



Tale of the Heike:  
Minamoto Clan

# Note from the In-Room Director

*Hi Delegates!*

My name is Vi Nguyen and I am so excited to welcome you all to our half of the JCC, *Minamoto Clan*. Before getting to know you all soon, I'd love to tell you more about myself! I'm studying neuroscience and linguistics, possibly on the pre-med track. In our International Relations Club, I compete at MUN and help plan events. I also work on merch!

I am also thrilled to have you all on our lovely campus. I hope you guys have a great time while you are with us in Williamsburg. I really recommend walking through Merchant's Square if you get a chance.

Other than MUN, I have a variety of interests on campus. I am the DEI chair for Sinfonicron, an entirely student-run theatre company, and secretary for QTPOC. I'm part of multiple cultural organizations, including KASA, FASA, and VSA, which I'm helping plan a show for. I also fence, do quiz bowl occasionally, and do finance for HOSA. I also work on the Gallery, an arts magazine. In my spare time, you'll find me reading the worst books I can find or doing pottery in my dorm's lounge. I also like to crochet while watching Netflix. I'd definitely recommend *Lupin*, *Sex Education*, and *Community* if you're ever bored.

I love crisis committees because I feel they really allow everyone the opportunity to be so creative. I've never looked back since starting crisis! I can't wait to see all of you bring these characters to life in room and looking forward to see what you do with them. And most of all, I hope we can all have a lot of fun!

*Yours,*

Vi Nguyen

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# Note from the Crisis Director

*Dear Delegates,*

My name is Nolan Jansorn, and I'm so excited to be your crisis director for &MUN XII. I'm a freshman studying (and maybe majoring in) government here at William and Mary, and this is my first time crisis-directing after almost six years of MUN. I'm thrilled to present a small piece of Asian history to you through this committee, a subject that I feel like has always gotten the short end of the stick when it comes to MUN topics. I've always been a bit of a history nerd, and so being able to research and learn about such an overlooked piece of the past for this conference was such a joy. Outside of MUN, I'm part of clubs on campus like the College Company, our Revolutionary War reenactment group (yes, we get to fire real muskets).

I can't wait to see you all in April. I hope that you all will find this committee, with all of the secret crisis plotting and scrambling for solutions, as enjoyable as I will. Even if the actual Tale of the Heike is all about how all things must eventually end, maybe we can keep Japan together for at least one committee session.

If you have any questions about your character and crisis arc, tips for CD'ing, or just any general places I can improve during the conference, feel free to send me an email at [ndjansorn@wm.edu](mailto:ndjansorn@wm.edu) on Outlook.

*Thank you,*

Nolan Jansorn

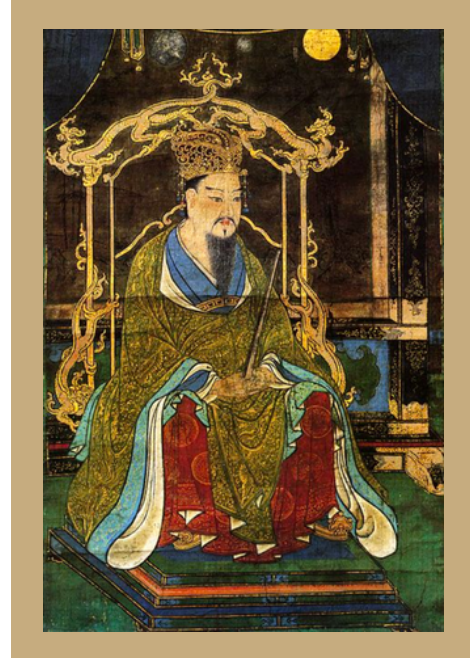


# Background

At many points in this guide, we use the posthumous names of the emperors (such as using Antoku instead of Tokohito-shinno), even if they were not in contemporary use. This is because most emperors are more well-known by their posthumous names.

## The Heian period

The Heian period was Japan's classical golden age, defined by the superiority of court culture and the elite aristocracy over Japanese society. It began with the construction of the new capital of Heian-kyo in 794, later known as Kyoto. Japan was ruled by a powerful emperor at the head of his centralized bureaucracy, consisting of a small caste of aristocrats, nobles, and bureaucrats under his leadership. Cultural traditions like Buddhism, literature, and art flourished, inspired by similar contemporary developments in Tang-era China. It was a golden age in Japanese history, but eventually, all golden ages come to an end.



*A 16th century depiction of the Emperor Kanmul/Kammu, one of the most famous Heian-period emperors.*

Originally, all land in Japan was administered as public, government owned land, loaned out to local landlords by the central government. However, land and offices were sold and privatized under the shoen system to certain organizations and families, resulting in the rise of new social classes across the nation. Various groups were able to consolidate their control of land across the country, carving the nation up into feudal estates. Among these groups were the royal courtiers (*kuge*), religious institutions (*jisha*), and the warrior class (*buke / samurai*). As time went on, these groups began to grow their own power bases, independent of the emperor: religious institutions such as monasteries became increasingly militarized and organized, warrior families became more influential as hired mercenaries, and etc. The Taira and Minamoto clans were two samurai families who became important at this time, using their former imperial heritage to gain positions as provincial governors and important military commanders. Whenever the government attempted to enforce its control to tax land, both peasants and nobles alike resisted, choosing to hide their wealth rather than pay the central government. Japan even began to regress from a monetary economy, with taxes being usually collected in rice, rather than in coin, as they were in the past.

However, the state was still run from the center: all appointments to military and government offices were decided by the imperial court. Therefore, the samurai were not an independent social group of warrior-lords who sought to seize power for themselves as a class, but

important lords who happened to have warriors and who wanted to use their individual clans to control the government. Japanese society was intensely stratified at this time, with a rigid class system preventing any sort of social mobility: powerful provincial lords were unable to easily join the court bureaucracy, just as lower level imperial bureaucrats could not drop down into the nobility. Therefore, these lords would make allies within the bureaucracy to control the government from the outside, rather than trying to insert themselves into the imperial court.

Meanwhile, the power of the emperor himself was on the decline. There was constant conflict between the ruling emperors and various regents, chancellor, and “prime minister” positions open to those outside the imperial family. Clans like the Fujiwara dominated the court by marrying their daughters to the emperors, and using their power and connections to influence their decisions. By the mid-Heian period, the emperors were basically powerless to go against the commands of their regents. However, during the *Insei* period (1068-1185), this regent position was held by retired emperors. These individuals would retire from the imperial office to the Buddhist priesthood, using the holy nature of their office to protect themselves from assassination, and ruling the nation through their successors, usually a young son or grandson. The first of these regents (referred to as *daijo-tenno* emperors), emperor Go-Sanjo (elevated in 1068), was able to retake imperial power from the Fujiwara, and began to favor the Minamoto clan, bringing them into core imperial politics.

### The Taira-Minamoto power struggle

In 1156, violence erupted between the Taira and Minamoto clans for the first time. The death of the *daijo-tenno* emperor Toba led to the Hogen Disturbance, a power struggle between another *daijo-tenno* emperor, Sutoku, and the reigning emperor, Go-Shirakawa. While the Fujiwara backed the former, and the Taira the latter, the Minamoto clan was split down the middle, leading to a chaotic civil war. In the end, Go-Shirakawa won, bringing the victorious Taira and Minamoto into power, and ousting the Fujiwara, splitting their house up into numerous smaller branches. Military factions like the *samurai* families now held direct power over the imperial government for the first time.



*Depiction of Minamoto no Yoshitomo*



*Depiction of Emperor Go-Shirakawa*



*Depiction of Taira no Kiyomori*

However, the Minamoto were not pleased with the result of this conflict. Clan leader Minamoto no Yoshitomo had been forced to kill his own father in the fighting, and was angered by the rich rewards given to the Taira. In the Heiji Disturbance, he attempted to place his own candidate on the imperial throne when Taira was away from Kyoto. However, Kiyomori was soon able to crush the rebellion, killing Yoshitomo and his two oldest sons, and solidifying his control over Japan. By 1177, he ruled the nation as the Grand Minister of State (daijo-daijin), and was even attempting to place a Taira on the imperial throne through the marriage of a Taira princess to the emperor Takakura. Even his old ally, Go-Shirakawa was forced out of his daijo-tenno status after an attempted assassination on Kiyomori, and was stripped of his power. The remaining Minamoto, led by Minamoto no Yoritomo, a son of Yoshitomo, were largely exiled to remote parts of Japan. It seemed like the Taira would control the empire for centuries, just like the Fujiwara before them.

### Buildup to war

At the beginning of 1178, the imperial consort, Taira no Tokuko, daughter of Kiyomori, fell ill. Across the country, both noble and common folk are saddened, leading many temples, shrines, and physicians across the nation to work and pray for her recovery. However, it turns out that Tokuko is pregnant. Kiyomori and the Taira are overjoyed, as a son will help them solidify their power over the throne for years to come. Meanwhile, the Minamoto realize the extent of the power that the Taira will gain from having Kiyomori's grandson on the throne, and begin to plot against their rivals once again. Kiyomori then summons all high-ranking priests to appeal to the heavens for a son.

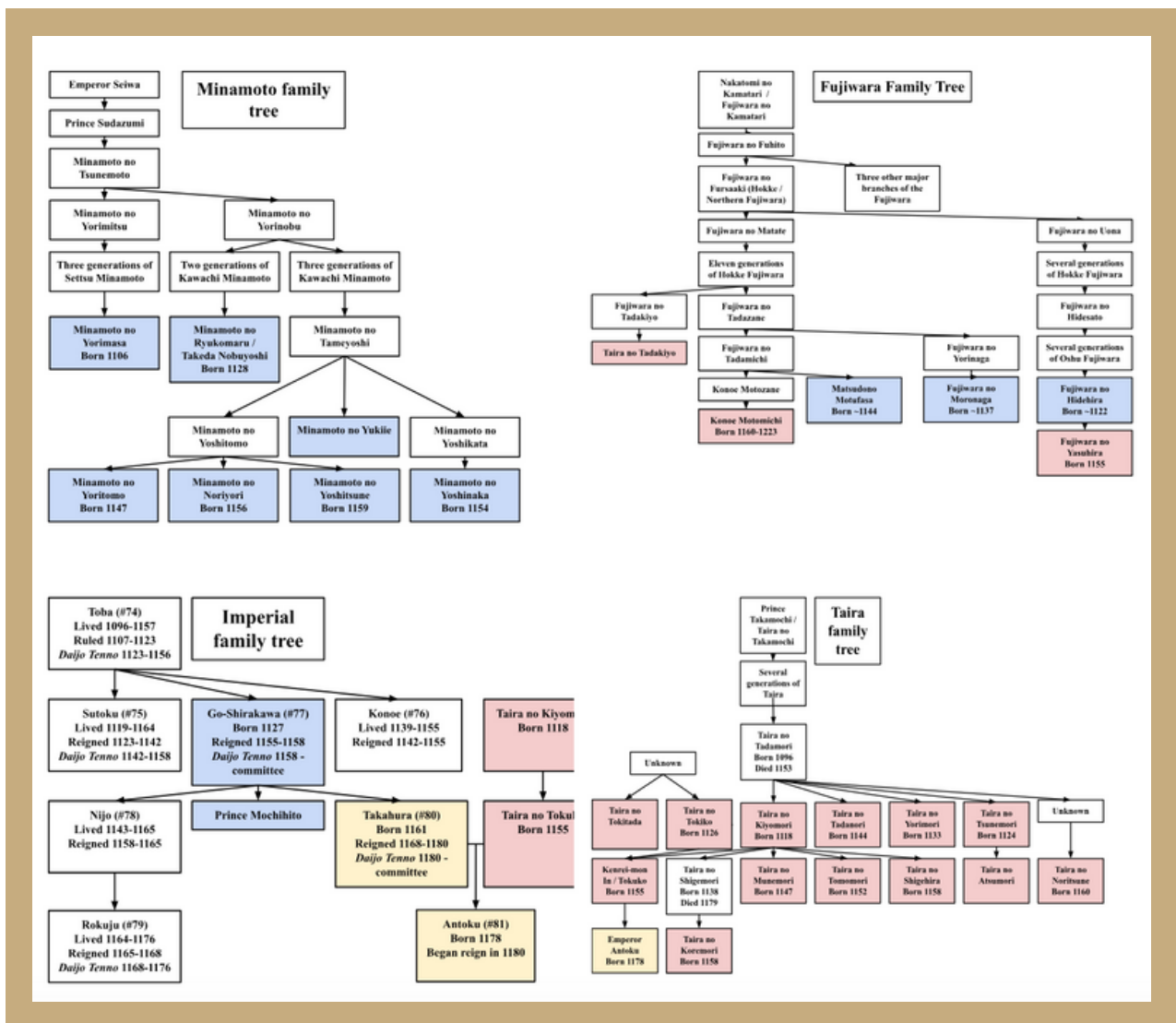
However, months later, the Consort again becomes gravely ill and Kiyomori begins to worry about the effects of malicious spirits. It is very important to appease angry spirits, for they are believed to hold much power: the deposition of a previous emperor was said to be the work of a vengeful spirit, as well as the illness of two other emperors. In an attempt to placate both the living and the dead, he restores a variety of religious and court positions that he had previously taken. Kiyomori is convinced that pardoning many of the previously exiled monks will help his daughter recover from her illness and have an easy delivery.

At the end of 1178, he organized a ceremonial visit to the place of the Consort. Possessions of nobles attend, bringing gifts of swords, horses, and garments. Attendees included the current Kampaku, Daijo-daijin, Sadajin, Udaijin, and various other ministers, counselors, and warlords. All courtiers, officials, and anyone hoping to regain office attends, leading to a very extensive pardon (except for a few specific political enemies like the monk Shunkwan).

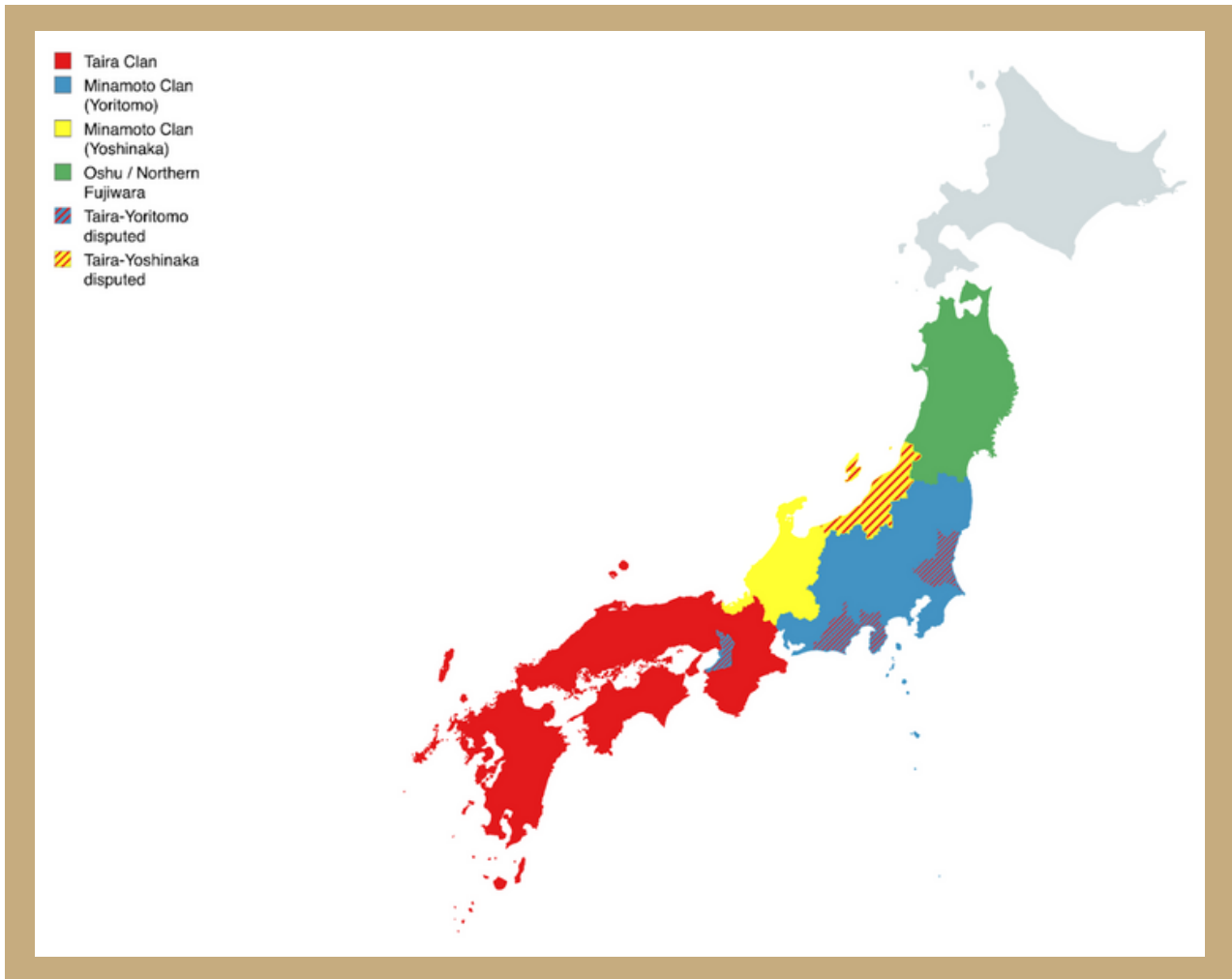
Promises are made to a plethora of temples that they will be visited by the Empress and the Crown Prince if the birth goes easily. Despite the prayers, sutras, and appeals from dozens of temples, the delivery of the royal baby is not easy. However, the prince, named Antoku, is born safely and the nobles rejoice. The temples are rewarded for their prayers with a plethora of promotions, ranks, and temple repairs, as well as numerous other various rewards. However, the people see the birth as ill-omened, due to a series of "laughable" events. For one, the palace accidentally signaled the birth of a princess. The custom is to roll a koshiki

down the palace roof, on the north side if a princess is born, and on the south side if a prince. However, by mistake, the koshiki rolls down the north side, before having to be brought up and rolled down the south side. The people found this ill omen to signal an unfavorable birth.

In the second month of 1180, Emperor Takakura retires in favor of his son, Antoku. The circumstances are mysterious, given that Takakura was not ill, and was relatively young. Everyone suspects Kiyomori's manipulation, as it seems like he is trying to place his grandson Antoku on the throne. It was at this point that another prince, Mochihito, son of Go-Shirakawa, flees from Kyoto, and issues a general call for rebellion against the Taira clan. The Minamoto lord, Minamoto no Yorimasa, is the first to answer, gathering an army at the Byodo-in shrine just outside Kyoto to help Mochihito overthrow the Taira and take the throne from Antoku. The Taira are quick to respond, sending an army south to Byodo-in to deal with Yorimasa and Mochihito.



# Current Situation



At the start of committee, Japan is on the brink of civil war. Following Antoku's ascension to the throne, and Mochihito's call to rebellion, both the Taira and Minamoto clans are preparing for a confrontation at the Byodo-in shrine, where Mochihito and his supporters are gathering. With more lords across Japan taking sides, war appears inevitable: the Minamoto must fight to claim hegemony over all of Japan.

The immediate issue facing the Minamoto is the war itself. Minamoto territory is divided, with lords divided in their allegiance to the rival courts in Kamakura and Kyoto, and in their loyalty to clan leader Yoritomo or his cousin Yoshinaka. While the clan and its coalition allies have significant resources and armies, many important groups throughout Japan have avoided taking sides. Various factions amongst the imperial court, provincial governors, samurai lords, religious institutions, and etc across the nation find it difficult to justify supporting the Minamoto's bid for power without the rewards of land or money that usually accompany military campaigns. Therefore, the committee must determine how it can gain the assistance of these groups to support the war effort against the Taira. In particular, the various unaffiliated samurai clans of Japan can prove a major boon to either side. Nearly everything in Japanese warfare is based around the skills of archery and horsemanship that these experienced warriors have mastered, allowing them to tip the balance of the war for either side.



Moreover, the Minamoto clan itself is internally disunited. Unlike the Taira, who largely follow Kiyomori as their undisputed leader, the Minamoto clan has been internally fractured since the death of Minamoto no Yoshitomo. Yoritomo's brothers and cousins dispute his leadership over the clan, while more distant branches like the Settsu Minamoto and Takeda have begun to act largely independently. While this disunity may serve the interests of some samurai lords, it makes a coordinated war effort extremely difficult. The committee must determine how the divided Minamoto clan and its disparate allies can unite together into an opposition force strong enough to overpower the Taira.

However, a larger issue looms over the Minamoto coalition: once the war is won, who will lead Japan? Everyone across Japan knows that the emperor has not been the true ruler of the nation for centuries, and has been relegated to a figurehead position. Rather, the real power in Japan has been held by a series of imperial regents, from the Fujiwara family to the daijō-tenno emperors, in often-hereditary offices, pulling the strings from behind the scenes. While the Minamoto coalition is united in their opposition to Taira no Kiyomori and his clan, they disagree significantly on who should replace him. Clever samurai lords could seize power for themselves with the regency offices of shogun or shikken (the former usually being reserved for imperial descendents such as the Minamoto, and the latter open to all). The upheaval in Japan could also see a return to the Fujiwara hereditary regency, the *insei* system of retired emperors, the powerful emperors of the early Heiji period, or any number of other options. The actions of this committee will help determine what the future power structure of Japan will look like, and who will control the power of the emperor.

## Questions to Consider

1. How can the Minamoto defeat the Taira? How can they leverage their advantages, and the various strengths of their allies, to defeat their rivals in Kyoto?
2. What actions or agreements can the Minamoto make to secure the loyalty of the various social groups and factions in Japan?
3. How will the Minamoto clan organize itself and the war effort? Will the war be led from the top-down by Minamoto leadership, or managed by a coalition of equal clans?
4. What sort of political system will replace Kiyomori's dominance over the imperial court? What will the role of the emperor be in this new arrangement?

## Notes:

Characters with no asterisks next to their name have had only minor changes from the original historical figure, if any at all.

Characters with one asterisk (\*) have had notable changes made from the original historical figure, in the spirit of the period or of that person.

Characters with two asterisks (\*\*) have been changed significantly or have had backgrounds created for this committee based on whatever historical information is available.

## The Minamoto Clan

### *Minamoto no Yoritomo - Lord of the Minamoto Clan*

Yoritomo is the leader of the Minamoto clan, and rules from the great city of Kamakura - second only to Kyoto itself. He maintains the largest army and income among the Minamoto clan leaders through his loose suzerainty over the other Minamoto rulers and rule of the rich Kanto farms, but his decades-old feud with the ruling Taira has weakened his personal support within the imperial court. Yoritomo's paranoid nature has also led him to employ numerous assassins to suppress local unrest and threats to his rule. He is also married to Hojo Masako.

### *Minamoto no Yorimasa - Lord of the Settsu Minamoto\**

Yorimasa is a distant relative of the ruling Kawachi branch of the Minamoto, but still an influential figure in clan politics. His Settsu branch of the Minamoto family is based in the titular Settsu province, only several miles from Kyoto. Because of this proximity to the capital and his neutrality in earlier wars, Yorimasa has many supporters in the imperial court/bureaucracy and neighboring monasteries. This support also gives him unique access to the imperial archives, copies of which are kept in his castle: these include tax records, army mobilization orders, maps, and etc. Yorimasa and his forces currently occupy the shrine of Byodo-In outside Kyoto, accompanied by Prince Mochihito, Yorimasa's candidate for the throne, and the local monks, led by Gochi-in no Tajima.

### *Minamoto no Noriyori - Chief admiral\*\**

Noriyori is the half-brother of **Yoritomo**, and one of the top generals in the Minamoto cause. He commands the Minamoto fleet based in Kamakura, but is still a competent general on land. Additionally, he has support from many important business magnates and merchants in Japan, who fund and supply his naval operations. Due to their wealth, Noriyori's domains are some of the only lands in which operate on a monetary economy, rather than the rice-based barter economy: this has allowed Noriyori to play an important role in forging trade agreements and arranging commerce with powers outside Japan.

### *Minamoto no Yoshitsune - Chief general*

Yoshitsune, another half-brother of Yoritomo, is the best general in the Minamoto clan, and a skilled warrior. As such, he has been appointed the overall commander for the Minamoto-coalition war effort. He has a large retinue of skilled samurai and sohei, including the loyal warrior-monk Benkei, drawn to his service by legends of his skills. He is good friends with the northern lord Fujiwara no Hidehira.

### *Minamoto no Yoshinaka / Kiso Yoshinaka - Lord of the Kiso mountains\**

Yoshinaka is a cousin of Yoritomo and one of the few Minamoto who reject Yoritomo's supreme command over the rebellion and the clan. He controls a significant sized territory based in the Kiso mountains, and is an experienced general, skilled in ambush tactics and guerilla warfare. However, he is somewhat isolated from the other Minamoto both politically and geographically, and so Yoshinaka draws most of his support from the rural peasantry and bandit forces in his domain. Him and Yoritomo have temporarily agreed to put aside their conflict for the clan's leadership to focus on their common Taira enemies, but the power dynamic between the two remains nebulous.

### *Minamoto no Yukiie - Minamoto spymaster\**

Yukiie is the uncle of Yoritomo and his brothers, and has been appointed the Minamoto spymaster. He manages a network of informants placed across Japan, with some agents operating as far away as Song China. These espionage tactics have attracted many proto-shinobi/ninjas to his service, whose experience in stealth, infiltration, and disruption strengthen his small forces. However, his association with Yoshinaka has diminished his standing within the clan, as many doubt his loyalty to Yoritomo.

### *Takeda Nobuyoshi - Lord of the Takeda clan*

Nobuyoshi (also known as Minamoto no Ryukomaru) is another distant relative of the core Minamoto leadership, and the founder of the Minamoto-offshoot Takeda clan. He rules the Kai province in central Honshu, and commands the Takeda cavalry, the strongest and fastest horsemen in Japan. His mountainous domain makes the majority of its income from horse-trading and livestock. It also occupies a crucial position controlling the north-south overland trade in Japan, and the only major road connecting Yoritomo in Kamakura and Yoshinaka in the Kiso Mountains.

## The Imperial Family

### *Go-Shirakawa - Retired emperor*

Go-Shirakawa was once the emperor of Japan, however he now lives as a Buddhist monk under the captivity of his rival Taira no Kiyomori. Despite this setback, his name still carries significant weight within the imperial court as the last real *daijo-tenno* emperor, allowing him to maintain a small network of spies and supporters within the court in Kyoto. Additionally, he has strong connections among the priesthood of Japan from his financial patronage of Buddhist literature and art. Go-Shirakawa also has his grandson, the young Prince Takahira (also known later as Go-Toba), in his custody.

### *Prince Mochihito - Claimant to the Chrysanthemum Throne\**

Prince Mochihito, son of Go-Shirakawa, is the Minamoto-backed claimant to the imperial throne of Japan. He serves as the figurehead of the Minamoto cause, uniting the disparate clans of the anti-Taira coalition. His flight from Kyoto has left him without any funds of his own, however he does have a small but well-trained bodyguard force who obey his commands. Mochihito currently occupies the Byodo-in shrine with his ally Minamoto no Yorimasa and the local monks, led by Gochi-in no Tajima.

### Allied Clans

#### *Hojo Tokimasa - Lord of the Hojo Clan*

Tokimasa was one of the first lords to rally to the Minamoto cause, as his daughter Hojo Masako is married to Yoritomo. He rules the Hojo lands in the Izu province, where disgraced court officials out of Kiyomori's favor are often exiled; thus, his province is full of capable administrators, court officials, and various samurai disgruntled with Taira rule. The road between Kamakura and Kyoto also passes through Izu, potentially allowing Tokimasa to control and intercept news coming to and from the capitol. However, Izu, as a border province, still harbors many minor lords loyal to the Taira cause, making Tokimasa's rule unstable.

#### *Hojo Masako - Wife of Minamoto no Yoritomo*

Masako is the daughter of Hojo Tokimasa, and is married to Minamoto no Yoritomo. Her status in the Minamoto clan gives her significant influence among the courtiers and ladies-in-waiting of the nascent rebel court in Kamakura, and the power to arrange marriages for younger members of the Minamoto and Hojo clans to other families, bringing the coalition closer together. Unusually for a Heian-era woman, Masoka is also a skilled athlete, having been trained in horseback riding and hunting.

#### *Fujiwara no Motifasa / Matsudono Motifasa - Deposed Fujiwara regent\**

In 1179, Motifasa was the sessho and kampuka, the office of imperial regent historically held by the Fujiwara. However, he was deposed by Taira no Kiyomori, and replaced by his nephew Konoe Motomichi, who continues to serve the Taira clan. He remains an important force within the fractured Fujiwara clan as the leader of the Matsudono branch and an influential monk within the Fujiwara-clan monastery at Kofuku-ji.

#### *Fujiwara no Moronaga - Fujiwara Chancellor\**

Moronaga is the cousin of Motifasa and a close political ally. Exiled from the capital at Kiyomori's order, he uses his talents in persuasion and diplomacy to serve as chancellor for the Minamoto cause, arranging treaties and negotiation between the Minamoto coalition, smaller clans throughout the country, and foreign powers like Song China. Moronaga is also an accomplished musician, having great skill at various string instruments.

### *Fujiwara no Hidehira - Lord of the Oshu Fujiwara*

Hidehira is the head of the Oshu Fujiwara, a northern branch of the family ruling lands in the Tohoku region of Honshu. His sizable territory and control of local mining operations have placed Hidehira as a powerful lord, allowing him to maintain an official stance of neutrality. However, Hidehira is good friends with Minamoto no Yoshitsune, slightly tipping his support in favor of the Minamoto cause. His northern fiefdom also gives him exclusive contact with the Ainu people on Hokkaido, one of the major trade links between Japan and mainland Asia.

### *Miura Yoshizumi - Lord of the Miura Clan\*\**

Yoshizumi is the leader of the Miura Clan. He is a notable benefactor of science, sponsoring various scholars from across Japan and even from abroad to come study and invent new technology under his patronage. This technological research has allowed Yoshizumi to turn his province on the Miura peninsula into one of the most productive regions in Japan, using improved roads, irrigation systems, and other advancements to generate greater wealth. However, many Minamoto lords distrust the Miura, as they are one of the many offshoot clans descended from the Taira, and have historically quarreled with other coalition clans like the Hojo.

### *Chiba Tsunetane - Lord of the Chiba Clan\*\**

Tsunetane is the leader of the Chiba clan, and governs the Shimosa province in the Kanto. Shimosa is one of the wealthiest agricultural regions in Japan, containing many productive farms and breweries which enrich the Chiba family. Additionally, as the Chiba lands guard the flanks of Yoritomo's domain, Tsunetane has used his crucial strategic role as leverage to obtain key military posts for himself and his family, such as the command of the Kamikura garrison, and several forts protecting major roads around Kamakura and Shimosa. However, similar to the Miura, the clan's Taira ancestry causes them to be mistrusted by other Minamoto lords.

## Samurai and other retainers

### *Tomoe Gozen - The samurai-woman\**

Tomoe is a onna-musha, a class of female warriors who fight alongside male samurai. She has earned particular renown for her skill in combat, and her command of a sizable group of warriors in service of Minamoto no Yoshinaka. As such, Gozen has become a popular quasi-celebrity among the imperial courtiers and ladies-in-waiting of the imperial court, who spread tales of her talents and skill throughout the upper aristocracy.

### *Imai Kanehira - Yoshinaka's admiral\*\**

Kanehira is a supporter of Minamoto no Yoshinaka, and one of his closest friends. He maintains a small fleet of elite ships, many of them hired proto-*wokou* pirates or mercenaries, on the Sea of Japan between the islands and the Asian mainland. These forces and his geographic location have given him significant control over Minamoto trade traveling directly to and from China and Korea, including access to more advanced weapons like crossbows.

### *Kumagai no Jiro Naozane - Pious samurai\**

Naozane is a skilled *samurai*, and one of the most famous individual warriors in the Minamoto cause. Despite his violent profession, he has a widespread reputation for being a devout Buddhist, showing an unparalleled level of mercy towards his foes, honoring the dead after every battle, and even occasionally riding backward on his horse, so he can always face the Western Paradise of Amida from Buddhist folklore. Naozane is also a talented and well-renowned poet.

### *Wada Yoshimori - Infantry leader\*\**

Yoshimori is a samurai from a distant branch of the Miura clan. His proficiency in combat has allowed him to rise through the ranks, being promoted to a major commander of soldiers in the Minamoto army, where he has earned great respect from the common soldiers for his bravery and frontline leadership. Yoshimori also manages the Kamakura prison, and is responsible for supervising captives taken during the conflict, along with various common criminals and bandits.

### *Nasu no Yoichi - Expert archer and lead armorer\*\**

Yoichi is one of the most talented warriors in the Minamoto army, capable of impressive feats of archery even on horseback. His skill at many different arms has resulted in his appointment as the overseer of the Kamakura arsenal, supervising not only the production and storage of weapons, but also of armor, signal flags, drums, and other military equipment. As weapon imports from overseas have historically been restricted, Yoichi and the Kamakura manufacturers are responsible for the production of most Minamoto arms.

### *Benkei - loyal sohei*

Benkei is the most famous *sohei* warrior monk in Japan, his impressive stature and strength distinguishing him as a uniquely skilled fighter. However, unlike most *sohei*, he is unattached to any one monastery, and fights in the service of Minamoto no Yoshitsune. The many tales and legend of his feats have made him a popular figure among many Buddhist monasteries in Japan, allowing him to rally many *sohei* to the Minamoto cause.

### *Gochi-in no Tajima - the arrow-cutter of Mii-dera\**

Tajima is the head abbot of the Buddhist monastery of Mii-dera, located a short distance from Kyoto and their rival, the neighboring Enryaku-Ji monastery. He is also a *sohei* warrior monk, and is so skilled with the *naginata* spear that he can supposedly deflect arrows using his weapon. As the abbot of one of the largest monasteries in Japan, Tajima holds a significant amount of spiritual influence among the rest of the monasteries in Minamoto territory, but no direct administrative or taxation power over them. Tajima has also chosen to shelter Yorimasa and Prince Mochihito from the Taira in the Byodo-in monastery.

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