

# **Crisis: Kamakura Shogunate**



# JACKRABBIT MUN V

L.B. POLY - MAY 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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# CO-HEAD CHAIR LETTER

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Dear Esteemed Delegates,

My name is Matthew Inui, and I am excited to welcome you to the Kamakura Shogunate crisis room. As a descendant of the Taira clan (albeit quite severely diluted), I am honored to be one of your co-chairs and to have the privilege of leading you through what will doubtlessly be a tumultuous journey.

I am currently a junior and the co-president of our Model UN club. I am also active in our school's UNICEF club, Japanese club, and chamber orchestra. When I'm not drowning in schoolwork, I can probably be found drowning in a book or a cup of coffee (if you have any book recommendations, I'd be happy to take any and all of them).

I look forward to seeing where your research and creativity takes our committee. While I fully expect backstabbing and broken hearts, remember that MUN is supposed to be fun. I fully expect vibrant and diplomatic debate from every delegate, which means keeping the assassination attempts to a minimum. Nevertheless, this is a crisis committee, so while history has played out one way, it is now within your power to rewrite it.

If any questions arise (or if you have book recs), please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Otherwise, happy researching! The fate of the Japanese archipelago rests in your hands.

Sincerely,

Matthew Inui

Kamakura Shogunate Crisis Committee | Co-Head Chair

[matthewinui@gmail.com](mailto:matthewinui@gmail.com)



# CO-HEAD CHAIR LETTER

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Greetings Delegates!

My name is Alexis Lam, and I will be one of your Co-Head Chairs for the Kamakura Shogunate Room. Along with being Co-Head Chair, I am also one of your Co-Secretaries General for this conference. As Co-Secretary General, I am one of the directors of operations and organization of our conference. I also help plan and chair our Mini-MUNs as well as support the rest of leadership.

I am currently a senior at Poly, and I will be attending Yale University next fall majoring in Global Affairs. Go Bulldogs!! Outside of MUN, I am one of the presidents of the UNICEF club at Poly, co-captain of the Speech and Debate team, and one of the drum majors for Poly's Marching Unit. I act as concertmaster of our school's Chamber Orchestra and play clarinet in the Symphonic Winds ensemble. Aside from those, I love to embroider and bullet journal while jamming out to indie or classical music.

I'm looking forward to seeing all the wonderful and creative ideas and plans you have in store for us in this room. The Kamakura Shogunate period is a riveting era. I wish you the best of luck in your preparations, and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any of the other chairs.

Best Wishes,

Alexis Lam

Kamakura Shogunate Crisis Committee | Co-Head Chair

[alexis.lam133@gmail.com](mailto:alexis.lam133@gmail.com)



# VICE CHAIR LETTER

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Hello Delegates!

My name is Nisha Patel, and I will be your Vice Chair for the Kamakura Shogunate Room. I'm excited to see what type of innovative solutions you will come up with, and I cannot wait to see how you manage through the curveballs of 12th Century Japan.

I am currently a senior who is part of our Model UN's Webmaster and Social Media Team. Apart from MUN, I am one of the Vice Presidents of our school's UNICEF club, and I take charge as President of our Key Club. When I am outside of school, I find myself scattered with several supplies across my room. I try to dip my feet into different forms of art; sketching, painting, and editing digital works off of Procreate. I struggle a little with drawing anatomy accurately, but it's fun getting to learn it step-by-step and see myself slowly improve!

The day of the conference is getting even closer and closer. I am waiting in anticipation for the amazing debate that will occur because there is so much you can do with the Kamakura Shogunate room. I highly encourage you to deviate from what has already happened and explore your options as you develop your crisis arc.

Please do not be afraid to reach out to me. I will try my best to answer your questions and help in any way I can. Best of luck to all the delegates out there!

Kind Regards,

Nisha Patel

Kamakura Shogunate Crisis Committee | Vice Chair

[Nishaopatell@gmail.com](mailto:Nishaopatell@gmail.com)



# CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Lauren Higuchi, and I am excited to welcome you to Jackrabbit MUN V as your Crisis Director. My talented crisis staff and I have worked tirelessly to ensure that your crisis experience is the best it can be, and we are eager to see what kinds of out-of-the-box things you can accomplish.

I am a senior here at Poly and closing out my second year in MUN. In addition to MUN, I am also captain of our robotics team and have recently led us to our first-ever Regional Competition win and into the World Championships. I love historical fashion and birdwatching and often listen to Russian alt-rock (shoutout to the Red Scare Room).

I am extremely proud of all three of our crisis rooms and know that I will be in awe of your creativity, cunningness, and cooperation. Once again, welcome to Jackrabbit MUN V. I hope you all have a fantastic time!

Lauren Higuchi

Long Beach Poly Model UN | Crisis Director

[laurenhiguchi123@gmail.com](mailto:laurenhiguchi123@gmail.com)



# CRISIS LEAD LETTER

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Hi Crisis Delegates!

My name is Catherine Som de Cerff, and I am the crisis lead for the Kamakura Shogunate at Jackrabbit MUN V! I will be running this committee behind the scenes, working to integrate all of your directives into the grand plot of the crisis, and maybe throwing in a disruption or two! I am looking forward to seeing all of your creative solutions to this complicated succession crisis and leading Japan out of conflict.

I am currently a junior at Poly, and I have been a part of Poly MUN for three years now. Last year, I was a co-chair for the UNESCO committee, discussing the repatriation of cultural artifacts. Outside of MUN, I am a member of the Poly robotics team, a swimmer on the girls' swim team, and I play cello in symphony orchestra. When I am not working on homework, I enjoy reading and have been creating a service project teaching students in Long Beach how to swim.

I can't wait to see the direction this committee takes once all the delegates start debating. It is going to be a wild ride of political intrigue, alliances, backstabbing, and maybe an assassination attempt or two. See you on conference day, and don't be afraid to reach out before then if you have any questions!

Sincerely,

Catherine Som de Cerff

Kamakura Shogunate Crisis Committee | Crisis Lead

[Catherine.a.sdc@gmail.com](mailto:Catherine.a.sdc@gmail.com)



# POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

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## JACKRABBIT MUN POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

- Position Papers are due at 11:59 PM on **Wednesday, May 17** in order to receive feedback and be eligible for **research AND committee awards.**
- Position Papers are due at 11:59 PM on **Friday, May 19** in order to be eligible for **committee awards ONLY.**
- Position Papers can be submitted through the committee email:
  - **kamakurajackrabbit2023@gmail.com**
- At the top of each paper, include your character/country name, first and last name, school name, and appropriate committee.
  - Genghis Khan
  - First Last
  - School Name
  - Crisis: Kamakura Shogunate
- Papers should be emailed as a PDF file.
  - Paper content should also be copied and pasted into the body of the email so it can still be graded in the event of technical difficulties
  - Please name the file and email subject line [Committee\_ Character Name]
    - Ex. **Crisis\_Kamakura\_GenghisKhan**
- Papers should be 1-2 pages single-spaced with additional Works Cited pages in MLA format.
- Papers should be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font and include no pictures or graphics.
- Please include the following sections for each committee topic:
  - Background
  - Position of your Character
  - Possible Solutions

If you have any questions or concerns, please email your respective chairs.





# TOPIC SYNOPSIS

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The year is 1220. Less than half a century ago, Yoritomo Minamoto defeated the Taira clan and instituted himself as the head of a new shogunate based in the eastern Japanese city of Kamakura. However, his bloodline ended when Sanetomo Minamoto was assassinated in 1219. Now, the Hōjō family regency has assumed power, but their authority rests on a pyramid of usurpations and illegitimacy.

With four major clans and the emperor looking to regain control of the government, it is your job to further your personal and familial interests in this internal power struggle. Land will shift, allegiances will switch, and foreign policy will become increasingly important as the Mongols threaten invasion from the West. So the question for you is how will history play out this time? Will a new power emerge to lead Japan to prosperity, or will in-fighting ultimately drive the island to ruin?



# TOPIC BACKGROUND

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The beginning of Japan's medieval age (1185–1573) saw the emergence of a new political institution: the shogunate. Characterized by hereditary military dictatorships and clear social classes, the feudal structure of the Kamakura Shogunate would persist far into the Muromachi, Azuchi-Momoyama, and Edo periods. It would not be until nearly six centuries later that the shogunate system would be overthrown and the emperor's power restored.

## Pre-Kamakura Japan

Before the establishment of the Kamakura Shogunate in 1192, Japan was under the emperor's rule (although the Taira family had most of the power). After its founding in 825, the Taira clan developed into a powerful samurai family, eventually gaining control of eastern Japan's Kantō district. In 1028, Taira Tadatsune attempted to establish a government in opposition to the Emperor, but the court dispatched a warrior, Minamoto Yorinobu, to quell the rebellion. In the coming years, the Taira family weakened to a subordinate position under the growing Minamoto family.



However, these power dynamics began to change in the 11th century when the Fujiwara family (backed by the military might of the Minamoto clan) began to decline. After emperor Shirakawa abdicated in 1086 and established *insei*, a new political system in which retired emperors retained much more influence, Shirakawa was able to wrest political control away from the Fujiwara courtiers. At this time, Shirakawa also hired Taira Masamori to deal with the Minamoto clan; Masamori's success in these endeavors ultimately led to his swift



promotion in the court and the re-establishment of the Taira as the dominant family in Japan. It was not until the rule of Taira Kiyomori, Masamori's grandson, that the Minamoto clan would enter the spotlight again.

### The Hogen and Heiji Disturbance

The beginnings of the Minamoto rise to power can be traced back to two events



from the mid-12th century, the first being the Hōgen rebellion in 1156. Although it started as a political conflict between retired monarchs Sutoku and Go-Shirakawa, the Hōgen rebellion grew into a war when Japan's most powerful military families, the Seiwa Minamoto and the Ise Taira, split their support between the two rulers.

After a month of fighting, Go-Shirakawa and his supporters, Taira Kiyomori and Minamoto Yoshitomo, were victorious. However, while

Kiyomori received a governorship for his services, Yoshitomo was given a lower post: Head of the Left Horse Guards. Disillusioned with the situation, Yoshitomo sided with Emperor Nijō, the dissatisfied son of Go-Shirakawa, in what would be known as the Heiji rebellion. But after Nijō abandoned his forces, Yoshitomo was defeated and ultimately killed.

These two events led to the exile of his son, Minamoto Yoritomo, to the Izu Province in southwest Tokyo, where he lived for 20 years under Taira supervision. It was here that Yoritomo first made contact with the Hōjōs and began plotting another uprising.



## Rise of the Minamotos

In 1180, a now-grown Minamoto Yoritomo began planning another uprising against the Taira. Capitalizing on dissent within the Taira family towards its leadership, the Minamoto family (aided by several Taira clan members) launched a revolt against Taira leadership and two-year-old Emperor Antoku. After they strategically gained the east coast of Japan in 1182, the Minamoto prepared to invade the capital at Kyoto, so the Taira leaders, including Emperor Antoku, fled the city. Finally, in the 1185 battle of Dannoura, the Taira were defeated and emperor Antoku was killed.



In the aftermath of the war, retired emperor Go-Shirakawa granted Yoritomo the right to collect the commissariat tax (a levy of rice) and to appoint stewards and constables in the many provinces, thus reestablishing Minamoto dominance in politics. Finally, in 1192, Yoritomo was granted the title Sei-i Tai Shōgun, thus beginning the feudal state in Japan.

## The Kamakura Shogunate

The Kamakura Shogunate, named after the city where Yoritomo established his military government, was the first of three major shogunates that would rule Japan for the next 700 years. The shogunate was centered around the *bakufu*, a military administration that served alongside the imperial court and was headed by the hereditary shogun. This dual polity of court and shogunate severely weakened the control once held solely by the emperor and Council of State.

The shogunate was split into three basic organs: the Board of Retainers (in charge of organizing vassals), the Chancellery (the administrative body), and the Board of Inquiry (a judicial body created to handle disputes between warriors). The



shogunate also maintained an extensive network of military governors and stewards to manage provincial governments and independent estates. In this way, the Kamakura Shogunate retained power for nearly two centuries.

## The Hōjō Regency

While historians are divided on where the Hōjō family came from, several



believe they are descended from the Kanmu Taira family. An influential group of military elites based in the Izu Province just outside of Kyoto, the Hōjō were often called on when the capital needed military support.

Hōjō Tokimasa, the first known member of the family, entered the historical scene as the warden of the exiled Minamoto Yoritomo. However, in 1180, the same year Yoritomo married Hōjō Tokimasa's eldest daughter, Hōjō Masako, Tokimasa fought with Yoritomo in the Genpei War. After the Taira rule was dismantled and the Minamoto shogunate established, Tokimasa became the warden of Kyōto.

After Yoritomo's death in 1199, Tokimasa became the guardian of his heir, Yoriie Minamoto, and regent to the shogun. By this time, a provisional council headed by Tokimasa had gained much power in relation to the shogunate. Yoriie tried to bypass the council and strengthen the shogunate, but failed and was forced to abdicate. In 1204, Yoriie was assassinated, likely at the command of Tokimasa.



At this point, Sanetomo Minamoto assumed the shogunate at age eleven, but since he was so young, Tokimasa was again appointed regent. Because of Tokimasa's



strong influence and guidance, Sanetomo is considered the first puppet shogun under Hōjō. However, by 1218, Sanetomo still had no children, raising concerns over the line of succession. With help from Kyō no Tsubone, a lady of high rank in Kyoto at the time, Masako chose one of retired emperor Go-Toba's sons as the shogunal successor. However, after Sanetomo's assassination in 1219, Go-Toba refused to honor the agreement. Instead, Kujō Yoritsune, a distant relative of Yoritomo, was placed on the throne. Only two years old, the Hōjō regency again expanded its control of the shogunate. However, having such a young shogun also presented opportunities for the Hōjō's enemies.

## China and Korea

The Mongols are a collection of nomadic tribes living in the Central Asian



steppes of modern Mongolia and northern China.

When they were divided, the tribes were herders who moved according to the seasons, but their

archery and horse riding traditions translated

directly into military power. In 1206, Ghengis Khan

unified the many Mongol tribes and created the

Mongol empire, which quickly rose to power

through Asia. Efficient hunting techniques, expertise

in archery, a highly mobile society, and widespread

use of horses helped the Mongols quickly overthrow other societies throughout Asia with minimal loss.

At this time, the other two powers in China were the southern Song dynasty and the northern Jin dynasty. While the Songs were severely weakened by a military defeat at the hands of the Jin in the early 12th century, a combination of competent rulers and



government support allowed the Song dynasty to build thriving port cities and a powerful navy around the turn of the 13th century. Meanwhile, the Jin were severely weakened by successive invasions by the Mongols (supported by the Song navy) in the early 1200s. By 1220, the power dynamics in China had begun to shift drastically.

The final player in east continental Asian politics is the Kingdom of Goryeo, established in 918. While a monarchy in name, ever since the 1170 coup d'état, the Choi family has held real power as a military regime. A center of philosophy, literature, religion, and science, the Korean peninsula began developing as an international force. However, the threat of a Mongol invasion from the north severely destabilized the region. When the Mongols attempted to conquer the Japanese, they contracted the seafaring Goryeo people to build a fleet of warships.



# CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

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**An asterisk (\*) indicates a character that has been created for the purposes of our committee. Please research their position/job rather than their name.**

## **Bae Jung-son\***

Bae Jung-son is the commissioner of the Goryeo Ministry of Public Works. In this position, he is responsible for managing the kingdom's resource use and maintaining the kingdom's public infrastructure. In charge of the upkeep of the kingdom's ports and the construction of its ships, Jung-son also has incredible influence on the nation's commerce. While he is officially employed by the government, Jung-son is a merchant at heart and is always looking for a good deal. His allegiance is to the government, at least until the money leads him elsewhere.

## **Choi Wu**

Choi Wu is the de facto military dictator of the kingdom of Goryeo. Since his father led a coup in 1197, the Choi family's power on the Korean peninsula has rivaled that of even the king. However, as the Mongols threaten invasion, Wu's position as the leading military force in the kingdom will become increasingly important. Any military mishap could be exploited by the monarch as a means of retaking power; Wu's responsibility in not only maintaining his own familial interests but also Goryeo's territorial integrity is immense.





## **Fujiwara Teika**

Fujiwara Teika is widely considered one of the greatest poets in Japan. His use of old diction in novel ways attracted the attention of former emperor Go-Toba, who patronized Teika's work for several years. However, Teika's erratic writing style would eventually clash with Go-Toba's more traditionally structured poems. After Teika accepted a position as poetry teacher to shogun Minamoto Sanetomo, Go-Toba's sworn rival, their relationship dissolved. As Japan plunges into political chaos, it remains to be seen who Teika will ally with: his now estranged former patron, his powerful tutoree, the Fujiwara family, or someone else entirely.

## **Gojong of Goryeo**

Gojong of Goryeo has been the ruler of the Kingdom of Goryeo since 1213. However, tensions between the monarch and the militant Choi family have grown in recent years as the latter began increasing its political influence. Further, the Koreans live in constant fear as the threat of a Mongol invasion from the western border increases. Therefore, it will be difficult for Gojong to unite the Korean people as conflict within and around the Korean peninsula rises.

## **Gongsheng of Song**

Gongsheng of Song is the empress consort of the Song Dynasty in southern China. Married to Emperor Ningzong of Song, she serves as the co-regent of Emperor Lizong and is the current de facto ruler of the Song Dynasty due to her husband's sickly stature. Known for her intelligence and ruthlessness, she is widely respected as one of the most competent rulers throughout China. The rising power of the Song dynasty and her esteemed reputation made the Song Dynasty the more favorable dynasty compared to its Jin Dynasty rivals in the north. Gongsheng plans to maintain



her power at all costs, even if it means snuffing her rivals out with the help of foreign allies.

### **Gosho no Gorōmaru**

Gosho no Gorōmaru is a Samurai lord who served the Minamoto shogunate. In 1193, he prevented an assassination attempt against Yoritomo Minamoto. After the death of the Yoritomo in 1199, he rose to power as a lord and a part of the Kamakura shogunate. Gorōmaru is regarded as a powerful warrior, with many describing him as having the strength of 75 men. No matter the situation, Gosho will use this strength and prowess on the battlefield to protect the other members of the Kamakura shogunate and their allies.

### **Go-Toba Tennō**

Go-Toba Tennō, also known as Takahira, reigned as emperor of Japan from 1183 to 1198. He supported increasing the power of the imperial family, so in 1198, he abdicated the throne to his son so he could build a cloister government and further dominate the imperial court. A long-time shogunate discontent, after the death of shogun Yoritomo in 1199, Go-Toba began developing a sizable following, ready to use force if necessary to subdue the increasingly powerful Kamakura shogunate.

### **Hōjō Masako**

Hōjō Masako is the wife of former shogun Minamoto Yoritomo, mother of the previous two shoguns, and sister of the current regent to the shogun, Hōjō Yoshitoki. Through these connections, she has been able to develop her position in the shogunate as a cunning and formidable opponent. Even though she became a Buddhist nun after her husband's death, she remained involved in politics as a powerful negotiator with



the imperial court, where she was instrumental in the creation of an advisory council. She also serves alongside her brother as the de-facto shogun, making most of the decisions for the young shogun Kujō Yoritsune.

### **Hōjō Yoshitoki**

Hōjō Yoshitoki, a warrior for the Minamoto clan in the Genpei War and now the regent successor of Hōjō Tokimasa, has worked to greatly consolidate the power of the Kamakura Shogunate. To strengthen the shogunate's standing over imperial authorities and recover from the assassination of the childless shogun Minamoto, he placed a young son of the Fujiwara family, a high-status aristocracy in Kyōto, as the shogun's successor. As regent, Yoshitoki now holds significant authority in the shogunate and wants to keep it that way.

### **Jien**

Jien, who also goes by the name Jichen, is a Buddhist monk and poet from a high position in the Fujiwara Clan. His most famous work, *Gukanshō*, takes inspiration from the *mapppō* (Buddhist Doctrine) and negatively comments on the decline of the Japanese government and religion. Through his writing, Jien has exposed the urgent need for reform in the Japanese feudal system, although he largely supports the assumed power of the shogun. And though he has close ties with the imperial court as the former personal priest to Emperor Go-Toba, his relationship with the emperor has deteriorated as Go-Toba increasingly opposes the shogunate. Determined to restore Buddhist principles to government, Jien hopes to make compromise between the court and the shogunate.



## **Juntoku**

Juntoku is the third son of Go-Toba Tennō and the current Japanese emperor. Infamous for his fiery temper, Juntoku has latched onto his father's anti-shogunate sentiments, fully aware that the shogunate's military power rivals the court's legal supremacy. Like his father, he is ready to use the full force of the imperial court to bring the shogunate down. However, with the court becoming increasingly polarized and familial interests taking over, Juntoku faces an uphill battle to unify the court behind his causes.

## **Konoe Iezane**

Konoe Iezane is the current head of the Fujiwara family and *kanpaku* (regent) to emperor Juntoku. In these capacities, Iezane plays a critical role in advising the emperor on political and economic policy. While his power comes from his relationship with the imperial court, he has tried hard to restore its fraught relationship with the shogunate. In this way, Konoe has long been an advocate of peace, but to what extent is he willing to push this ideology, especially if it comes in conflict with Fujiwara family interests?

## **Kujō Michiie**

Kujō Michiie is a member of the Fujiwara family in Japan and the current sadaijin (Minister of the Left). In this position, he has far-reaching administrative powers within the imperial court's daijō-kan (Great Council of State), from conducting police activity to maintaining census records. Especially with his sister married to the current Emperor, Michiie is deeply loyal to the imperial court and will do anything within his power to expand its power (and, thus, his own).



## **Masastune Asukai**

Asukai Masatsune, also known as Fujiwara no Masatsune, is a widely recognized *kemari* player and poet from a family of talented writers. He began to make a name for himself after political complications resulted in his father's exile. As his writing career progressed, he was selected by Go-Toba to write the Shin Kokin Wakashū alongside Fujiwara Teika. Although tensions eventually soured between Fujiwara Teika and Go Toba Tenno, the relationship between Masatsune and Go-Toba stayed relatively calm, and he continued his support for the Kamakura.

## **Minamoto Mitsuyuki**

Minamoto Mitsuyuki, because of his incredible talent, was appointed as the administrator of the Kamakura shogunate's *mandokoro* (administrative board). In this capacity, Mitsuyuki is responsible for overseeing much of the shogunate's administrative and financial affairs as well as for directing the domestic economy. However, Mitsuyuki was also placed as the governor of the Kawachi and Yamato provinces in east-central Japan by the imperial court. With such powerful positions from opposing sides of the Japanese government, Mitsuyuki often finds himself trying to broker better relationships between the shogunate and the imperial court. However, as tensions grow, Mitsuyuki's role as a middle-man may have to change.

## **Kugyō\***

Kugyō is the current abbot of the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū shrine, the most important temple in Kamakura. A devout practitioner of the Tendai Lotus School of Buddhism, Kugyō is well known for his incredible wisdom. However, recently, there has been a movement from the supposedly corrupt Tendai School toward other Buddhist doctrines, including the emerging True Pure Land sect. Kugyō looks to



maintain his hold on the country's religion as political and social tensions begin to rise. **(This character is based on a real person, but parts of their background have been made up for the purposes of the committee)**

### **Ninshō\***

Ninshō is the abbot at the famous Kofukuji Temple, known as one of the “Seven Great Temples” of Nara. A descendant of the Fujiwara family, Ninshō often uses the religious, political, and military forces of the Kofukuji Temple to implement his family's agenda. Of course, however, he is also a devout monk, deeply involved with the Hossō school of Buddhism. Further, ever since the Taira family set fire to the temple during the Genpei War, Ninshō has been unofficially aligned with the Minamoto family. With so many competing interests, Ninshō will have to make some hard decisions as a national struggle for power begins to emerge.

### **Ōtomo Yoshinao**

Ōtomo Yoshinao has been a lifelong retainer of Minamoto Yoritomo, having fought beside Yoritomo in his quest for nationwide dominance. As the Defense Commissioner of the West, Yoshinao is now in charge of the defense of Kyūshū, Japan's southernmost major island. Further, as the *shugo* (governor) of the Buzen and Bungo provinces, Yoshinao acts as the intermediary between the Kamakura shogunate and the Kyūshū locals. While he is firmly committed to serving Minamoto interests, Yoshinao also has the interests of the Ōtomo clan and his local provinces to consider. In times of conflict such as this, even the oldest relationships can be broken.

### **Oyama Noriko\***

Oyama Noriko is the current *naishi no kami*, the highest rank of the *naishi no tsukasa* (roughly translated to Secretary of Internal Affairs). The most powerful female



in the imperial court (serving directly underneath the empress), Noriko is responsible for relaying the emperor's orders to the court and organizing imperial events, giving her extreme influence within the palace. She is also tasked with keeping watch of the *Yata no Kagami* (divine mirror), one of the three sacred imperial treasures. Noriko is loyal to the emperor but also has her own Oyama familial interests to look out for; only time will tell what her powerful position will amount to.

### **Oyama Tomomasa**

Oyama Tomomasa is a Samurai lord and the head of the Oyama clan. His family was closely associated with the Minamoto family, as his mother was the wet nurse to Minamoto Yoritomo. Before the emperor's death, Tomomasa served in a high-level position in his army. During the Kamakura shogunate, he was appointed by the shogun to govern the Shimotsuke and Harima provinces. He rules with military power over the samurai forces he inherited from his father and political power over the residents of the provinces he governs. His family's previous support of the emperor means he still holds influence over the pro-Minamoto factions.

### **Sakurada Sadakuni\***

Sakurada Sadakuni is the director of the imperial *jingi-kan*, or Department of Divinities, given overarching jurisdiction over Shinto practices. In this role, Sadakuni oversees the operations of provincial shrines and carries out various rites throughout the year. He also has the final say in the interpretation of the will of the *kami* (gods). Independent from the *daijō-kan* (Great Council of State), Sadakuni tries to stay out of political affairs. However, as the country becomes increasingly divided and conflict with local Buddhist temples increases, many wonder whether Sadakuni will be able to maintain this position of neutrality.



## **Sanjo Kinfusa**

Sanjo Kinfusa is the current *daijō-daijin* (Chancellor of the Realm), which means he heads the eight ministries within the *daijō-kan* (Great Council of State). In this position, Kinfusa has significant influence over the imperial court's secular affairs, including its judicial, civil, financial, and military undertakings. However, because the *daijō-kan* is a complex web of officials and the *daijō-daijin* is not a permanent position like the two offices beneath it, getting anything done is difficult. Kinfusa's power rests on an unstable pyramid of conflicting interests, so he must stay in the good graces of officials below him and the emperor above him in order to retain power.

## **Shinran**

Shinran is the founder of Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land School), a school that advocates Buddhist teachings. Many of his teachings originated from Hōnen. However, one of Shinran's emphasized teachings, *senju nembutsu*, invoked the name of Amida Buddha as the sole practice. This caused controversy amongst several temples and resulted in his banishment to Echigo. Here he deepened his religious ideas and continued to develop “Kamakura Buddhism.” While he looks to continue pursuing Jōdo Shinshū, Shinran also wishes to restore his position within the Buddhist community.

## **Wang Tan Mei\***

Wang Tan Mei is one of the most successful merchants in the coastal city of Shaoxing in Song China. Traveling as far as East Africa and trading everything from silk to copper coins, Tan Mei has far-reaching influence on the international commercial scene. However, as his country becomes increasingly unstable, his profits have started to decline. While technically beholden to Song prosperity, Tan Mei, his





far-reaching sphere of influence, and his incredible wealth will go towards whoever poses the best deal for his business.

### **Xuanzong of Jin**

Xuanzong of Jin is the current emperor of the Jin dynasty in eastern China. After two successful invasions of Jin territory, Xunazong was forced to capitulate to Mongol rule. In addition, conflict with the Song dynasty to the south and Xia dynasty to the west severely weakened his empire. Still, Xuanzong is determined to restore his control over the Jin empire and return it to its former glory. However, whether that means cooperation or full-out war with the Jin's neighboring states remains yet to be seen.



# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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- What are the political, religious, and familial alignments of your character?
  - Are you generally allied with the shogunate, the imperial court, or a third group?
- What are your character's capabilities?
  - What assets and liabilities come with their positions?
- Who are your character's allies and enemies within and outside the committee?
- What are your character's overarching goals?
  - How and with whom could you achieve them?
  - Who stands in the way of these goals?



# USEFUL LINKS

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We understand that researching for this committee will be challenging as not much information is available on this time period in Japanese history. We encourage you all to do your best but recognize that a degree of creativity on the day of the conference will be necessary to fill in some of the gaps. Still, to aid in your research, we have provided a few resources that may prove helpful.

- <https://www.worldhistory.org/>
- <https://www.britannica.com/>
- <https://www.japanesewiki.com/>
- <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/>
- <https://historyofjapan.co.uk/>
- <https://www.encyclopedia.com/>
- <https://www.doopedia.co.kr/index.do> (if you speak Korean or use Google Translate)



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