

Uncovering Doorways to the Conceptual World of Medieval Japan: Comparing *Kanseki* in the Kakuichi and Engyō Variants of the *Heike Monogatari*

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Excerpts from Chinese texts, *kanseki*, are a prominent part of many variants of the *Heike Monogatari*. These have tended to be neglected as merely unnecessary embellishments that detract from the main narrative of the tale. However, the *kanseki* in fact contribute significantly to their framing episodes, changing the range of impressions and meanings through their presence. This becomes particularly evident when comparing the well-known Kakuichi variant, which has a comparatively smaller number of *kanseki*, and the Engyō variant, which has a larger number.

In order to reveal the different functions and meanings conveyed by these episodes by their presence, the present study takes several *Heike Monogatari* episodes which exist in both variants and compares them, noting that both in cases where there are *kanseki* but of different lengths, and in cases where *kanseki* are present only in the Engyō variant, the presence of the *kanseki* substantially raises different issues and fosters the emergence of different interpretations of the framing *Heike Monogatari* episode. Moreover, analyzing these *kanseki* in context offers an opportunity to enter the conceptual framework of the compilers, and in so doing to better understand the intellectual world of medieval Japan.