linking local, state, and national bodies, and the rise of “plebiscitary” politics under Indira Gandhi. This pattern has largely continued under Rajiv Gandhi.

The demise of Janata Party rule is seen as a political failure rather than a policy failure. (p. 172) While the gerontocracy restored a degree of democracy, “human nature” took its toll. The party leaders plotted against each other while Mrs. Gandhi engineered her return to center stage. It was the loss of a historic opportunity to establish a viable neo-Gandhian alternative to Congress rule.

The Rudolphs avoid the ideological debate about the relative merits of “socialism” and “capitalism”. Political economy is examined in terms of “popular sovereignty” and “state sovereignty” using “demand polity” (voter citizen sovereignty) and “command polity” (autonomous sovereign state) models. Since independence, four types of regimes and politics can be distinguished: democratic regime/command politics I (1952-64), democratic regime/demand politics I (1964-75), authoritarian regime/command politics II (1975-77), and democratic regime/demand politics II (1977-86). Significantly, the authors conclude that there is no “consistent time-bound association” between type of regime and economic performance. (p. 242)

The book also deals with demand groups, particularly labor and the new agrarian class of bullock capitalists. In both cases, the pattern of political mobilization has reinforced the centrist nature of Indian politics. State domination of labor reflects “involuted pluralism” (p. 255) or the fragmentation of demand groups. Capital is similarly made dependent upon the state by fragmentation and bureaucratic regulation of small units.

A central question is whether the centrist nature of Indian politics will hold. In recent years, caste and communal violence, often exacerbated by economic struggle, has grown, casting political stability in doubt. The authors conclude, however, that the dynamics of Indian politics point toward a continuing centrist pattern.

Students of India are indebted to the authors for this, rich, scholarly, detailed and meticulously documented volume. It is a superb achievement.

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Thomas J. Cogan (translator), The Tale of the Soga Brothers. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1987; Distributed by Columbia University Press, xl, 336 pp., $34.50.

If you attend the theater in Japan, you will soon become acquainted with the Soga brothers. They appear in over twenty noh plays and in an estimated 600 kabuki plays. Chikamatsu Monzaemon alone, the greatest playwright of the Edo period, wrote ten plays retelling their adventures. Naturally, they materialize regularly in woodblock prints of kabuki actors. And, although less readily accessible, stories about them also abound in the various genres of traditional popular fiction. Who are these ubiquitous heros? They are, in fact historical figures. In 1176 when they were only five and three years old respectively, their father fell victim to an ancient family feud and was killed by a relative. Seventeen years later they avenged their father’s death by murdering the culprit. They died for their efforts.

This simple tale evolved as oral literature, retold and embellished by wandering story tellers and itinerant Buddhist preachers. The earliest written version, in Chinese, is thought to date from the fourteenth century, and versions in Japanese

appeared shortly afterwards. Numerous popular woodblock editions were published starting in the early seventeenth century, and these became the standard version of the story. Known as *The Tale of the Soga Brothers* (*Soga Monogatari*), this story has come to be ranked among the masterpieces of *gunkimono* (war tales), a major genre in Japanese literary history.

Examples of war tales have long been available in English versions, and in recent years important new translations have appeared, including Judith Rabinovitch’s *Shōmonki: The Story of Masakado’s Rebellion* (Tokyo: Monumenta Nipponica, 1986), a translation of the earliest of *gunkimono*, and Helen McCullough’s *The Tale of the Heike* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988), a new version of the greatest representative of the genre. In addition, Thomas Cogan has provided us with *The Tale of the Soga Brothers*, a full translation of the standard text of *Soga Monogatari*—complete with introduction, notes, and bibliography—in a handsome volume attractively illustrated with woodblock prints from an 1803 edition of the work.

*The Tale of the Soga Brothers* focuses on the familiar story of the Soga brothers and their revenge, but is greatly embellished. It begins in the age of the gods, recounting Japan’s ancient creation myth, and ends after the death of its heroes when their female survivors become nuns and live in seclusion, recalling the closing to *Tale of the Heike*, as Cogan points out. In between, we have anything but a linear narrative or a well-crafted plot. Instead, we are treated a long sequence of short episodes, some focusing on the principal events of the story, others carrying us very far afield indeed to China and India. The following series of episodes from Book Five will give some sense of the narrative flow: “The Story of the Hunting Grounds at Asazuma”, “The Battle between Lord Indra and the Asura King”, “The Soga Brothers Confide in Miura no Yoichi”, “Gorō Falls in Love with a Courtesan”, “The Story of Ch’ao Fu and Hsü Yu.”

Episodes also vary considerably in tone. Some are filled with the doughty exploits we associate with the Way of the Warrior. Others read rather more like passages from the *Tale of Genji*, interwoven with elegant description of conventionally admired natural phenomena and selected poems from the imperial anthologies. The text is thus highly eclectic, drawing on all the literary traditions its authors could have known, both from Japan’s classical past and from India and China as well. The resulting mixture may be rather more bewildering than pleasing to a modern Western reader, but before we rush to condemn its lack of rigorous organization, we ought stop to remind ourselves that we are reading one of the more popular works of traditional Japanese literature. The episodic quality reveals its orgins in oral tradition. The excursions to ancient India and China, which may seem extraneous to us, elevate and add depth to the simple story, as do the poetic passages. They tell us that this is not simply the tale of two unfortunate brothers. It is a work of literature.

Cogan’s translation is not the first. As he notes in his introduction, Hiroshi Kitagawa published an English version of the first half of *Soga Monogatari* in 1981 (Shiga: Faculty of Economics, Shiga University). In 1985, the remainder of this translation appeared, presumably too late to be acknowledged by Cogan. Of the two renditions, Cogan’s is clearly superior, as a brief comparison will show.

Before their final parting with their mother, one of the brothers starts quoting the sutras, to his mother’s pleasant surprise. He modestly demurs by saying, in the Cogan version:

“When a horse becomes thin, its hair grows long and its cry weakens”, Jūrō said. “When a man becomes poor, his knowledge lessens and his speech grows coarse. How could I have learned the sutras”