THE TSUKUSHI *MAN'YÔSHÛ* POETS AND THE INVENTION OF JAPANESE POETRY

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ii

List of Appendices. vi

Chapter One
Introduction 1

Chapter Two
Writing and Poetry in Seventh and Eighth Century Japan 16

Early Interaction between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago . . . 20

Writing Chinese and Japanese in Nara Japan 28

The Effects of Transcription on Japanese Poetry 36

The *Ritsuryô* and the Four Periods of the *Man'yôshû* 43

Okura and Tabito before Tsukushi 51

Chapter Three
Okura, Tabito, and the Genesis of Written Japanese Poetry 71

The Nature of *Man'yôshû* Book Five 72

A Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings 79

A Japanese Elegy 96

Japanese Poetry as a Written Form 116

Chapter Four
The Compound Form and Chinese Philosophy 128

The Three Compositions at Kama 130

A Poem to Turn a Confused Mind 136

A Poem on Thinking of Children 152

A Poem Lamenting the Hardships of the World 171

The Reception of Chinese Texts in Japan 180

Chapter Five
The Poetry Sequence as Literary Unit 186

Tabito's Plum Blossom Viewing Banquet 189

An Excursion to the Matsura River 211

Conclusion 225

Appendices

Appendix A: Outline of *Man'yôshû* Contents 227

Appendix B: Contents of *Man'yôshû* Book Five 235

Bibliography 237

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Outline of *Man'yôshû* Contents 227

Appendix B: Contents of *Man'yôshû* Book Five 235

Chapter One: Introduction

Japan was invented in the eighth century CE. Yes, it is true that the immigrant population of rice farmers from the Asian mainland that would make up the core of the Japanese population had made their way to the archipelago now known as Japan over a thousand years earlier, in the fourth century B.C.[1] And yes, there exists archaeological evidence that the ancestors of the aboriginal Ainu population now found only on the northernmost island of Hokkaidô had been living on the islands for another ten thousand years before this point. But neither of these populations could have been said to be Japanese in any meaningful sense, since the concept of Japan did not yet exist.

Of course, there are other points in history which might have an equal claim to the moment of Japan's creation. The first history chronicle, the *Kojiki*, places the creation of Japan in ancient antiquity, with the creation of the Japanese islands by the god-ancestors of the Yamato imperial line. An argument might also be made for pushing my date of creation back a century, to the year 604 and Shôtoku Taishi's *Seventeen Article Constitution*, which first outlined the framework of what would become the Japanese state. On the other hand, some might argue that "Japan" did not truly exist until the modern period, when a concept of inherent "Japaneseness" was articulated and applied retroactively to earlier populations. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, I define the invention of Japan at the moment of the conscious creation of an origin and history of the state of Yamato, with the compilation of its first histories and literary

[1] A detailed analysis of this population and its process of integration with the aboriginal peoples of the Japanese archipelago can be found in Hudson 1999.

works. These represented an effort by the ruling clan of the Japanese archipelago to write themselves into history as the rightful rulers of the state of Yamato, and it was this agenda that necessitated the definition of what Japan was.

The first histories compiled in Japan, or at least the first that survived, were the *Kojiki* (古事記 – *Record of Ancient Matters*) of 712 CE and the *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀 – *Chronicles of Japan*) of 720 CE. Although both were based on pre-existing "histories," a memorized oral history in the case of the *Kojiki* and an existing body of historical documents for the *Nihon shoki*, to all intents and purposes the two works created Japan's history. The compilation of both works was a response to the needs of an emerging Yamato state based on a newly created bureaucracy with the imperial clan at its head, and both fulfilled the purpose of solidifying that clan's control by emphasizing its ties to the history of the land itself. The reforms that were expediting the consolidation of power in the hands of a central bureaucracy and extending the reach of that power in eighth century Japan were legitimized by the definition of the archipelago's history as fundamentally linked to the family line that held power, and each new area that was brought under control became a part of "Japan" and a participant in that history.

At the same time, the histories were also a product of the newly emerging Japanese state's need to define itself in the same terms in which it viewed China, Japan's primary model for its self-reconstruction. Because Japan's adoption of most Chinese technologies had been mediated, brought to Japan through the filter of the inhabitants of the Korean peninsula, direct contact with China was primarily through Japan’s reception of Chinese literary works. “China” became defined by its Confucian classics and its histories, and if Japan was to define itself, it required the same tools. Compiling the

histories was a necessary step toward creating for Japan the cultural capital that came with having an understanding of its own past. In this way, "Japan" was invented through the invention of Japan's history.

While few would dispute the obvious political necessities that informed the compilation of the two histories, the first collection of Japanese poetry, the *Man'yôshû* (万葉集 – *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*), has not always been viewed in the same light. While few would view the *Kojiki*'s account of the divine origins of the Japanese imperial line uncritically, many have been willing to ignore the corresponding political motivation revealed in the transcription and anthologization of early ritual song and poems of imperial praise in the *Man'yôshû*. However, just as the creation of a state history was a necessary prerequisite to defining the Japanese state, the creation of a literary history was necessary to place Japan's cultural legacy on the same footing as China. And just as available documents needed to be selectively culled to tell the story of the Yamato line's rise to power, the tradition of Japanese song needed to be adapted to the cause of creating Japanese literature.

Thus, despite the range of themes and poets which goes beyond that found in later Japanese poetry collections, the *Man'yôshû* was not an attempt at a comprehensive collection of all the poems which could be found throughout Japan's past. It was created through a deliberate process of selection and adaptation in order to transform the existing corpus of oral song into the semblance of a literary tradition. At its most basic level, this involved the transcribing of previously oral songs in written form and the incorporation of existing written collections, but it also involved placing those works into a framework that began with ancient origins of the imperial line and extended to the present, while at

the same time emphasizing the literary quality of the works in light of China's far vaster body of works. Like the histories, it represented not merely the collection of works from the past, but the retroactive creation of that past.

Of course, the *Man'yôshû* is the first collection of Japanese poetry and, as with any "first," it has been regarded as a link to the past, before the changes that necessarily accompanied the creation of that "first" had taken place. Thus, throughout its history of reception, the *Man'yôshû*, has been interpreted and reinterpreted to serve a wide range of often conflicting ideologies. To the compilers of the *Kokinshû*, it represented a poetry that was more pure in expression than that of their own time, and a poetry of which much had already been lost. To the Tokugawa "national learning" scholars, it was the product of a lost, idealized Japan free from the corrupting influence of China. To the pre-WWII nationalists, it offered a historical basis for imperialism and an ancient precedent for emperor worship. And to some modern interpreters, it represents an opportunity to rewrite the early history of interaction between the Korean and Japanese nations.

The common thread in the above interpretations is that the *Man'yôshû* represented a kind of ur-Japaneseness which was very different from the understanding of Japaneseness in the present, yet fundamentally linked to it. If only that primitive link could be understood, through elimination of the corrrupting influences that have since muddied the waters, then the earlier understanding could be restored. Of course, this view is largely the product of the way in which modern biases necessarily inform our understanding of premodern societies. As Naoki Sakai has described it:

> ... the transferability and uprootedness of modernity simultaneously creates two contrasting but mutually supplementary conditions, one that allows for comparing many areas in the world in the relationship of *equi-valence*, and another

> contrasting one which calls for an obsessive emphasis on the historical authenticity and irreplaceability of a particular area and its inhabitant population.[2]

In this, Sakai was speaking of Motoori Norinaga's interpretation of the *Kojiki*, but his central point is equally relevant to discussion of the *Man'yôshû*. Norinaga's definition of "Japaneseness" was based on the modern assumption of a unique "Japanese" nature in conflict with a unique "Chinese" nature. However, this kind of definition could only take place after the fact, when looking back to a Japanese antiquity that had since been lost. In the same way, the pre-WWII Japanese nationalists used the *Nihon shoki's* mention of Japanese colonialism on the Korean peninsula to justify modern Japan's expansion into Korea, inventing a power relationship in the ancient past which was founded on an acceptance of Japanese authority and which was intended to legitimate imperialism in the present. Like Norinaga, they invented a concept of "the Japanese" from an ancient culture and projected onto it a modern sense of "Japaneseness" that would probably have been completely foreign to it.

One of the most successful aspects of this agenda was the attempt by the pre-WWII Japanese nationalists to characterize the poetry of the *Man'yôshû* as purely Japanese, and to marginalize the importance of foreign influence on the work. To these nationalists, the *Man'yôshû* represented *yamatokotoba*, the lost language of Japan that existed prior to Chinese influence, and was thus capable of recapturing the ancient Yamato spirit that defined the Japanese race. They further tied the work to the cult of the emperor and cultivated the popular image of Japanese soldiers carrying *Man'yôshû* poems into battle with them, dying with words of praise for the emperor on their lips. This radical reinterpretation of the *Man'yôshû* ended with the relaxation of nationalist

[2] Sakai 1997, pp. x-xi.

sentiments following the war. However, despite more balanced inquiry into the collection, this image of the *Man'yôshû* as purely Japanese, particularly in contrast with the Sinicized imagery and elegance of the poetry in later collections, continues to color the popular view of the anthology even today.

This attitude is extremely difficult to understand given the vast evidence of the importance of Chinese poetry to the collection and to the formation of the Japanese poetic tradition itself. Thankfully, the attitudes of the nationalists have since been repudiated, at least among literary scholars, and there now exists an extensive body of research into the nature of Chinese influence on the *Man'yôshû*.[3] Recognition of this foreign influence was an important aspect of even the earliest full-scale commentary, Keichû's seventeenth century *Man'yô daishôki*. Many early twentieth century studies of the *Man'yôshû*, prior to the rise of the nationalists, also demonstrated a recognition of the great importance of Chinese influence. These included Tsuchida Kyôson's 1929 *Jôdai no kayô* (*Ancient Japanese folk song*) and Hayashi Takejirô's 1932 *Man'yôshû gairai bungaku kô* (*A Study of Foreign Literature in the Man'yôshû*). Tsuchida even went to the extent of going beyond the issue of Chinese influence and pointing to connections between ancient Japanese and Korean poetry.

Although serious examination of the *Man'yôshû* in the context of Chinese influence began again soon after the war, the polarity of native Japanese folk song versus "invading" Chinese language and culture continued to color research. This impulse may have been exacerbated by the view of the *Man'yôshû* put forth by the pre-war nationalists, but it fit firmly into the tradition of Tokugawa era "national learning"

[3] A more thorough analysis of the following outline of existing research may be found in Ono 1999, pp. 13-29.

scholars such as Norinaga, for whom native Japanese tradition was always defined in terms of resistance to Chinese tradition. Chinese elements in the *Man'yôshû* were noted and their possible sources catalogued, but scholarship still tended to posit a Japanese poetic tradition existing prior to the transmission of Chinese language and place it in opposition to a Chinese poetry aesthetic that would eventually come to dominate it.

Postwar scholarship was strongly influenced by an approach to comparative literature derived from foreign theories such as French positivism and American literary criticism. Of primary importance was the text itself, and research focused primarily on identifying foreign elements by searching for direct sources in the Chinese literary tradition. Some of the most important work of this type was begun in the 1960's by scholars such as Kojima Noriyuki. In his three-volume *Jôdai Nihon bungaku to Chûgoku bungaku* (*Ancient Japanese literature and Chinese literature*), completed in 1965, Kojima traces Chinese literary influence from the first introduction of Chinese texts to Japan. He catalogues numerous aspects of the *Man'yôshû* that were derived from Chinese sources, including the system of classifying poetry, conventions of literary expression, direct allusion to Chinese works, and imitation of Chinese models. Kojima's focus continues to be the text and his goal to gain a deeper understanding of the *Man'yôshû* through recognition of its Chinese antecedents. Much of his later research deals with identifying the origins of numerous expressions used in the *Man'yôshû*, and this approach has influenced others, such as Furusawa Michio in his 1966 *Kanshibu in'yô yori mita Man'yôshû no kenkyû* (Man'yôshû research through Chinese literary quotations).

Like Kojima, Nakanishi Susumu's goal was to better understand the *Man'yôshû* itself, but while Kojima was tightly focused on textual elements, Nakanishi attempted to look at the larger context. Beginning in 1963 with *Man'yôshû no hikaku bungakuteki kenkyû* (*Comparative literary research into the Man'yôshû*) and continuing with the 1968 *Man'yô shi no kenkyû* (*Research in Man'yôshû history*) and 1976 *Man'yôshû genron* (*Fundamental principles of the Man'yôshû*), he attempted to define the *Man'yôshû*, and by extension Japan's literary history, through comparison with Chinese literature. His research attempted to trace the origins of the *Man'yôshû* in the context of relations with China in order to understand the nature of Japanese literature itself. Despite this, he too focused mainly on individual poets and themes and looked primarily for textual sources. Still, between Kojima, Nakanishi, and those who have followed their approaches, a huge catalogue of shared features, common themes, and allusions has been identified, and this has provided the necessary groundwork for other research into larger issues.

The larger issues raised by Nakanishi have perhaps been more successfully addressed by Tatsumi Masaaki, who focuses on general characteristics of the literary traditions rather than individual literary works. In his 1987 *Man'yôshu to Chûgoku bungaku* (*The Man'yôshû and Chinese literature*), Tatsumi examines the poetry of the *Man'yôshû* as an emerging Japanese tradition under the influence of the Chinese tradition. Rather than simply containing allusion to Chinese works, Tatsumi sees *Man'yôshû* poetry as the product of the Japanese attempt to assimilate the Chinese concept of literature into a Japanese context. In the second volume of *Man'yôshu to Chûgoku bungaku*, released in 1993, he takes this one step further and points to the way in which exposure to the Japanese conception of "China" as viewed through Chinese

literature forced Japan to define “Japaneseness” in relation to it. The ideal of *Man’yôshu* poetics thus becomes an amalgam of Chinese and Japanese styles in the creation of a new Japanese literary form based on Chinese conceptions of literature.

The fundamental problem that has been at the core of research into the importance of Chinese sources to the development of *Man'yôshû* poetry is the continued assumption that Japanese poetry existed in a form something like that which was preserved in writing prior to contact with China. In other words, *Man'yôshû* poetry is posited as a combination of an existing Japanese poetry with Chinese conventions, in the process of which Japanese poetry was altered by the incorporation of Chinese themes. However, as I will argue in the course of this dissertation, Japanese poetry as we know it could not have existed prior to the encounter with Chinese literature. It is thus impossible for a modern reader, whose only link to pre-literate Japanese poetry is the written form that was left behind, to reconstruct what Japanese poetry was prior to that transcription, since the act of transcription itself irrevocably altered the nature of that poetry. Thus, just as the compilers of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* created "history" out of a collection of documents and anecdotes, the various compilers of the *Man'yôshû* were forced to create "literature" out of a pre-literate culture of song. The influence of the Chinese literary tradition on this process was thus not merely in the form of allusions to Chinese texts and imitation of Chinese forms, but in the Chinese conception of what literature was, and of the relationship between poetry and the written word.

Of course, any inquiry into the ostensible origins of Japanese literature must naturally address the vast differences of opinion which exist over the question of what it is that defines “literature.” Most relevant to this dissertation is the question of whether

the products of a purely oral tradition can be considered to be literature or whether the term literature is necessarily bound by its original meaning of "the study of writing." Further complicating the issue is the necessary distinction between what we as twenty-first century readers define as "literature" and the corresponding conception of "literary" works by those in eighth-century Japan.

Of course, modern Japanese terms for literature, such as *bungaku* (文学) and *bungei* (文芸), were not coined until the nineteenth century, and their creation was motivated by the need for terms to describe the Western conception of literature. As such, they necessarily distort the view of "literature" in Japan prior to their usage. However, this certainly does not preclude the possibility of a related conception of literature predating contact with the west, and evidence of this concept's importance in informing the later terms can be seen in the presence of the character *bun* (文, Chinese *wen*) in the words. By the time Japan began its own project of creating written works in the eighth century, there were already numerous Chinese works from which to draw conclusions as to the nature of *bun*, including collections of exemplary works such as the *Wen Xuan* (文選 – *Literary Selections*) and treatises on the nature of literature, such as the *Wenxin Diaolong* (文心雕龍 – *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*). There is little doubt that the concept was widely known in Japan, and must have contributed to the compilation of the *Man'yôshû*.

However, we must also be wary of applying the Chinese conception of *bun* uncritically to Japan's own agenda of literary creation. In China, the character was used to describe a broad range of themes including pattern, language, writing, refinement, culture, and civilization, problematizing the equation of the term with "literature." Even

more importantly, the conception of *bun* which guided the creation of the first Japanese literary works was necessarily a Japanese interpretation of the term rather than the original Chinese one. Thus, a prerequisite to understanding the conception of *bun* which led to the creation of the *Man'yôshû* is examining the place of Chinese literature in Japanese society at the time and attempting to examine the method of reception of those works. The definition of literature depends on reception, with the reader determining after the fact what is and isn't literary.

In fact, the modern definition of literature often depends on this same sort of emphasis on reader reception, leading to an expansion of literature to include anything which displays literary qualities. Thus any "text" in which a modern reader might find literary aspects might be included under the title of literature, even if this definition ignores the view of the work held by those at the time of its composition. For example, we may view the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as works of literature today, but that was certainly not the dominant view of the works to those who compiled them. At the same time, this definition necessarily ties the definition of literature to written works, since reception of ancient works by a modern audience is impossible by any other means. Even texts which began their existence as oral works could only be passed down if an attempt was made to capture them in writing. While the written record of them can not be said to have captured their original nature, it is only through the written form that we as readers can receive them.

For this reason, we must make a distinction between poetry as it was originally composed and the same poetry as it was transcribed, gathered, and included within the *Man'yôshû* collection by its eighth century compilers. Even if we are able to define the

compilation of the *Man'yôshû* as a literary act, we must question whether the individual poems which make it up could be called literary works at the time of their composition or if that quality only became apparent in their later reception as written works. Thus, by defining the origins of Japanese literature in the eighth century, I am pointing not only to the importance of the poets who composed the poetry of the *Man'yôshû*, but to the compilers who placed those poems in a literary framework, granting them the status of literature retroactively.

My focus will be on two poets, Yamanoue Okura (山上憶良) and Ôtomo Tabito (大伴旅人), and primarily on their literary activity for a very brief span of time, the years between 728 and 730 CE, when the two were serving in official posts in Tsukushi (modern Kyûshû), the southernmost of Japan's four major islands. Their poetic activities at this time make up the entirety of the fifth book of the *Man'yôshû*, and are also included in several other books. While a mere two years may seem quite a narrow focus for a collection spanning some one hundred and thirty years and purporting to speak for "ten thousand" generations, the poetic activity of Okura and Tabito during their time in Tsukushi was a critical turning point for Japanese poetry. The two poets actively pushed the boundaries of the Japanese poetry of the time in an attempt to make it conform to their conception of *bun*, and actively composed poetry of their own in the light of their understanding of this continental tradition.

In comparison with the rest of the *Man'yôshû*, the poetry of Tabito and Okura seems an aberration. It makes extensive use of Chinese allusions, and includes themes found in Chinese poetry but not dealt with in Japanese, either in the rest of the collection or in the poetry which would come after. In addition, rather than being limited to

Japanese poetry, book five also includes poetry, essays, and letter exchanges in Chinese, a very unusual characteristic for a collection which was in the process of defining what Japanese poetry would be. In other words, Okura and Tabito seem the exception to the rule, and although the quality of their compositions has been recognized, their experimentation has largely been viewed as a failure, inspiring few imitators beyond their immediate circle and completely disappearing in the next major Japanese poetry collections.

I will attempt to reframe the activities of these two poets in the context of the *Man'yôshû* poets' process of assimilation of Chinese culture and attitudes in the formation of a Japanese poetic tradition. In this context, their poetry does not represent a failed experiment, but a crucial yet unappreciated chapter in the formative years of Japanese poetry. While the unusual nature of their themes and unorthodox poetic forms have been the subject of scholarly focus, these elements have distracted attention from the importance of their compositions to the developing attitudes toward poetry. While their practice of incorporating overtly Chinese themes was abandoned by later poets, their influence was felt by many later poets, not least of which was the *Man'yôshû*'s primary compiler, Tabito's son, Ôtomo Yakamochi.

I will begin in the next chapter with an examination of the existing situation in Japan prior to Okura and Tabito's meeting in Tsukushi. I start by questioning the applicability of the label "Japanese" to the pre-Nara Japanese in the context of the extended contact with continental culture and the influx of a large population of immigrants from the Korean peninsula. I then move on to the adoption of the technology of writing in Japan and its connection to the Chinese-inspired system of

bureaucracy which was being implemented in all corners of the fledgling Japanese state. In this context, I will also look at the way the progress of this bureaucratic agenda is paralleled by a transformation in poetry, observable in the various eras of poetry composition represented in the *Man'yôshû*. Finally, I look at the place of Okura and Tabito in this society, as participants in the political as well as literary worlds of eighth century Japan.

In chapter three, I turn to the first poems appearing in book five of the *Man'yôshû*, Tabito's "Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings" (*MYS* V:793) and Okura's "Japanese Elegy" (*MYS* V:794-799). These poetry sequences represent the earliest use of the combined Chinese/Japanese form which would come to typify Okura and Tabito's poetry. Rather than viewing the practice as an aberration, I interpret it as an effort to divorce poetry from the context of performance on which song had traditionally relied, and to create poetry that was meant to be read rather than heard. Inspired by the conventions of letter exchange and poetry anthologization, Okura and Tabito created poetry sequences which were literary works in their own right, without the need for performance as song in order to be realized.

Chapter four focuses on the next three poem sequences in book five, known collectively as Okura's "three compositions at Kama" (*MYS* V:800-805). With the composition of these poems, Okura refined the techniques begun in his earlier poetry sequence and used it to expand the potential of Japanese poetry to deal with complex philosophical issues. Okura makes extensive use of Chinese allusion, but he does so not in imitation of Chinese forms but in order to use their complexity to examine his own personal experience. Through the compound form, he is able to put different

philosophies into a dialogue with each other, and to compare them in the context of his own experience of human existence.

The fifth and final chapter introduces the view that the poetry sequence rather than the individual poem should be considered the primary literary unit of Japanese poetry. In this context, I examine two extended poetry sequences, "Thirty-two Poems on the Plum Blossoms" (*MYS* V:815-846) and "Excursion to Matsura River" (*MYS* V:853-863), and the many poems which were written in reply to them. This process of reading and responding to existing poetry sequences represents a consciousness of the works as literature, and reveals the greater potential of the written poetic form over oral song. This practice also serves as a precursor to later attitudes toward poetry composition and anthologization.

The goal of this work is thus to recognize the importance of Chinese literature to the development of the poetry of the *Man'yôshû*, and to articulate Okura and Tabito's role in that development. It is to problematize the concept of an existing Japanese poetic tradition prior to the assimilation of Chinese culture and to question the inherent "Japaneseness" of the resulting poetry. And, ultimately, it is to place the poetry of the *Man'yôshû* as not merely a turning point in Japanese poetry, but as its starting point.

Chapter Two: Writing and Poetry in Seventh and Eighth Century Japan

Although no such division exists in the *Man'yôshû* itself, scholars typically divide the work into four sections based on the era in which the poetry was composed. The first section consists of the earliest *Man'yôshû* poetry and, although it includes poems attributed to emperors as early as the fifth century Yûryaku, the reliably datable poems generally fall within the range of the forty some years between the reigns of the emperors Jomei (629-641) and Tenji (662-672). Most of the poems in this section are attributed to members of the imperial family and those that surrounded the imperial court. The second section consists of poems composed between the Ôjin insurrection of 672 and the establishment of a permanent capital at Heijô in 710, the beginning of the Nara period. This was the age of the professional court poet and the undisputed master of the craft, Kakinomoto Hitomaro. The poetry of the third period was composed during the twenty three years between the beginning of the Nara period in 710 and the fifth year of the Tempyô era (733), a time that saw an explosion of literary activity and exploration of Chinese culture under the empresses Genmei (707-715) and Genshô (715-724) and the early years of emperor Shômu (724-748). This period includes the poets Yamabe no Akihito, Takechi no Kurohito, and Takahashi no Mushimaro, but the representative poets of this age are Yamanoue Okura and Ôtomo Tabito, the subject of this dissertation. The final period extends from 733, the year of Okura's death, to 759, the year of composition of the last datable poem in the collection. This final section is dominated by the poetry of Ôtomo Yakamochi, the son of Tabito and the primary compiler of the *Man'yôshû*.

The poetry of the *Man'yôshû* thus extends over a period of some one hundred and thirty years, during a time of great upheaval and complete transformation of the social, political, and cultural climate of Japan. The first official embassy to China began in the second year of Jomei's reign (630) and from the time of that embassy's return to Japan ten years later in 640, Japan embarked on a campaign of self-transformation that would completely redefine what the country was. Under the influence of the Prince Naka no Ôe (who would rise to the throne in 662 as Emperor Tenji) and Fujiwara Kamatari, a radical series of reforms was enacted in 646, superimposing the structure of Chinese-style statecraft over the existing system of clan ties.[1] These reforms are referred to as the Taika Reforms, taking their name from that of the first reign period, which was also established at this time. A system of provincial administration was established, public ownership of land was abolished, and a Chinese-style tax system was implemented. The system was further defined with the implementation of the *ritsuryô*, penal (律 – *ritsu*) and admistrative (令 – *ryô*) codes which created an extensive bureaucratic structure for the emerging Japanese nation, modeled closely on the Tang Chinese model. These began with the Asuka-Kiyomihara Code of 681, continued with the Taihô Code of 702 and culminated with the Yôrô Code of 720. As a fundamental task in the of implementation of the *ritsuryô*, Japan's first permanent capital would be established in 710 at Heijô, laid out in the image of the Tang capital of Chang'an.

[1] It should be noted that the regent Shôtoku Taishi is usually credited with beginning the process of Chinese-style reform with his Seventeen Article Constitution in 604. However, although this document described Buddhism and Confucianism as the foundations of a new Japanese government and emphasized the role of the Imperial line as the head of that government, the actual form the government would take would not be defined until these 646 Taika Reforms, and the implementation of the new system would be carried out over the next century.

This was the social context in which the poetry of the *Man'yôshû* was composed, and the transformation of Japanese poetry over the course of the collection parallels the rapid changes that were taking place in Japanese society. And, like the changes in the country at large, the changes that were taking place in Japanese poetry were primarily due to the increasing familiarity with and emulation of foreign models, whether of technology, statecraft, or literature. The influx of immigrants from the Korean peninsula, the hosting of foreign visitors by the ruling clans in Japan, and the regular embassies to China which continued throughout most of the Nara period created a period of extended contact with continental culture that went far beyond anything that had come before. The large number of Chinese works which were introduced to the country at this time was just one aspect of this contact, and the growing facility among the nobility with reading these works created literary possibilities that went beyond mere imitation and changed the face of Japanese poetry itself.

It is ironic, then, that the *Man'yôshû* has so often been examined as a link to an early Japanese tradition free from the "corrupting" influence of Chinese, its foreign elements elided, ignored, or dismissed as aberrations. This interpretation certainly served well the purposes of both the Tokugawa era "national learning" (*kokugaku*) scholars who posited a "pure" Japanese culture in opposition to Chinese culture, and the pre-WWII Nationalists, who held up early poetry as *yamatokotoba*, a direct expression of the unchanging essence of "Japaneseness." In both cases, the earliest poetry, both that included in the historical works *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* and that collected in the *Man'yôshû*, provided a way to explore a culture which predated the influx of Chinese

culture. And in both cases this culture was identified as "Japanese," with a fundamental link to the national spirit of the Japanese people in the present.

While modern scholarship has acknowledged the great indebtedness of the *Man'yôshû* poets to Chinese literature and moved beyond the concepts of purity and ethnic character, the dichotomy between "Japanese" and "foreign" culture continues to color much inquiry into early poetry, particularly as it relates to the investigation of what "Japanese poetry" was prior to its compilation and transcription in collections such as the *Man'yôshû*. For example, there continues to be an overly simplistic notion that the act of compiling an anthology of written poetry was nothing more than a matter of transcribing an existing Japanese oral literary tradition using the new technology of writing imported from China. While this may seem an innocuous, or even obvious, statement of fact, it relies on three underlying assumptions which I intend to problematize here.

The first assumption is that there was something recognizable as the poetry preserved in the *Man'yôshû* that existed in Japan prior to contact with China. While there is little doubt that Japanese poetry was built on an existing oral tradition of song, the idea that the result was a combination of Japanese and Chinese concepts of literature assumes a Japanese awareness of poetry as literature that could not possibly have existed prior to contact with the literary culture of China. The second assumption is that the act of writing was simply the transcription of a previously oral form. In fact, poetry as it appears in the *Man'yôshû* was a product of the new technology of writing, and could not have existed in the form in which we now know it prior to the introduction of writing to Japan. The third assumption surrounds the question of, if a poetic tradition could be said to exist prior to the influence of Chinese culture, whether that tradition was in any

meaningful way "Japanese." This goes beyond the question of whether there is continuity between the culture of the pre-Nara occupants of the archipelago now known as Japan and the Japanese of today, or whether the "Japanese" as a people could be said to predate the notion of Japan as country, and extends to the question of whether it is appropriate to refer to an early "Japanese people" as distinct from, for example, the occupants of the Korean peninsula. The first two assumptions relate to the practice of writing Japanese and its effect on poetry, and will be addressed later in this chapter, as well as in chapter three. But it is the last assumption which was most responsible for the co-opting of early Japanese poetry for ideological or political purposes, and it is this assumption which I will address first.

Early Interaction between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago

Recent archaeological finds have cast doubt on the degree to which the people occupying the Japanese islands in the centuries prior to the first written documents and those occupying the Korean peninsula at the same time can be viewed as distinct peoples. In fact, Japan's early history seems to have been marked by successive waves of immigration from the Asian mainland, primarily from the Korean peninsula, beginning as early as the displacement of the prehistoric Jômon peoples by the Yayoi in the fourth century BCE.[2] Of more interest to us are the more recent waves of immigration which accompanied periods of unrest on the Korean peninsula, finally ending with unification of the Korean peninsula under the kingdom of Silla in 668. Available evidence suggests that there was a very high degree of interaction between the occupants of the Korean

[2] Detailed examination of the archaelogical evidence for this is examined in detail in Hudson 1999.

peninsula and those of the Japanese archipelago at least from the fourth century CE to the appearance of the first written historical documents in the eighth century.[3]

For this reason, the terms "Korean" and "Japanese" may have no meaning in the context of early Japan besides the purely geographical "people living in the areas that are now called the modern nations of Korea and Japan." It is difficult to gauge either the degree of unification or the extent of influence of the early Japanese and Korean states. For example, until the seventh century the Korean peninsula was divided into several competing "kingdoms," each with its own cultural and linguistic qualities, and with indistinct and mutable boundaries between them. The case of Japan is even more obscure, and we do not know the exact location, limits, or degree of central control in *wa* (倭) or *yamatai* (邪馬台, 耶馬台), a kingdom referred to in the third century Chinese *Records of the Three Kingdoms*[4] and commonly identified as early Japan. The specific location of the people of *wa* in the Chinese record is unclear, and the eighth century Japanese histories' descriptions of the rulers of the time are unreliable as sources, given that they were clearly written with the intent of legitimating the power of the Imperial clan by defining a lineage extending back through antiquity. In addition, despite the Chinese empire's recognition of a Queen Pimiko as sovereign of a unified state encompassing over twenty kingdoms, it is highly unlikely that any real centralized control was possible. As William Farris suggests, the term *wa* "probably referred to a disunified ethnic group comprising several regional chiefdoms and occupying the western archipelago and perhaps the southern coast of Korea as well."[5] In fact, there is a strong

[3] Recent research into this topic in English includes Farris 1998 and Pai 2000.
[4] 三国志, The relevant passage is in a section called "Records of the Wei – Account of the *wa* people " (魏志倭人伝)
[5] Farris 1998, p. 57.

possibility that the same people, if not the same "kingdom" occupied land both on the Korean peninsula and on the Japanese islands. The straits between the Korean peninsula and Kyûshû certainly constitute a geographical divide, but it doesn't necessarily imply a corresponding political one, at least until the deliberate state-building of the seventh and eighth centuries. Despite the modern desire to divide the premodern world up with the same boundaries that exist in the present, the distinction between "Korean" and "Japanese" was certainly not as clear as the use of those terms might imply.

In fact, the eighth century Japanese history, the *Nihon shoki*, describes a strong overlap between the two areas in the past, in the form of an early Japanese presence in Korea. It tells of an Empress Jingû who subdued the Korean states of Kaya, Silla, and Paekche in the third century, directly controlling Kaya (called Mimana in Japan) and receiving tribute from Silla and Paekche. Beginning in the 1960s, North Korean scholar Kim Sok Hyong proposed a radically different thesis, that the various Korean kingdoms held "satellite" holdings in the Japanese islands, and this possibility inspired other North and South Korean scholars to pursue theories that reversed the balance of power.[6] Of course, the motivation of the accounts both in the *Nihon shoki* and in the 1960s Korean scholarship were largely political, and neither side of the debate can be said to have met the burden of proof. Although there is a wealth of archaeological evidence showing the presence of technologies of Korean origin in Japan, it is difficult to determine what power relationship resulted in their appearance in Japan.

The *Nihon shoki* had a very real political agenda that was advanced by emphasizing the Korean kingdoms' subservience to the Japanese rulers. The work was motivated by an effort to consolidate political power in the hands of a single clan and its

descriptions of interactions with Korean immigrants were thus colored by this project. The story of Empress Jingû establishing colonies in Korea, for example, appears to be a deliberate reinterpretation of the legend of Pimiko in the *History of the Three Kingdoms* in order to emphasize the power of the ruling Yamato clan. In addition, the people of the Korean peninsula were clearly portrayed as subservient to the rulers of Japan throughout the work. The technological advances from Korea were not obtained through trade but demanded as tribute and Korean scholars could be summoned at the whim of the emperor to provide the benefit of their knowledge to Japan.

However, unlike the motivation suggested by later nationalistic interpretations, this superiority is linked to the power of the Japanese sovereign rather than to a sense of the unique superiority of the Japanese as a race. There must have been a sense of superiority of certain clans, particularly those descended from the imperial line, but this could not possibly have been tied to race, nor could it have extended to the "Japanese" as a people, since such a people could not really be said to exist. A more realistic view may be that of the Yamato-Paekche "interaction sphere" posited by Pai Hyung Il, in which personal and political ties existed between the islands and the peninsula, but no clear national distinction existed at that early stage.[7]

What, then, was the real relationship between the people we now think of as Koreans and those we think of Japanese? Recent archaeological evidence suggests a freedom of movement between the areas far greater than had been previously assumed. For example, although there is no way of knowing exactly how many people immigrated from the Korean peninsula to Japan, one estimate is that it might have been as high as

[6] For a complete description and research history of these theories, see Farris 1998, pp. 57-68.
[7] Pai 2000, p. 234.

3,000 people per year for the six centuries of the Yayoi period.[8] 1,800,000 immigrants over 600 years may seem too high of an estimate, but the numbers are borne out by evidence of the rapid spread of Korean technologies such as ironworking, stone-fitting, canal-digging, aristocratic accoutrements, and methods of statecraft in Japan.[9] While examination of the effects on the native culture has usually focused on the goods and technological sophistication brought by these immigrants, the presence of the immigrants themselves must have had a great influence as well, creating an environment of cultural diversity rather than of homogeneity.

In addition to the archaeological evidence of Yayoi era immigration, we also have evidence in the early Japanese textual record of immigration both during and after the Yayoi. As mentioned earlier, there is frequent mention in the *Nihon shoki* of Japanese rulers summoning skilled or knowledgeable people from the Korean kingdoms (primarily Paekche) to the court. Although the term usually used in the work to refer to these naturalized immigrants was *kikajin* (帰化人), the characters implying that the move to Japan was a step closer to civilization, the context shows that these immigrants possessed cultural and technological sophistication far beyond those of the Japanese at the time. Also, evidence shows that these groups were kept close to the ruling class, their skills a major factor in consolidating power and building the early Japanese state. In fact, these immigrants were often identified as the founders of various hereditary guilds of artisans, technicians, and scribes in Japan, indicating that they may have come to Japan as outsiders, but that those of their line would become the skilled elite class.

[8] Farris1998, p. 109. The Yayoi period extends roughly from the 4th century BCE to the 3rd century CE.
[9] Ibid. p. 69.

These examples of immigration were not isolated incidents. As Farris suggests, "All evidence, archaeological and historical, shows a nearly constant in-migration of peninsular peoples into Japan ever since the Yayoi period."[10] Although some of these groups did form immigrant communities, many integrated into Japanese society. The preface to the early ninth century *New Compilation of the Register of Lineages* (新選姓氏録 – *Shinsen shôjiroku*) indicates that, when clans first began to be defined in the time of the legendary Emperor Suinin (r. 29 BC - 70 CE), "barbarians from other countries, in due reverence for his virtue, all wished to come to Japan. Out of solicitude for these aliens, he bestowed family names on them. This was an outstanding feature of the time."[11] While these earliest family names certainly could not have been the equivalent of royally bestowed surnames (氏 – *uji*) in the ninth century sense, it suggests that immigrants were being integrated into the family lines of the various clans from the very beginning. Seven centuries later:

> during the Tempyô Shôrô [sic] era (749-757), by special favor of the court, all aliens who had made applications were granted family names. Since the same surnames were given to the immigrants as Japanese families possessed, uncertainty arose as to which families were of alien and which of native origin. There were commoners everywhere who pretended to be the scions of the high and the mighty, and immigrant aliens from the Korean kingdoms claimed to be the descendants of the Japanese deities. As time passed and people changed scarcely anyone was left who knew the facts.[12]

This passage is revealing as much for what it implies about earlier attitudes toward immigrants as for its goal in the ninth century. The purpose of the work is clearly to establish genealogies for all Japanese clans in the capital and the five surrounding

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[10] Ibid. p. 109.
[11] Translation in deBary 1958, pp. 86-7. Of course, although it is possible that family lines dating back to to the time of Suinin survived to the ninth century, they were certainly not official lineages in the sense intended.
[12] Ibid, p.87.

provinces, thus identifying and classifying Japan's ruling class. In the registry, those clans that were descended from Chinese and Korean immigrants were separated from those of native Japanese families. We must remember that, although the register may have been compiled in the ninth century, it referred to matters from centuries earlier, when attitudes seem to have been far different. The concern for clarifying the genealogies was part of the same impulse that motivated the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* histories: to bolster the political legitimacy of certain clans. The distinction made in the register between "clans that claimed descent from former emperors" and "divine clans that claimed descent from heavenly and earthly deities,"[13] for example, reflects the same privileging of the imperial clan seen in the other works. As the preface to the register makes clear, however, there was less attention paid to these matters in earlier times and the genealogies were in a state of near complete confusion until at least the seventh century. The influx of immigrants from the Korean peninsula may have furthered the confusion for the compilers, but it also reflects a lack of concern for maintaining such distinctions in earlier times. Indeed, the very need to compile such a registry suggests that there must have been an extremely thorough mixing of "Japanese" and "Korean" families.

Of the 1,182 families included in the register, 328 were classified as "foreign clans," including 158 families from Paekche, 42 from Koguryô, 9 from Silla, 10 from Kaya, and 109 from China.[14] This in itself is remarkable, in that it shows that over one quarter of the elite families of Japan were of foreign origin. As Wontack Hong reminds us, however, the mixing of Japanese and Korean clans meant that "foreign clans"

[13] Hong 1994, p. 70.
[14] Ibid, p.73.

probably referred only to those families who had come to Japan fairly recently, such as the royal families who fled to Japan after the defeat of Paekche by Silla in 663 CE. Earlier immigrants were almost certainly fully integrated into Japanese society and were indistinguishable from the other ruling clans. In fact, the distinction between clans that claimed descent from "heavenly" and "earthly" deities, is thought by some scholars to be a distinction between the descendants of foreign conquerors and those of the chieftains of Japanese clans who had arrived earlier.[15] Rather than "Japanese" vs. "foreign," then, the distinctions made in the register might better be described as "recent immigrants" vs. "early immigrants." If Hong's suppositions are correct, only 222 of the 1,182 clans listed in the register were not directly related to Korean immigrants.[16] While Hong supports the controversial view that the imperial line is descended from immigrants from the Korean peninsula and thus includes the imperial clans in his count, his evidence for counting Korean immigrants among the supposedly native Japanese clans is convincing. Clearly families from the Korean peninsula played a far greater role in the formation of the Japanese state than has previously been suspected.

In fact, given the difficulty of imposing a vast, unfamiliar bureaucratic structure on the previously non-centralized and almost entirely non-literate culture that was pre-Nara Japan, it is no exaggeration to say that the successful implementation of the *ritsuryô* was dependent on widespread immigration from the Korean peninsula. And, since these were the years which defined the changes in Japanese poetry throughout the *Man'yôshû*, it would be unreasonable to assume a lack of influence by the large immigrant population on that poetry's development. The possible relationship between Japanese and Korean

[15] This view is found in Hong 1994, p. 71 and attributed to Egami Namio.
[16] Ibid., p.73.

song traditions will be examined later in this chapter, but for now I would like to turn to the greatest product of these immigrants' efforts: the expansion and development of writing in Japan.

Writing Chinese and Japanese in Nara Japan

One of the areas in which we should expect the greatest evidence of Korean influence is in the writing system employed in early Japan. Both the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* attribute the delivery of writing to Japan to Wani, a scholar summoned from Paekche by the Japanese emperor and said to have become the ancestor of the "chiefs of writing."[17] Although the *Nihon shoki* dates Wani's arrival in the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Ôjin, or 284 CE, correcting for the chronological distortion by the compilers of the *Nihon shoki* places the date in the early fifth century.[18] Although the details of the episode cannot be accepted at face value, few would doubt that Chinese writing, like the vast majority of continental culture, came to Japan via the Korean peninsula, and that the Japanese rulers relied heavily on Korean scholars as scribes and teachers.

Until recently, there was little concrete evidence available against which to test the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* accounts, as only a few early inscriptions in stone or metal had been found from which we might guess the true state of writing in pre-Nara Japan.[19]

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[17] 文首 – *fumi no obito*, *Nihon shoki*, Ôjin year 15, 8th month, 6th day.
[18] Because of the *Nihon shoki* compilers attempt to incorporate Chinese chronographic theory in their recording of early dates, it is necessary to correct their dating by adding two sixty year cycles to their dates. Seeley 2000, p.6.
[19] There are numerous artifacts, particularly swords and mirrors, which have survived from before this time and which are inscribed with Chinese characters. However, given the nature of most of these objects as ceremonial objects or gifts, the distribution was extremely limited and cannot be considered representative of a widespread culture of writing. David Lurie examines these putative "origins" of Japanese writing in detail in the second and third chapters of Lurie 2001.

However, over the past fifty years, thousands of *mokkan* (木簡), slats of wood of various sizes with characters written in ink on them, have been unearthed from various archaeological sites around Japan. Only a few of these have been found from the early- to mid-seventh century, but there have been far more discoveries of *mokkan* from the last quarter of the seventh century, and eighth century artifacts number in the tens of thousands. This evidence suggests that there was an explosion of writing, not merely for ceremonial or diplomatic purposes, but for general administration as well, in the mid- to late-seventh century CE.[20]

It is certainly no coincidence that this sudden increase in both function and geographical range of the use of writing parallels the promulgation of the *ritsuryô*. Nor is it coincidental that the spread of writing coincides with the mass influx of skilled, literate immigrants from Paekche after its defeat by Silla in 663. As examined earlier, the immigrant population was vital to the spread of technologies such as writing to the Japanese islands. However, David Lurie has suggested a third possible reason for the speed with which writing was able to spread throughout Japan: the use of *kundoku* to read written Chinese as though it were Japanese.[21]

In a modern context, *kundoku* (訓読) refers to two parallel phenomena. The first is simply the reading of a Chinese character or character compound using the Japanese pronunciation. For example, the character for the season of spring, "春" can be read either with its *kun* (訓) reading, *haru*, the native Japanese language term for spring, or by its *on* (音) reading, *shun*, based on the Chinese pronunciation of the character (in modern Chinese, *chun*). *Kundoku* in this sense is simply reading a character by its *kun* reading

[20] Lurie, p.202.

rather than its *on* reading. Of course, this can only be considered "reading" because both the *kun* and *on* readings of Chinese characters continue to be used in modern Japanese, making the act of reading Chinese characters with a Japanese pronunciation seem perfectly natural. In the case of early Japan, however, this must have been more akin to translation than to simply reading, applying the names of Japanese concepts to the "equivalent" Chinese characters.

This type of *kundoku* was almost certainly in use in Japan as soon as Chinese characters entered the country. After all, any concept in Chinese for which there was a Japanese "equivalent" must have been first explained in the Japanese language. There are even examples of *mokkan* which feature character glosses, and perhaps even what may be considered a Chinese-Japanese character dictionary. In these, a given Chinese character is accompanied by characters used as phonographs to provide the pronunciation. For example, on one fragment of a *mokkan* dating from the late seventh century, the character "賛" is followed by three smaller characters "田須久," indicating that it is to be read "*tasuku*," while on another the character "椿" is glossed with "ツ婆木," identifying the pronunciation as "*tsubaki*."[22] These fragments are important not only in that they demonstrate that the practice of reading Chinese characters with Japanese pronunciation existed, but that there was already a usage of Chinese characters as phonographs to render Japanese words. In other words, the one-syllable-per-character *on* readings of characters were used to describe the appropriate *kun* reading for a character. Certainly this practice was widespread by the time of the completion of the *Kojiki* in 712, as the

[21] This is the central point of Lurie's fourth chapter.
[22] Lurie, pp. 222-3.

text contains numerous notes clarifying the *kun* reading of a given character using phonograph orthography.[23]

The second phenomenon referred to by the term *kundoku* is the reading of an extended Chinese text, rather than simply a single character or compound, as though it were Japanese. This is often accomplished by means of *kunten* (訓点), a system of marks that indicate where the characters should be reversed to conform to Japanese grammar, how verbs should be inflected, etc. Using *kunten*, an experienced reader can look at a Chinese text and read it aloud as though it were in Japanese. Such a system of marks began to be found in Japan as early as the end of the eighth century, and indeed modern editions of Chinese texts printed in Japan continue to include a more developed form of them.[24] In a sense, this cannot be said to be reading Chinese at all, but engaging in impromptu translation of a Chinese text into Japanese, and only the fact that the written characters used are shared by the two languages allows this to be equated to "reading."

Prior to the ninth century, only Buddhist texts employed widespread use of *kunten*, and it was unknown what type of "reading" was employed for other Chinese texts during to this period. In other words, were these texts being read as Chinese, using the *on* readings and the Chinese word order, or were they being translated "on the fly," either read aloud or in the minds of those looking at the texts? David Lurie argues that this second type of *kundoku* was very much a part of Japanese reading and writing conventions in early Japan, even where *kunten* are not present. Many of the *mokkan* feature, for example, Chinese characters in inverted order, approximating the Japanese word order rather than the Chinese. While a great many of these *mokkan* were clearly

[23] Seeley 2000, p.45.
[24] Ibid. p. 62.

being used for writing practice, and the difference in order has thus sometimes been attributed simply to error, there is enough of a consistency to the types of "error" that it suggests a basis in the reading of Chinese texts as Japanese that precedes the earliest known work written in a form of Japanese, the *Kojiki*. [25]

Of course, this adaptation of the Chinese script in order to more easily render it in Japanese was not entirely a Japanese innovation. Similar changes can also be observed in the usage of Chinese texts in Korea as well. For example, numerous Japanese examples of character styles and methods of character abbreviation have been found that were popular in Paekche and Koguryô.[26] In addition, Korean grammatical elements such as *zhong* (中) used at the end of a line to mean "within" were unknown in China but have been found on early Japanese sword inscriptions.[27] It has also been suggested that the convention of reading the character *zhe* (者) as the Japanese particle *-ba* (ば) has its origins in logographs of Korean rather than Chinese origin.[28] Clearly, just as Koreans left their mark in the form of modifications to ironworking, stone-fitting, and canal-digging technologies, they also influenced the way the Japanese used Chinese characters.

The question of whether ostensibly Chinese texts were read in Chinese or in Japanese is not merely an academic one when it comes to texts in which it is important to render the original Japanese precisely, for example in the case of poetry. While the general meaning of a Chinese prose text was more or less the same regardless of the language in which it was read, poetry required a more exact rendering of the original Japanese. This is why the compilers of both the *Nihon shoki*, which was written

[25] Lurie 2001, pp.216-21.
[26] Farris 1998, p.99.
[27] Seeley 2000, p.23.
[28] Ibid., p.28.

primarily in Chinese, and the *Kojiki*, which was written in a combination of Chinese characters used for their meaning and those used for their phonetic value, transcribed poetry using characters used for their sound rather than their meaning. In other words, characters were chosen for the sounds they evoked, with presumably little or no attention paid to the meaning of the characters in Chinese. This has been viewed as an attempt to divorce the characters from their nature as logographs and use them only for their phonetic value, what David Pollack calls "emptying these handy semiotic markers of their culture-bound Chinese content."[29] In effect, they were using Chinese characters as a *kana* syllabary.

Of course, the first use of the phonetic value of Chinese characters to transcribe the sound of Japanese words was done by the Chinese themselves, in the description of the kingdom of *wa* in the earlier mentioned *Records of the Three Kingdoms*. The Chinese had used characters purely for their phonetic value prior to this as well, in the transcription of Buddhist terms from Sanskrit and for other foreign terms. We must remain aware, however, that this activity must have been fundamentally different from the use of Chinese phonographs by the Japanese. While the Chinese were transcribing a foreign language using their own writing system and guided by the linguistic assumptions inherent in their own language, the Japanese were attempting to use a foreign writing system to capture their understanding of their own pre-literate language. In other words, the Chinese use of characters to transcribe Japanese did not require investigation into the nature of the Japanese language; its words were simply adapted using existing Chinese syllables.

[29] Pollack 1986, p.27.

Of course, the same might be said for the first use of Chinese characters to transcribe Japanese words in Japan, in that it was almost certainly accomplished by recent immigrants from the Korean peninsula rather than by the Japanese themselves. The Korean use of Chinese characters as phonographs to transcribe terms in their own language can be seen in the *Nihon shoki*, which contains quotes from early Korean texts that employ Chinese phonographs to transcribe Korean place names.[30] Thus the defining of the Japanese language into a finite number of syllables was almost certainly accomplished in the context of the Korean experience of doing so.

Had the task fallen entirely to the Japanese themselves, the Japanese language might have become something very different. The rendering of a pre-literate spoken language in writing is not merely a matter of determining certain written symbols to stand for elements already present in the spoken language. Rather, it is necessary first to analyze the spoken language itself in order to divide it into units. The assumption that these units are "natural" elements that were already present in the spoken language, needing to be "discovered" rather than "created" is a conceit that is only possible after the fact. In the words of Walter Ong:

> By contrast with natural, oral speech, writing is completely artificial. There is no way to write "naturally." ... Writing or script differs as such from speech in that it does not inevitably well up out of the unconscious. The process of putting spoken language into writing is governed by consciously contrived, articulable rules: for example, a certain pictogram will stand for a certain specific word, or *a* will represent a certain phoneme, *b* another, and so on.[31]

Thus the process of dividing a language into distinct units is a series of choices over how to separate the stream of spoken language into individual phonemes, how to distinguish each phoneme from the next, and how to transcribe those phonemes on the written page.

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[30] Seeley.2000, p.23.

Fortunately for the Japanese, there were existing models on which to build and skilled foreign scribes on whom to rely.

The Japanese dependence on Korean immigrants for the development of the written language is particularly clear in the structure of *man'yôgana* (万葉仮名), the writing system in which the *Kojiki* and much of the *Man'yôshû* were written. *Man'yôgana* is a combination of Chinese characters used for their meaning and those used only for their phonetic value. Judging by the few surviving examples of Korean poetry from this age, the Koreans appear to have used a similar system, called *hyang'chal* which appears to have many similarities with *man'yôgana*. Beyond the complex concept of a hybrid logograph/phonograph writing system itself, even the Japanese pronunciation for many characters used phonetically seems to accord more with the Korean pronunciation than with the Chinese.[32] In other words, the *kana* usage of Chinese characters reflects not merely the Chinese pronunciation, but the Chinese pronunciation as articulated by the Koreans.

For all these reasons, we cannot view the system used to write Japanese as simply a method of transcribing the sounds of the pre-literate oral language. The system of writing used affected the degree to which the pre-literate oral Japanese language could be evoked in writing, and the very act of writing necessarily had a profound effect on the language itself. Most particularly, the act of writing down poetry had a profound and observable effect on the development of that poetry. "Oral literature" is an impossibility, since it is through the transformation brought about by writing that "literature" comes

[31] Ong 1982, p. 82.
[32] Konishi 1984, p.336.

into being. Transcription did not merely change Japanese poetry; it created Japanese poetry.

The Effects of Transcription on Japanese Poetry

In Japanese, there are different characters used to denote Chinese poetry and for Japanese poetry. While Chinese poetry was *shi* (詩), in both Korea and Japan, the native verse was referred to with the character 歌 (J. *uta*, *ka*; K. *ga*), meaning something closer to "song." Thus, the distinction betwen *waka* (和歌) and *kanshi* (漢詩) is not merely the difference in language or geography implied by the terms "Japanese poetry" and "Chinese poetry." Rather, it is a distinction between *shi* as poetry, which was to be read, and *uta* as song, which was to be heard. Prior to the advent of writing, then, there was only song, or *uta*.

In fact, this distinction between *shi* and *uta* was the product of the Japanese reception of Chinese poetry rather than something inherent in the poetry itself. Like Japanese *uta*, Chinese *shi* began as song. The poems of the Chinese *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* – 詩経) were originally sung, and the collection contains frequent reference to poems written to the tune of other existing poems. However, in Japan these poems were experienced not as oral song, but primarily as written poetry. Even if the poems might be read aloud or recited, either in Chinese or in a Japanese variation, their reception remained primarily tied to the written work. This created a natural divide between Chinese poetry and Japanese *uta*, which were tied to a performance rather than to a written representation.

The reliance of *uta* on performance is evident in the word's origins in the verb *utsu*, to "strike" as a drum is struck or to "play" as an instrument is played.[33] *Uta* as performed pieces were inherently transient, coming into existence in the moment of performance and then disappearing forever. The written representation of an *uta* could not be said to contain the whole of it, any more than a piece of sheet music could be said to be equivalent to the performance of a symphony. As Gary Ebersole puts it, "Poems were performances or acts, not artifacts."[34] An *uta* that was not performed simply did not exist.

The nature of *uta* as performance is also strongly rooted in Japanese poetry's origins in ritual song, in which it is the moment of invocation that has the power. Ritual songs were performative, not merely describing the world, but affecting it. When Emperor Jomei climbs to the top of Mt. Kagu and intones the words "Such a splendid land, this Dragonfly island, this land of Yamato" he is not merely making an observation, but reaffirming with his words the power of the land and his own power as emperor over the land, through the ritualistic power of the poem.[35] The words were almost certainly formulaic rather than unique to Jomei, the same or similar words intoned in a similar form by Jomei's predecessors just as they would continue to be intoned by his descendents in later land-viewing ceremonies. But even if the sounds that made up the poem were transcribed using characters, the words themselves existed only in the moment of speaking, and the power of those words, their *kotodama*, was power inherent

[33] Harada 2001, pp.401.
[34] Ebersole 1989, p. 17.
[35] This poem is attributed to Emperor Jomei which would place the time of its composition in the early- to mid-seventh century. However, as with all the early poems of the *Man'yôshû*, the accuracy of this attribution is far from certain. It is likely that this poem was a formulaic ritual poem used in land-viewing ceremonies by many emperors and its composition was simply attributed to one specific emperor.

in the speaking of the words rather than the words themselves. Indeed, this distinction between "words" and "the spoken word" would have been meaningless, since a word could not exist unless it was spoken. In the same way, a song *was* its performance; there was no such thing as a song unsung.

If a song was defined by its performance, then the transcription of a song was not an attempt to reproduce a song in writing, since this would have been an impossibility. Rather, it was either a way of recalling the performance of a poem or a method of preparing a poem for future performance. The former is apparent in the titles and notes, which attempt to clarify the circumstances of performance for those who were not present, while an example of the latter can be seen in Tabito's poem number 315 (book 3), composed in response to an Imperial command but bearing the note "the poem has not yet been presented." It is unknown whether the poem was, in fact, ever performed for the emperor, but even if it had never been realized in performance and had only been experienced as a read text, the note makes it clear that the intended medium was *uta* performance. For this reason, the early *Man'yôshû* might be more appropriately called a collection of lyrics rather than a collection of songs, the relationship between written poem and performed song like that between script and play, or between sheet music and the music as performed.

However, the relationship may not be that straightforward either, since the structure of Japanese poetry is based on syllable-count, and it is doubtful whether that was the case with pre-literate Japanese *uta*. Japanese poetry consists of alternating five-syllable and seven-syllable lines, the most common form being the *tanka* (短歌), or short poem, with thirty-one syllables in five lines in the form 5-7-5-7-7. In the preface to the

early-tenth century *Kokin wakashû*, the creation of this form is credited to the god *Susano-o no mikoto*, who is said to have originated the composition of poems "of thirty syllables plus one syllable,"[36] improving on earlier poetry, in which "a poem's syllables were not set and the expression was direct, with the sense of the words thus difficult to understand."[37] Although couched in mythological terms, this passage is clearly intended to describe the development of a standardized poetic form from a more loosely defined sense of poetry. Indeed, the earliest Japanese poetry, preserved in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, as well as the earliest poems of the *Man'yôshû*, shows a far greater degree of irregularity in the syllable count, with frequent examples of hypermeter (*ji-amari*), which would become rare in later poetry, and hypometer (*ji-tarazu*), which would later disappear completely. The *Kokin wakashû* explanation of the indeterminate nature of poetry prior to *Susano-o no mikoto*'s innovation thus served as an explanation of the unusual poetic forms and language seen in earlier poetry.

It is important to note, however, that the word used for "syllable" in the account is *moji* (文字), which refers not to the spoken language, but to the written. The Japanese words for syllable, *onsetsu* (音節), or phoneme, *on'in* (音韻), did not exist until the modern age, and the author of the *Kokin wakashû* preface, Ki no Tsurayuki, was thus forced to use the terminology of the written language in order to refer to the poetry of a pre-literate antiquity. Of course, to Tsurayuki there was no dissonance in this approach. By his time, *waka* had become set at a standard thirty-one syllable, and were now able to be clearly rendered in the standardized *kana* syllabary which eliminated the confusion of the hybrid *man'yôgana* writing form. To Tsurayuki, the syllables of the written language

[36]もそもじあまり、ひともじはよみける

corresponded to syllables in the spoken language, and a poetry based on syllable count was thus a natural reflection of the spoken language. Of course, even to the limited extent that this was true in Tsurayuki's time, it certainly could not have been true in pre-literate Japan.

Thus, the problems earlier examined in relation to the transcription of the Japanese language are compounded with respect to Japanese poetry. Without syllable count to rely on, oral *uta* must have depended for their structure on rhythm, extension of certain sounds, and other techniques inherent in performance, but unexpressed in the written form. It was in the writing down of these songs rather than through the poetic genius of Susano-o no Mikoto that the syllable count of the *waka* became standardized. Of course, this process was probably far from complete at the time of the compilation of the *Man'yôshû*, but the very process of selecting poems for the collection and writing them down also served to advance the process of standardization.

It is clear, for example, from the folk songs preserved in the *Kojiki*, the *Nihon shoki*, and the *Fudoki* regional annals, that the *waka* form was far from standardized at thirty-one syllables at the time of composition of most of the earlier poems of the *Man'yôshû*. However, most the poems of the *Man'yôshû* are read as though they all conformed to the standard form. In some cases, this standardization may have been undertaken by whoever first transcribed the poem in writing, as is almost certainly the case in the provincial "Eastern poems" and "poems of the border guards" transcribed by Yakamochi.[38] In other cases, however, they may have been "standardized" after the fact

[37] うたのもじもさだまらず、すなほにして、言の心わきがたかりけらし

[38] Both the "Eastern poems" (*azuma uta*) of book twenty and the "poems of the border guards" (*sakimori no uta*) of book fourteen were supposedly folk songs collected from inhabitants of various rural provinces, and we would thus expect a certain degree of irregularity in the verse form. However, they are transcribed

by the readers of the collection rather than the original scribes. In other words, even if a particular grammatical form or article is not explicit in the way a poem is written, it was inferred by later readers in order to make the poems conform to the 5-7-5-7-7 structure which had since become the standard. Any elongation or extraneous sounds that may have been present in the song as performed would be lost in transcription, and the poems would be read as though they had always conformed to the proper syllable count.

This process of the standardization of the syllable count as the defining characteristic of poetry naturally led to the development of standards of poetic language and form. However, it should be noted that these changes did not rely on poetry becoming primarily a written medium. Throughout the four stages of the *Man'yôshû*, and beyond, the central experience of poetry continued to be as a performed art. However, the ability to write poetry down, whether by the poet in preparation for performance or by a listener transcribing a poem after it had been performed, itself created fundamental changes in poetry. Harada Sadayoshi outlined these effect of poetry transcription in his *Yomiuta no seiritsu: Ôtomo Tabito to Yamanoue Okura*, and I summarize them here:[39]

1) quickening the standardization of the *waka* form
2) elimination of "non-standard" *waka*
3) emergence of a definite rhythmic structure
4) development of specialized poetic vocabulary
5) formalization of rhetorical structures
6) lengthening of poetic forms

These effects of transcribing poems are naturally inter-related, since it was the development of poetic vocabulary, for example the restricting of rhetorical devices such as "pillow words" to five syllables, that helped standardize the form and define the

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almost entirely in phonographs and show no more deviation from the form than many court poems. For this reason, it is likely that either the scribe or the compiler of these poems may have edited them, altering the form to make it conform to the current accepted form.

rhythmic structure. Similarly, the development of rhetorical structures such as parallelism and prefatory lines made possible longer and more complex poetic forms.

However, Harada notes that the transcription of poetry also had a profound effect on the circumstances surrounding poetry composition, beyond the structure of the poems themselves.[40] The writing down of poetry resulted in a narrowing of the audience for poetry. While song had been, and continued to be, a folk art, only the literate had access to written poetry. Writing down a poem also fixed it in form. As a performed art, poems were extremely fluid, changing with every performance as mistakes or changes were incorporated into the poem with no sense of an "original" form. Written down, a poem became fixed and unchanging, and an "original" or "correct" form could be said to exist. Along with this new emphasis on fixed form came an emphasis on original authorship. Where a song had been linked to the person performing it, authorship was now linked to composition, and poems were recognized as works produced by individuals. Finally, transcription of songs allowed the collection of poetry and the compilation of poetry anthologies, which defines the quality of a poem through its inclusion or exclusion.

In general, these effects mark the change of poetry from a folk communal art that was quite fluid to a literary form increasingly meant for the elite, fixed in form and more focused on the individual. These changes can be observed in the development of poetry throughout the four periods of the *Man'yôshû*, as poetry transformed from ritual song into the form in which we now know it. While the authorship of later poems is generally precise, many earlier poems are listed as "author unknown" and others are included with extensive notes describing conflicting attributions or different versions. It provides a

[39] Harada 2001, pp. 431-6.
[40] The following paragraph is a summary of Harada 2001, pp. 436-9.

snapshot of the attempt by the compilers to impose a mid-eighth century sense of order on the earlier texts used as sources. The role of poetry had changed and it fell to the *Man'yôshû* compilers to make the earlier versions fit.

If the development of *Man'yôshû* poetry throughout its four eras serves as an image of the transformation of *waka* from an oral to a written form, a major turning point comes in the third period with the poetry of Okura and Tabito. I will be examining their role in this transformation in chapter three. For now, though, I will attempt to place them in their proper context in this process of poetic development, as representative poets of the third era of the *Man'yôshû*.

The *Ritsuryô* and the Four Periods of the *Man'yôshû*

Chronologically, the third period of the *Man'yôshû* begins with the establishment of the first permanent capital at Heijô in 710, and ends with the death of Yamanoue Okura in 733. Ironically, the two representative poets from this age, Okura and his compatriot Ôtomo Tabito, were of approximately the same generation as Hitomaro, the most important poet of the second *Man'yôshû* period. However, nearly all of their poetry was composed late in life, after their meeting in Tsukushi in 728, while the entirety of Hitomaro's poems were composed in the decade from 689-700. And in terms of the themes they explored, incorporating concepts from Chinese philosophy and continental aesthetics, Okura and Tabito are of another generation altogether.

One of the distinctive qualities about the poetry of Okura and Tabito is that the vast majority of it was composed far from the capital, on the southern island of Tsukushi (modern Kyûshû). Of course, this shift away from the capital may be one of the qualities

characteristic not only of the Tsukushi poets, but of the poets of the third generation of *Man'yôshû* poets in general: a movement of the place of poetic production away from the center of the imperial court and toward the margins, the homes of the nobility and, even further afield, to the provinces. If the first era of the *Man'yôshû* was dominated by the Imperial family and the second centered on professional poets such as Hitomaro, they shared a focus on public poetry centered on the court and the occasions of official excursions. However, the same extended bureaucracy of the *ritsuryô* which enabled control to be spread to the outlying provinces also made possible the divorce of cultural activity from the court that had been its center. Hu Zhi'ang writes:

> In accordance with the propagation of the *ritsuryô*, a knowledge of Chinese texts, beginning with the Five Classics, the Three Histories, and the *Wen Xuan*, became indispensable. And as education regarding Chinese poetry and writing permeated the ranks of government officials, the place of Chinese poetry composition shifted from the court to the officials' private residences and provincial posts ... In the same way, *waka* composition, which had been the exclusive province of court poets such as Princess Nukada and Kakinomoto no Hitomaro gave way to an era of poets claiming a place for poetry in the outlying regions, far from the capital and the imperial court ...[41]

Although many of those who received government posts had already been participants in the poetic activity of the imperial court, a fundamental change occurred in the divorcing of the place of poetry from the court. It helped remove poetry from the public, ceremonial function it retained from its origins in ritual song and enlarge the scope of acceptable subject matter.

Also important to this movement of poetry away from the court which had been its center was the fact that it was paralleled by the spread of education in Chinese. Hu Zhi'ang continues:

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[41] Hu 1998, pp.12-3.

> Many of these [*waka* poets] were government officials under the *ritsuryô*, and many of these were also writers of Chinese poetry. Thus, when they engaged in the composition of *waka*, they remained conscious of the conventions of Chinese poetry and prose... [42]

The conventions of Chinese texts had become familiar enough that they, rather than *waka*'s ritualistic past, had the potential to become a driving force in poetry composition, not through imitation of Chinese models, but through the internalization of Chinese conventions. It became possible to express Japanese sentiments backed by a Chinese aesthetic sense.

In fact, this spread of Chinese learning from the capital to the provinces with the spread of the *ritsuryô* system provides an instructive parallel to the development of poetry throughout the *Man'yôshû* in general. In *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, Joan Piggott argues that the implementation of the *ritsuryô* occurred in three general stages:

> The first ... led to the compilation of the Taihô Code and saw Great Kings transformed into *tennô*, universal monarchs of the eight-island realm. A second stage saw codal structures becoming operational during the first two decades of the eighth century ... A geographically expanded polity centered on the *tennô* actually began to function as provincial administration commenced in earnest.... A third stage of the *ritsuryô* process spanned Shômu Tennô's Tempyô era, from the 720s through the 770s, and witnessed the full penetration by integrative *ritsuryô* networks to the frontiers of the insular realm.[43]

Thus the spread of the *ritsuryô* system was paralleled, chronologically and thematically, by the different eras of poetry in the *Man'yôshû*. The poetry of the earliest period looks back to a time just before the implementation of the system, though the view of this history is seen through the lens of the new Japanese state. The poetry of the second period represents the early stage of the *ritsuryô*, when the codes had been articulated but

[42] Ibid., p.13.
[43] Piggott 1997, p.168.

had yet to be implemented. The third *Man'yôshû* era reflects the expanded sphere of control from the center of the imperial court to the officials stationed in the provinces. And the final period represents the triumph of the *ritsuryô* codes, fully integrated as a system of government extending even to the distant reaches of the realm.

As examined earlier, the poetry of the first period of the *Man'yôshû* centers on the ritual poetry of the imperial clan, and represents the transformation, visible only in retrospect of course, of the Yamato clan kings into the imperial line. The first poem, for example, is attributed to Emperor Yûryaku, who supposedly reigned in the fifth century: *MYS* I:1

ko mo yo	With your basket,
miko mochi	holding a pretty basket
fukushi mo yo	With your spade,
mibukushi mochi	holding a pretty spade.
kono oka ni	On this hill,
na tsumasu ko	young one gathering herbs
ie kikana	I would hear of your home.
na norasane	Tell me your name
sora mitsu	In the sky-filling
Yamato no kuni wa	kingdom of Yamato,
oshinabete	I am the one
ware koso ore	who rules it all.
shikinabete	I am the one
ware koso imase	reigning over all.
ware koso ba	As for myself,
norame	I will tell you
ie o mo na o mo	my home and my name.

Although originally viewed as a love poem, with Yûryaku in the position of the suitor approaching a provincial maiden romantically, the poem is clearly also an expression of the emperor's rule over Yamato, and is often interpreted as an image of the marriage politics through which the early clans expanded their sphere of influence. Although the irregularity of the poetic structure marks it as quite an early poem, attribution to any poet

as early as Yûryaku is almost certainly false. Still, the political agenda represented by this choice of opening poem is clear. Just as the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* served to legitimize the rule of the *tennô* by charting the lineage of the Yamato clan back to the deities who created the Japanese islands, the first poem of the *Man'yôshû* serves to extend the *tennô* system into the past. It positions *tennô*-centered rule not as a recent innovation based on Chinese concepts of statecraft, but as a practice founded in antiquity and legitimized by long practice. Yûryaku's seduction of a provincial maiden was not merely an attempt to bring one clan under the control of another, but an attempt to bring a clan on the periphery into the political center of imperial control.

The second poem of the collection continues this theme, with a poem of ritualistic "land-viewing" on the summit of Mount Kagu by Emperor Jomei. Unlike the attribution of the previous poem to Yûryaku, there is at least a chance that this attribution has a basis in fact, given that Jomei was a more recent sovereign (629-641 CE). But what is of greater importance is the ritual through which Jomei reaffirms his control over the land of Yamato. While the ritual itself may indeed have existed in Jomei's time, by the time of the poem's inclusion in the *Man'yôshû*, both the meaning of "emperor" and of "Yamato" had changed considerably. Rather than the king of the Yamato clan ritually confirming his sovereignty over a certain region extending to the limits of his view from a mountaintop, the poem can be interpreted as an emperor confirming through ritual his sovereignty over the whole of Japan, or Yamato. The poem as included in the *Man'yôshû* is necessarily being interpreted in retrospect, since it is highly unlikely that the poem was transcribed prior to the spread of writing in the late seventh century. In other words, although the poems purport to come from a pre-*ritsuryô* era, it reflects the attitudes of the

post-*ritsuryô* age in which it was transcribed. It is an image of the era before that identified by Piggott as the first stage of the promulgation of *ritsuryô*, as interpreted by those immersed in that first stage.

The second period of the *Man'yôshû* is the era of the professional court poet, and this era gives us a more direct view of Piggott's first stage. In *Hitomaro and the Birth of Japanese Lyricism*, Ian Hideo Levy charts the development of Japanese poetry from the ritual song of the early emperors to the sophisticated lyrical sensibility of Kakinomoto Hitomaro. However, although poetry was becoming transformed from ritual into something resembling literature, the themes remain very much tied to the imperial family. Levy ties this change to:

> ... a new demand on literature that was social and political in nature: the conscious deificiation of the imperial family in verse. This extrinsic necessity ... would lead to a rhetorical return to myth and a new poetry of public ritual praise.[44]

In other words, where the early poetry of the emperor was motivated by a belief in ties to the land, maintained through ritual, the poetry of Hitomaro's time was motivated by the political necessity of publicly reemphasizing those ties. Hitomaro's long-form poems in praise of the emperor on the occasions of various imperial excursions can be understood as the products of a society making the transition to a government in which the emperor's status as cultural center was maintained not through ritual, but through the public acknowledgement of that status by those who served them. Piggott notes that "*ritsuryô* monarchs, like their Chinese exemplars, emphasized an ideal paradigm of rule by cultural preeminence" rather than military conquest.[45] Thus, while the earliest poetry in the collection was attributed to the emperors themselves, emphasizing their rule through

[44] Levy 1984, p. 66.
[45] Piggott 1997. p.169.

ritual ties to the land, the poetry of Hitomaro's time represents a transition to praise of the emperor by others, creating a poetic culture appropriate to the social culture, continually emphasizing the emperor as its head.

In addition, this court-centered poetry reflected the fact that the technology of writing was itself still primarily limited to the court. Hitomaro composed the entirety of his oeuvre between the years 689 and 700 CE, when the vast expansion of writing had begun, but proficiency in it was still fairly limited. Of course, the actual practice of composing and performing folk song may have been extremely widespread, but the new methods for transcribing Japanese song in writing must have been even more limited than writing in Chinese. And, since the *ritsuryô* had not yet been spread to the provinces, there was no one to transcribe the results of the poetic activity there, and the vast majority of songs that remain from that period are centered on the activities of those surrounding the court.

This court-centered poetic world was also the environment in which Okura and Tabito spent most of their lives. As mentioned earlier, both Okura and Tabito were of roughly the same generation as Hitomaro, and their classification in the third rather than the second period is due to the fact that the vast majority of their poetry composition occurred quite late in life. As such, they embody the transformation occurring in Japanese poetry, composed by literati educated under the ideals of the *ritsuryô*, but freed from the limitations of the court's formal public poetry.

Aside from the spread of educated officials to the provinces and the divorcing of poetry from the cultural center of the imperial court, the third period was also notable for an expansion of themes made possible by exposure to Chinese works. Official embassies

to China were halted between the years 669 and 701, but once they resumed, these embassies returned vast quantities of Chinese texts to Japan, often within only a few decades after they became popular in China. For example, Wang Bo's *Shixuji* (詩序集) is believed to have been compiled after his death in 674, yet it is known to have existed, and been quite influential, in Japan as early as 707.[46] The Chinese works which were brought to Japan naturally included Buddhist commentaries and Confucian treatises, but among them were also modern poetry, popular literary works, and secular texts, representing both the refined and the vulgar in Chinese culture. Familiarity with Chinese texts was no longer limited to the nine Chinese classics required for higher education under the codes,[47] but included works that represented a far broader range of Chinese culture, allowing those familiar with the texts to move beyond earlier themes. Knowledge of Chinese culture was no longer merely a tool for the management of the state.

By the time of the fourth era of *Man'yôshû* poets, the spread of the authority of the *ritsuryô* was largely complete. The primary poet of the fourth period, Yakamochi, composed what is considered his best poetry during his five years in Etchû, far from the capital. He also included in the collection poetry from the far eastern reaches (the *azumauta* of book fourteen) and transcribed songs of various provinces related to him by border guards stationed in Tsukushi (the *sakimori no uta*, primarily in book twenty). In his own poetry, as well as in his activities as primary compiler of the *Man'yôshû*, he had internalized many of the Chinese concepts of literature that had been combined with

[46] Hu 1998, p.16.
[47] The Yôrô Code lists the nine classics which needed to be mastered by students of the Bureau of Greater Learning (*Daigakuryô*): *Li ji*, *Zuo zhuan*, *Shi jing*, *Zhou li*, *Yi li*, *Yi jing*, *Shu jing*, *Lun yu*, *Xiao jing*.

Japanese song in the experimentation by his father and Okura. In many ways, he represents the fulfillment of the promise embodied in the poets of the third period.

But before we examine the experimentation through which poets such as Okura and Tabito transformed Japanese poetry, the subject of the remainder of this work, we must look to their activities before coming to Tsukushi. This is because they bridge the gap between the court-centered poetry of the second period and the decentralized poetic practice of the third. Despite the experimental nature of their poetic activity in Tsukushi, they were clearly products of the early years of *ritsuryô* expansion. Both were well-educated in the Chinese classics, both were active in the cultural activity of the capital, and both served more than one term as provincial governors. In other words, prior to their meeting in Tsukushi, they were the very embodiment of the ideals of *ritsuryô* society.

Okura and Tabito before Tsukushi

There is no record of Okura in official documents until the year 701, when he was listed in the *Shoku Nihongi* as a lesser scribe (少録), without court rank, on an embassy to Tang China.[48] This is unusual for several reasons, first among them Okura's age. If we accept the age cited by Okura in one of his poems late in life, Okura would have been forty-two years old at the time of the embassy, far too old to have been without rank if he had grown up within the aristocracy. This lack of rank is also problematic in that a position as lesser scribe would generally be considered appropriate for a courtier of the

[48] *Shoku Nihongi* 701, 1st month, 23rd day. Okura's name is the last of the one hundred sixty members of the embassy, and is listed as 无位山於億良, without the title that would later be attached to his name and with variant characters used for both surname and personal name.

seventh rank.[49] It has thus been generally assumed that Okura was chosen on the basis of merit rather than family status or background, and given Okura's reputation for knowledge of continental culture, it is thought that an unusually advanced knowledge of China must have been behind the appointment. This, in turn, has given rise to much speculation about Okura's early life, with the most attention focused on the possibility that Okura was an immigrant from the Korean kingdom of Paekche.[50]

As we examined earlier, immigration from the Korean peninsula was not unusual at this time, and given the discrepancy between the complete lack of information regarding Okura prior to the age of forty-two and his participation in the highest levels of Japanese society later in life, it is certainly a reasonable hypothesis. This lineage is also suggested by Okura's name, which shares its first character with other known Paekche immigrants, such as Okurai Fukuru (憶礼福留) and Okurai Shirô (憶頼子老).[51] While this may be enough to establish that "Okura" was indeed, as Nakanishi Susumu suggests, a "foreign sounding" name, it is insufficient to confirm his speculation that Okura was the son of Okuni (憶仁), a physician who immigrated to Japan with his family when Paekche was annihilated by its rival kingdom of Silla in about 663.[52] Although having as father an educated Korean immigrant who served as a court physician would explain Okura's extensive education in the Chinese classics, as well as his unusual access to the upper

[49] It should be noted, however, that the other two lesser scribes who accompanied the embassy were also listed without rank, so the speculation regarding Okura's background applies to them as well.
[50] This possibility was first proposed by Tsuchiya Fumiaki in the 1959 Koten Nihon bungaku zenshû *Man'yôshû* v.1, and it has been further explored by numerous scholars, particularly Nakanishi Susumu (Nakanishi 1973).
[51] Nakanishi Susumu has suggested that these names were actually intended to render Korean names in Chinese characters. For example, 憶礼福留 would represent the syllables o-ra-pu-ru. He further suggests that Okura's own name might have been the same, but rendered with a different character for transliteration: 憶良福留. Nakanishi 1980b, p.147.
[52] Nakanishi 1973, p. 41-2.

echelons of court society despite his lack of rank, there is simply not enough evidence to either confirm or deny this theory.

The only real evidence we have of Okura's activities prior to 701 is the note to a poem by Prince Kawashima in book one of the *Man'yôshû* (*MYS* I:34), composed in the year 690. According to the note, one text attributes the authorship to Okura which may mean that Okura composed the poem to be performed by Prince Kawashima, in the manner of the "professional" court poets in service to the nobility.[53] While there is no supporting evidence for this outside of the lone attribution listed above, it has spurred much speculation regarding Okura's early activities, including the possibility that he was active as a court poet at the same time as Hitomaro, who served Kawashima's brother, Prince Osakabe.[54] If he had been a court poet, it may explain the interaction with the aristocracy that would have been necessary to be chosen for the embassy to China, despite his lack of rank. Of course, it is surprising that there is so little that is attributable to Okura from this time if he were indeed an active poet, but it remains a distinct possibility that he was involved in the poetic life of the capital prior to the 701 embassy to China.

After the listing as a member of the Chinese embassy, Okura does not appear again until the year 714, when he was promoted from "senior sixth rank, lower" to "junior fifth rank, lower," his name listed with the title *omi* (臣).[55] Thus, at some point between these two appearances, Okura must have been granted both title and rank, and been able

[53] A nearly identical poem is included in book nine of the collection (*MYS* IX:1716), attributed to Okura and with a note listing an alternative attribution to Prince Kawashima. The problem of attributing a poem's authorship according to differing anthologists' practices is examined in the final chapter.
[54] Among those who have built hypotheses around this are Hashimoto Tatsuo (Hashimoto 1975) and Itô Haku (Itô 1975).
[55] *Shoku Nihongi*, 714/1/5.

to rise through the ranks rapidly. Nakanishi has speculated that he was given rank and title just before his departure for China in the sixth month of 701.[56] Since there is no one else with the Yamanoue surname prior to Okura, it has also been suggested that the surname itself was created as an offshoot of the Awata clan, perhaps at the behest of Awata Mahito, the leader of the Chinese embassy.[57] There is evidence of this in the fact that the surname Yamanoue with the attached title "asomi" (朝臣) appears in the ninth century name register, the *Shinsen shôjiroku* (新選姓氏録), listed next to the surname Awata and identified as "of the same clan" with that line. Whatever the exact circumstances, it is clear that it was the embassy to China which provided the opportunity for Okura to rise above his lack of rank and family influence and gain his first foothold in the Japanese aristocracy.

Regardless of his low rank at the time, Okura was obviously important enough to the embassy to have been one of the members who traveled all the way to Chang'an, the capital of Tang China and the largest and most metropolitan city in the world at that time. He spent a total of two years in Chang'an, increasing his familiarity with the Chinese literary tradition, studying both elegant literary works and popular works of philosophy, poetry and popular mythology. It was about this time that many Chinese classics became known in Japan, and given Okura's familiarity with and allusion to certain sources such as the *Youxianku* (遊仙窟 - *The Dwelling of Playful Goddesses*) and the *Yiwen leiju* (藝文類聚 – *Classified Literary Arts*), he is frequently credited with first bringing these texts to Japan. Though Okura's inclusion in the embassy in the first place presupposed a high degree of familiarity with Chinese, it was probably his time in Chang'an that gave

[56] Nakanishi 1980b, p.119.

him the breadth and depth of familiarity with both high and low works that went far beyond that of most poets in Japan.

All told, Okura spent somewhere between three and six years in China before returning to the capital, probably in 704 but possibly as late as 707.[58] After this point, there is a gap in the record history, and there is no record of Okura's activities for the next decade. However, his rank must have risen dramatically during this period and by 714, when he once again appears in official records, he had advanced an astonishing fourteen grades in rank to reach junior fifth rank, lower. In the fourth month of 716, he received his first official post, the governorship of Hôki in Sanindô (modern Tottori prefecture). Imura Tetsuo notes that if Okura had indeed been a court poet prior to the embassy to China, rising to the level of a governorship was quite unusual, and marks a radical switch from poet to government official, and representative of the expanding *ritsuryô*.[59] Indeed, whether or not Okura had been active as a court poet, to rise from a complete lack of rank and lineage to a governorship in a mere fifteen years was remarkable. As with all provincial posts, Hôki was quite separated from the cultural life of the capital, but the location was considered important because of its location near the Asian continent. It enjoyed a high level of prosperity and a great deal of foreign influence, one possible reason for Okura's appointment there. His term as governor ended and he returned to the capital in 720, where he probably served at the court in some unknown capacity.

In the first month of 721, sixteen learned courtiers were ordered to leave the imperial court and serve instead in the "Eastern palace," residence of Empress Genshô's

[57] Murayama 1994b, pp. 13-22.
[58] The return of several of the ships of this embassy were delayed by storms and they remained in China for an additional three years. It is unknown whether Okura was one of those delayed.
[59] Imura 1996, p.102.

nephew and heir, Crown Prince Obito (who would rise to the throne as Emperor Shômu), and Okura was listed among them.[60] These courtiers, many of whom were of foreign descent, were well-versed in various aspects of continental tradition, and it is thought they were meant to act as a kind of knowledge base or literary salon for the Crown Prince's education in the Chinese classics, music, poetry, etc. Because these scholars were generally focused on continental rather than Japanese literature, it appears that Okura had more of an interest in *waka* than most.[61] Evidence of this can be seen in his composition at a Seventh Night celebration (七夕 - *Tanabata*) in the year 722. The *Tanabata* holiday was a Chinese import, and the occasion was usually marked by gatherings at which Chinese poems were composed. However, where the rest of the members composed *Tanabata shi*, Okura composed a *Tanabata uta*.[62] Even at this early stage, he was experimenting with application of Chinese literary conventions in a Japanese context.

This group remained at the Eastern Palace until the Crown Prince ascended to the throne as Emperor Shômu in 724, but even after they officially disbanded, it is thought that many of them stayed together in some capacity. In the *Fujiwara family history* (藤氏家伝), the group of scholars who served at the Eastern Palace are called the "refined chamberlains" (風流侍従 - *fûryû no jijû*), and reference to them is seen even after Shômu's ascension. The possibility that Okura was once again among them is

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[60] *Shoku Nihongi*, 721/1/23.
[61] Four of these scholars are represented in the *Man'yôshû*, but with only six poems between them. Wada 1991, p.111.
[62] Included in the *Man'yôshû* as VIII:1518, the first of twelve *Tanabata* poems by Okura. The date on this poem is actually listed as *Yôrô* year eight, but since that year (724) only lasted until Shômu's ascension to emperor in February, after which the year title was changed to *Jingi*, a *Tanabata* festival in its seventh month would not have been possible. The note is thus usually assumed to be an error, meant to read *Yôrô* year six (722).

suggested by his involvement in Prince Nagaya's literary salon.[63] Although he is not represented in the *Kaifûsô* as were many members of Nagaya's poetry circle, he was present on the occasion of the *Tanabata* poetry composition at Nagaya's residence in 724. His membership in this group probably lasted until he was appointed to the Governorship of the Tsukushi province of Chikuzen in 726.

The vast majority of Okura's poetry preserved in the *Man'yôshû* was produced during his time in Chikuzen, and it is this time which defines his activities as a poet. However, although there is little of his own poetry preserved from early in his life, a poetry anthology he compiled at some time prior to coming to Chikuzen proved important to the compilation of the *Man'yôshû*. Okura's *Ruijû karin* (類聚歌林 – *Classified Forest of Poetry*) is one of the existing texts upon which the compilers of the *Man'yôshû* relied in the process of compilation.[64] Although it is explicitly identified as a source only nine times in the notes of the collection,[65] it must have contained far more poems. In Emperor Shômu's *Record of Miscellaneous Self-Copied Works* (写私雑書帳) there is a reference to a *Karin* (歌林) in seven scrolls, and it is possible this refers to Okura's *Ruijû karin*.[66] If these scrolls are of the approximate size of the twenty scrolls comprising the *Man'yôshû*, then this collection might well number over a thousand poems, certainly a major collection in its own right.

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[63] Imura 1996, p.103.
[64] The other major identified sources for the collection are Kakinomoto Hitomaro's *Hitomaro Poetry Collection* (人麿歌集) and the *Collection of Ancient Poems* (古歌集).
[65] *Ruijû karin* is specified as a source in the notes following: *MYS* I:6, 7, 8, 12, 18, II:85, 90, 202, IX:1673.
[66] This document is among the personal effects of the Emperor Shômu dedicated to the statue of the Great Buddha after his death in 756 and kept in the Tôdaiji temple repository until they were catalogued at the end of the nineteenth century. The interpretation of the document and calculation of the possible number of poems are from Matsuda 1983.

There is also the possibility that, despite the specific lack of attribution outside of the nine instances mentioned, other *Man'yôshû* poems also came from the earlier collection. In none of the nine instances is the note limited to identifying Okura's anthology as the source of the poem, in the manner of most of the poems drawn from the *Hitomaro collection*. Rather, *Ruijû karin* is listed as the source of alternative attributions of authorship, expanded description of the occasion of the poem's composition, etc.[67] Thus, there is the possibility that other poems from the *Man'yôshû* were also found in Okura's collection, but that only those with an unusual or conflicting attribution were identified as such.[68] Aside from a source of poems, the earlier collection is also widely viewed as an important resource for the philosophy of anthologization which guided the compilers of the *Man'yôshû* itself. Unfortunately, *Ruijû karin* is no longer extant, and many questions remain as to the time and purpose of its compilation, and the system by which its poems were "classified," as well as the extent to which these elements influenced the compilers of the *Man'yôshû*.

One of the biggest questions surrounding *Ruijû karin* is the time and circumstances of its compilation. Certainly there were many periods in Okura's life when the compilation of a poetry collection would have been a highly appropriate activity, and opinions differ over when the collection might have been compiled. The latest of the nine poems specifically associated with the collection (*MYS* IX:1673) is dated 701, so it is generally assumed that the compilation must have occurred sometime after that date.

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[67] In fact, the note to *MYS* II:85 reads only "This poem is included in Yamanoue no Okura no Omi's Ruijû karin," but that poem is an alternative version of MYS II:90, for which a longer description which differs from the *Kojiki* analysis is included in the note.

[68] Matsuda Tomiko, for example, speculates that the references to poems drawn from the *Hitomaro Poetry Collection* in books seven and ten were in fact the vestiges of Okura's own activity of poetry collection, retained in the Man'yôshû when large sections were copied verbatim. Matsuda 1983.

In addition, the note following poem I:6 contains a quote from the *Ruijû karin* referring to "記" as a source, and this has been interpreted by many to refer to the *Nihon shoki*, which would date the collection sometime after the *Nihon shoki*'s compilation in 720.[69] The most common view is thus that Okura compiled the collection between the years 721 and 724, during his time serving as tutor at the Eastern Palace. Of course, the poems were almost certainly gathered over a long period of time, and thus even if we limit the date of completion until after 720, it does not preclude the possibility that some, or even most, of the work was compiled earlier.

Watabe Kazuo and Higo Ryûkai have suggested that compilation may have begun as early as Okura's involvement in Prince Kawashima's court prior to his embassy to China.[70] In 682, Prince Kawashima and his brother, Prince Osakabe, were undertaking a project to gather "various materials from the imperial records and from ancient times"[71] and it is possible that Okura might also have been involved in this activity. The most important products of this gathering were documents that are thought to have been later included in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, and Okura may have had access to these documents prior to their inclusion in it.[72] This gathering of materials may also have been Okura's source of some of the poems eventually collected into *Ruijû karin*, especially given that most of the *Man'yôshû* poems for which additional context is provided by the *Ruijû karin* are early poems of the imperial family and the poets of the imperial court.

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[69] There are problems with assuming Okura was quoting the Nihon shoki, not the least being that the Nihon shoki as we know it uses the character "紀" rather than " 記" in its title. In addition, although the wording of Okura's "quote" is similar to that in the Nihon shoki, it is not exact. Still, there are enough similarities that it is almost certain that Okura either drew on the text as it existed in some pre-final form, or that he had access to some of the materials that would eventually be included in the collection.

[70] Watanabe 1969, Higo 1973.

[71] 帝紀及上古諸事 – *Nihon shoki* 681/3/17.

[72] Higo 1973, pp. 22-3.

And the fact that Okura's collection is used as an alternative source to the background provided in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* in several of these cases suggests that Okura was privy to documents that were not necessarily included in the *Nihon shoki* in its final form. Thus, although it is impossible that the collection could have been present in its final form this early, it is certainly possible that Okura was collecting poems at this time.

Kojima Noriyuki and Ogawa Nobuyuki speculate that the collection was compiled after Okura's return from China, but before his service as governor in Hôki in 716.[73] Certainly, there is a gap in what we know of Okura's life during these nine years, with only the single mention of his promotion in 714 to feed speculation about his activities. Kojima suggests that his time was spent on the *Ruijû karin*, and that the collection was directly inspired by Okura's time in China:

> The compilation of *Ruijû karin* was not so much driven by Okura as poet. Rather, on returning from China having developed to a certain degree his ability with reading Chinese sources, he was inspired to attempt a work of his own.[74]

In other words, Okura's work may have been as much an experiment in Chinese-style anthologization, perhaps on the model of the newly imported *Yiwen leiju*, as it was an attempt to create a literary work. The *Yiwen leiju* itself was little more than a collection of passages taken from various literary sources and organized by topic, in the manner of a dictionary of quotes rather than a work of art. Thus, if Okura was indeed using this as a model as Kojima suggests, he was perhaps acting more in the role of Chinese scholar and government functionary than poet at this point in his life, "his reputation as a *Man'yôshû* poet limited to the time after his appointment to Tsukushi."[75]

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[73] Kojima 1972, Ogawa 1976.
[74] Kojima 1972, p.91.
[75] Ibid.

Ogawa builds on this theory to suggest that the *Ruijû karin* may actually have been a publicly sponsored work rather than a private collection, compiled on official command and inspired by the Minister of the Right, Fujiwara Fuhito's, emphasis on absorbing Chinese culture:

> We can see Fuhito's sense of competition with Tang China in his motivation to respond to the [Chinese] Imperial sponsored classified work, *Yiwen leiju,* with a publicly sponsored classified work, *Ruijû karin*. And if that work might also prove useful in the future accession of Emperor Shômu, then we might imagine he was attempting to kill two birds with one stone.[76]

Public sponsorship of the work would explain the focus of the remaining works on the imperial family and court poetry. It would also explain why Okura did not follow the practice of naming the collection after himself, in the manner of most private collections. It also provides a concrete, albeit purely speculative, reason for Okura's later call to service in the Eastern Palace, as an acknowledgement of his success with the compilation. While the concept of the collection as an educational work for the tutoring of the crown prince has gained wide acceptance, most scholars believe Ogawa's proposed dates are far too early for the completion of the collection, and with no actual evidence of public sponsorship, or of Okura's poetic activities at the time, the theory cannot move beyond the realm of speculation.

Another possibility that has been raised is that Okura may have gathered poems for the collection during his time as governor of Hôki from 716 to 720. In the ninth month of 717, Empress Genshô held a festival in Mino at which were presented examples of various provinces' "local song and dance."[77] It is thought that the governors of the various provinces, including Okura in Hôki, must have been preparing for this festival for

[76] Ogawa 1976, p.60.
[77] 土風歌舞

quite some time. While there is no specific attribution to songs gathered at this time in the *Man'yôshû*, there are many other examples of provincial songs recorded by local governors, leading Nakanishi Susumu to view it as "evidence that provincial governors had a far deeper relationship with local customs than we may imagine."[78] Still, without the collection itself to examine, the possibility that these songs were included is pure speculation.

Of course, both the preceding theories as to the dates of composition are in conflict with the anthology's supposed quoting of the *Nihon shoki*, which was not completed until 720. It is possible, of course, that Okura had access to the original materials that were compiled to create the *Nihon shoki*, either during his service to Prince Kawashima or after his return from China.[79] However, most scholars continue to place the date of the final completion of the work during Okura's time spent serving in the Eastern Palace, from 721 to 724. In keeping with the goal of tutoring the crown prince, the earlier mentioned idea that the collection was intended as a kind of textbook gains credence.

While the classification system used by Okura is not known, it is probable that it included, but was not limited to the three categories that make up the three major classifications of the *Man'yôshû*: *banka* (挽歌 – elegy), *sômon* (相聞 – poetic exchange), and *zôka* (雑歌 – miscellany). These classifications themselves were probably drawn from Chinese sources, notably the *Wen xuan*, and Okura is sometimes credited with first

[78] Nakanishi 1973, p.153.
[79] Onodera Shizuko raises this later possibility in Onodera 1985, in which she suggests that Okura was involved in gathering documents for the compilation of the *Nihon shoki* in the years between his return from China and his appointment as governor of Hôki.

applying them to Japanese poetry.[80] While those three genres are the most prominent in the *Man'yôshû*, however, there are many lesser categories included as well, and it is thought that Okura's work must have included a broader spectrum of categories.

As earlier noted, Okura's use of "*ruijû*" in the title suggests that his classification system may have been inspired by that of the *Yiwen leiju* (藝文類聚) collection of literary quotes. Its classification system is encyclopedic in nature, opening with a section on "the heavens" (天), including the sun, moon, clouds, etc.; continuing with "time" (歳時), including the seasons, seasonal festivals, etc.; and moving on to sections on "people," "mountains," "waters," "ritual," and a host of other topics. In other words, it seems to aim at a fairly comprehensive index of literary quotes for every conceivable theme, going far beyond the range of topics seen in the *Man'yôshû*.

Another model for the interpretation of "*ruijû*" exists in the *Ruijû koshû* (類聚古集), an early-twelfth century work compiled by Fujiwara no Atsutaka, consisting of 3,228 *Man'yôshû* poems reorganized into categories.[81] While there is some obvious affinity of the work with the *Yiwen leiju*, Yoshinaga Minoru has placed Okura's *Ruijû karin* between the two, with Okura's work influenced by the Chinese collection, and Atsutaka in turn inspired by Okura.[82] The poems are divided by type into *chôka*, *tanka*, and *sedôka* and then further divided thematically.[83] While the *Man'yôshû* does separate *sedôka* poems under a separate heading in several books, it makes no distinction between

[80] Kitano 1993, p. 98.
[81] The whole of the work was in twenty books, but the extant version consists of only sixteen, missing books nine, ten, eighteen, and twenty.
[82] Yoshinaga 1956, pp. 41-3.
[83] While the *tanka*, or "short poem" in the form 5-7-5-7-7 would become the primary form of Japanese poetry in later collections, the *Man'yôshû* also contained many "long poems," or *chôka*, consisting of an indeterminate number of alternating lines of five and seven syllables each and capped with a final seven-

chôka and *tanka*, and the division according to these poetry forms may have been a later innovation, reflecting the fact that the *chôka* form had disappeared. However, if Okura did indeed divide the poems according to form, it would support the notion that *Ruijû karin* was intended for the purpose of education.

There is considerable overlap between the categories used in the first eleven books of *Ruijû koshû* and those in the *Yiwen leiju*, suggesting some affinity in classification. The *Ruijû koshû* opens with sections on the four seasons, then continues with "the heavens," "the earth," "mountains," "waters," etc. While it is, of course, unknown whether Okura's work contained such division, it has been suggested that the *Ruijû karin* may have been the inspiration for the categorization of seasonal poems of book eight of the *Man'yôshû*. Book eight, like book ten, is divided into eight sections, one section of *sômon* and one of *zôka* for each of the four seasons.[84] However, where the poems in book ten are attributed primarily to the *Hitomaro Poetry Collection* and the *Collection of Ancient Poems*, and the names of the poets are not listed, book eight specifies no source but identifies the poets by name. Of course, since many of the poems date from after the time the *Ruijû karin* is thought to have been compiled, and some from after Okura's death, the book cannot have been drawn directly from Okura's work, and any influence can only have been in the standards of categorization.

Beginning with book twelve, the *Ruijû koshû* categories cease to resemble the categorization system of the *Yiwen leiju*, and seem to refer instead to the many lesser categories seen in the *Man'yôshû*, such as the allusive poems of book eleven, the travel poems of book twelve, the *azumauta* of book fourteen, and the "poems with a story" of

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syllable line: 5-7-5-7- … -5-7-7. The *sedôka* was a less common form also present in the collection, in the form 5-7-7-5-7-7

book sixteen.[85] These are the type of categories thought to have been used by Okura in his anthology, and Hisamatsu Sen'ichi has gone so far as to suggest that books eleven and twelve were originally a section of the *Ruijû karin*, supplemented with poems from the *Hitomaro Poetry Collection*.[86] However, though the poems drawn from Hitomaro's anthology are identified as such, there is no specific attribution for the remaining poems, and equation of the categories with those of the *Ruijû karin* is mere speculation. The categories of the *Ruijû koshû* also do not qualify as convincing evidence, since they can be explained by reliance on the *Man'yôshû* alone and need not have been inspired by Okura's work.

Despite this, the *Ruijû karin* continues to be viewed as an important influence on the compilation of the *Man'yôshû*. In part, this is because Ôtomo Yakamochi, son of Tabito and main compiler of the *Man'yôshû*, is known to have been strongly influenced by Okura both during his youth in Tsukushi and in his later development as a poet. It is also because it seems to be ranked alongside the *Man'yôshû* itself in late Heian works on poetics such as the *Ôgishô*, *Fukurozôshi*, and *Korai fûteishô*.[87] Of course, without viewing the work itself, it is difficult to determine with any certainty the ways it may have acted as a model for the *Man'yôshû* compilers, and we are left only with Okura's own compositions from which to evaluate his influence.

Okura before his assignment to Tsukushi was already very much a part of the cultural life of the capital, but his real poetic life did not begin until he was made

[84] See Appendix A for an outline of the contents of the twenty books of the *Man'yôshû*.
[85] Although these categories appear as headings in certain books of the *Man'yôshû*, they do not appear as frequently or universally as the three major classifications and are thus considered secondary. An outline of these categories as they appear in the various books can be found in Appendix A.
[86] Hisamatsu 1965.
[87] Higo1994, p.25.

Governor of Chikuzen in 726. In fact, we see no significant increase in his poetic activity until 728, when Ôtomo Tabito was made Dazaifu Commander and joined Okura in Tsukushi. Though Okura was already steeped in the Chinese classics and was an experienced poet, his willingness to experiment with combining Chinese and Japanese forms did not come about until his encounter with Tabito.

Unlike Okura, who appears to have arisen from humble beginnings to achieve a high official position, Tabito's pedigree was never in doubt. The Ôtomo clan had served the imperial line, primarily in a military capacity, for generations and Tabito became the head of that clan with the death of his father Yasumaro in 714. Despite his family's importance, however Tabito's progress through the ranks prior to the death of his father was unremarkable, and he does not appear in official records until the year 710, with senior fifth rank, lower, at the age of forty-five. After becoming head of the clan, however, Tabito's rank began to rise more rapidly, and had achieved senior fourth rank, lower, and the position of middle counselor by the year 719. His prestige seems to have gotten another boost when he distinguished himself with the military defeat of the Hayato in Ôsumi, the southernmost part of Tsukushi in 720. In fact, this previous service in Tsukushi may have been part of the reason for Tabito's being named Commander of Dazaifu in 728, approximately a year and a half after Okura's arrival there.

Like Okura, Tabito's years of poetic productivity came at the end of his life, and his first extant *waka*, a *chôka* and *tanka* on the occasion of an imperial procession to Yoshino (*MYS* III:315-6), was not composed until he was already sixty. However, in terms of Chinese poetry, he was known to be a participant in Prince Nagaya's poetry circle, and several of his Chinese poetry compositions were included in the *Kaifûsô*

poetry collection. Still, nearly all of his Japanese poetic activity comes from late in his life, and only the two poems mentioned above remain from the time before his appointment in Dazaifu. It was clearly the time spent in Tsukushi that was the turning point for Tabito as a Japanese poet.

Various explanations have been given for Tabito's appointment to Tsukushi at the advanced age of sixty four. The Commander of Dazaifu was responsible for the whole of the island of Tsukushi, including authority over its various governors and control over a large military garrison, and was thus a position of great responsibility. However, the post was also extremely distant from the capital, and an appointment to a governorship in Tsukushi might be considered the Japanese equivalent of being sent to Siberia, or being posted in Greenland. In later years, it would become more literally a place of political exile, and not all who were sent there were expected to return.[88] It has thus been suggested that Tabito had been sent to Tsukushi in an attempt by the Fujiwara family to distance him from the court in Nara, as part of their strategy of marginalizing Prince Nagaya and his allies as threats to their political power.[89] Indeed, the Ôtomo family would come into conflict with the Fujiwara family later as well, culminating in Tabito's heir Yakamochi being posthumously stripped of his title and lands, ending the family's influence. Of course, Tabito's return to the capital three years later and his rise to the position of Greater Counselor (Dainagon) seems to suggest that he still held some political clout, though this return to power was only after Prince Nagaya's house arrest and subsequent suicide in the year 729, after being framed for treason by the Fujiwara

[88] In fact, Dazaifu was the destination for early Japan's most famous political exile, Sugawara no Michizane, in 901 CE.
[89] This possibility is examined in Kawasaki 1982 and Umehara 1982.

family. In addition, Tabito's poor health at the time of his return and his death soon after effectively ended any threat he may have posed to Fujiwara dominance.

Of course, it is not necessary to assume that Tabito's position in Tsukushi was intended as a form of punishment or demotion. After all, Tabito had a history of successful military service in Tsukushi, and his father had served in the same position years earlier. Emperor Shômu was still in the process of extending the reach of the *ritsuryô* codes to the outlying provinces, thus expanding the effective borders of the Yamato state, and Dazaifu was an important post for advancing this agenda. Just as Dazaifu's proximity to Silla on the Korean peninsula and Bohai in Eastern China made it the gateway to and from the Asian continent for subsequent embassies, its position on the northern frontier of the not yet fully controlled areas of southern Tsukushi made it an important domestic outpost as well. In fact, Hayashida Masao has even suggested that the post in Dazaifu may have been one of Tabito's own choosing, given the region's importance and Tabito's seeming affinity for Tsukushi culture.[90]

Whatever the reason for his appointment to Tsukushi, it was his time there that proved instrumental to his development as a *waka* poet. In Dazaifu, Tabito became the center of a group of poets distinguished by their familiarity and experimentation with Chinese models. This group included Tabito's half-sister Lady Ôtomo Sakanoue and the Priest Manzei, but certainly the most important, both as a poet and in his influence on Tabito, was Okura. Indeed the interaction between Tabito and Okura seems to have been the critical stimulus that pushed both poets toward the active experimentation which would change the face of *waka* composition. The poetry they composed during this time

[90] Hayashida 1982, pp.275-305.

can be found throughout the *Man'yôshû*, but it completely dominates book five, making it easily the most idiosyncratic book in the collection.

There are many possible reasons for the eagerness to engage in poetic experimentation by the Tsukushi poets. Many scholars point to Okura and Tabito themselves as the important elements, given the extensive familiarity both had with Chinese texts. However, the fact that neither poet was particularly prolific prior to their meeting in Tsukushi suggests that the character of the men alone did not provide the necessary element. The location in Tsukushi may have been a contributing factor, given the proximity to the Asian mainland and the presence in Tsukushi of a large immigrant population. But, as important as the proximity to the Asian mainland was, the distance from the capital may have been of equal importance.

Physically separated from the capital, the poets at Tsukushi were the very model of the earlier mentioned shift from the court to the provinces as the place of poetic production. The list of poets in attendance at Tabito's famous gathering to compose poetry on the plum blossoms in the year 730 (*MYS* V:815-846) reads like a veritable who's who of provincial governors, assistant governors, and other functionaries stationed in the various provinces of northern Tsukushi. Among them were Hanishi Momomura, who had served with Okura in the Eastern Palace, and Ki no Ohito, who had both served in the Eastern Palace and, like Tabito, participated in Prince Nagaya's poetry circle and was represented in the *Kaifûsô*. Despite their distance from the capital, these poets were well-educated and of relatively high rank, though few were of a rank that would have permitted them to attend similar gatherings in the Nara court or to accompany the emperor on a procession, had they been in the capital. Thus, the spread of poetry

composition to the provinces opened it up to a far broader spectrum of the bureaucratic class.

No longer the sole province of the highest echelons, no longer linked to imperial ritual, and no longer a purely oral art, the function of poetry naturally began to change. And the poets in Tsukushi were the vanguard of that change. Far from a mere aberration, their poetry was a necessary link between the lyrical but still primarily oral poetry of Hitomaro, and the polished elegance of Yakamochi that would in turn lead to the sophistication of *Kokinshû* poetry. Book five is thus not to be dismissed for its uniqueness, but studied for the techniques that allowed an increase in poetic sophistication and a final break from the limitations of oral ritual song.

Chapter Three: Okura, Tabito, and the Genesis of Written Japanese Poetry

As examined in the last chapter, Okura and Tabito were both active in the literary life of the capital. However, it is not known whether or not the two had any contact prior to their appointments to Tsukushi, Okura in 726 and Tabito in 728. Although both are known to have participated in Prince Nagaya's poetry circle, the difference between their ranks may have been sufficient for them to have had little cause for extended contact.[1] The difference in their ranks was no less apparent in Tsukushi, in which Tabito served as Dazaifu Commander, with all the provinces of Tsukushi under his command, while Okura served as the governor of one of those provinces, Chikuzen. And despite the physical proximity of Dazaifu, within the borders of Chikuzen, it seems they had fairly little contact at first.[2]

This changed with the death of Tabito's wife and the subsequent exchange of poems dealt with in this chapter. After this exchange, the poetic activity of both Okura and Tabito increased dramatically, and their years in Tsukushi represent the vast majority of their literary output. These poems are preserved in various books throughout the *Man'yôshû*, but book five is of particular interest, both for its exclusive focus on the poets in Tsukushi, and for the unusual nature of the poems themselves, filled with Chinese references and combined with Chinese forms to create a new, experimental hybrid Chinese/Japanese form. This experimentation was also the direct product of the initial

[1] Okura was of junior fifth rank, lower, while Tabito was in the position of middle counselor with senior fourth rank, lower, a difference of six ranks.
[2] Murayama 1987, p. 170.

poetry exchange between Okura and Tabito, which is appropriately placed at the head of the book.

This chapter will examine the poetry exchange and place it in context, both as a product of what had come before and as a harbinger of what was to come. In the context of the development of poetry, it represented a sudden leap in the transformation of poetry from an oral art form to a literary one, yet it was firmly entrenched in the writing practices which had come before. Viewed in this context, the poetry of book five, which has always seemed so difficult to categorize and place reliably in any overarching theory of *Man'yôshû* poetry, can be seen as a vital turning point in the history of poetry rather than a mere aberration.

The Nature of *Man'yôshû* Book Five

Unlike the next major Japanese poetry collection, the tenth century *Kokin wakashû*, the *Man'yôshû* has no coherent overall classification system. Rather, it contains a combination of different organizational styles, due both to the probable involvement of multiple compilers and to the inclusion of excerpts from various earlier collections. In contrast with the *Kokin wakashû*'s strict classification of its twenty books by poem content, and the sophisticated use both within and between books of the organizing principles of association and progression, the *Man'yôshû* seems disjointed, with some sections organized chronologically, others by common theme, others by poem type, and still others simply by virtue of their inclusion in earlier, no longer extant, anthologies, the principles of organization lost along with the texts themselves.[3] The *Man'yôshû* also lacks a *Kokin wakashû* style preface to provide a glimpse into the thought

processes of its compilers. Later readers have been forced to rely on poem titles, notes, individual book headings, internal genre classifications, and the poems themselves for hints as to the contemporary understanding of what a poetry anthology was, and of what poetry itself was thought to be by the compilers and poets of the time.

Book five of the collection is simultaneously one of the easiest to understand in terms of organization, and one of the most problematic in terms of identifying its place within the classification system of the anthology as a whole. What is clear is that the book is devoted almost exclusively to Yamanoue Okura, Ôtomo Tabito, and the other members of the so-called *Tsukushi kadan*, or "Tsukushi poetry group," which surrounded Tabito at his post at Dazaifu on the southern island of Tsukushi, modern Kyûshû. The poems are arranged in chronological order, and cover a relatively short span of time, ranging from the sixth month of 728 CE, approximately eight months after Tabito arrived in Tsukushi to take up his post as Commander, to 733, the year in which Okura is believed to have died.[4] However, it cannot simply be viewed as the compendium of Tabito and Okura's body of work during their time in Tsukushi, because many other poems composed by them during this time period are included in other books. Some other, less explicit reason for grouping these specific poems together is at work.

Book five also highlights many of the issues that have plagued attempts to impose a coherent system of organization onto the collection. The internal conventions used in ascribing authorship are not always consistent, leading some scholars to attribute the original materials on which the book was presumably based to Okura, some to Tabito,

[3] For a detailed breakdown of the organization of the various books, see Appendix A.
[4] The last group of three poems in book 5, Okura's "Poems of Longing for the Boy Furuhi," (V:904-6) is not dated and its inclusion at the end is unusual in that Okura is believed to have died soon after composing

and some to a combination of the two.[5] Even more problematic, Book five is designated a book of "miscellaneous poems" but contains works that would be more properly regarded as poetry exchanges or elegies, the other two major genre classifications of the *Man'yôshû*. This irregularity confounds the urge to view these three poetry classifications as well-defined and independent entities, the dominant poetic organizing principles of the time. It is tempting to dismiss these seeming contradictions as simply characteristic of the idiosyncratic nature of the Tsukushi poets themselves; as with so many other rules of the *Man'yôshû*, the Tsukushi poets provide the exception. However, given the influence of the Tsukushi poets on Tabito's son, Yakamochi, the main compiler of the collection, it makes more sense to use the seeming contradictions to test our understanding of the system itself. It is the seeming exceptions that may shed light on the rules.

The first six books of the *Man'yôshû* have been grouped by some scholars into three sets of two books each, with books one and two representing ancient poems, books three and four representing the transition from ancient to modern, and books five and six representing modern poetry.[6] Indeed, a cursory overview of the contents of the first four books seems to lend credence to this interpretation. Books one and two form a set of poems centered on the imperial court and its concerns. Together they encompass the three major *Man'yôshû* poetic genres, with the first book consisting of miscellany (雑歌 – *zôka*) and the second covering elegy (挽歌 – *banka*) and poetic exchange (相聞 – *sômon*) for the same time period. They contain the earliest poems in the collection,

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the poems which immediately precede it. The possible reasons for this discrepancy will be examined in detail later, but aside from this, the order is generally chronological.

[5] These theories will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

[6] For example, Sakamoto and Môri 1995, p.17.

attributed to pseudo-historical emperors, with all poems arranged in order by the reign in which they were composed. Books three and four may have been compiled from "leftover" poems not included in the first two books, supplemented by poems by the Ôtomo family and associated poets which would have been familiar and available to Yakamochi as compiler.[7] Like the first two books, these books cover all three major poetic genres, with book three comprised of *zôka*, *banka*, and a third lesser genre, *hiyuka* (比喩謌), or metaphorical poems, and book four containing *sômon* for the same general time frame. Whether or not an ancient "poetic history" was intended by the compilers or this definition was simply imposed on the collection by scholars attempting to apply a modern sense of historical progression to the books, the similarities between books one and two, and between books three and four, are real. It is not until books five and six that the pattern breaks down.

Unlike the first two sets of books, which share conventions of transcription and organization, and the contents of which are complementary, books five and six share few similarities. The dates of the two books do overlap or, more accurately, the twenty-year span of time represented by the poems in book four completely encompasses book five's six-year span. However, both are headed with the classification *zôka* and there is no sense that the two were designed to complement each other. In addition, the transcription methods are different in the two books, with book five consisting primarily of one-character-per-syllable phonetic transcription and book six a combination ideograph/phonograph form. Whatever connections might exist between the two books, their relationship is certainly not as readily apparent as those in the first four.

[7] Sakurai 1976, p.9.

In fact, it is the very differences between the two books that may help to define their relationship. If these two books were supposed to represent the "modern" poetry of the time, then the court-centered poetry of book six acted as a counterpoint to the less conventional poetry of the poets in Tsukushi, far removed from the capital. In this regard, book six has more in common with the first four books than it does with book five, and the theory that these six books are intended to represent the scope of Japan's poetic history is somewhat hindered by the fact that the most experimental forms are included not in the concluding book, but in book five. What is doubtless is that the poems in book five are of a different type altogether, not just different from the court-centered poetry of the first four books, but from all the poetry in the rest of the collection.

There is also the problem of the inconsistent usage of the heading *zôka*, which seems to mean something very different in book five than it does in other cases. Outside of book five, poems subsumed under the heading *zôka* tend to be public poetry performed at various court occasions such as banquets or excursions, their "miscellaneous" nature apparent only in their failure to conform to the larger themes of love and death that typify the *sômon* and *banka* categories.[8] In book five, however, this clearly does not apply. In addition to the presence of *sômon* and *banka* within the book, the majority of the poems seem private or based on social gatherings rather than public and based on formal court gatherings. In fact, this has created some doubt over whether or not the *zôka* classification was even present in the original or whether it was added later.[9] Hayashida Masao and Inaoka Kôji have suggested that the heading was original, but that the book originally consisted only of poems which could be regarded as "miscellaneous," with

[8] Hayashida 1982, p. 23.

sômon and *banka* added later in the course of compilation.[10] Of course, the contrast with the strict division of the categories in the first four books makes this unlikely.

A more likely explanation is that *zôka* as used in book five is a reflection of the Chinese *za shi* (雜詩) heading found in *Wen xuan* books 29 and 30.[11] In the two internal commentaries, Li Shan explains, "'miscellany' refers to not being of a set style, the words based on the topic, and thus called 'miscellany'"[12] while Li Zhouhan specifies "Not of a single theme, and thus called 'miscellaneous poems.'"[13] In the *Wen xuan*, these books consist primarily of works on the themes of impermanence, old age, life and death, poverty, parting, homesickness, and other such topics. These themes, while conspicuously absent from the majority of the *Man'yôshû*, are extremely common in book five, and it is very likely that the heading for book five was a direct reflection of the Chinese use of the term, perhaps reflecting an earlier usage for the term found by Yakamochi in the source materials for book five rather than applied by the final compiler. Indeed, the description "not of a single theme" seems particularly appropriate for the poems in book five, unique in the collection.

In addition to the uniqueness of the themes dealt with in book five, another distinctive quality is the extensive use of Chinese language. In addition to the 104 *tanka* and ten *chôka*, there are also two poems in Chinese, ten Chinese prefaces to poems or groups of poems, five letters in Chinese, and one long Chinese essay. While there is no

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[9] Of course, even if the heading was added later, the very lack of a genre designation in the original marks it as distinct from the books which precede it.
[10] Hayashida 1973, Inaoka Kôji 1976.
[11] Tatsumi 1987, pp. 387-91. Although the designation *za ge* (雜歌) also exists in the *Wen Xuan*, it refers to only four poems, and they are of the style of old folk songs, unlike the wide range of topics represented by the *Wen Xuan*'s *za shi* and the *zôka* of the *Man'yôshû*.
[12] 雜者，不揜流例，遇物即言，故云雜也
[13] 興致不一，故云雜詩

doubt that composition in Chinese was widespread during this period, as outlined in the previous chapter, it is the inclusion of these Chinese compositions in an otherwise Japanese collection that is of interest. This is particularly true considering the sociocultural importance of compiling an anthology of native verse to accompany the recent compilation of two major native histories. The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* are very different histories, but they were both clearly motivated by the desire to compile a history of Yamato and its imperial court to place alongside the great histories of China, thereby joining the continental cultures in the eighth century version of modernity. If the *Man'yôshû* was similarly meant to elevate the Japanese poetic tradition to the level of literature on par with the continental tradition, the inclusion of works in Chinese might be considered regressive rather than progressive, a throwback to imitation of the Chinese literary tradition rather than development of a comparable native literature. However, it is not merely the inclusion of Chinese, but Okura and Tabito's innovative approach to combining Chinese and Japanese elements, which reveals these works as the turning point in creating poetry as literature out of native Japanese song.

As mentioned earlier, not all of the Tsukushi poets' compositions from the period covered in book five are included in this book. Numerous poems by the *Ôtomo* family are included in the latter portions of books three and four, in book six, and scattered throughout other books as well. The difference between these poems might best be described as the "continental" influence on the poems found in book five in comparison to the "native" nature of the other books. We might also characterize the poems in other books as "conventional," more closely resembling the other poems in the collection,

while those in book five are "experimental," with no comparable works to be found elsewhere.

As a way of approaching these experimental poems, the ideal starting point is the first poems to experiment with these forms, which are also the first poems in book five. In the first four books, the introductory poems are attributed to ancient emperors and represent the earliest examples of poetry, the very origins of the Japanese poetic tradition. Although book five covers a much shorter span of time than earlier books, the practice of beginning with the oldest poems is still followed. But these poems are important not merely for their chronological primacy, but for their nature as the origins of the Chinese/Japanese compound form. Examination of these earliest versions of the combined forms can shed light on the reasons for, methodology in, and consequences of the creation of compositions of this type.

A Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings

The first poem in book five is clearly in the form of the second half of a letter exchange. The Chinese prose passage which precedes the poem shows many phrases characteristic of letters written in Chinese at the time, and it is clearly framed as a response to an earlier message containing the "dreadful tidings" of the title. The original message is not included, probably because it did not contain a poem, and there is thus some doubt as to the context of Tabito's reply. However, its nature as a letter is in no doubt.

V:793

A Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings by Lord Ôtomo, *ruler of Dazaifu*

Tragic events mount up, dreadful tidings gather in a pile. I am overcome by heart-rending sadness without end, and I shed gut-wrenching tears all alone. It is only with great help from you two gentlemen that I can manage to extend, if only a little, my failing will to live. The brush cannot express my words – all the grief of the past and of today.

yo no naka ha	When I understand
munashiki mono to	that all within the world
shiru toki shi	is merely empty,
iyoyo masumasu	All the more, greater than before,
kanashikarikeri	I come to know despair.

Twenty third day, sixth month, fifth year of Jinki (728)

The phrase "dreadful tidings" in the title is a euphemism for a message bearing the news that someone has died and, since Keichû's speculation in the *Man'yô Daishôki* that the death to which Tabito referred was that of his wife, many commentaries have followed this line of thought. Indeed, the timing of the poem makes this assumption natural, since other poems in the collection place the death of Tabito's wife in the summer of 728, not long before Tabito composed this poem.[14] Indeed, there are several poem sequences by Tabito in which he mourns for "one who has passed on," dated 728 and included in the *banka* section of book three.[15] This interpretation also explains the placement of the poem sequence immediately following Tabito's, Okura's "Japanese Elegy," which is believed to be Okura's own expression of condolences to Tabito on the death of his wife.

However, more recent scholarship has rejected this interpretation for various reasons. The most obvious of these is that Lady Ôtomo had in fact accompanied Tabito

[14] In the notes to poem 1742 in book eight, dated the fifth year of *Jinki* (728), it is specifically mentioned that Tabito's wife had just died. The poem itself is composed on a summer theme.
[15] *MYS* III: 438-440, 446-450.

to Dazaifu and was there with him when she died, eliminating the necessity for Tabito to receive news of her death from the capital. The wording of the preface also suggests that more than one death had occurred, in that Tabito speaks of tragedies "mounting up" and bad news "gathering in piles." In addition, the above mentioned presence in book three of a series of poems of elegy believed to be for Tabito's wife makes the separate placement of another contemporary poem on the same topic in a different book less likely. It is more probable that the dreadful tidings in fact referred to the death of someone else close to Tabito, and the occasion was made all the more dreadful by the fact that it came so soon after the death of his wife. In this way, the poem changes from a specific expression of grief at the loss of a loved one to a more general despair at the senselessness of the world. Tabito's invocation of Buddhist terminology further generalizes the sentiment and locates the pain of loss within the broader Buddhist context of the unavoidable pain of the physical world.

Hashimoto Tatsuo has made the argument that the poem was written in response to news of the death of Ôtomo Sukunamaro, Tabito's younger brother and husband of his half sister Lady Ôtomo Sakanoue.[16] If the poem does indeed refer to the death of Sukunamaro, it has been suggested that the "two gentlemen" mentioned in the preface may have been Tabito's younger brother Inagimi and his nephew Komaro, sending the news from the capital along with their condolences to Tabito on the occasion. Another

[16] Although the exact date of Ôtomo Sukunamaro's death is not known, it is thought to have been between 727 and 730. It is known that Sukunamaro rose to the position of Major Controller (*Daiben*) of the left, for which he must have been at least upper junior fourth rank, a rank he probably could not have attained before 727 or early 728. Ôtomo Michitari took over the position in 729, and it is thought that the position must have been left vacant due to Sukunamaro's recent death. In addition, according to the notes to poem #567 (book IV), on the occasion of Tabito's severe illness in 730, he summoned to his bedside his younger brother Inagimi and nephew Komaro, but not Sukunamaro, suggesting that he had already died by this time. Sukunamaro's death at this time would account for Lady Ôtomo Sakanoue's joining Tabito in Dazaifu sometime around the year 729. Hashimoto 1974.

possibility has been suggested by Satô Michiko that the poem may have been composed in response to news of the death of the Imperial Princess Tagata, who died in the third month of that year.[17] She too had a connection to the family, in that her older brother Prince Hozumi was Lady Sakanoue's first husband. In this case, it would probably have been Lady Sakanoue herself who sent the dreadful tidings of Tagata's death to Tabito, though this leaves the identity of the "two gentlemen" a mystery. Regardless of the specific content of the message to which Tabito was responding, it was certainly no exaggeration to say that dreadful news was piling up, and the many deaths of those close to him gave Tabito ample reason to question the vagaries of life in his poem.

More interesting than the historical context or the emotional impact of the poem, however, is the unconventional form in which this sentiment is expressed. This is the first example in the *Man'yôshû* of the Japanese/Chinese combined forms which are common in Book five, but nearly absent from the rest of the collection. Of course, the use of Chinese passages to provide context is common throughout the collection, and the other books contain many poems which are accompanied by titles and footnotes in Chinese identifying the poet and the date or circumstances of composition.[18] However, Tabito's Chinese passage was of a different type altogether, in both function and structure.

In general, *Man'yôshû* titles and footnotes are meant to identify the poet and describe the occasion of the poem. There has been a tendency to equate this "occasion" with the circumstances of a poem's composition, but it is more accurate to say they

[17] Satô 1975.
[18] Although I occasionally refer to these notes as "footnotes," a more accurate rendering might be the literal translation of the Japanese *sachû*: "left-notes." In other words, written vertically from right to left, these

indicate the time and place of the poem's performance. Since most *Man'yôshû* poems, or songs, were essentially performed works, the context for a given work was provided by the circumstances of the poem's performance. A common example is the poetry composed on the occasion of an imperial excursion, and often at the command of the emperor. Even if an experienced poet would anticipate that a poem would be required and prepare one in advance for the occasion, the setting itself was crucial and the poem composed for the occasion would have to be appropriate to the setting and season. The context was a vital part of the performance itself.

For this reason, the scribe, compiler, or poet who put the poem to paper naturally needed to include this information if a reader were to understand it properly. In other words, the notes were an attempt to supply information that was lacking in the transformation from performance to written work. In the case of Tabito's poem, for example, this function is fulfilled by the title, "Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings by Lord Ôtomo, ruler of Dazaifu," which identifies Tabito as the poet and specifies the form of the composition as a reply to a letter, and by the footnote, which gives the date. It is thought, however, that the title was probably not written by Tabito himself, given that titles of this type, while common in the rest of the collection, are unusual in book five.[19] In addition, it is doubtful that Tabito would refer to himself in the elevated manner used in the title. It is more likely that, like most *Man'yôshû* titles, it was added by the anthologist in order to clarify the poem's context. Tabito's authorship of the Chinese passage which precedes his poem, however, is in no doubt, and in stark contrast to the

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notes appear to the left of the poems, while the titles and accompanying information appear to the right, preceding the poem.

conventional function of titles, it gives no concrete information about the context of the composition. In fact, it omits what might be considered the most vital piece of data: the identity of the one for whom the poet is mourning. Clearly, there was some function beyond the merely informational that the passage was meant to fulfill.

Aside from the distinct function of the Chinese passage, the form is also far more elaborate than typical *Man'yôshû* notes, which are usually quite simple, a straightforward outline of dates and names or a straightforward description of the occasion of performance. Tabito's passage, on the other hand, is written in parallel prose, the elegant Chinese prose form which represented exemplary writing style in Six Dynasties era Chinese prose composition. It opens with a four character phrase, followed by another four character phrase parallel to the first in grammatical structure. This is followed by two lines of six characters each, once again parallel in structure. This alternation of lines of four and six characters is called, appropriately enough, "four-six literary style" (*shiroku buntai*, 四六文体) or "aligned style" (*benreitai*, 駢儷体) and was imitated by the Japanese in later collections of Chinese poetry such as the *Kanke bunsô* and the *Wakan rôei shû*.[20] While prose of this type could not be said to be poetry, lacking the tonal harmony of Chinese poems, the composition of parallel prose was certainly an art form in itself, an appropriate medium for a formal letter between members of the Nara intelligentsia.

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[19] Harada Sadayoshi points out that there is only one other example of this type of title in the first half of book five: Prince Mishima's poem in response to the series of poems on Princess Sayo of Matsura (MYS V:883). Harada 2001, pp. 347.

[20] In Chinese, this parallel prose was referred to as *pian wen* (駢文), and its practice began in the Six Dynasties period, extending from the third to the sixth centuries. Although Japan at this time was contemporaneous with the Tang era in China, it was the Six Dynasties period that had the greatest influence on the imitation and incorporation of Chinese models in Japan during this period.

This parallel Chinese prose should not be confused with the "parallel phrases," or *taiku* (対句), found in early Japanese ritual poetry, though the development of these *taiku* was greatly influenced by the greater sophistication of Chinese parallelism. *Taiku* grew out of repeated phrases found in early folk song and ritual, and was at first little more than the repetition of a sentence with a different object. For example, consider the opening lines of the first poem in book one of the *Man'yôshû*, attributed to Emperor Yûryaku:

> With your basket, your pretty basket
> With your trowel, your pretty trowel

Compare this with Tabito's Chinese passage, divided here into grammatical units in order to clarify the structure:

> Tragic events mount up,
> dreadful tidings gather in a pile.
>
> ceaselessly [I am] overcome by heart rending sadness,
> all alone [I] shed gut wrenching tears.

Rather than simply repeating a phrase with minor changes, each phrase is paralleled by a second phrase with identical grammatical structure, each character matched to another with the same function within the sentence. This more elaborate and formalized parallelism has been identified as one of the primary influences which transformed *taiku* from mere repetition to the more sophisticated parallelism of Princess Nukada and Hitomaro.[21] For a scholar such as Tabito, who possessed a great familiarity with Chinese texts, it was simply the standard medium for communication with his peers.

In addition, this type of formal prose may have been more resistant to reading aloud as Japanese, as examined in the second chapter. The rigidity of the structure makes

it difficult to switch the grammatical order to conform to the Japanese without losing the elegance implied by the form. This means that it was far more likely that this type of Chinese was meant only to be read, rather than read aloud as Japanese, and thus suggests that we are dealing with a visual rather than an aural medium.

After the initial lines in formal parallel prose, however, the structure of Tabito's passage seems to break down into a straightforward expression of appreciation to the "two gentlemen" for their concern, then ends with a set of two four-character phrases to conclude the passage. In the original, these phrases are not simply a part of the passage itself, but are included in the form of interlinear notes, rendered in my translation using a smaller font. Interlinear notes are a kind of internal Chinese footnote or commentary written in two columns of half-size characters included within the main text itself. Typically, they would explain or expand on the elements in the main text which precedes them, usually representing the break between original text and later commentaries. The lines in Tabito's poem seem to function as a concluding remark or even an apology for his professed inability to express his feelings adequately in the preceding passage.

Kojima Noriyuki has suggested that this type of closing may have been formulaic in letter writing. The first phrase, "The brush can not fully express my words," (筆不尽言) is an obvious variation on the *Yi Jing*'s "Writing cannot fully express [spoken] language, language can not fully express meaning" (書不尽言　言不尽意).[22] As an expression of the inadequacy of words, and of the written word in particular, to express one's intention, this phrase seems particularly appropriate as the closing of a

[21] Konishi Jin'ichi offers a detailed analysis of the way various types of parallelism became a part of Hitomaro's poetry in Konishi 1984, pp. 352-6.
[22] From the "Great commentary" to the *Yi Jing*.

letter, and Kojima has located examples of both the verbatim phrase and variations on it used in this manner.[23] Given the emotional topic of Tabito's letter, this phrase captures his inability to express in words his feelings of sorrow. In fact, Kojima identifies numerous phrases in Tabito's Chinese prose that can be found in other examples of Chinese letter writing, suggesting that, as a reply to condolences, Tabito's letter may have been rather formulaic. Tabito's innovation, and the reason for the letter's inclusion in this collection, was not the Chinese passage but his inclusion of a Japanese poem along with it.

Certainly the concept of including a poem in a letter is not particularly surprising to the modern reader. After all, the poem exchange, or *sômon*, is one of the major categories of poetry in the *Man'yôshû*, and the use of elaborately decorated and scented letters to exchange love poems is one of the most enduring images from later works such as the *Tale of Genji*. However, we must be wary of applying our knowledge of Heian era written poem exchange to the poetry of the *Man'yôshû,* and remember that the process of using Chinese characters to transcribe Japanese poems was a recent innovation. In Tabito's time, poems were performed or recited, while a letter would have been written entirely in Chinese. Tabito's innovation was the use of a compound Chinese/Japanese form and the creation of a poem intended to be read rather than heard.

Modern scholars might be forgiven for making the mistake of treating *Man'yôshû* poetry as primarily written in nature. After all, from the time of the earliest *Man'yôshû* research, when the Heian era "Five Scholars of the Pear Pavilion" were faced with the task of "decoding" the complex and inconsistent language in which the poetry was transcribed, the *Man'yôshû* has been encountered primarily as a written text. In addition,

[23] Kojima 2002, pp. 209.

the language in which it is written often bears little resemblance to the spoken Japanese language. It is thus easy to forget that many of the poems, particularly the earlier ones, were not originally meant to be read at all. As examined in chapter two, Japanese poetry had its origins in early ritual song and, like song, early poetry was only realized only in the moment of performance, not in the composition or transcription.

In *Hitomaro and the Birth of Japanese Lyricism*, Ian Hideo Levy examines the growth of Japanese poetry from its origins in ritual song to its expression as a lyric form. He points to Kakinomoto no Hitomaro as the poet most responsible for developing a lyrical voice for Japanese poetry, creating "a new consciousness of verbal expression as a specifically aesthetic, rather than magical and ceremonial, medium."[24] However, for all its development as an art form, the poetry of Hitomaro retained one very important element of ritual song: it remained very much tied to the moment of performance. Even after a method was developed by which the meaning or the sounds of the Japanese language might be expressed using Chinese characters, the fundamental nature of *uta* remained centered in performance, and this is apparent in Hitomaro's method of transcription.

Most of Hitomaro's transcribed poems consist primarily of ideographs, with minimal use of additional characters to make the intended reading clear. Many of the poems from the *Hitomaro Poetry Collection* are even more detached from the spoken word, transcribed in "abbreviated form."[25] In other words, although the words

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[24] Levy 1984, p.7.

[25] The dichotomy "abbreviated form" (略体) vs. "non-abbreviated form" (非略体) was articulated with regards to Hitomaro's poetry in Aso 1972, and it has since become the standard approach to analysis of Hitomaro's transcription methods. It should be noted that, while the poems of the *Hitomaro Poetry Collection* (人麿歌集) are presumed to be of varied authorship, it is assumed that Hitomaro is responsible for the form in which they were transcribed.

transcribed are ostensibly intended to be a Japanese poem, Chinese characters are only used to represent the intended meaning, with no attempt made to represent the actual words as spoken. A typical example is *MYS* 7:1247, identified as coming from the *Hitomaro Poetry Collection*:

Ônanji	The gods Ônanji
Sukuna mikami no	and Sukunabikona
tsukurashishi	were the creators
Imose no yama o	of Mount Imose,
mirakushi yoshi mo	marvelous to gaze upon.

This Japanese pronunciation is as it was inferred by later scholars, while the original characters were far less explicit. The relationship between the characters as transcribed in the *Man'yôshû* and the subsequent interpretation of the Japanese reading is as follows:

大穴道	少　御神	作
ohonamuji	*sukuna mikamino*	*tsukurashishi*
Ônanji	Sukuna great god	created

妹勢 能　山	見　吉
imose no yama wo	*mirakushi yoshi mo*
Imose mountain	look at good

The characters used to transcribe the poem bear little resemblance to the Japanese reading. The first phrase uses the characters of an alternative name for the god Ônanji, but this kind of substitution is not unusual. It is in the third and fifth lines where there is ambiguity. The third line consists of the single character "作," the base character of the verb *tsukuru*, meaning "to create." However, in order to make it conform to the required five syllables of the *waka* form, it has been interpreted to be read as "*tsukurashishi*," an honorific in the past tense. The final line consists of only two characters, "見" (*miru*, "to see") and "吉" (*yoshi*, "auspicious"), yet the verb is conjugated to *"miraku*" "the act of gazing", and the emphatic particles *shi* and *mo* are added to create the seven syllable

phrase "*mirakushi yoshi mo.*" Needless to say, none of this inflection is obvious from the characters used and had to be inferred by later scholars relying on the context, and imposing on the characters the demands of the *tanka* syllable count. There is thus no way to be certain that this was, in fact, the reading intended by the poet.

It is this type of poem that required "decoding" by the Five Scholars of the Pear Pavilion and numerous subsequent generations of scholars, in that the meaning residing within a given set of characters could be rendered in a variety of ways, or even in a variety of languages. In fact it is only the relative simplicity of the Japanese language and the standardization of the *waka* form that allowed them to be reconstructed as *uta* at all.[26] Even then, it is only the overall meaning which survives and some parts of the poems as they appeared in performance may have been lost or replaced with others in the course of their reconstruction. Although generally accepted standard readings of most *Man'yôshû* poetry have grown over the course of repeated reinterpretations, there are still poems that continue to resist convincing interpretation.

This method of transcription, in which the written word on its own could not be used to reliably recreate the spoken poem, relied on the fact of the poems' performance to make the poems intelligible. An incomplete rendering of a poem in writing was permissible since the poem's reading was already known, and it was unnecessary to relate all the nuances of meaning since they would be revealed when the poem was performed. The written document served merely as a reminder of a poem's performance, or as a reminder of the composition for purposes of performance, but it was not, in and of itself,

[26] In fact, it is unclear how complete the standardization of syllable counts was at the time of the *Man'yôshû*'s compilation. Subsequent interpreters used a standard 5-7-5-7-7 count to devise their readings for the *waka*, but at least in the case of the abbreviated form *waka*, there is no way of knowing whether this syllable count was accurate at the time of transcription.

the poem. To all intents and purposes, it was a mnemonic device or rebus through which the poem could be recalled.

Tabito's poem, in contrast, was recorded entirely in characters used to represent single syllable, with no relation to the meaning associated with the characters. In other words, although Chinese characters were used, and although more than one character might be used to identify the same syllable, Tabito was essentially writing in *kana*:

余能奈可波　　牟奈之伎母乃等　　志流等伎子
yo no na ka ha　　mu na shi ki mo no to　　shi ru to ki shi

伊与余麻須万須　　加奈之可利家理
i yo yo ma su ma su　　ka na shi ka ri ke ri

Although there could conceivably be some confusion if a homonym was present, Tabito's transcription method is far more precise than that found in the *Hitomaro Poetry Collection* in expressing the way a poem was to be read. This was necessary in that the poem was sent along with a letter, and was thus not written with the intention that it would be performed in the manner of most poems. For this reason, the entirety of the poem's reading had to be included within the written representation of it. It was a step toward a poetry that was read rather than heard as performance, and thus a step away from poetry as song and toward poetry as literature.

Hayashida Masao calls the poetry of book five "visual literature" to contrast it with the earlier aural poetry.[27] He writes:

> 'Visual literature' is literature composed with great deal of attention paid to the reader's gaze. From the moment it comes into being, there is an awareness of the reader, and it necessarily seeks to express one's poetic intent clearly to another.[28]

[27] Literally, Hayashida's phrase translates as "literature that is seen with the eyes" (目で見る文学). Hayashida 1982, p.35.
[28] Ibid.

Ironically, one of the tools used to accomplish this was the use of a written form which more accurately expressed the specific sounds of a poem as read aloud. However, the use of Chinese characters as *kana* served to eliminate the need for a reciter. The poem was clear without being performed aloud and could be understood without an intermediary simply by viewing the text. This combined with a Chinese written form that was inherently visual created a poem that was intended primarily to be read.

Certainly I am not suggesting that Tabito and Okura were the first to truly "write" poetry, but they were the first to attempt to divorce poetry entirely from the moment of performance. Although they also composed (and performed) poetry for more conventional poetic occasions, such as that found in book three, the poetry in book five was, from the beginning, meant to be read. Indeed, most of the unique characteristics of book five which have been viewed as aberrations by most *Man'yôshû* scholars, make perfect sense if they are viewed as early experiments with creating a written poetry through the combination of Japanese poetry with Chinese forms, themes, and conventions. I will explore these characteristics, and the reasons for them, later in this chapter.

Tabito's one-to-one syllable transcription method is all the more striking in contrast with the Chinese passage which precedes it. While the poem might be said to be closer than others in attempting to duplicate spoken Japanese, with all attempts made to divorce the sound of the words from the meaning of the characters, the Chinese passage is closer than most others to written Chinese, written in the elegant parallel style. The abrupt shift to purely phonetical Japanese transcription for the poem must have been a conscious choice, particularly in the case of transcribing the Japanese terms for concepts

of foreign origin. It represented a decision to transcribe foreign concepts while refusing to employ the foreign written representation of them, and thus acted to naturalize the concepts.

The first lines of the poem, for example, read "When I understand that all within the world is only empty." The keywords "within the world" (*yo no naka*), "emptiness" (*munashi*), and "understanding" (*shiru*) are all important concepts in Buddhism, represented by the Chinese characters 世間, 空, and 知. However, Tabito eschews the form in which they were most commonly known and transcribes them instead as though they were Japanese.[29] In fact, it is unknown whether these spoken words would even have been recognizable, since they would presumably have been previously encountered in writing only as the original Chinese characters.[30] This poem also represents the earliest appearance of these concepts in the *Man'yôshû*. It is the earliest occurrence of "the emptiness of the world," as well as the philosophical concept of "understanding" or "realization." In addition, despite the common occurrence of the term *kanashi* (sadness) in the collection, this is the sole occurrence of the structure "*kanashikarikeri*," or "to come to a realization of one's sadness."

The unique language of the poem is, naturally, a reflection of the unusual subject matter. It is unusual, that is, in the context of the collection as a whole; in book five, such themes are fairly common. In Tabito's poem, the use of Buddhist terminology (albeit naturalized to the Japanese language) invites the interpretation of the poem as a

[29] While Tabito was not the first to use the phrase "*yo no naka*" in a poem, his sequence is the first example of its usage in the Buddhist sense, in combination with "emptiness."
[30] Of course, the pronunciation would presumably have been familiar from the practice of reading aloud of written Chinese as though it were Japanese, using *kundoku*, as outlined in the previous chapter. Still, viewing the transcription of the terms in *kana* must have been something akin to seeing words spelled phonetically.

philosophical exploration of sorrow rather than simply a personal statement of individual loss. The knowledge that the world is empty is supposed to be a key to achieving Buddhist release, but to one who has faced the tragedies Tabito has, that knowledge offers no comfort and instead makes him realize the true depth of his sadness.

The philosophical exploration made possible by these more complex forms will be examined in more detail in relation to Okura's poetry in this and the next chapter. For now, suffice it to say that this level of complexity is made possible by Tabito's combination of Chinese and Japanese forms. The Chinese prose and the Japanese poem each fulfill a distinct function within the composition, but they come together to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The text of the letter expresses Tabito's great sadness, but on its own it seems stilted and formulaic, simply a collection of conventional Chinese expressions on grief. In fact, Imura Tetsuo has suggested that the phrase "the brush cannot express my words" with which Tabito makes the transition from prose to poetry may reflect Tabito's inability to fully express his intention with the extreme outpouring of grief of the Chinese passage. In order to express a more complex emotion, Tabito was forced to use a combination of Chinese and Japanese forms.[31] Only by combining the expressive potential of two forms could Tabito fully express his intended meaning. In fact, the link between the prose and poem is so strong that some scholars have treated it as a *jobun*, or preface to the poem, in the manner of Okura's preface-poem combinations later in book five.[32] The two halves complement each other, the Chinese prose providing the context necessary to interpret the poem as Tabito's fruitless search for comfort in the face of mounting tragedy.

[31] Imura 1990, p. 63.

It might be said that Tabito used the text of the letter to provide the context that was lacking in the poem's not being performed. But unlike the context provided by conventional titles and notes, the context provided was a psychological one. Rather than explaining the circumstances which led to the poem's composition, Tabito prefaced his poem with an outpouring of grief. He provided a context by describing his emotional state in writing the poem rather than the physical circumstances of performance, and thus further divorced the poem from the occasion of its performance.

Thus, the poem which opens book five is a series of firsts, many of which will come to characterize book five as a whole. It is the earliest example of the combined Chinese/Japanese form which is so prevalent in the book, as well as the first letter to be included in the collection. It is also the first mention of the phrase *yo no naka* and the Buddhist philosophy that dominates book five. And, as we have seen, it is one of the first steps toward creating poetry as a written art form rather than an oral one. In addition, the next series of experimental poems by Okura seem to be written in direct response to Tabito's composition, building on its technique to further develop the Chinese/Japanese compound form. It is Tabito's poem which provides the impetus for the experimentation that defines the Tsukushi poetry group, and its placement here at the head of book five is thus entirely appropriate.

[32] Needless to say, if the passage is a *jobun*, it is not identified as such by Tabito in the way Okura included the *jobun* in his titles. However, the function is similar, as we will see when we examine Okura's poems.

A Japanese Elegy

Immediately following Tabito's "Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings" is a combined form by Okura consisting of a Chinese prose passage, a Chinese poem, a *chôka*, and five *hanka*. The two Chinese works have no title, and are given no number in modern classifications of the collection, and they are thus usually referred to through reference to their placement before the *chôka*, *Yamato Banka* ("A Japanese Elegy").[33] The date of this sequence and its contents suggest that it was written as a direct response to Tabito's poem, perhaps as Okura's expression of sympathy with the grief expressed by Tabito.

Although the subject of the poem was originally thought to be the death of Okura's own wife, the fact that Okura's poem is thought to be a reply to Tabito has naturally cast this interpretation into doubt.[34] The poem is now usually interpreted as a *daisaku* (代作), a poem written imagining oneself in the persona of another, in this case Tabito grieving for his wife. This, in turn, has given rise to speculation that Okura himself was one of the "two gentlemen" referred to in Tabito's Chinese prose passage. Whether or not this is the case, Okura almost certainly had access to the letter at some point, as he uses language which echoes that used by Tabito. While it might seem unusual that Okura would have seen a letter sent to someone else, it is thought that letters

[33] The title of this poem is written 日本挽歌, and it is usually referred to by the modern pronunciation of that title, *Nihon Banka*. Since the title is ostensibly Chinese, and thus meaningful primarily in writing, either Japanese rendering stands only as a convenience. However, because the characters 日本 are more commonly read as "*Yamato*" within several *Man'yôshû* poems, I have chosen to render it in this way.

[34] Given the timing of the poem's composition and its placement following Tabito's expression of grief in book five, there is far more evidence for the position that the poem refers to Tabito's wife. In contrast, there is no evidence that Okura had recently lost a wife, and this interpretation is supported only by the belief that Okura's first-person account is too emotional and immediate to have been written for another. Given the evidence of Okura's ability with *daisaku*, this argument is unconvincing.

at this time were frequently copied and circulated, a practice that will be addressed later.

For now, we turn to the composition itself:

I have heard,
that the rise and fall of the four births[35] is as empty as a dream
and the aimless flow through the three realms[36] is as endless as a ring.
Thus,
Great Yuima[37] within his square chamber
was afflicted with the misery of illness
Benevolent Shaka[38] sitting in the sal forest
could not avoid the agony of death.
Thus we know,
[if] these two enlightened sages
could not forestall the arrival of the powerful one[39]
in the three thousand worlds,[40]
who could flee the coming of the darkness?
The two rats[41] scramble, racing each other
[gone] like the dawn flight of a bird past the eyes.[42]
The four serpents[43] writhe, fighting each other,
[gone] like the evening run of a horse seen through a crack.[44]
Oh such suffering!

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[35] The "four births" refers to all life on the planet, in the form of birth from the womb (mammals), from eggs (birds), from moisture (fish, frogs, etc.) and through metamorphosis (butterflies, etc.). In tracking this and subsequent references to Chinese philosophy, I have referred to multiple commentaries on the *Man'yôshû*, but am most deeply indebted to the copious notes of Itô Haku's *Man'yôshû shakuchû* vol. 5 and Imura Tetsuo's *Man'yôshû zenchû* vol. 5.

[36] The "three realms" refers to the cycle of worlds into which human beings are endlessly reborn: the world of desire (in which people respond blindly to their desires), the world of vision (above the world of desire, but still centered on the physical form) and the world without vision (the highest realm, in which the spirit is free of the physical body).

[37] Vimalakîrti

[38] 'Sâkyamuni

[39] "The powerful one" is Death, a reference to *Zhuang zi* 6, which speaks of the foolishness of attempting to evade death: "One may hide one's boat in the valley or hide a mountain in the swamp, but in the middle of the night a powerful man hefts them up and takes them away and the foolish one wonders why it has happened."

[40] There are three tiers of a thousand worlds each, of which this world is only one. It is the greater world, or everything in the universe.

[41] A black and a white mouse in an eternal chase are a metaphor for the cycle of day and night in various Buddhist texts, including the *Jinguangming zuishengwang jing* (*Kongômyô saishô ô kyô* – 金光明最勝王経. *TT* 665.). It can also be found listed as a metaphor in the *Foshuo piyu jing* (*Classic of Buddhist Simile*).

[42] A bird's flight past the eyes is a metaphor for the quick passage of time, with examples present in the "miscellaneous poems" section of *Wen xuan* book 29.

[43] The four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind make up the human body, but because they are eternally consuming each other, the body falls into sickness and death. The term is also seen in the *bussokusekika* poems of Yakushi Temple and can be found in the *Foshuo piyu jing* (*Classic of Buddhist Simile*).

[44] Like the bird's flight, this is a metaphor for the swift passage of time. The source of this metaphor is the *Zhuangzi*, though it may also be found in numerous other sources, including the *Shi ji* and the *Li ji*.

The rosy face passed away with the woman's three duties.[45]
The white skin destroyed forever with the wife's four virtues.[46]
How could one know
that despite the vow to grow old together
one must live half one's life flying alone?[47]
In the orchid chamber, the screens were set in vain,
and the gut-wrenching sadness grows ever more painful.
At her pillowed head, the bright mirror was hung to no purpose,
and the bamboo-staining tears flow ever more freely.
Once the gate to the spring is shut[48]
There is no way to meet again.
Oh such sadness!

The rushing torrent of the river of love has already disappeared.
To the agonizing torture of the sea of pain I will not be bound.
From now on I will shun this impure world,
by the Buddha's vow I entrust my life to paradise.

A Japanese Elegy - one poem

ôkimi no	To our great lord's
tô no mikado to	remote provincial outpost,
shiranu hi	to far Tsukushi,
Tsukushi no kuni ni	this unknown land,[49]
naku ko nasu	like a crying child
shitaikimashite	she insisted she follow me,
iki dani mo	yet there was not even
imada yasumezu	a moment to catch her breath,
toshitsuki mo	not years, nor months
imada araneba	had yet had time to pass,
kokoro yu mo	more quickly than I
omowanu aida ni	could ever have expected,
uchinabiki	she crumpled
koyashinure	and passed away.

[45] The Confucian ideal that a woman must obey her father when she is young, her husband in middle age and her son when she is elderly are present in numerous texts, including the *Li ji* and the *Yi li*.
[46] Like the three duties, these are Confucian ideals of womanhood, that a wife must be chaste, reserved in speech, graceful and skilled, found in the *Li ji* and *Zhou li*, among many other examples.
[47] The ostensible source for the image of a bird separated from its flock and forced to fly on alone is Tao Qian's poem "Drinking Wine." However, Kojima Noriyuki has suggested that a more likely source was Emperor Liang Jianwendi's poem "Gazing at a lone goose in flight," which is quoted in the *Yi wen lei ju* collection of quotes. Okura's probable reliance on collections of this sort will be examined in more detail in chapter four.
[48] This is the gate to the "yellow spring," or death.
[49] *Shiranu hi* is a *makurakotoba*, a set epithet of uncertain meaning used as a modifier for Tsukushi. Possible interpretations include "land of mysterious fire" and "land of countless days," and I have elected to focus on the sense of the unknown in my translation rather than rendering it literally.

iwamu sube
semu sube shirani
iwaki o mo
toisake shirazu
ie naraba
katachi wa aramu o
urameshiki
imo no mikoto no
are o ba mo
ika ni seyo to ka
niodori no
futari narabi i
kataraishi
kokoro somukite
ie zakari imasu

What can I say?
I know not what to do.
And I do not know
how to ask the rocks and trees.
If she had stayed home
might she still have mortal form?
How could you be
so cruel, my honored wife?
What was it
you would have had me do?
Like a pair of grebes
sitting side by side
we spoke of our feelings,
yet you turned your back on them
and abandoned our home.

Envoys

ie ni yukite
ika ni ka a ga semu
makurazuku
tsuma ya sabushiku
omôyubeshi mo

I may return home,
but what good would it do?
The pillows laid out
in our marital house will only
make me feel longing for her.

hashikiyoshi
kaku nomi kara ni
shitaikoshi
imo ga kokoro no
sube mo subenasa

Oh such sadness
that it should come to this!
My wife's feelings
as she accompanied me here
have all come to nothing.

kuyashi ka mo
kaku shiramaseba
ao ni yoshi
kunuchi koto goto
misemashi mono o

How I regret it!
Had I only known,
I would have shown her
everything there was to see
in the land of the blue earth.[50]

imo ga mishi
ôchi no hana wa
chirinu beshi
wa ga naku namida
imada hinaku ni

Bead tree blossoms
my wife once gazed upon
must have scattered,
though the tears I shed
have still not yet dried.

[50] *Ao ni yoshi* is a *makurakotoba* for *kunuchi*, "land," and more specifically, for Nara itself. Thus the land the poet wishes he had time to show his wife is not Tsukushi, but home in the capital.

Ônoyama	On Mt. Ônо
kiri tachiwataru	the rising fog covers all.
wa ga nageku	Moved by the wind
oki sono kaze ni	of my heartbroken sighs
kiri tachiwataru	the rising fog covers all.

Presented on the twenty first day, seventh month, fifth year of Jinki (728) *by the governor of Chikuzen Yamanoue Okura*

The first question raised by the form of the poem is, naturally, how to consider the relationship between the Chinese essay and poem, and the Japanese poems. The placement of the title and the specific designation "one poem" may suggest that the title refers only to the *chôka*. However, the date of presentation identified in the final note is generally accepted to refer to the entire sequence, and the common themes make it clear that some type of relationship was intended. Also, given the position of the sequence immediately following Tabito's experimentation with the combined Chinese/Japanese form, it makes sense to give the Chinese passages serious consideration in interpreting the poem.

It is ironic then, that this passage was often elided when discussing the poem prior to the mid-twentieth century. Although Keichû examined it in some detail in the *Man'yô Daishôki*, beginning with the mid-nineteenth century *Man'yôshû kogi* (万葉集古義) it began to be dismissed as unimportant, and this continued to be the dominant view until the postwar period.[51] After all, if the *Man'yôshû* was important due to its nature as a repository of the earliest Japanese poetry, works in Chinese could be dismissed as irrelevant. Since it was not itself a Japanese poem, it remained without a number in the various systems devised to classify Japanese poetry in the turn of the century effort to organize Japan's vast body of literary works into a coherent literary history. Resisting

easy classification, it was simply dismissed. In fact, early translations of the *Man'yôshû* into English left it out entirely, not even noting that such an essay existed.[52]

Even after the Chinese essay began to be considered more seriously, its function with relation to the poem remained in doubt. Modern commentaries identify it variously as a "letter of condolence"[53] in the manner of the letter to which Tabito was replying in the previous poem, or a "preface" in the manner of the prefaces to Okura's three compositions at Kama.[54] Of course, even those who believe the Chinese works should not be viewed as such a fundamental part of the sequence now generally accept that it is intimately tied to the meaning of the poems, and it is impossible to fully understand one without the other.

The essay is roughly divided into two halves by content. In the first half, Okura laments the inevitability of death in a general philosophical sense, through reference to Buddhist images of impermanence and the transience of life. In the second half, the tone becomes more specific, still filled with Chinese allusions but directed toward a more personal expression of grief at the loss of one's wife. In fact, the theme of the second half of the Chinese essay parallels that of the *chôka*, supporting the view that they are linked. Throughout the essay, Okura makes liberal use of allusions to Chinese philosophical texts, whether Buddhist sutras, Daoist texts, or Confucian treatises, and it is in these allusions that we may attempt to define the form Okura intended.

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[51] Tetsuno 2000, p. 36.
[52] This is naturally true of the 1967 H.H. Honda translation, which includes none of the Chinese passages that were present in the work, but it is also true of the 1940 Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkôkai translation, which translates the Chinese prefaces of Okura's three compositions at Kama, but does not include this passage in the case of *Yamato banka*.
[53] 弔問の書簡文, this according to Kubota Utsuho's *Man'yôshû hyôshaku*.
[54] In Tsuchiya Fumiaki's *Man'yôshû shichû*. If the Chinese passage was intended as a preface, it is not identified as such, unlike the prefaces to the Kama compositions. These compositions will be examined in the next chapter.

Since Kojima Noriyuki first began to examine possible sources for the allusions and the style of the essay, scholars have noted several parallels between Okura's composition and works from the *Wen xuan*. These include the *lei* (誄, dirges), the *beiwen* (碑文, epitaphs), and the *ai* (哀, laments). Specifically, Kojima noted the similarity of the opening line of Okura's essay with Wang Jianqi's "Epitaph at Toutuo temple" (*Toutuosi beiwen*: 頭陀寺碑文; *Wen xuan* 59).[55] Although this alone would certainly not constitute proof of influence, Imura Tetsuo has noted that Li Shan's commentary on this piece in the *Wen xuan* may also have influenced Okura. The commentary contains a quote of the same Zhuangzi passage describing death as "the powerful one," which Okura quotes in his essay.[56] The commentary also descibes the phrase "river of love" (愛河) which Okura uses in his Chinese poem.[57] While this is certainly strong evidence that Okura looked to this piece for inspiration, there is no indication that Okura was actually attempting to adopt the *beiwen* form.

Kojima also noted the similarity of the two thematic sections of Okura's essay to Xie Zhuang's dirge *Song Li Wuxuan guifei lei* (宋李武宣貴妃誄; *Wen xuan* 57) and Yan Yanzhi's examination essay lament *Songwen huangdi yuanhuanghou ai cewen* (宋文皇帝元皇后哀策文; *Wen xuan* 57).[58] However, Haga Norio notes that the two Chinese forms were written in strict four character lines, while Okura followed 4-6 parallel prose. In addition, there was a disjuncture between the language typically found in *lei* and *ai cewen* forms and that used by Okura.[59] Thus, although many of the

[55] Kojima 1962, v. 2.
[56] Imura 1984 vol. 5, p.23.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Kojima 1962, v. 2.
[59] Haga 1973.

suggested sources may have served as partial inspiration for Okura's essay, it is difficult to attribute too much influence to any one source.

Rather than a literary Chinese source such as the *Wen xuan*, Haga has pointed out similarities between the first half of Okura's essay and Buddhist prayer services for the deceased.[60] This interpretation, in turn, inspired Imura Tetsuo to note that the date of Okura's composition might correspond to the memorial on the one hundredth day following the death of Tabito's wife and to suggest that Okura composed the poem sequence for that very purpose.[61] Given the lack of specificity regarding the date of Tabito's wife's death, this is certainly conceivable, but it is impossible to confirm. Also, as Tetsuno Masahiro points out, existing records of prayers of this type necessarily contain certain elements that are missing from Okura's essay, most importantly the name of the deceased.[62] It also lacks the formulaic phrases in praise of the Buddha that would necessarily have been a part of a memorial service, it is not marked as prayers of this type usually are, and it is unusual in its combination with a poem.[63] Thus, although Okura might have had certain elements of Buddhist prayer for the dead in mind as he composed, the definition is not sufficient to understand the work.

In the end, the images Okura used were simply too varied and present in too many sources for it to be possible to identify a single source of inspiration. As Nakanishi Susumu suggests:

> Okura responded to the general philosophical knowledge of the literati of the time, chose his words accordingly, and used a proper literary form to write down

[60] Ibid.
[61] *Zenshû*, pp.35-7.
[62] Tetsuno 2000, p. 40.
[63] Ibid.

> his essay on mourning. Why can't we simply accept that a single poetic source on which Okura based his entire poem probably did not exist?[64]

While it is not necessarily surprising that a scholar with Okura's familiarity with Chinese texts would have been able to combine them in this way, it was this innovation which set him apart from his contemporaries. For all the elegance of the Chinese essays used to preface poems in the *Kaifûsô*, many consisted almost entirely of lines reproduced from Chinese texts and were thus unable to move beyond them. Okura, on the other hand, was drawing on his knowledge of Chinese sources, but turning those sources toward his own ends to create a new form to express his intended meaning. And as in Tabito's poem, the experimental form allowed a much deeper and more original meaning to be expressed than was possible in more conventional poetic forms.

With the first half of his essay, Okura sets up a Buddhist context in which to read the rest of the sequence, but this is not the religious Buddhism of praise for the Buddha and prayer for rebirth. It is the philosophical Buddhism which attempts to recognize the impermanence and uncertainty of the world. In Okura's essay, not even enlightened beings are immune to the throes of sickness and death, much less mere mortals.[65] All effort to escape is hopeless. Then, with the exclamation "oh, such suffering," Okura's attitude changes from a philosophical reflection on the world's sadness to an intense personal experience of sorrow. Okura seems to be speaking directly to the sentiments expressed by Tabito in his poem, that his personal sorrow is only deepened by the

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[64] Nakanishi 1973, p. 221.

[65] In fact, Okura might be said to err in his characterization of the two saints' suffering. In describing Sâkyamuni's death, he uses the term *naion* (泥洹), an unconventional term usually taken to mean the same as *nehan* (涅槃), or *nirvana*. Since this is the state of enlightenment that would free one from the physical world of suffering, there should be no "agony of death" associated with *naion*. It is unclear whether this reflects a lack of understanding on Okura's part about the basic philosophical concepts, or whether this is an intentional playing with Buddhist concepts of the type I will examine in chapter four.

knowledge that it is a reflection of the sorrow of the world. That he is responding directly to Tabito is also supported by his use of the phrase "gut-wrenching sadness," a parallel to the "gut-wrenching tears" of Tabito's essay. He ends the essay with another exclamation, but this time he changes his cry from "suffering" (痛, *itawashiki*) to "sadness" (哀, *kanashiki*). While the latter's reflection of the personal emotional state accords well with the personal nature of the second half, it also echoes the final "*kanashikarikeri*" of Tabito's poem: "I come to know despair."

Whether or not the essay is linked to Okura's *chôka*, there is no doubt that it is connected to the Chinese poem which immediately follows it, and if the essay cannot truly be called a preface to *Yamato banka*, it can at least be considered a preface to the poem. Like the essay, the Chinese poem is heavy with Buddhist keywords and allusions, and like the essay, they are general enough that it is next to impossible to find a single source. There is also some doubt regarding what meaning Okura is assuming for several of the Buddhist concepts and what the resulting overall meaning of the poem is.

The first problematic term is the "river of love" (愛河). While it is obviously intended to parallel the phrase "sea of pain" (苦海), it is unclear whether or not these two terms are intended to be contrastive or complementary. While most commentators have treated "love" simply as love for the wife that has passed away, it must be remembered that love in the Buddhist sense frequently refers to attachment. Love is simply one aspect of the desire which binds us to the world of illusion and keeps us from achieving enlightenment. The "river of love" has thus been used as a metaphor for the danger of sinking into and drowning in desire.[66] In fact, this is how the term is described by Li

[66] Haga 1973, p. 43.

Shan in his *Wen xuan* commentary to the aforementioned poem by Wang Jianqi. In this sense, the "river of love" and the "sea of pain" are the same thing. However, since Okura also seems unclear on the distinction between the two possible meanings of the word "love" in his preface to "Poem Thinking of Children,"[67] it is unclear which sense of the term he is using here. If we interpret the first line as referring to the love for one's wife, then the disappearance of that love would naturally refer to the death of one's wife. On the other hand, if we are referring to the disappearance of desire, then the subject is unclear. It may be Tabito's wife who, having died, is free from the world of desire, or it may be Tabito himself, with nothing left to tie him to the secular world since his wife has died.[68]

The next line is equally problematic. The final phrase, which I translated as "will not be bound" (無結) has also resulted in multiple interpretations. Usually, *musubu* (結) in a Buddhist context means to be tangled up in desire and thus bound to the suffering of the world, unable to escape. However, the sense of being "not bound" to the sea of pain has conflicted with some commentators' interpretations of the poem, and they have translated it instead as "without end" or "never again bound to life."[69] If we interpret the first line as referring to freedom from temptation, though, it makes sense to treat this also as release from the world of suffering. In this case, the first two lines basically repeat the same idea that death brings a release from attachment to the world, either for Tabito's wife or for Tabito himself.

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[67] *MYS* V:802-3. In fact, the interpretation of this poem also hinges on the interpretation of the term "love." This poem sequence is examined in detail in the next chapter.
[68] Tetsuno 2000, p. 43.
[69] From *Man'yôshû shinkô* and *Man'yôshû ryakkai*, respectively. These and other interpretations are outlined in Tetsuno 2000, p. 41.

Given this interpretation, the poem's overall meaning centers on death as an opportunity for Buddhist enlightenment. If the subject of the poem is taken to be Tabito's wife, then death is imagined as a release, the only possibility of freedom from the pain of the world. On the other hand, if the subject is Tabito himself, then the death of his wife can be viewed as an opportunity to reject the secular world and embrace Buddhism. If love for one's wife is the only attachment keeping one bound to this world, the wife's death can be the impetus to break those ties once and for all.

The relationship between the preface and the poem, then, is that between suffering and the release from that suffering. The preface acts as a direct response to Tabito's, affirming the personal sorrow Tabito is feeling as well as the larger suffering of the world, of which Tabito's own pain is simply a part. The poem then provides the answer that Tabito was unable to find on his own. If thinking of the suffering of the world only serves to remind Tabito all the more of his pain, then Okura needs to remind him of the other side of Buddhism: the hope for release from that suffering. Rather than simply offering a prayer for the repose of a departed spirit, as Imura posits, the combination of preface and poem provides a ray of hope for the one who was left alone.

Following the poem comes the title, "A Japanese Elegy – One Poem" (*Yamato Banka isshu*). As mentioned earlier, this placement raises the question of whether or not the Chinese pieces are to be considered a part of the same sequence, but the title is unusual for other reasons as well. First, it specifies "one poem" despite the presence of multiple *hanka*. Of course, there were no standards defining whether or not *hanka* would be specifically listed, and there are other examples within the *Man'yôshû* of titles which mention only the *chôka* despite the presence of *hanka*. Still, the *hanka* are definitely

considered to be of a set with the *chôka*, and thus the similar lack of identification of the Chinese passages does not necessarily preclude their being considered part of the same sequence. This is particularly true if we accept the common wisdom that the date at the end of the *hanka* is meant to refer to everything which precedes it, including the Chinese essay.

The title itself is also unusual. For example, although the *banka* is one of the three major genres of Man'yôshû poetry, and sections of the various books are designated with the heading *banka*, this is the first case of a poet actually identifying his poem as a *banka* in the title.[70] In fact, it has been suggested that Okura's was the first poem to actually be composed as a *banka*. This distinction may be largely a semantic one, since Okura is often credited with borrowing the genre names *sômon*, *zôka*, and *banka* from the *Wen xuan* for use in his collection, the *Ruiju karin*, which in turn inspired the compilers of the *Man'yôshû* to use the same headings.[71] Thus, even though other Japanese poets' laments and elegies would be classified under this heading in the process of the anthologization of the *Man'yôshû*, Okura can be considered the first to compose a poem consciously as a *banka*.

Okura's title also suggests that he was consciously reacting against foreign models in the creation of his *banka*. The inclusion of the designator "*Yamato*" in the title has long been interpreted as designed to specifically identify it as a Japanese rather than a Chinese *banka*, suggesting an awareness of the Chinese model in the process of composition.[72] Of course, as Kitano Tôru has noted, there is little in Okura's poem to

[70] The only other example is Ôtomo Yakamochi's *chôka* entitled simply "banka" – *MYS* XIX: 4214-4216.
[71] Kitano 1993, p. 98.
[72] First suggested by Keichû in his *Man'yô Daishôki*.

identify it with the conventions of the *wange* (挽歌) form found in the *Wen xuan*.[73] It thus seems that Okura was not attempting to create a Japanese poem in imitation of the Chinese form, but rather to create a new Japanese form on the same theme. At the same time, he was not simply creating another Japanese elegiac poem of the type that had been composed earlier by Hitomaro and which would later be classified as *banka*. If that had been his intent, the self-conscious title would not have been necessary, and the poem could simply have been included in another section under the *banka* heading. Rather, Okura was reacting against foreign models to create a new form different from the Japanese laments and elegies which had come before.

Okura's titling of the work in this manner is important also in that it represents a break with previously held concepts of poetry as song. As outlined earlier, most *Man'yôshû* titles were added by the compiler rather than the poet, and their purpose was to describe the occasion of performance. Okura's title, in contrast, describes not the occasion for the poem, but its theme, in the manner of the titles of *fu* (賦) poetry of the *Wen xuan*.[74] As such, it removes the poem one step further from the earlier reliance on performance to create a poem centered on Okura's individual creative impulse, and expressed as a written poem. As Mori Asao puts it:

> For a poem, having a title meant that the poet was conscious of a theme for the poem at the time of its composition. And through that awareness of theme, it became possible for the poem to move beyond the circumstances surrounding the poet at the time of composition ... this necessarily allowed the poem to free itself from the characteristics of folk song which defined both its origins and its fundamental nature, and made it possible for the poem to move beyond those limitations ... awareness of an individual theme in composition is in opposition to

[73] Kitano 1993, pp. 93-7.
[74] Mori 1983, p. 35.

> the concepts which guided folk song composition, which were of a communal, collective nature. We might refer to it as the poet's individualism.[75]

Thus, although there were certainly topics which guided the composition of folk song, these were necessarily tied to the moment of performance, naturally including the time and occasion, but also the presence of the "audience" for the poem. Consciously crafting a poem on a specific theme shifted the context for the poem away from the communal occasion of performance and toward the poet's psychological state. While folk song emerged through the interaction of poet and listener, guided by the demands of the occasion, poetry as literature was founded on the individual poet's reflection and conscious creation of an original work, what Mori calls "creative awareness,"[76] focused on the poem as composition but divorced from the moment of performance and thus capable of a wider range of expression.

Doubtless, composition of this type was possible due to Okura's experience not only as poet, but as scholar and anthologist. Okura's familiarity with Chinese literature, his experience of compiling the *Ruijû karin*, and his time acting as tutor to the Crown Prince provided occasions not merely to compose poetry, but to reflect on the nature of poetry. In sitting down to compose a *banka*, he thus drew on his knowledge of dirges, laments, and epitaphs from Chinese literature; Buddhist prayer and memorial services; as well as the body of poems he himself had classified as *banka* in the past. And in creating not merely a *banka*, but a Yamato *banka*, he was consciously acting to create a Japanese form on par with the Chinese examples. The act of poetry composition was a conscious act of creation of a work of literature rather than simply participation in an existing framework of song composition and performance

[75] Ibid., p.31.

This result of this "creative awareness" is that *Yamato Banka*, the first *chôka* written by Okura, is very different from any *chôka* that came before. More specifically, it represents an extreme departure, both in form and theme, from the *chôka* of Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, widely regarded and often imitated as the master of the *chôka* form. Hitomaro's *chôka* tend to follow a set pattern. The first half of the poem tends to be descriptive, followed by an expression of lyrical feeling. In addition, all of the sixteen *chôka* reliably attributed to him contain a reference to a person (usually the emperor), a time (usually historical), or a place (usually in the form of *jo*, or prefatory comments) in the opening lines.[77] In this, Hitomaro's poetry is a direct descendent of ritual poetry and folk song. The words of praise for the emperor are typical of court ceremonies, the mention of place is similar to that found in ritualistic *kunimi* (land viewing) poems, and the reference to historical time is present in the creation myths of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, and the legends preserved in the *Fudoki*.[78] In Okura's poetry, on the other hand, these elements are present only in the most ritualistic examples, such as the "Poem of Wishing Good Journey and Good Return" (V:894) or "Song in Praise of Heart-Calming Stones" (V:813). While Hitomaro's poetry does introduce a lyrical voice into what had been a purely ritualistic genre, his poetry still represents a continuation of that tradition. Okura represents a break from it. To quote Mori once again:

> The distinction between Hitomaro and Okura is in the difference between a lyrical poet such as Hitomaro, with a deep connection to the ceremonial world of the imperial court, and a scholarly poet such as Okura, involved in the intellectual experiment of transplanting continental literature.[79]

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[76] 創作意識, Ibid., p.32.
[77] Ibid., pp. 35-6.
[78] Ibid., pp. 36-7.
[79] Ibid., p. 39.

It was only through the incorporation of foreign concepts of literature that Okura was able to move beyond the limitations of theme and the oral focus of ritual poetry to create Japanese poetry that was able to explore psychological depth.

This intellectual depth is apparent in *Yamato Banka*. As mentioned earlier, Okura's *chôka* coincides with the second half of the Chinese essay, but it simultaneously adds a second layer of depth, in the form of Tabito's imagined feelings of regret and betrayal. While Tabito's own poem sequence and Okura's essay express only hopeless sadness, and Okura's Chinese poem seems to seek a way to accept the situation, the *chôka* more closely resembles one of the other modern stages of grief: anger at the loved one who has died. In language that is far removed from the praise that typifies most *banka*, the poem blames the wife's death on her own insistence that she accompany Tabito to Tsukushi. All the regret that she might have lived if she had not come with him is directed at his wife, insisting "like a crying child" that she not be left behind only to "turn her back" on the marriage vow and "abandon" their home. Tabito is left to simply wonder "what would you have had me do?" The contradiction between his love and the anger he feels is apparent in the lines "*urameshiki imo no mikoto no*" – "cruel, honored wife." This shows a far more sophisticated understanding of the grieving process than simple exclamations of sorrow could possibly convey, and there is little wonder that many have assumed that Okura must have been speaking of his own experience of grief rather than imagining himself in the persona of Tabito.

Okura may have been drawing on an earlier personal experience of grief in writing his *daisaku*, but he was also able to create a feeling of sympathy with Tabito through their shared sense of homesickness at being so far from the capital. The concept

of "home" (家) is extremely important in both the *chôka* and the *hanka* which follow it, and the feeling of being far from home is used to symbolize the grief at losing one's wife, in many ways the symbol of that home.[80] It appears twice in the *chôka*, first as an expression of regret, that if only his wife had stayed home (in the capital) then her "form" might still exist (*katachi wa aramu o*). She would not be with him, but at least he would still know that she existed. Instead, she "abandoned home," first by insisting that she accompany him to the far outpost of Tsukushi, and then with her death. Like Okura, Tabito was already far removed from home with his posting in Tsukushi, and with the death of his wife, there is no longer any home to which he can return.

This theme continues with Okura's first *hanka*, as he imagines his subject having to return home without his wife. However, it seems that he has moved on from his initial feelings of betrayal and is now resigned to the fact that no one is to blame. The regrets expressed in the *chôka* continue in the *hanka*, but there is no longer any sign of the anger and resentment. He regrets that his wife's feelings in wanting to join him ended this way, but he no longer directs his anger at her or blames her for her feelings. Although the poems were supposedly all presented at the same time, there is a sense in the final two *hanka* that time has passed and, though there is still sorrow, the feelings have had time to lose their intensity, giving way once again to a sense of the uncertainty of the world.[81] Perhaps Okura is giving Tabito the benefit of his experience, assuring him that the intense grief he feels will indeed pass with time.

It should be noted that, in addition to the unconventional character of the *chôka* itself, it was also unheard of to include so many *hanka* along with it, and it appears that

[80] Tetsuno 2000, pp. 44-5.
[81] Tairadate 1998.

Okura was experimenting with the function of the *hanka* as well. In general, the *function* of a *hanka* is to repeat the main point of the longer poem which precedes it, distilling the central meaning into a single *tanka*. Its origins are unclear, but they may have come from the Chinese *luan* (乱), short passages which followed the long *fu* (賦) poetic form and summed up the meaning of the preceding poem.[82] The *fanci* (反辞) which were a part of some Chinese *fu* sequences is also a possibility.[83] If, as some have speculated, the *chôka* form is itself derived from the long Chinese *fu* form, the appending of a Japanese version of the *luan* or *fanci* in the manner of those attached to a *fu* would not be unreasonable. However, as Kojima notes, the use of *hanka* emerged quite early in the development of the *chôka* form, long before the length increased and it was recognized as the equivalent of the *fu*.[84] A third possible source is the Korean *hugu* (後句), additional verses appended to the *hyangga* (鄕歌) folk songs to repeat or emphasize its central meaning.[85] Like these precursors, the *hanka* generally served to repeat, or summarize, what had come before, and added little, if anything, to the meaning of the *chôka*.

The numerous *hanka* included with Okura's poem, on the other hand, serve to expand and elaborate on the central meaning rather than simply reiterating it. While Hitomaro's *hanka* are often very formulaic, practically interchangeable between different *chôka*, Okura's deal with specific aspects of earlier expressed themes, but with a new emotion attached. And where *hanka* frequently seem to be nothing more than formulaic addenda, contributing little to the overall meaning, Okura's fulfill a specific function

[82] Eight examples of *fu* followed by *luan* are found in the *Wen xuan*. Konishi 1984, p.332.
[83] Tatsumi 1987, p. 407. However, Nakanishi Susumu notes that the nature of the *fanci* as seen in the *Xunzi* differs in usage from the *hanka*. Nakanishi 1963, pp. 602.
[84] Kojima 1984, p. 332.
[85] Ibid.

within the larger poetry sequence, allowing the complexities of a changing rather than static emotion to be expressed. Like that of the Chinese preface and poem which precedes the *chôka*, the message of the *hanka* needs to be considered a fundamental element of the poetry sequence as a whole.

Through the compound form, Okura is able to present an extremely complex, and often seemingly contradictory, message to Tabito to console him on the loss of his wife. The Chinese preface echoes Tabito's feelings of grief and hopelessness with the world, validating his emotions. The Chinese poem goes on to remind him that, even in the uncertainty and sorrow of the world, there is hope for escape from it. The *chôka* then reaffirms the feelings of sorrow presented in the preface, and adds to them the irrational and contradictory anger and resentment that Tabito must be feeling toward his wife, expressed through the alienation of being far from home. Finally, with the *hanka*, Okura imparts a sense of resignation and a recognition that, with all its uncertainty and sadness, life does go on. The intense feelings of the preface are real, but they are temporary.

Needless to say, this level of intellectual sophistication was inconceivable in Japanese poetry before Okura. It is certainly far more than simply a Buddhist prayer for the repose of the deceased. Okura's ability to achieve this was due, in part, to his facility with Chinese enabling him to compose not merely in imitation of continental works, but in the creation of original sentiment. But it was also due to the nature of the compound form in which he worked, which allowed different contexts to be built and different emotions to be evoked by different literary forms fulfilling specific roles in a larger whole.

This potential of the compound form for expressing complex psychological and philosophical concepts will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to examining the reasons for the transformation of poetry from a primarily oral to a written form, and the rationale for their grouping together in book five.

Japanese Poetry as a Written Form

It is clear that the compound Chinese/Japanese form which characterizes book five represents a break with existing convention, but what was the reason for this break? Certainly, the two poets' ability with Chinese texts is in no doubt; Okura's familiarity with Chinese is apparent from his personal history, and Tabito's ability to compose in Chinese is demonstrated in the inclusion of his poems in the *Kaifûsô*. However, as we observed in the second chapter, both poets were very much a part of the mainstream of Japan's literary culture prior to their meeting in Tsukushi. What, then, was the reason for turning to such an experimental method of combining Japanese and Chinese forms in this way?

One possible source of inspiration lies in Okura's experience as an anthologist. As we saw earlier, in including titles and defining the context with a Chinese preface, Okura was acting in the role usually filled by the anthologist. For the oral poet, the performance itself sufficed to define all necessary context for the listener, but for the reader of a written poem, that context needed instead to be provided by the scribe or anthologist, in the form of titles and notes. Okura was thus usurping this role by defining the context of his poem for himself, and his creation of a poem that existed primarily, or

even solely, as a written work might be viewed as the work of an anthologist rather than simply a poet.

In the second chapter, I outlined the changes undergone by poetry as a result of the spread of the practice of transcription. However, the changes that grew out of the practice of writing must be distinguished from those that emerged from the practice of anthologization. The act of writing may have been used by the poet to craft a poem prior to performance, or by some secondary scribe to remember the poem after its performance, but it did not necessarily change the essential nature of the poem as performance. The collection and anthologization of poetry, on the other hand, marks a move toward divorcing poetry from performance and transforming it into a written medium. In the case of the earlier titles and notes, as we have seen, this was still largely an attempt to duplicate this context through description of the occasion of performance.

For the early anthologist, then, it was not merely a matter of compiling poems, but of making them intelligible to a reader rather than a listener. In the earlier attempts at transcription and anthologization, as we saw in the case of the *Hitomaro Poetry Collection*, this impulse was as yet ill-formed. The "abbreviated form" in which Hitomaro transcribed much of the poetry in the collection managed to impart the basic meaning of the songs, but was not specific about the exact grammar of the Japanese. The written form was little more than a mnemonic, and the poems needed to be interpreted by a poet who was already familiar with the poem if they were to be understood. In the absence of such an interpreter, the poems posed a difficult puzzle that had to be decoded by later scholars in order to be intelligible. While Hitomaro's abbreviated form succeeded in preserving the framework on which the poetry had been built, it failed to

evoke the poetry itself. Thus, the "non-abbreviated form" that is also found in Hitomaro's collection is usually taken as a more advanced form, closer to that of other forms included in the *Man'yôshû* and better able to stand alone as a literary form, though still not fully divorced from the moment of performance.[86]

As the compiler of the *Ruijû karin*, Okura must have been well aware of the challenges of anthologization, and in attempting to create a written form, he relied on these experiences to create a poetic form which could survive as a written work independent of performance. Nor is it a coincidence that he did so through combining different elements into one poetic sequence, since the work of the anthologist centers not on individual poems, but on putting multiple poems together. The fact that Okura's combined form was of mixed Chinese and Japanese has obscured the simple fact that Okura was dealing with poetry sequences rather than individual poems as the fundamental literary unit. Through combining various parts into a cohesive whole, he was able to build more complex works, creating a new artistic work through putting multiple poems into dialogue with each other.

The influence of this aesthetic can be observed in Okura's use of *hanka*. As has already been noted, the *hanka* to Hitomaro's *chôka* were rather formulaic, expressions of praise that were practically interchangeable between different *chôka*. Okura on the other hand, used his *hanka* to develop and refine, or even contradict, the concepts put forth in his *chôka*. They were a fundamental part of the *chôka* to which they were linked, unable to be properly understood without the *chôka* just as the *chôka* was unable to be fully understood without them.

[86] Inaoka 1976.

We also know, however, that there are *hanka* included in the *Man'yôshû* which weren't originally associated with the *chôka* to which they are attached. For example, one of Hitomaro's *chôka* in book two (*MYS* II:135) is followed by two *hanka*, then one additional one explained with the note "a certain texts lists this *hanka*." It is not known whether or not the *hanka* was originally part of the sequence, since different compilers attributed it differently. An even more explicit example is Okura's *chôka* "Yearning for the boy Furuhi" (V:904), which is followed by two *hanka* and the note "The authorship of this poem is not certain, but it resembles that of Yamanoue and is thus included here." This note is generally taken to refer only to the final *hanka*, suggesting that, even though that *hanka* may not have been a part of Okura's original composition, it was the compiler's prerogative to use it in that way, thus creating a new sequence from existing poems. The relationship of *chôka* to *hanka* was thus not one which was solely determined by the poet, but also by the anthologist.

The viewpoint of the anthologist is almost certainly also the reason for Okura's attention to the generic category of *banka*. As noted earlier, most of the early poems now thought of as *banka* were classified as such after the fact, identified by the compiler rather than the poet. Okura, on the other hand, applied his familiarity with generic categories in explicitly naming his work a *banka* but specifying that it was a Yamato version of the form rather than that present in Chinese collections. More importantly, as we touched on earlier, naming a poem according to the overall genre or theme rather than the performance occasion displayed a consciousness of the act of composition. In fact, nearly all of Okura's works in book five are titled in this way, specifying a theme for the

work, and these titles are one of the aspects which serve to set book five apart from the rest of the collection.

For example, there are many works by Okura which are not titled in this way and which appear elsewhere in the collection, but they tend to be very different from those included in book five. First, they tend to be from earlier in Okura's life, prior to the experimentation which began with *Yamato Banka*. In addition, those poems which are contemporaneous with the poems in book five tend to be of the more traditional type that were recited at gatherings or related to a listener.[87] These include, for example, Okura's poem on leaving a banquet (III:337), his deathbed poem on lamenting his illness (VI:978), and his *Tanabata* poems (VIII:1518-1529), which would have been composed on the specific occasion of a *Tanabata* party. In other words, they were poems which belonged to the world of communal poetry, passed along orally to others who set them down rather than written down by Okura himself. In contrast, the poems in book five are thought to have been created specifically as written works, and given titles by the poet which identified the thematic context rather than the occasion of performance. Thus it appears to be a focus on the written form, rather than simply authorship by members of the Tsukushi poetry circle or composition during the specific time frame of Okura and Tabito's presence in Tsukushi, that appears to have been the defining criterion for inclusion in book five.

Of course, much of above reasoning relies on the fact that Okura's poems are believed to have been written down by Okura himself and transcribed verbatim by Yakamochi for inclusion in the *Man'yôshû*. In this, Okura is unusual, since the vast majority of poems in the collection were probably transcribed by someone other than the

poet, and thus necessarily conform more to the earlier conventions of performed oral works. It is also possible that the hand of Okura as anthologist is visible in book five as well, as it may be that Yakamochi was in fact copying an existing poetry collection by Okura in compiling book five, in part if not in its entirety.[88]

Evidence that book five was originally an Okura anthology can be found in the conventions of poetry attribution. For example, most of the poems by Okura in book five list his name simply, "Yamanoue Okura," with none of the honorific titles found elsewhere in the collection.[89] In addition, although Okura is listed as the author of "Song in Praise of Heart-Calming Stones" (V:813) in the table of contents for book five (which was added later), his name is not included with the poem itself, as is common in the case of anthologies of one's own poems.[90] An Okura collection as a partial source may also help to explain the title of *zôka* despite the presence of other genres. Inaoka Kôji speculates that certain poems had already been grouped together by Okura under the heading *zôka*, and when Yakamochi added to them to create book five, he retained the title.[91] It is now generally accepted that at least the second half of book five, which shows evidence of deliberate progression in its ordering of poems, comes from an earlier collection by Okura.

The first half of the collection, though, is a bit more problematic. While some scholars attribute this half to Okura as well, others believe the source was the personal

[87] Hayashida 1982, p.8.
[88] This possibility was raised very early, with Keichû's *Man'yô Daishôki*, which speculated that the book was primarily an Okura family collection with additional poems added by Yakamochi. Itô 1974, v.1 p.277.
[89] Hayashida 1982, p.11.
[90] Itô 1974, v.1 p. 280.
[91] Inaoka 1968.

documents of Tabito, to which his son Yakamochi would have had access.[92] What makes the attribution to Okura difficult is the presence in book five of numerous letters, most of them either written by or sent to Tabito. Since these letters have been presumed to be private correspondence, some scholars have eliminated the possibility of Okura as sole compiler.[93] However, this ignores the evidence present in book five itself that letter writing was a very different activity in the Nara period than it is today.

In general, Tabito's letter and Okura's *Yamato banka*, as well as the three Kama compositions which follow it, are viewed as a poem exchange, with Okura composing or selecting his poems in direct response to Tabito's poem. However, it is important to remember that this exchange begins not with either of the two main participants, but with the "two gentlemen" who first sent Tabito the "dreadful tidings" referred to in the first poem of book five. Although this letter is not reproduced in the *Man'yôshû*, presumably because it contained no poem, it provided the impetus for Tabito to write the first example of the Chinese/Japanese combined form in reply to it. If Tabito's reply was then simply sent to these two gentlemen in the capital in the manner of a modern letter, then it raises the question of why it remained in his personal effects, to be found later by Yakamochi and included in the *Man'yôshû*, as well as how Okura gained access to the letter, since he was not the intended recipient.

Harada Sadayoshi has suggested that, rather than simply sent as private correspondence, letters of this type were also circulated as a literary works.[94] Thus, Tabito's letter was sent to the capital, but it was also copied to keep among his own

[92] Itô Haku falls into the former camp (Itô 1974, v.1, pp. 310-1) while Inaoka Kôji represents the latter (Inaoka 1968, p.17)
[93] Inaoka 1968, p.22.
[94] Harada 2001, p. 346.

collected poems as well as to be circulated among the literati in Tsukushi, including Okura. Seeing Tabito's inclusion of a written Japanese poem in the Chinese letter then inspired Okura to create *Yamato banka*, as well as to begin the process of developing the more complex hybrid forms that are now synonymous with his name.

While there exists evidence that Okura had already been working on the creation of Chinese/Japanese forms before this, and there is thus doubt about the identity of Tabito as the first innovator,[95] the importance of the practice of letter exchange is clear in book five. In fact, looking at the first part of book five primarily as a series of letter exchanges explains many of the characteristics that distinguish this book from the rest of the collection. Harada has developed an outline of these characteristics based on his assumption that the first half of book five was primarily a collection of existing letters and exchanged written documents, gathered together with relatively little editing to make up the book:[96]

1) The poems come from a relatively short span of time, the first part spanning only three years and the whole of book five encompassing only five years.

2) The poets were limited to those involved in the poetry circle at Dazaifu and those with whom they interacted.

3) Because of the limited number of poets, the poems were composed only in two locations: Dazaifu and the capital.

4) Most of these poems took the form of letter exchanges and were thus already present in written form, able to be included with little or no editing by the compilers.

[95] The three Kama compositions included by Okura along with *Yamato banka* were listed as "selected" rather than "composed" at that time and may date from prior to Tabito's letter.
[96] These ten characteristics are outlined in Harada 2001, pp.345-6, but most had been recognized and dealt with separately by many earlier scholars. The exceptions to this are numbers six and seven, which form the basis of Harada's own view of the Dazaifu poets as revolutionary in creating a written poetry.

5) The method of identifying titles, poets, and dates is different from that found elsewhere in the collection, reflecting letter writing conventions rather than poetry footnote conventions.

6) Also because of their written nature, Chinese essays, prefaces, and poems could be combined with the Japanese poems, and it thus may not be entirely accurate to call the book a "song collection."

7) This nature of the poetry as written rather than sung was due to the strong influence of continental culture on the poets.

8) The practice of transcription using one syllable per character was a reflection of the fact that the poems needed to be rendered accurately, since they would not actually be performed.

9) There is a difference in the character usage of different poets, giving each a distinctive style. This is due to the poems having been transcribed by the poets themselves in letters and transposed verbatim into the collection.

10) Because the poems were culled from a variety of letters, many poems are missing the poet's name, date, etc.

Harada's outline does much to bring together the disparate elements which had long been viewed as aberrations unique to the Dazaifu poets and thus dismissed as a sideline to the central development of *waka* composition.

This view of book five poetry as centered on poetic letter exchange makes sense in the context of the shift of the place of poetry composition away from the imperial court, as discussed in chapter two. The poets in Dazaifu were geographically separated from the capital and, while this marginalized them in the context of court poetry, it also freed them to explore more radical elements in their own compositions. Ôkubo Hiroyuki has called this poetry "A free, earnestly human, completely new type of literary activity, liberated from the framework of court poetry."[97] At the same time, they continued to exchange letters with their friends and contacts in the capital, keeping them abreast of their poetic activities. Naturally, this forced them to attempt to capture in writing what

they could not express in person and led to the continued development of the written form and a poetry that was meant entirely to be read.

Thus, the presence of letters is itself a possible impetus for the creation of a hybrid Chinese/Japanese written form. As examined in the discussion of Tabito's poem, it was the necessity of expressing a poem clearly in letters that may have led him to transcribe it entirely in phonographs. At the same time, the use of elegant Chinese was simply standard practice for a letter, and Tabito's compound form at the head of book five simply reflects the practice of the literati composing messages in elegant Chinese prose sprinkled liberally with classical references. This naturally became a related art form when the use of Chinese characters to transcribe Japanese became widespread and Japanese poems were added to the mix. The inclusion of these letters in an anthology of Japanese poetry is thus a natural outgrowth of the changing practices of the poets in their everyday life.

Due to the seemingly broad circulation these letters received, it is unclear whether the letters and other similar materials later included in book five were in Tabito's possession or in Okura's. It is thus difficult to determine whether they were added to the existing Okura poetry collection by Okura himself or later, by Yakamochi. In either case, the letters fit well with the other poems in the collection, as both represent the experimental Chinese/Japanese compound form. In fact, Itô Haku has suggested that this is the real defining element of book five, and that Yakamochi adopted Okura's collection, selectively adding other texts in order to showcase what Ito calls *Tsukushi shinbungei*, or "Tsukushi new literary arts."[98]

[97] Ôkubo 1983, p. 89.
[98] Itô 1974, p. 308-10.

The placement of Tabito's "Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings" at the head of this book thus places him at the head of this innovation, both chronologically as the first example of this new form, but also as the center of the Tsukushi poetry circle which produced it. The book heading *zôka* can also be understood in this context, representing poetry which does not fit into the conventional categorization. And the book's placement within the larger collection is also appropriate. If books one and two were meant to represent the ancient poems, and books three and four contained the more recent conventional poetry, then book five may represent the experimental modern poetry of the Tsukushi poets, completing Yakamochi's poetic "history."[99]

In some ways, it might be said that this experimental poetry failed. After all, aside from a few of Yakamochi's poems, the use of Chinese prefaces largely ended with Tabito and Okura, and the compound form did not last as a major form. The next century would see a focus on purely Chinese poetry and, when Japanese poetry would come back into vogue with the ninth century *Kokinshû*, it would come with a conscious rejection of many of the Chinese elements of the type employed by the Tsukushi poets, particularly with regard to the range of themes considered appropriate for Japanese poetry. Tabito and Okura appear to be nothing more than exceptions to the rule of separate roles for Chinese and Japanese composition.

However, if we view their activity not as an experiment to create compound form, but rather as an attempt to create a purely written literature, then their experiments might be said to have succeeded in the conventions of *waka* transcription that lived on. Although the tradition of oral poetry would continue in poetry recitation, banquets, and

[99] Ibid., p. 312.

public poetry contests, the ability of poetry to exist as a written form had been demonstrated, and poetry would go on as a literary art as well.

Chapter Four: The Compound Form and Chinese Philosophy

As examined in the previous chapter, the compound form allowed for an increased sophistication and complexity in the subject matter that could be addressed in *waka*. Konishi Jin'ichi refers to Okura's *Yamato Banka* in this way:

> ...this is the first poem in Yamato made of the stuff of philosophical thought. The doctrines of Buddhism were known in Yamato from the sixth century, but this is the first poem to deal with them in terms of the poet's own experience.[1]

In other words, although Okura drew on texts that were widely known in Japan, his work represented an entirely new means of expression in which the philosophical implications of Buddhism were tested against the realities of life. In fact, this approach to continental philosophy was fundamental to Okura's poetry during his time in Tsukushi. The incorporation of passages from Chinese philosophical texts into his poetry was not merely a way of displaying his erudition, but a method of inquiry. By placing often contradictory texts into a dialogue with each other, and with Okura's personal experience, he was able to examine their basic tenets and test their applicability to his own life.

Unfortunately, far too many *Man'yôshû* scholars have equated allusion and reference to philosophical texts with unquestioning belief in those texts. If Okura included reference to Buddhist sutras, it must be because he was a devout Buddhist. If his reference to them seems confusing, it must be because he misunderstood those texts. And if the tenets of Buddhism and Confucianism to which Okura referred were incompatible, his inclusion of both must reflect a lack of critical distance from the subject matter. These attitudes reflect the assumption that Chinese texts were viewed as products

of a superior culture, and were adopted universally, uncritically, and with a lack of understanding of their true content.

The other side of the coin is the portrayal of much of Okura's poetry as purely solipsistic, and Okura himself as a poet unable to move beyond his own personal experience. Poetry is interpreted as autobiography and every line in Okura's poetry has been examined for the possibility of insight into the life of Okura, the man. In this context, references to Chinese texts are nothing more than window dressing, cherry picked to add a veneer of philosophical depth to an essentially self-centered narrative.

Both of these portrayals fail to acknowledge the complexity of the form in which Okura was composing and the sophistication of expression made possible by that form. In large part, this comes from the mistake of focusing the search for meaning on one portion of Okura's compositions rather than paying attention to the interplay between the various parts. As we saw in the examination of *Yamato Banka*, each section of the poetry sequence has a role to play, and the meaning is not inherent in any one section, but in the relationship between them.

The complete lack of any examples of the compound form by Okura prior to *Yamato Banka* and the large number of such compositions which followed it make it seem as though Tabito's "Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings" opened the floodgates for Okura, inspiring him to ever more elaborate experiments with the form. Whether Tabito was the inspiration, or whether Okura had been experimenting with the form in the past, the three poem sequences which follow *Yamato Banka* in book five are clearly a development of the compound form. They exemplify the strategy employed by Okura in

[1] Konishi 1984, p. 388.

exploring the various threads of Chinese philosophy: the comparison of conflicting ideas in different philosophies and examination of their relation to personal experience.

The Three Compositions at Kama

On the same day Okura presented Tabito with *Yamato Banka*, he also presented the three poem sequences which make up *Man'yôshû* poems #800-805. They are identified by the note following the last selection as "Selected and completed by Chikuzen Governor Yamanoue Okura in the county of Kama on the twenty first day of the seventh month, *Jingi* year 5 (728)" and are thus collectively referred to as the "Three compositions of Kama" (*Kama sambusaku*; 嘉摩三部作). However, it remains unclear exactly when they were composed, and whether they were composed together. It is also unclear, and the subject of a great deal of speculation, just what the relationship between the three pieces is intended to be and how the compositions relate to *Yamato Banka* and to Tabito's original piece, to which it was presumably a response.

Whether or not each of the three sequences were intended to be part of a larger whole, they share certain characteristics, both with each other and with *Yamato Banka*. Each of the three sequences is of the same general form, consisting of a title, a preface in Chinese, a long form *chôka*, and a single *hanka*. Even if these poetry sequences had nothing else in common, the regularity of this combination form would be enough to establish a connection between them, as well as an affinity with the compound structure of the two poetry sequences which precede them in book five. The sequences differ from *Yamato Banka* in that the titles for the three sequences precede the Chinese preface, and refer to the presence of a preface in the title itself. Thus, unlike the case of the Chinese

essay preceding *Yamato Banka*, there is little doubt that the preface was intended to be of a set with the poem.

As examined in the previous chapter, the presence of a thematic title rather than one which described the occasion of performance helped to create a consciousness of literary production. Tatsumi Masaaki goes a step further, to suggest that it was the presence of this thematic title which made the complexity of the compound form possible:

> It may be that Okura's and Tabito's works are the first for which there is a clear example of poetry composition with a preconceived "title" in mind. We can say that having such a "title" made unified expression possible and allowed the poet to capture the logic of the expression for himself. The possibilities opened up through the inclusion of a "title" for a poem were those of the titles for Chinese poetry in general, but its connection to the *chôka* makes it seem that the form of Chinese rhapsody (*fu* – 賦) had been incorporated into the *chôka*. The structure of Okura's three compositions in the seventh month, fifth year of Jinki [728] as a set of title, preface, *chôka*, and *hanka*, corresponds to the structure of the rhapsody, a set of title, preface, rhapsody (*fuwen* – 賦文), and concluding lines (*fanci* – 反辞).[2]

The *chôka* form itself, as well its combination with a *hanka*, is sometimes thought to have been derived from the *fu*, but Okura's work parallels the structure of the extended poetry sequence far more than any other example. Okura's innovation was in replacing the Chinese poems with Japanese ones, creating a compound form. Because of their uniqueness in the *Man'yôshû*, more attention has generally been paid to Okura's Chinese prefaces than to the presence of the title as a vital part of the whole. However, it is these thematic titles which tie the sequence together into a unified whole, expressing an overarching theme which provides context for each individual section.

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[2] Tatsumi 1987, p. 407. It should be noted that the term used for "title" is *dai* (題), which can refer both to specific title and to general theme.

The prefaces are composed primarily in the elegant parallel Chinese style seen in the previous chapter and are filled with scholarly phrases from continental philosophy, primarily Buddhist and Confucian, and to a lesser extent Daoist. Although this might be better described as a characteristic of Okura's Chinese compositions in general rather than these sequences in particular, it does add a sense of connection between the three, and has invited much speculation about overarching Chinese interpretations for the three compositions as a set. Where the title gives a general context in which to read each individual section, the prefaces provide an introduction to the topic and provide additional context for the poem which is to come.

The note which follows the compositions is not clear as to whether or not the three compositions were officially presented by Okura to Tabito along with *Yamato Banka* but there is reason to imagine that they were given to him, if only informally, on the same occasion. One reason for this is the possibility that at least the first part of book five of the *Man'yôshû* was compiled by Yakamochi from his father Tabito's documents, a theory examined in more detail in the previous chapter. On the other hand, since these poems are themselves held up as partial evidence for this theory of compilation, it would be circular reasoning to presume that these poems were necessarily among Tabito's possessions. Even so, their availability to Yakamochi as compiler, combined with their position following Tabito's poem and the coincidence of the date makes a connection among them quite likely. But does this connection extend to the meaning of the poems themselves, making the three compositions part of a larger poetry sequence encompassing both Okura's and Tabito's poems?

Nakanishi Susumu believes that the three compositions were indeed presented by Okura to Tabito as a set with *Yamato Banka*. He further speculates that, like that poem, they were intended to comfort Tabito after his wife had passed away. For Nakanishi, the three poems are intended to represent the themes of uncertainty, love, and impermanence.[3] The poems thus become a commentary on the human condition, attempting to comfort Tabito by relating his personal sorrow at losing his wife to the larger context of the suffering of humanity, and to help him find comfort in a Buddhist understanding of the illusory nature of the world and its suffering. The third composition, in particular, hearkens back to the despair at the uncertainty of the world expressed in Tabito's poem. This interpretation thus recasts the entire first part of book five as a philosophical exploration of life and death in a Buddhist context.

Itô Haku agrees with this Buddhist interpretation, and suggests that the three compositions represent three types of Buddhist suffering caused by misunderstanding of the nature of the world. To Itô, the subjects of the three sequences are the pain of uncertainty, the pain of attachment, and the pain of old age.[4] Itô emphasizes that the three sequences are linked by the phrase "*yo no naka,*" which appears in all three, as well as in Tabito's poem, thus providing a link to the poem to which these poems are presumably a response.[5] The phrase means simply, "within the world," but in all three cases is used in the Buddhist sense to refer to the material world in which we are all trapped. Thus each of the three poems represents a different aspect of life's suffering

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[3] 惑、愛、無常 – Nakanishi 1973, pp. 244-77.

[4]惑苦、愛苦、老苦 – Itô 1976. In his *Man'yô shakuchû*, however, Itô changes the designation of the first from the pain of uncertainty (惑苦) to the pain of emotion (情苦), focusing on a different character from the title, but retaining the same explanation of the overall structure of the sequences.

which we must recognize as illusory if we are to transcend it and achieve Buddhist release.

The ultimate question these interpretations raise is, naturally, whether this definition of the overall theme of the poems aids or detracts from our understanding of each individual sequence, and of each sequence's function in the sequence as a whole. Though Buddhist elements may be found throughout the three poetry sequences, is it valid to interpret the entire sequence as Buddhist in nature? Looking at each of three poetry sequences as a unified whole, each has its own theme and each poem has its own role to play within that theme. However, we must be careful in applying another layer of meaning on the three sequences as a whole until we know whether or not such an interpretation was deliberately suggested, and whether or not this suggestion was that of the poet or that of the compiler.

The phrasing of the note makes it clear that these poems were at least in part composed earlier than "the twenty first day of the seventh month" of 728, and were merely selected by Okura for a particular purpose on that particular occasion. Unfortunately, the key phrase "selected and completed" (撰定) in the note is little help in determining when the poems were actually composed. The term "completed" may indicate that the poems existed in some form but were as yet incomplete at the time of Okura's presentation. Okura thus adapted them to the occasion, putting them in their final form on that day. On the other hand, it may be that the poems already existed in their final form and "completed" simply refers to Okura writing them down and thus making them public, ending any potential future revision. Then again, the two characters

[5] It should be noted that the phrase appears within the poem portion in the first and third Kama poems, but in the second poem, "On thinking of children," only in the preface, and thus in Chinese rather than

used for this phrase may simply be a compound, indicating only that Okura "selected" the sequences from previously composed poems. In any case, it is clear that the poems were not entirely new compositions created for the occasion, but were rather existing works, perhaps composed together and perhaps not, but deemed by Okura to be appropriate to the occasion.

Given the identical date of these poems' selection and the presentation of *Yamato Banka*, it is not unreasonable to assume that the occasion for which Okura selected the poems coincided, in time if not in intent, with that for which the other poem was prepared. However, it is also clear that these three compositions are distinct from that sequence, identified collectively under a separate note. In addition, while *Yamato Banka* is referred to as being "offered" by Okura to Tabito, the other three sequences were merely "selected" on the same day. This difference in terminology has been attributed by many to the possible ritualistic interpretation of *Yamato Banka* warranting a more formal or ceremonial presentation, whereas the other poems were given less formally, as companion pieces that were deemed appropriate to be presented alongside the other poem but not parts of the same greater sequence. More importantly, if the poems were not formal compositions for a given event, then they may not be as firmly tied to the occasion as a more formally presented poem would. Thus, even if we accept that *Yamato Banka* was a specific response to Tabito's poem, it is not necessary to read the three Kama compositions in the same way. Indeed, it is not necessary to read them as thematically linked to *Yamato Banka* at all, though it has been the standard practice among commentators to do so.

Japanese.

Ultimately, our interpretation of the poems must spring from the poems themselves. Although our understanding of each poem may be enhanced by examination of the larger sequence, the very possibility that a larger sequence exists depends on the interpretation of the individual poems. If the poems themselves do not suggest an affinity, the coincidence of the time of their selection must not be allowed to override their individual meanings. For this reason, it makes the most sense to begin my examination of the three sequences with an analysis of each one.

A Poem to Turn a Confused Mind

The first of the three Kama poetry sequences is "Poem to Turn a Confused Mind." In addition to the poem sequence's obvious unconventional nature as a Chinese/Japanese compound form, the *chôka* itself is also unusual in form, seeming to consist of three short "sub-*chôka*" within the poem itself, each section ending with two seven-syllable lines. In fact, it could almost be considered three individual *chôka* rather than one single long one, if Okura's title for the overall sequence did not make it clear that Okura considered it to be a single poem.[6] It is also followed by a single *hanka* at the end,

It is possible that Okura was attempting to create a new "subdivided *chôka*" form with this division, as this is not the only example of Okura partitioning a *chôka* in this way. Okura would later use the technique in his best-known poem, "Poem of Dialogue with the Impoverished" (V:892-893), which uses a *chôka* divided into two sections to represent different sides of a dialogue. However, unlike the case of other alternative poetic forms found in the *Man'yôshû*, there is no regularity in the number of lines per

section in Okura's execution of the form. For example, the *sedôka* form consists of a regular 5-7-7-5-7-7 pattern and the *bussokusekika* follows a 5-7-5-7-7-7 syllable pattern. In other words, both structures differ from the standard *tanka* pattern by the addition of a single seven-syllable line, albeit in different positions.[7] In contrast, the sections into which Okura divides his *chôka* are of indeterminate length, like the *chôka* form itself. In the "Poem of Dialogue with the Impoverished," the first 33 lines make up the first section and the last 49 lines make up the second, each constituting a substantial *chôka* in its own right, while in this case of "Poem to Turn a Confused Mind" the sections are of 9, 7, and 15 lines in length.[8]

This irregularity makes it doubtful that the poems would have been considered representative of a new form. It is also difficult to call this a new form in that the innovation of dividing *chôka* into smaller thematic elements did not extend beyond Okura's own works. Indeed, it might be dismissed as merely an idiosyncrasy, on the level of his relatively frequent use of hypermeter, rather than an alternative form if it were not for Okura's use of the technique elsewhere. Perhaps "experiment" might be a better description then, but like the composite form made up of Chinese and Japanese elements, this experiment would begin and end with the Tsukushi poets.

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[6] The title of each poem specifically identifies it as "one poem, combined with preface" (一首并序). I will deal with the relationship between preface and poem, and between *chôka* and *hanka*, later in this chapter, but it is clear that Okura intended at the very least that the *chôka* was to be viewed as a single poem.

[7] It should not be assumed from this that these forms were conceived simply as *tanka* with an additional seven-syllable line inserted. The addition of a line creates a rhythmic division within the poems that can be very different from that of the *tanka*.

[8] This irregularity is not entirely surprising, since the *chôka* form is not limited to a set number of lines, and Okura was not averse to composing *chôka* that were shorter than the norm. The second Kama poem, "Poem on Thinking of Children," for example, is only nine lines long, a mere four lines longer than a standard *tanka*. However, the viewing of the composition as a single unit rather than three separate *chôka* is unusual.

Given that the *chôka* is itself part of a larger aggregate of Chinese and Japanese forms, the internal division of the *chôka* contributes to the sense of the sequence as a composite form, its overall meaning created by the interplay of distinct but interdependent parts. Just as the preface and *hanka* contribute different layers of meaning to the whole, altering and enhancing the meaning of the *chôka*, meaning is created within the *chôka* through the interplay of these individual sections. As in "Poem of Dialogue with the Impoverished," each "sub-*chôka*" has a definite function within the larger whole, each section treating a different aspect of the overall meaning.

On the surface, the sequence is a preachy commentary on resisting the temptation to flee one's Confucian duty to work and care for one's family. The straw man Okura sets up as the target of this lesson is "Baizoku sensei," (倍俗先生)[9] or "Mr. Disdain the Vulgar," a proud man who believes himself to be above the filth of the world and seeks to turn his back on his worldly ties. The speaker who admonishes this target is generally associated with Okura himself, but there is no certainty as to the identity of Baizoku sensei, primarily because this man is given no voice in the poem and we thus have no opportunity to hear him defend his actions. We do not know whether he is motivated by a Daoist desire to distance himself from the petty demands of society, a Buddhist effort to shun the mundane world, or simply a layman's desire to be free of responsibility. What is ostensibly a dialogue becomes instead a sermon and, at least on the surface, the poem seems merely a medium through which to espouse the ideals of Confucian duty.

[9] In one alternative *Man'yôshû* text, this name is rendered 畏俗先生, or *izoku sensei*.

V:800-801

A Poem to Turn a Confused Mind – one poem, with preface

There is a certain man
Who knows to respect father and mother, yet forgets to serve them as a filial son,
who values not wife and child, and dismisses them like a discarded sandal.
He proclaims himself "Mr. Disdain the Vulgar,"
but although his spirit may soar above the blue clouds,
his body still remains in the vulgar dust of the world.
There is no hint of the discipline had by a sage attaining the Way.
Rather, he seems like a vagabond, denizen of the hills and swamps.
Thus,
I point out the three bonds,[10] and clarify the five teachings,[11]
and present him with a poem to turn back this irresolution.
The poem reads:

chichi haha o	Mother and Father
mireba tôtoshi	we look upon with respect.
meko mireba	We look on wife and child
megushi utsukushi	and feel love and affection.
yo no naka wa	This is simply
kaku zo kotowari	the normal working of this world.
mochidori no	We are as bound to them
kakarawashi mo yo	as birds caught fast in lime,
yukue shiraneba	for we know not what lies ahead.
ukegutsu o	Like removing a shoe,
nukitsuru gotoku	worn out and discarded,
fuminukite	This is a person who
yukuchiyu hito wa	goes and leaves them behind
iwaki yori	Is this a person made
narideshi hito ka	out of stone or of wood?
na ga na norasane	Who do you think you are?
ame e yukaba	If you go to heaven,
na ga ma ni ma ni	you may do what you will
tsuchi naraba	If on the earth,
ôkimi imasu	there our great lord rules.
kono terasu	Beneath the bright
hitsuki no shita wa	shining sun and moon,
amekumo no	as far as the clouds

[10] 三綱; the Confucian bonds between ruler and subject, between father and son, and between husband and wife

[11] 五教; the Confucian ideals of behavior appropriate to one's role: the father should be righteous, the mother compassionate, the brother friendly, the younger brother obedient, and the child filial.

mukabusu kiwami	stretching to the horizon
taniguku no	as far as the lands
sa wataru kiwami	where the valley toad travels
kikoshi osu	he rules over
kuni no mahora zo	this marvelous land.
ka ni kaku ni	Doing such things,
hoshiki ma ni ma ni	whatever way you wish --
shika ni wa araji ka	this is not as things should be.

hanka:

hisakata no	The eternal road
amaji wa tôshi	to heaven is far away.
nao nao ni	Far better it is
ie ni kaerite	to return to your home
nari o shimasa ni	and attend to your duties.

As is the case with Okura's other titles, the title does not serve the typical function of defining the setting of the poem's performance, but rather is a statement of the poet's own purpose in writing the poem. It defines theme rather than occasion. The two characters "惑情" in the title have usually been read as modifier and modified, meaning "a confused mind" or "confused feelings," but it may also be read as a two-character compound. Though no specific examples of "惑情" has been found in the major Chinese texts known in Japan at the time, similar terms can be found in both Confucian and Buddhist texts.[12] Depending on the context it can refer to feelings which stray from the proper Confucian path or to a Buddhist sense of worldly desires and temptations. Thus, while the title does not necessarily imply a Confucian or Buddhist theme, the expressed intention to "turn" or "reverse" (反) those feelings gives the impression of a lesson or sermon, written expressly for the purpose of changing someone's mind.

[12] "惑志," for example, can be found in *Analects* 14, while " 惑心," " 惑業," " 惑著," etc. are found in numerous Buddhist texts. Itô 1995 v.5, p. 44.

As in previous examples, Okura's preface is written in parallel prose, in this case consisting of parallel four-character couplets. I have once again attempted to emphasize this parallel structure in my translation by the division of the prose passage into lines reflecting the eight-character grammatical units, though it should be noted that no such divisions were present in the original. As in *Yamato Banka*, the preface supplies the context necessary to understand the poem, but can it be considered a part of the poem sequence itself? Here Okura's penchant for titling his works may aid in our interpretation, as he designates this sequence, like all three Kama sequences, as "one poem, combined with preface."[13] The identification of the Kama sequences by a single title encompassing preface, *chôka* and *hanka* suggests that there is a firmer connection between the parts than would normally be expected between separate poems, or for example, in *Yamato Banka*.

Unfortunately, Okura's use of the character "并" in the title to identify the relationship between poem and preface may obfuscate more than it reveals. The meaning of the character is equivalent to the modern character "併" and can mean "combined with," "merged with," "together with," or simply "lined up next to." In the case of Okura's compound forms, these nuances of meaning are not insignificant; are the two elements "merged" into a single form, or is the preface merely "included with" the poem? The most common function of " 并 " within the *Man'yôshû* itself is to link a given *hanka* to the *chôka* which precedes it, but even if we were to make the logical jump required to suggest that Okura's preface and poem are linked in the same way a poet might attach a *hanka* to a *chôka*, this would not bring us much closer to understanding its function.

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[13] 一首并序

After all, as we examined in the previous chapter, not only is the specific function of the *hanka* in relation to the *chôka* not completely understood, but Okura's personal use of *hanka* is also atypical.

Okura's use of the term "preface" (序; *jo*) may be revealing. The more common use of the term refers to the practice of beginning a poem with several introductory or prefatory lines, one of the most important literary devices of the *Man'yôshû*. Although both this technique and Okura's prefaces can both be referred to as simply *jo*, scholars often distinguish them by referring to the more common practice as *joshi* or *jokotoba* (序詞) and to Okura's prefaces as *kanbun no jo* (漢文の序, "Chinese preface") or *jobun* (序文, "prose preface" or "written preface").[14] The *joshi* is similar to the *makurakotoba* (枕詞), the formulaic "pillow words" used to add a set phrase, if no actual additional "meaning," to a poem.[15] However, whereas the *makurakotoba* were set five-syllable phrases, epithets used verbatim in various poems to modify certain poetic key words or place names, the *joshi* were generally longer and usually (though not always) unique to an individual poem. Often without any solid connection to the "content" of the general poem, they usually consisted of natural images in poetic language to introduce and set the tone for an extended *chôka*.

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[14] Rererring to the writing in Okura's prefaces as "*bun*" (文) to distinguish it from the *joshi* of course carries implications for how we interpret the *joshi* as well. It labels Okura's *jo* as written prose, meant to be read and thus very different from the traditional function of poetry. Of course, Okura's use of prose, both in his *jo* and in his longer prose essay later in Book V, is also very different from the only occurrences of prose in the collection outside of book five, in the notes to poems. The question of whether or not the *jo* may be included as part of the poetry sequence brings us back to the issue addressed in the last chapter: have Okura and Tabito's experiments with poetic forms succeeded in transforming them into a written literary form?

[15] The link between *joshi* and *makurakotoba* was explicitly made by Keichû, who referred to the *joshi* as simply "a long *makurakotoba*" in his *Man'yô daishôki*. According to Konishi Jin'ichi, both types of phrases were originally tied to *kotodama*, the power of words, in the poems' origins as ritual. Konishi, p.234.

However, despite the fact that the *joshi* is one of the most common literary techniques found in the *Man'yôshû*, it is difficult to say with any certainty whether or not the term was actually used by the poets themselves. Unlike Okura's self-identified *jo*, there is no occurrence of the term *joshi* anywhere in the collection. In fact, apart from Okura's usage of the term, the character only appears in the notes as part of the word *junjo* (順序; sequence) to describe the proper order of poems, and in a few poems as a phonograph to transliterate the syllable "zo." This lack of explicit identification of the term *joshi* is not particularly surprising, given that the *Man'yôshû* is a collection of poems rather than a work of literary criticism, but this lack makes it difficult to determine whether or not the poets at the time even used the term, much less whether or not they made a distinction between the different types of *jo* differentiated by modern scholars.

Whether or not the *Man'yôshû* poets specifically used the term, the *joshi* was definitely part of the poem itself rather than a separate element. Its presence, whether in *tanka* or *chôka*, was certainly not noted in the headnotes and, as with all lines in *waka*, it consisted of alternating lines of five and seven syllables, with no separation from the rest of the poem. It was a purely lyrical device not marked as distinct from the remainder of the poem by any formulaic differences. In other words, like the *makurakotoba* or the other conventions of poetic language that were beginning to develop, the *joshi* was simply an internal poetic technique rather than a distinct element like Okura's *jo*. Of course, the fact that Okura's *jo* were written in literary Chinese seems to automatically preclude identification of Okura's *jo* with the far more common technique of the *joshi*, but if we are examining the relationship between the *jo* and the rest of the poetry sequence, a comparison of its function with that of the *joshi* may prove revealing.

In the case of "A Poem to Restore a Confused mind," the most obvious role of the *jo* seems to be the contextualization of the poem. Much of the information found in the *jo*, such as the theme of failing in one's filial duty to respect one's parents, is repeated in the first part of the *chôka* itself. However, while the poem posits the feelings for one's family as natural, "the normal working of the world," the *jo* clearly identifies these bonds as Confucian in nature. Okura uses the overtly Confucian phrase "serve filially" (侍養) for the duty in which his "Baizoku Sensei" fails. Later, he makes it explicit that his intent is to "point out the three bonds, and clarify the five teachings."

The poem itself however, makes no explicit mention of Confucianism. There also seems to be no attempt to evoke the Confucian terms in Japanese, as Okura does with phrases from Buddhist ideology such as "birds caught in lime" and "like a discarded shoe." Rather, Okura speaks in the poem of the preservation of familial bonds as obvious and simply in accord with nature. Respect is simply the natural feeling one has for one's parents, while the natural emotion to feel for one's wife and children is love. Thus, those who fail to value those bonds are not merely neglecting their Confucian duties, but rebelling against the proper order of things. Even respect for the ruler, completing the three bonds mentioned in the preface, is recast in terms of respect for a natural order. In the manner typical of Japanese ritualistic poems of praise for the emperor, Okura ties the emperor to the land rather than to his subjects. His authority derives not through a Confucian bond of loyalty between subject and ruler, but through a natural, and divine, bond to the land. His realm stretches to the limits of the horizon, to all the lands where the valley frog may be found. The reach of the emperor is inescapable as long as one

lives in this world and, as Okura tells us in the *hanka*, "the eternal road to heaven is far away."

Thus, despite the fact that the poem mentions bonds to mother, father, wife, child, and ruler, these bonds are not overtly Confucian without the context provided by the preface. On the other hand, without the emphasis on human emotions provided by the poem, the preface would simply be a collection of dogmatic instructions to follow the tenets of Confucianism. Together, they tie the objective philosophical mind of the preface to the natural, emotional appeal of the poem to create a meaning greater than either could accomplish on its own. Indeed, it is through this examination that Okura provides the promised "clarification" of the three bonds he mentions in the preface. If the tenets of Confucianism are not merely detached lessons from old texts, but codified relationships based on the natural bonds of the world, then Okura can confirm their validity by pointing out their accord with the natural way of humanity.

Of course, the title and preface make it clear that this lesson is not merely a detached examination of Confucianism, but a lesson explicitly designed to correct the actions of a man who has failed to follow the proper path. Unfortunately, this Baizoku sensei does not have the chance to defend himself, and both his identity and the nature of his failure to conform to Confucian ideals are left to the reader's imagination. The name itself is reminiscent of various Daoist models, including "Guangcheng xiansheng" (広成先生; Mr. Widely Realized) from the *Zhuangzi*, "Daren xiansheng" (大人先生; Mr. Big Man) from Ruan Ji's *Daren xiansheng zhuan*, and "Hongda xiansheng" (宏達先生;

Mr. Broadly Accomplished) from Ji Kang's *Bu Yi*.[16] These names were intended to identify character types rather than actual people, each associated with the Daoist ideal of disassociating oneself from the bonds of society, and Baizoku sensei's sense of self fits into this mold perfectly. As his name implies, he turns his back on the vulgarity of the world, declaring himself above, or at least detached from, the mundane world. Of course, it is Baizoku sensei himself who attempts to take on this pretentious title, and Okura mocks him for his hypocrisy in doing so, suggesting that even if he manages to turn his back on vulgarity in his own mind, his body cannot escape and remains in the "vulgar dust of the world." Further, Okura criticizes his target for failing to follow the disciplined lifestyle of a true ascetic, comparing him instead to those who abandon their families and flee to wander in the wilderness. In other words, Okura does not seem to be dismissing the true ideals of one who might have disdain for the vulgarity of the world, but rather criticizing his target for failing to live up to the name, using it only to excuse his behavior rather than as a true calling.

One of the most common explanations for the relationship between Okura and Baizoku sensei is also one of the most pedantic. It suggests that Okura composed the poem in his capacity as governor of Chikuzen, in order to discipline those among his subjects who might seek to avoid their duty as citizens by escaping to the hills in order to become hermits.[17] Apparently this phenomenon was common enough at the time that there was a specific prohibition against it in the *Rttsuryô* and instances of it are

[16] These sources are according to Ijitsu 2000, p. 56. Ruan Ji and Ji Kang were both among the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, third century poets known for their dismissal of the rules of society.
[17] For example, Tsuchiya Fumiaki in the *Man'yôshû shichû* suggests that Okura could have been in Kama in his capacity as governor and the composition there was meant as a lesson to those he oversaw.

mentioned in the *Shoku Nihongi*.[18] Some have pointed to the line in the preface mentioning the "vagabond, denizen of the hills and swamps," as evidence to support this line of reasoning, but in fact Okura explicitly states that Baizoku sensei merely "seems like" rather than actually "is" one of these vagabonds. He invokes them as an object of derision more appropriate for comparison with Baizoku sensei than is the man's self-identification as a sage. In addition, this explanation seems far too simple for such a complex poem and far too pedantic to be considered the motivation for a work of literature worth preserving. Had the intent been a mere lesson in civic duty, the poem alone would have sufficed, and there was little need for Okura to use such a complicated and experimental compound form. In fact, those who have promoted this interpretation of the poem have tended to privilege the *chôka* over the preface rather than studying the interplay of the two, and have thus identified an overly simplistic meaning for the poem.

It is also possible that Baizoku sensei was merely a straw man, a Daoist foil for Okura's Confucian preaching. Some have even suggested that this target was meant as a stand-in for Tabito, whose Daoist interests come out in works such as his "Thirteen Poems in Praise of *Sake*" (MYS III:338-350).[19] Putting aside the question of the propriety of choosing the occasion of Tabito's wife's death for a lesson in Confucian morality over Daoist irresponsibility, this explanation also seems overly simplistic, this time privileging the preface over the poem. After all, it is only the preface which puts forth the ideals of Confucianism, while the poem itself speaks instead of emotion and humanity. Indeed, if the intent were merely to defend the ideals of Confucianism, a Chinese essay by itself would have been the appropriate medium with which to do so. In

[18] *Shoku Nihongi*, 7th month, 707, and 11th month, 717.

addition, as described earlier, Okura does not denigrate the ideal of rejecting the vulgarity of the world, but merely cast aspersions on his target's sincerity in doing so, calling himself a sage while failing to follow through with the discipline necessary for those who seek the Way.

A far more compelling explanation posits Baizoku sensei as an aspect of Okura's own psyche which he was engaging in internal conflict. Baizoku sensei represents Okura's own dream to abandon his responsibilities and be free from the vulgar needs of the world in conflict with his sense of duty.[20] Thus, the "confused mind" of the title is the temptation that Okura himself feels, and the poem is his attempt to resist it through examination of his own feelings toward his loved ones and admission of the impossibility of truly separating oneself from one's obligations. The conflict must have been all the more acute for Okura, whose training as a scholar exposed him to a philosophy in which turning one's back on the secular world was a valid path. It required the strength to recognize whether one was being true to that path or whether one was simply shirking responsibility, and to refuse to give in to the hypocrisy of the latter path.

Whatever the identity of Baizoku sensei, the poem sequence exists as a kind of intervention to save him from his own baser desires. Although he is having doubts, he is certainly not already lost to temptation. As Okura points out in the preface, he knows the proper way to behave, but is simply having difficulty following through with it. Imura Tetsuo posits him as the equivalent of the *shite* figure in *nô* drama, requiring the

[19] For example, Tatsumi Masaaki casts the conflict in terms of Okura's Confucian productivity versus Tabito's Daoist lack of productivity, in Tatsumi 1993.
[20] Suggested in Nakanishi 1973, pp. 249-60.

assistance of another in order to realize the truth of his situation.[21] It is only through Okura's explication of the "proper way" that Baizoku sensei can overcome his desire for freedom and fulfill his duties. And it seems obvious that, given the heavy-handed preaching of the preface and the conclusion drawn in the *hanka*, the proper way espoused by Okura is that of Confucianism.

However, it would be a mistake to simply classify the poem as a Confucian treatise. Haga Norio points out that much of the language included in the preface has parallels with the *Shibolun* (釈駁論), a story from the Six Dynasties era collection of Buddhist writings, the *Hongmingji* (弘明集).[22] This text tells the story of two sages involved in a defense of the merits of abandoning the secular world in relation to the teachings of Confucianism. Given the striking thematic similarities, Okura appears to have looked to this text for far more than simply a few borrowed phrases, perhaps composing his own poetry sequence as a response to it. Higashi Shigemi notes that this text was characteristic of an intellectual exercise often seen in Six Dynasties sources: examination of the conflict between the tenets of Confucianism and Buddhism.[23] In this context, Okura seems to be participating in this tradition of philosophical inquiry.

Okura's effort is directed toward examining the two traditions in an attempt to dispel the doubts in his own mind over which path is the proper one for himself. Buddhist symbols, such as the "discarded sandal" representing the secular life one must leave behind, and "a man made of stone or wood," representing the elimination of desire

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[21] Itô 1995, v.5, p. 6. While this analogy may be helpful for the modern reader, it should be noted that Okura's poem predates *nô* drama, and even its precursor *sarugaku*, by several centuries.

[22] Haga 1973. The introduction to the *Shibolun* specifies that it was intended as a response to an earlier text, now lost, in which the authors included the Buddhist clergy among the “Five Subversive Elements” which threatened society. It was thus explicitly framed as a defense of Buddhism from Confucian criticism. Zûrcher 1972, vol. 2, p. 415.

that is necessary for enlightenment, are examined and dismissed as impossible, against the natural way of the world. However, Okura is not without sympathy for those who pursue the Buddhist path, and does not dismiss it outright. Rather, he notes the difficulty of detaching oneself from familial ties, to which we are bound "as birds caught fast in lime," and he attacks the hypocrisy of those who show "no hint of the discipline had by a sage in attaining the Way" but instead merely use it as an excuse to do "whatever they wish." Rather than simply lecturing on the superiority of Confucianism to Buddhism, Okura attempts to examine both in light of his own experience in order to dispel his confusion.

Okura accomplishes this examination of conflicting elements through the interplay of the different elements in the compound form. With his title, Okura explicitly outlines his purpose. The contradictions between two traditions recently imported from the continent create confusion, and it must be dispelled. With the preface, he explains the confusion and proposes a way to deal with it. The confusion is that of a man who recognizes his duty, yet is tempted by the idea that there might be a way to escape it. Okura's solution lies in pointing out his lack of conviction in pursuing this new path, and "clarifying" the obligations he seems ready to discard. The final line of the preface makes it clear that the poem itself is meant to be the means by which this confusion is dispelled.

The poem accomplishes this through its tripartite structure. In the first section, Okura emphasizes the strength of familial ties, based not on Confucian dogma but on "the normal working of this world." By invoking the image of the bird trapped in lime, he suggests that Buddhist texts themselves point out how strong these bonds are. In the

[23] Higashi 1986, p. 76.

second section, he ties these feelings to one's humanity. The only man who can truly fulfill the Buddhist ideal of turning his back on these ties is no longer human, "made out of stone or wood." And in the final, longer section, Okura turns from the natural ties to family, to the divine ties to the emperor. Even if one were able to overcome one's natural feelings and deny one's family, as long as one lived one would still be subject to one's lord. Here, Okura slips into the rhetoric of emperor praise more commonly found in the *chôka* of Hitomaro. Finally, in the *hanka*, Okura comes to a final conclusion based on simple practicality. The road to heaven may be an ideal, but it is far away. In this life, one must adhere to one's duties.

Given this interpretation, it is impossible to separate the individual parts from the poetry sequence as a whole without distorting their meaning. In this sense, considering Okura's preface in relation to the literary technique of *joshi* is perhaps not inappropriate. Despite its being written in a different language (or, at least, a different writing system), it is a fundamental part of the poem itself. It is thus more accurate to define Okura's works in terms of poetry sequences rather than simply individual poems.

This creation of meaning not only in the individual parts of a sequence, but in their relationship to one another, is yet another outgrowth of poetry as a written form. While an oral form appeared and then disappeared forever, a written poem retained a standard form, to which could be added other poems in order to expand the scope of its expression. Multi-part sequences, series of poems examining different aspects of a single topic, and sequences of multiple authorship became possible. Okura was one of the first to use these multi-part poem sequences, and he may have been the only one to achieve this level of philosophical depth in doing so.

A Poem on Thinking of Children

The second of the "Three Compositions at Kama" is entitled "Poem on Thinking of Children, with preface." As with the other two Kama poetry sequences, it consists of a Chinese preface, a *chôka*, and a single *hanka*. This particular sequence is one of Okura's most well-known, and is often viewed as the most direct expression of Okura's frequent theme of parental love, but this interpretation largely derives from the mistaken emphasis on individual poems rather than the sequence as a whole. For example, on its own the *chôka* seems a straightforward expression of longing for children by a father who is separated from them, and the *hanka* a description of a parent's love for a child surpassing all worldly treasures. Indeed, as we have seen in other cases, some anthologies and translations include only these two poems, with the Chinese preface elided. As in the other examples, though, reading the poems in the context of the Chinese preface provides a necessary subtext for the poems and complicates Okura's feelings of parental love. It is the interplay of the component parts that creates the nuances of meaning of the sequence as a whole.

V:802-3

A Poem on Thinking of Children – one poem, with preface

Sakyamuni, the Thus-Come Buddha, with his golden mouth preached, "I care for all living beings as for [my son] Rahula." He also preached, "Of love, none surpasses that for one's child." If even the wisest of holy sages had a heart filled with love for his child, who among us mere mortal beings[24] could help but love his child?

uri hameba	Eating melons,
kodomo omôyu	I remember my children.
kuri hameba	Eating chestnuts,
mashite shinuwayu	I miss them all the more.

[24] literally, "the green grass of the world"

izuku yori
kitarishi mono zo
manakai ni
motona kakarite
yasui shi isanu

From what source
do they come to me?
Before my eyes
they uselessly taunt me,
not letting me sleep in peace.

Hanka

shirogane mo
kugane mo tama mo
nani semu ni
masareru takara
ko ni shikame ya mo

Envoy

Not silver,
nor gold, nor precious jewels –
how could they match
the far greater treasure
that is one's own child?

The theme of love for one's children is frequently explored in Okura's poetry, expressed in his desire to return to his wife and children in "Poem on Leaving a Banquet" (MYS III:337), his mourning for a child that has died in "Three Poems of Longing for the Boy named Furuhi" (MYS V:904-6), and his final thoughts of his children at the end of his life in "Seven Poems on the Illnesses that Mount in this Aged Body, on the Suffering of the Passing Years, and on Thinking of my Children" (MYS V:897-903). Indeed, the image of Okura as doting father is one that has caught the imagination of both scholars and the general public, and Okura's poetry has been called "sentimental," and Okura himself a "poet of love."[25] But it is this "Poem on Thinking of his Children" which has been held up as the ideal example of this type of sentimentality, the poem which directly expresses the fatherly love which forms the subtext so many other works. However, this focus on the overt meaning of the poem creates a reading of the poem as unsophisticated sentimentality, and ignores the effects of Okura's experimentation with non-standard poetic form and intertextuality, which allow a far more complex reading of the poem.

[25] Ôkubo 1977.

Reading only the poems, the meaning of the sequence seems obvious. In the *chôka*, Okura is separated from his children, but thinks of them constantly, reminded of them when he eats the foods they enjoy and distracted by thoughts of them when his mind is at rest. He is able to neither eat nor sleep without being reminded of his beloved children who are so far away. The strength of this emotion is distilled in the *hanka*, which expresses the all-consuming nature of parental love with the idea that a child is worth more than any worldly treasure. We may say that the emphasis on the bond between parent and child is a natural one, but it is also a distinctly Confucian ideal, as shown in the previous poem.

However, as in the previous poem, if the bond Okura refers to is Confucian, it should be at odds with the Buddhist worldview. After all, the fundamental conflict between preservation of Confucian familial bonds and Buddhist rejection of attachment is one which would be returned to frequently in Japanese literature, with parents unable to take Buddhist vows at the end of their lives due to a lingering concern for their children. If we take the preface at face value, however, Okura seems to be raising the Buddhist quotes in support of the idea that a parent should love a child. By pointing out that Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, was also a loving parent to his only son, Rahula, Okura shifts the poem from a personal expression of his own love as a father to a recognition of the universal nature of this emotion: no father can help but feel love for his child. Indeed, this is the meaning ascribed to the poem by most commentaries. However, this interpretation of the sequence requires that we ignore the fundamental meaning of the Buddhist texts to which Okura refers, assuming that Okura himself did not understand them.

Okura includes two quotes from Buddhist scripture in his preface: "I care for all living beings as for [my son] Rahula," (等思衆生如羅睺羅) and "Of love, none surpasses that for one's child." (愛無過子) It is not clear whether Okura was quoting directly or paraphrasing, and indeed such a distinction would probably have been foreign to him. The modern insistence on absolute accuracy in referring to earlier works was not a concern in Nara Japan, and paraphrasing the general meaning or quoting from memory was extremely common. Still, the source of these statements has been the focus of some debate among *Man'yôshû* scholars.

The first quote, "I care for all living beings as for Rahula" can be found with a certain degree of variation in numerous sutras and commentaries. In one of the earliest *Man'yôshû* commentaries, the seventeenth century *Man'yô Daishôki*, Keichû identifies the *Jinguangming zuishengwang jing*[26], a Tang era Chinese translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*[27] as the source of the quote, while Kojima Noriyuki indicates an earlier, Sui era, translation of the same sutra, the *Hebu Jinguangming jing*[28] as the source. Of the two, the *Jinguangming zuishengwang jing* is less likely a source, given that this translation was not widely known in Japan until the Tempyô era, after Okura's poem was composed. In addition, the wording of the later text is different from that used by Okura and it uses a different transliteration for the name "Rahula" than does Okura.[29] In contrast, the wording of the earlier text differs from Okura's by only a single character, reading, " 等觀衆生如羅睺羅." Even so, the change of that single character creates a large, and perhaps intentional, difference in meaning. If it was indeed this text to which

[26] In Japanese, *Kongômyô saishô ô kyô* – 金光明最勝王経. *TT* 665. Reference in *Daishôki* v.3, p.32.
[27] *Suvarna-prabhâsa sutra*. *TT* 663.
[28] In Japanese, *Gôbu kongômyô kyô* – 合部金光明経. *TT* 664. Reference in Kojima 1965, p. 986.

Okura was referring, his change of the character "観" in the original to "思" in his quote alters the meaning from "I look upon all living beings as I do Rahula" to something closer to "I care for all living being as I do Rahula." Although both characters can be used generally to mean "think of," the character "思", used by Okura both in the quote and in the title of his poetry sequence, is far more tied to personal emotional attachment than the relatively objective "look upon" expressed in the original, and in a poem sequence about love for one's child, this is no small difference.

Imura Tetsuo has raised a different possibility for the source of the quote: the *Nirvana Sutra*[30]. Imura suggests that the phrasing "with his golden mouth" was used only for the words of the Buddha himself, and thus shows that Okura must have intended a direct quote of the Buddha rather than one rendered by disciples, eliminating the possibility of *Sutra of Golden Light* as the original source.[31] The *Nirvana Sutra* reads "等視衆生如羅睺羅," once again differing from Okura's quote by a single character. And here too, the change in the quote is from a more neutral character, "視," meaning "look upon," to Okura's more emotional "思." Although the prominence of the *Sutra of Golden Light* in Japan at the time of Okura's composition makes it a convincing candidate, the *Nirvana Sutra* is difficult to dismiss as a possible source.

However, despite the attention paid by Japanese scholars to tracking down the source of Okura's quote, the original source should be of less concern than is his method of using that quote. Whether Okura was referring to the statement in the *Sutra of Golden Light* or in the *Nirvana Sutra*, the original meaning is far different than that seemingly

[29] 羅怙羅 as opposed to Okura's 羅睺羅
[30] *Mahâparinirvâna-sûtra*, in Japanese, *Daihatsu Nehan Gyô* –大般涅槃経. *TT* 375.

expressed by Okura's preface. The focus of the line in both sutras is on the impartiality of the Buddha's feelings for all beings: they are no more nor less intense than his feelings for his own son, Rahula. Rahula is invoked only as upâya, an "expedient means" to let the reader understand the depth of the Buddha's feeling by comparing it to the love of a parent for a child. It cannot be read as a statement of the Buddha's personal parental love for his son. In using it to come to the conclusion, "even the wisest of holy sages had a heart filled with love for his child," Okura either misinterprets the original or deliberately distorts its meaning for his own purposes.

The second quote Okura uses is no less problematic. A convincing source for the quote "Of love, none surpasses that for one's child" (愛無過子) has not been found in Buddhist texts. The *Man'yôshû kôshô* suggests the *Za Ahan jing*[32] as the source. This text reads:

> A heavenly being posed the hypothesis:
> Of love, none surpasses that for one's child
> Of riches, nothing is as valuable as cattle
> Of brightness, nothing surpasses the sun
> Of waters, nothing surpasses the sea
> The Buddha replied, saying:
> Of love, none surpasses that for oneself
> Of riches, nothing is as valuable as grain
> Of brightness, nothing surpasses wisdom
> Of waters, nothing surpasses the rain.

Although this passage does contain the phrase "of love, none surpasses that for one's child," the sentiment is proposed not by the Buddha, but by a heavenly being asking questions of the Buddha. In fact, the idea is specifically rejected by the Buddha, love for a child dismissed as subordinate to, or perhaps even an aspect of, the selfish love for

[31] Itô 1995 v.5, pp. 48-9.

[32] *Samyukta agama* (sanskrit text not extant), in Japanese *Zôagon kyô*. (雑阿含経 – *TT* 99) Reference in *Man'yôshû kôshô*

oneself. This is very different from the sentiment expressed in a surface reading of Okura's poem. Still, no other similar source for such a quote has been found, leading Itô Haku to suggest that Okura was well aware that no such quote existed, but simply made one up to suit his purposes.[33]

Even had a satisfactory source for the idea that "of love, none surpasses that for one's child" been found, it is highly unlikely that this love was viewed as a positive thing. In a Buddhist context, love for a child is simply one more attachment to the material world, which keeps us from recognizing it as illusory and thus prevents us from achieving enlightenment. In fact, in a strictly Buddhist context Okura's phrase might be more accurately rendered: "of the desires which keep us from achieving release from this world of pain, there is none greater than the attachment to one's child." As intimated by the passage in the *Za Ahan jing*, love for one's own child is simply an aspect of the selfish love for oneself, and must be rejected if one is to achieve release from the material world. Once again, Okura has either completely misunderstood the original Buddhist scriptures, or is distorting their original meaning.

This gap between the surface meaning of Okura's poems and the deeper meaning of the texts from which he draws his quotes has led some scholars to conclude that Okura did not fully understand the difference between the pure or holy love of the Buddha for all living beings (情愛) and the base or vulgar love which binds us to the things of this world (渇愛). In other words, Okura confused the Buddhist warning against attachment in the second quote with a promotion of the Confucian ideal of filiality, not

[33] Itô 1995, v.5, p.48.

understanding that the Buddha was in fact criticizing that very ideal.[34] Needless to say, a misinterpretation of this magnitude would require an extreme misreading of not only these Buddhist texts, but of the very underpinnings of the Buddhist worldview. Such a gross misunderstanding is inconsistent with the activity of a scholar such as Okura, whose familiarity with Chinese sources is apparent throughout his oeuvre.

In order to explain this gap in meaning, several scholars have offered possible explanations of why Okura, though fully aware of the import of the Buddhist quotes, still chose to draw the conclusion that "even the wisest of holy sages had a heart filled with love for his child." Imura Tetsuo attributes the mistake to Okura's "affective logic" (感情論理) in imagining the Buddha as a father, before he had rejected the world and turned his back on the secular love for his children.[35] "Affective" or "emotional" logic is a term usually found in psychological discourse, referring to the tendency to base decisions on emotional belief or wishful thinking rather than on rational analysis. In other words, Okura concludes that the Buddha loved his child simply because Okura himself fervently believes that the Buddha must have, the strength of this conviction overcoming his scholarly detachment. Imura writes:

> The Buddha with his beloved only child Rahula, the Buddha who could not avoid the suffering of death, the Buddha who examined deeply the various types of suffering which afflicted humanity, and with which he himself was afflicted, and for that very reason resolved to turn his back on the castle of Kapilavastu -- we can imagine that it was affection for the humanity of the Buddha with warm blood still running through his veins that gave rise to [Okura's] affective logic.[36]

Thus Okura surrenders his objectivity in favor of his empathy for the historical buddha as a man rather than the Holy Buddha as a transcendent being and concludes that the

[34] For example, as in Higashi 1984.
[35] Itô 1995 v.5, p. 48-9
[36] Ibid.

Buddha felt the same kind of love for Rahula that Okura feels for his own children. Itô Haku draws a similar conclusion:

> We can suppose that the phrase "Of love, none surpasses that for one's child," upon which Okura grounds his composition, was one that he made up himself. So strong was his awareness of the sin of attachment to his child that Okura resorted to invention to give himself a pillar to which he could cling.[37]

For Itô it is not empathy but guilt which drives Okura to make an overly hasty conclusion, but it is still emotion rather than reason which guides his hand. Like Imura, Itô paints Okura as a scholar willing to sacrifice the accuracy of his evidence in order to obtain the conclusion he desires.

Whether motivated by guilt or excessive emotion, there is little in this characterization of Okura to inspire trust in his abilities as an interpreter of Chinese philosophy, making this image at odds with Okura's reputation as one of the preeminent Chinese scholars of his time. However, this portrayal of Okura as an emotional rather than an intellectual poet is fairly common. It is the natural outgrowth of the trend to classify Okura's humanistic work as sentimentality, to read much of his poetry as autobiographical, and to overemphasize Okura's personal emotional connection to the subject matter. Although it is always acknowledged that he is exceedingly learned, in this caricature the impartial objectivity of Okura as a scholar cannot hope to compete with the intense emotion of Okura as a man. And, naturally, if it is assumed that the central theme of Okura's oeuvre is human emotion, then the interpretation of his poetry becomes colored by this assumption. Although Imura and Itô's interpretations of Okura's preface certainly do not fall as deeply into this pattern as those who dismiss the preface

[37] Itô 1995, v.5, p.48.

completely, they are also the result of classifying Okura as a "poet of love" rather than a "poet of reason."

Despite the uncertainty over Okura's interpretation of the Buddhist quotes in the preface, many scholars have used their presence to assume a Buddhist allegorical meaning for the entire sequence. And indeed, there are enough elements in the *chôka* which could be interpreted as Buddhist to make such an interpretation plausible. For example, it has long been suggested that the phrase "From what source / do they come to me?" is actually referring to the karmic bonds from a previous existence that has caused them to be born as parent and child.[38] Indeed, the *Nirvana Sutra* contains the lines "Are body and fate created of their own accord? ... Are mother and father? ... From where do they come, and to where do they go? ... Questions of this type give rise to limitless suffering and afflict the hearts of all living beings." Okura's question could thus have a deeper meaning, asking what karmic ties in a former life have created this parental bond which is impossible to overcome. The last line of the *chôka* can be given a Buddhist interpretation as well, "not letting me sleep in peace" referring both to the memories of his children which fill his mind when he is trying to rest and to the attachment of his parental love, which precludes any possibility of salvation. Read in this way, the *chôka* is an admission of Okura's inability to overcome his attachment.

But how do we understand the sequence as a Buddhist allegory in the context of Okura's misleading interpretation of the Buddhist quotes in the preface? In affirming that Okura fully understood the contradiction he was forming in the preface, yet still embraced the underlying philosophy as a devout Buddhist, Imura seems to want to both

[38] This possibility was first raised by Keichû in *Daishôki* v.3, p.33 and has been explored in Itô 1995, v.5, pp. 850-1 and Itô 1995, v.5, pp. 48-9, among others.

have his cake and eat it too. In the end, he is forced to come to the rather strained conclusion that Okura was actually better able to pursue the Buddhist path through embracing love rather than following the Buddha's instructions to reject it.

> From his standpoint in the ignorant secular world, Okura faces the wisdom of the enlightened beings as he toys with irony and paradox, and actually manages to come a step closer to the love of the enlightened being. 'When a beloved child dies, the mother and father wish they could die along with the child. My friend, it is also thus with the bodhisattva. When a being is suffering in hell, even if that person is an evil man, the bodhisattva wishes to fall into the depths of hell along with him.' (*Nehankyô shôgyôhin*) Okura refused to close his eyes to the relationship between foolish blindness and worldly suffering, and they thus begin to seem like the eyes of one with indomitable courage.[39]

It is unclear how Imura is attempting to resolve this contradiction. Is Okura a defiant humanist, freely admitting to love for his children despite the knowledge that he is damned because of it? Or is he a questioning acolyte, attempting to come closer to true understanding of a *koan* through an exploration of the inherent paradox contained within? More importantly, why do both interpretations require that Okura adhere to the tenets of Buddhism? If, as Imura suggests, it is the humanity of the Buddha before he turned his back on the secular world which draws Okura's sympathy, why is it then necessary to assume that the message which Okura embraces is that of the Buddha after he has divorced himself from that humanity? Imura assumes that Okura's viewpoint is a Buddhist one merely because he quotes Buddhist sutras in the preface, and it is this that drives him to redefine the entire sequence as a Buddhist allegory. In so doing, he allows the Buddhist quotes in the preface to dominate the sequence, and subordinates the meaning inherent in the *chôka* and *hanka* to this context alone.

Indeed, many of the differences in interpretation of this poetry sequence can be attributed to the privileging of one section over the others. The interpretation of the

sequence as simply the direct expression of a parent's love, for example, arises from an excessive focus on the poems at the expense of the preface. In fact, there are numerous examples in which one or both of the poems are presented on their own, without the context provided by the preface, thus distorting the nature of the three parts as a cohesive sequence while affirming the image of Okura as a poet ruled by emotion. The interpretation of the sequence as Buddhist allegory, on the other hand, subordinates the entire sequence to the Buddhist scripture quoted in the preface. In effect, it equates the inclusion of Buddhist texts with the promotion of Buddhist doctrine, and disallows the possibility of the new work transcending the philosophical limits of its antecedents. What has been lacking is an interpretation which views the sequence not as three distinct poems, but rather as a poetic whole, with individual parts performing different functions but with none subordinate to the others.

The key to understanding the contradiction between the quotes in the preface lies in the conclusion Okura draws from the quotes: "If even the wisest of holy sages had a heart filled with love for his child, who among us mere mortal beings could help but love his child?"[40] Okura's phrasing in this final line of the preface shows that he was well aware of both the original meaning of the quotes and of the fact that the conclusion to which they lead is contradictory. Okura states his conclusion using the construction 尚～況乎 (J. *nao~ihamu ya*) to ask the rhetorical question "If even the wisest of holy sages had a heart filled with love for his child, who among us mere mortal beings could help but love his child?" The grammatical construction translates roughly as "If this is so even for A, how much more so for B," or "This is true even for A, so it goes without

[39] *Zenshû* v. 5, p.55.

saying that it is true for B." A prime example of this is the passage from the *Dao de jing*, "Heaven and Earth cannot last forever, so how much less can man?"[41] Thus the truth of a statement in an extreme case is used as proof of its applicability to a less extreme case. The fact that the concept of all things eventually coming to an end is true even for the heaven and earth acts as evidence that it is true also for mankind. Okura also uses the latter part of the construction (況乎) to express a similar sentiment in the preface to his "Six Poems for Ôtomo no Kumagori, Expressing his Thoughts for Him" (*MYS* V:886-91)

> Thus a thousand sages have passed on and a hundred wise men could not last.
> How much less can a lowly, humble man such as I be able to elude death?

If any being should be able to escape death, it would be the sages and wise men, and the fact that they cannot emphasizes to the speaker that he, too, must die.

In the preface to "Poem on Thinking of Children," it is the love of the Buddha for his son that acts as the extreme example proving the less extreme hypothesis: that a man cannot help but love his child. Okura's use of this structure thus makes it clear that he could not possibly be suggesting that parental love was an aspect of the Buddha's universal love for all beings, a virtue to be emulated by the rest of humanity. Rather, he was emphasizing that love for one's child was a phenomenon to which mortal beings are far more vulnerable than was the Buddha. And if not even the holy Buddha could rid himself of this attachment, how could we mere mortals ever hope to do so? This is the central issue raised by the preface.

What implications, then, does this have for our understanding of the way Okura employs the two Buddhist quotes he selects? At the very least, it lets us know that Okura

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[40] 至極大聖尚有愛子之心　況乎世間蒼生誰不愛子乎
[41] 天地尚不能久而 況於人乎 – *Dao de jing* book 23.

was aware of a contradiction between them. The first quote, "I care for all living beings as for [my son] Rahula" is, of course, intended as an *upâya* designed to communicate the depth of the Buddha's universal love by comparing it with something to which the listener can relate: the unconditional love of a parent for a child. However, Okura does not simply take the quote at face value, but instead examines what it tells us about the Buddha himself. The Buddha does not compare his unconditional love for all beings to some generic ideal of parental love, but to his own personal love for his own son, mentioning Rahula by name. His understanding of this parental love is not merely that of a detached observer, acknowledging the strength of the impulse but setting himself clearly above it. Rather, he personalizes the sentiment, saying in effect "I am a father and as such I understand the love for a child -- this is the intensity of the love I have for all beings." Okura does not misunderstand the intent of the Buddha's quote as espousing the ideal of love for one's children, but rather recognizes what the statement unintentionally reveals: that even the Buddha himself is subject to such emotion. This allows Okura to raise the question of how any of us, less perfect beings, can possibly free ourselves from this strongest of attachments. As long as we are human, we cannot help but feel love for our children.

This is the other side of the conflict examined by Okura in the previous sequence, "Poem to Turn a Confused Mind." (*MYS* V:800-1), directed at those who would turn their back on their Confucian duty and reject their familial ties as though discarding an old shoe. They may call themselves "sages," but to Okura, these people are no longer human, "made of stone or wood" rather than flesh. If, as Confucian ideals tell us, it is familial relationships which truly define our humanity, then without those ties we are no

longer worthy of the name. Unfortunately, it is precisely these relationships which Buddhism asks us to recognize as chains which bind us to the world of suffering and to reject if we are to free ourselves from it. In that poem, the conclusion expressed in the *hanka* reveals where Okura's priorities really lie. The ideals of heaven are far removed from the reality of human existence, and rather than clinging to these illusory ideals, it is better to focus one's attention on home and family and fulfill one's duties in the mundane world. Okura chooses the way of flawed humanity over the way of the sage.

In light of this attitude, the preface to "Poem on Thinking of Children" makes the most sense as an implicit criticism of Buddhism as untenable on this particular point. The Buddha tells us to reject the ties to our children, but his own words show us that he himself does not do so. It fits into the same framework as the earlier poetry sequence: when Buddhism and Confucianism are in conflict, Confucianism must win out because of its basis in natural human relationships. Those who claim to adhere to Buddhist ideals may call themselves sages and deny these attachments, but they are as tied to them as any other human. In this light, there may be some truth in Kato Shuichi's observation that "although Okura understood Buddhist thought, he was probably not capable of believing in it."[42] After all, Okura was first and foremost a scholar, and we need not assume that intimate familiarity with the subject matter necessarily required Buddhist devotion.

Making this interpretation explicit in translation, Okura's preface might be rendered:

> Sakyamuni, the Thus-Come Buddha, with his golden mouth preached, "I care for all living beings as I care for my own son, Rahula." Yet he also preached, "There is no greater attachment than love for one's child." If even the wisest of holy sages had a heart that knew love for his child, who among us mere mortal beings could ever rid himself of attachment to his child?

[42] Kato,1979, p. 75.

The same grammatical structure which was used above to clarify Okura's understanding of the Buddhist quotes also makes it clear that the question of whether mankind can ever be free of the bonds of parental love is a rhetorical one, with an implied answer in the negative. However, given the problematic nature of the sources, we cannot take this conclusion at face value. The contradictory nature of the Buddhist teachings begs to be explored, and the rhetorical question Okura asks thus takes on the character of a hypothesis: Given that the Buddhist quotes present us with a paradox, is it not impossible for mortal men to follow the Buddhist path and reject the love for their children? The *chôka*, then, is the exploration of that hypothesis, in which the question raised through scholarly research is tested against the touchstone of life experience.

Much of the past research into this *chôka* has focused on the extent to which it is autobiographical. Certainly, the simplest explanation for why Okura was writing about love for one's children is that he himself had children whom he loved. Of course, at the time of the poem's composition in 728, Okura was nearly seventy years old, leading many to question whether he could have had children as young as those mentioned in both this poem and in his other works mentioning children. The assumption that Okura is writing from his own experience has led scholars to speculate that the poems were actually written much earlier, that Okura was referring to his grandchildren rather than his children, or that Okura was writing about some local children in his province or the children of an acquaintance. While these speculations may be interesting for those attempting to reconstruct an image of Okura's life, they do little to improve our understanding of the poem sequence itself. Like the assumption that Okura is a poet ruled by emotion, the attempt to read Okura's many poems mentioning children as

autobiographical may actually detract from understanding, causing the reader to conflate the children in this poem with those mentioned in Okura's other works.[43]

Other scholars have pointed out that many of Okura's works are *daisaku*, written in the persona of another person, and there is thus no reason to insist that Okura's poem is autobiographical. Ôkubo Hiroyuki, in particular, has dismissed the issue, saying:

> It is possible to find many poems in the collection which speak of a parent's feelings for a child, but these are all limited to expressions of individual experience in particular circumstances. In Okura's case, on the other hand, even if the poem is based on an individual experience, it naturally evokes a more general character at times elevated to the status of a 'philosophy of love,' and sets it apart from all others. This means that there is little to be gained from the issue of whether or not the children in the poem were or were not Okura's own. This is both because Okura had the ability to easily take on the persona of others in his *daisaku*, and because, as long as the position of reading personal experience in human terms is maintained, the result transcends the individual. Rather than focusing on the status of Okura's reality, more attention should be paid to the fundamental posture of his expression.[44]

Whether or not Okura achieves a "philosophy of love" with his poetry sequence, the tendency to view his poem as simply the personal musings of a father who begins to miss his children upon eating their favorite foods is clearly mistaken. As we have seen, the preface places the issue of love for children into a far larger context, but even without this preface there are indications that the poem is more than simply personal rumination. The melons and chestnuts (*uri* and *kuri*) that call thoughts of his children to mind, for example, are not simply a random choice of foods a child might enjoy, but are seen in other contexts as symbolic of children's food.[45] The most commonly cited example of this is Tao Qian's poem "Qing zi," which contains the lines "Now turned nine years old,

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[43] Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, for example, imagined that the child mentioned is not merely separated from his father, but dead, a conflation of the child mentioned in the Furuhi poem with the child in this sequence. Hisamatsu 1953.
[44] Ôkubo 1997, pp. 112-3.

my child still eats only pears and chestnuts."[46] The transformation from "pear" to "melon" has been variously explained as local familiarity and personal preference, and despite the change, the attribution is convincing given the extensive evidence of Tao Qian's influence on Okura.[47] Higashi Shigemi has also presented evidence that chestnuts and gourds played an important role in ceremonies celebrating the conception and birth of a child.[48] The two foods thus stand as symbols of children in general, and arouse Okura's thoughts for this reason.

The *hanka* concludes the sentiment with an almost celebratory tone. Okura seems to be not merely resigned, but wholeheartedly embracing his love for his children, which is very difficult to explain if the context is taken to be Buddhist. If mankind is unable to rid itself of attachment, it is condemned to the world of suffering, so if Okura truly believes in the Buddhist philosophy of rejecting desire, he should despair at the recognition that he is doomed by his love for his children. Yet the *hanka* with which Okura ends the sequence is far from despairing. Rather, Okura revels in the emotion of parental love, praising the ties to one's children as valuable beyond all else. His proclamation that a child's value exceeds that of all worldly treasures has an echo in his "Poem of longing for the boy named Furuhi" (*MYS* V: 904-6). In despair at the loss of a child, the poet asks the question:

... yo no hito no	... The seven types
tôtomi negau	of priceless treasure
shichikusa no	so valued by
takara mo ware wa	the men of this world–
nani semu ni ...	what are they to me? ...

[45] The *uri* mentioned by Okura is, in fact, a type of gourd. However, since, unlike most gourds, it is sweet, I have followed the custom of translating it "melon" in order to better express the general meaning.
[46] Find source, confirm quote
[47] Tao Qian's influence on Okura is documented in Nakanishi 1972.
[48] Higashi 1991, pp. 69-77.

The seven treasures are representative symbols of the wealth of the world, and include the gold, silver, and jewels mentioned in the *hanka* to "Poem on Thinking of Children." Indeed, these lines express the same sentiment as the *hanka*. Just as no amount of wealth could possibly console the grieving father who has lost a child, no father would ever willingly give up his child, whatever the price offered. This, then, is Okura's final conclusion: there is nothing that could induce a man to reject his love for his child, and ridding oneself of all attachment is thus an impossibility.

The *hanka* takes on an added significance when we note that the seven treasures are also frequently referred to in Buddhist scripture. Although they represent secular wealth, they also adorn numerous mythical Buddhist icons supposed to exist in the Pure Land, and can also be used to represent the seven proper Buddhist practices.[49] Since embracing the love for a child means giving in to worldly attachments, Okura is choosing his child not only over the treasures of the world, but also over the reward of Buddhist salvation. Recognizing the impossibility of turning his back on his children, Okura chooses instead to embrace his attachment, rejecting not just the treasures of the mundane world, but the promise of salvation in the next. Given the choice between mundane humanity and abstract philosophy, Okura holds true to his humanist outlook.

As in the previous poem sequence, this ability to place conflicting philosophies into a dialogue with each other, and with the reality of the poet's own experience, is reliant on separate sections of a poetry sequence taking on specific roles. In both poems, Okura examines Buddhist philosophy in relation to his own life and finds it lacking. As an idealistic philosophy, it may have a certain appeal, but to the everyday problems of the

[49] Itô 1995 v.5, p.52.

world, it lacks practicality. And in both poems, the oversimplification of the poems by later scholars is frequently due to excessive examination of the poems outside the context provided by the preface. The reduction of the two poems to a lecture on duty and a straightforward expression of affection is the result of an attempt to elide rather than examine the contradictory points raised by the various sections.

A Poem Lamenting the Hardships of the World

The last of the three Kama poems deals with the suffering that accompanies old age. In the Buddhist interpretation of the three sequences as an examination of the various types of suffering, it is thus the easiest to fit into the framework. After all, Okura's work embodies one of the four Buddhist noble truths: the awareness that all things must change and that any pleasure one finds in the world is temporary. As in the other two sequences, however, Okura may be concerned more with a universal statement on humanity than with advancing a specifically Buddhist point of view.

V: 804-805

A Poem Lamenting the Hardships of the World – one poem, with preface

Easy to gather and difficult to dispel are the eight great trials and pains.[50]
Difficult to gain and easy to spend are a hundred years of praise and pleasure.[51]
What men of old grieved over, indeed today we do the same. For this reason I composed a poem to drive out the sorrows of the two shades of hair.[52] The poem reads:

[50] Accoring to the *Nirvana sutra*, the "eight pains" were the pain of birth, the pain of old age, the pain of sickness, the pain of death, the pain of separation from loved ones, the pain of having to deal with those whom one dislikes, the pain of not attaining one's desires, and the pain which comes of the workings of one's physical body. Itô 1995, v.5, p. 58.
[51] One hundred years is the supposed limit of a human life according to some Buddhist sources.

yo no naka no			That within the world
subenaki mono wa			against which we are helpless
toshitsuki wa			is that years and months
nagaruru gotoshi			pass like a constant flow.
toritsutsuki			That which follows,
oikuru mono wa			coming one after another,
momokusa ni			are a myriad types
seme yori kitaru			of ailment afflicting us.
otomera ga			The young maidens,
otome sabisu to			as maidens are wont to do,
karatama o			wrap around their wrists
tamoto ni makashi			jewels from foreign lands
[*shirotae no*	][53]	[	and wave from side to side]
[*sode furikawashi*	]	[	their sleeves of pure white cloth]
[*kurenai no*	]	[	as the scarlet hems]
[*aka mo susobiki*	]	[	of their red skirts trail behind.]
yochi kora to			With others their age
te tazusawarite			they go hand in hand
asobikemu			and play without care
toki no sakari o			that this time of blossoming
todomikane			cannot be stopped
sugushi yaritsure			from slipping all away.
mina no wata			Black as the guts
kaguroki kami ni			of a snail was their hair.
itsu no ma ka			When did it become
shimo no furikemu			tinged with frost of white?
kurenai no[54]			And on their faces
omote no ue ni			which once blushed crimson,
izuku yu ka			whence came these
shiwa ga kitarishi			wrinkles which now cover them?
[*tsune narishi*	][55]	[	So soon the arched eyebrows]
[*emai mayobiki*	]	[	and tempting smiles are gone,]
[*saku hana no*	]	[	like flowers which bloom]
[*utsuroinikeri*	]	[	only to wither and die.]
[*yo no naka wa*	]	[	Within the world]
[*kaku nomi narashi*	]	[	this is all there is.]
masurao no			The virile warriors,
otoko sabisu to			as warriors are wont to do,
tsurugi tachi			take up their long blades
koshi ni torihaki			and strap them to their waists.
satsu yumi o			Firmly in hand

[52] "Two shades of hair" refers to old age, as streaks of gray appear in one's dark hair.
[53] The four lines from "shirotae no" to "aka mo susobiki" are listed as a variant in the original text.
[54] There is a variant on this line in some texts, reading "ninohonasu," or "like red earth."
[55] The six lines from "tsune narishi" to "kaku nomi narashi" are listed as a variant in the original text.

ta nigirimochite	their long hunting bows are gripped.
akagoma ni	On their sorrel mounts
shitsukura uchioki	they place saddles of Yamato cloth
hainorite	and leap astride
asobiarukishi	to race them about for sport.
yo no naka ya	But can the world
tsune ni arikeru	remain like this forever?
otomera ga	Behind closed doors
sanasu itato o	lovely maidens lie sleeping.
oshihiraki	They push them open
itadori yorite	to find their way through the dark,
matamade no	and jewelled arm entwined
tamade sashikae	with truly jewelled arm,
saneshi yo no	they sleep together.
ikuda mo araneba	But these nights are too few,
tatsukazue	and soon with cane in hand
koshi ni taganete	to steady uncertain legs,
ka yukeba	going this way
hito ni itowae	they are despised by everyone
kaku yukeba	going the other
hito ni nikumae	they are hated by everyone.
oyoshi o wa	For the elderly,
kaku nomi narashi	This is all there is.
tamakiwaru	Like a beautiful jewel
inochi oshi kedo	our life is precious, and yet
semu sube mo nashi	there is nothing we can do.

Envoy

tokiwa nasu	Never changing –
kaku shi mo ga mo to	if only life could be thus!
omoedomo	So I often wish.
yo no koto nareba	But the world is as it is
todomi kanetsu mo	and can not be made to stay.

With the title, Okura introduces the theme of the hardship of the world, and he specifies the Buddhist eight hardships in his preface. However, by the end of the preface, it is clear he is speaking primarily about the pain of old age. In this way, the preface serves to narrow the theme from the general topic of the title to the specific issue dealt with in the poem, while keeping it linked to the greater philosophical context. The theme

of the poem is old age, but the title and preface insure that it is understood in context as one of the general difficulties of the world, in keeping with the way the prefaces provided a universalization of the poems' personal expression in the other Kama compositions.

Like children, old age was also a topic to which Okura would return again, most overtly in his long compound sequence beginning with "Essay Lamenting My Descent into Illness" and ending with "Seven Poems on the Illnesses that Mount in this Aged Body, on the Suffering of the Passing Years, and on Thinking of my Children" (MYS V:897-903). As is the case with so much of Okura's work, these works have been interpreted as an autobiographical account of his own process of aging and falling into ill health. Of course, one of the poems in the later sequence was actually written years earlier, suggesting that it may have been more intellectual exercise than autobiographical grousing.[56] "Poem Lamenting the Hardships of the World" also seems less personal than the later sequence, and seems to be aiming for a more general commentary on the sadness of aging and the realization that all pleasure is temporary. Whether or not he was speaking of his own personal grief at sickness and aging, however, the nature of his language makes it clear that he was drawing inspiration from Chinese texts in framing his approach.

The most obvious potential influence is Six Dynasties era poetry, in particular the poetry of Tao Qian, whose influence on Okura was mentioned earlier in relation to "Poem on Thinking of Children." Nakanishi Susumu has pointed out various elements in Tao Qian's *Twelve Miscellaneous Poems* (雑詩十二首) that may have influenced

[56] The final *hanka* in the sequence, *MYS* V: 905 is accompanied by the note, "This was composed earlier, in the second year of Jinki [725 CE], but because of its similarity, it is included here again."

Okura.[57] However, as Tatsumi Masaaki points out, the theme was far from unusual in Chinese discourse, and there are numerous other examples that might have an equal claim to influence.[58] In fact, although many of the literary quotes in the "old age" (老) section of the *Yiwen leiju* deal with respect for the aged, there are also a number of examples which contrast the joy of youth with the difficulty of old age in the same way Okura does.[59] With such a large number of Chinese models available to Okura, it is virtually impossible to specify a single source of inspiration, and it makes more sense to view the poem as the product of Okura's participation in a larger literary tradition.

Like the other two poems, the phrase *yo no naka* (within the world) appears prominently in this poem. In fact, of the three, this is the poem which deals with the uncertainty of the world most directly, and the phrase *yo no naka* appears in the title, is the first phrase of the *chôka* and appears once again later in the poem. A variant on the phrase, *yo no koto*, also appears in the *hanka*. If the Kama poems were indeed intended as a response to Tabito's poem "In reply to dreadful news," it is this poem that seems to reply to it most directly. Okura's "What men of old grieved over, indeed today we do the same" seems to echo Tabito's "The brush cannot express my words – all the grief of the past and of today," and the general tone seems to echo the despair expressed in Tabito's poem.[60] However, where Tabito's opening lines referred to the world as "empty" (*yo no naka wa munashiki mono to*), Okura changes this to "helpless" (*yo no naka wa subenaki mono wa*). This helplessness, or *subenashi*, in the face of the sorrow of the world would

[57] Nakanishi 1973, pp. 266-9.
[58] Tatsumi 1987, pp. 404-5.
[59] Ibid., pp. 401-5.
[60] Ôkubo 2000a, p. 82.

become one of Okura's most used phrases, and has been interpreted to reflect a Buddhist sense of the world's uncertainty.

Although Okura's *chôka* is not divided into "sub-*chôka*" in the manner of his "Poem to Turn a Confused Mind," there is clear evidence of thematic division within it. For example, the first eight lines seem to be meant as a further introduction to the theme, recalling the "eight great hardships" of the preface. The next forty-six lines (not counting the lines listed as a variant) make up the bulk of the poem, speaking of the joys of youth and their destruction with the coming of old age. The last three lines form a concluding statement which returns again to the message of the first lines, that we are helpless to prevent the passing away of life.

The central section of the poem is further divided into two general thematic units, the first describing youthful maidens and the effects of age on them, and the second focused on young men and their subsequent aging. Tatsumi Masaaki notes that this makes the structure of Okura's poem adhere to the traditional Chinese structure of *ki-shô-ten-ketsu* (起承転結), or "introduction, development, twist, conclusion."[61] In this framework, The first eight lines represent the introduction, expressing the general theme. The lines on maidens serves as the development of this theme, and the parallel description of young men provides the twist. Finally, the last three lines conclude by reminding the reader of the theme which tied the specific examples together. Tatsumi further notes that Okura may also have been inspired by the Chinese treatise form, the *lun* (論), as described in the *Wenxin diaolong* (文心雕龍). [62]

[61] Tatsumi 1987, pp. 408-9.
[62] Ibid.

The structure of Okura's *chôka* is even more elaborate if the lines of variant text are considered. In fact, with the addition of the variant lines, the middle sections are precisely parallel, with twenty-eight lines each to describe the female and male aspects of aging. The opening line of each section identifies the subject, "young maidens" and "virile warriors" and the next nine lines describe the uncaring joy of their youth. After these lines, there is a gradual transition with the realization that such pleasures must eventually end, and the recognition that they have already begun to fade. The final lines of each section describe the suffering of old age, as both end with identical expressions resigned to the understanding that "this is all there is" (*kaku nomi narashi)*.

The presence of variant lines in the text gives a rare glimpse into the process of poetry composition. Unlike most such variants in the *Man'yôshû*, which are usually due to the existence of variant texts, the variants in this poem may be from Okura himself, either describing an earlier form of the same poem or including lines added later.[63] Itô Haku has suggested that the regularity of the form which includes the variant lines suggests that the variant was the original, preexisting conception of the poem, and that it was altered when it was "selected and completed" at Kama, thus defining it in its current form.[64] This alteration may have been meant to create a different mood than that of the poem in its original form, or to make the poem a more appropriate fit with the other two Kama compositions, but the fact that the variant was included in interlinear notes in the poem suggests that Okura was not ready to fully abandon his original conception. Of

[63] In the second and third sections of variant lines, the standard *Man'yôshû* marker for variant texts "一云," literally "one [text] says...." However, the first set of variant lines reads "或句云," or "a certain verse says..." suggesting it has a different meaning. In the case of the second variant, it appears that the line was intended as a replacement for the previous line rather than an addition to it, and I thus relegated it to a footnote in my translation. However, the third variant, though it too reads " 一云," makes the most sense as an addition rather than a replacement, for reasons discussed in the context of the poem's structure.

course, the very presence of a variant form naturally raises the question of what relevance the "original version" of a poem might have.

As examined in chapter two, concepts of authorship and originality were a product of the change of poetry to a written form, since the issues were meaningless when poetry was solely a performed art. Even if a poem went through various revisions before being finalized, those revisions were not retained and the "correct" form of the poem was simply that which was performed on any given occasion. In this context, the concept of "authorship" was necessarily subsumed under the person of the performer. Variants of the type preserved by Okura are evidence of a changing view of poetry, one in which there was an importance accorded to accuracy and an awareness of the poet as a creator of literature.

The overall theme of the *chôka* seems to be an awareness that change is inevitable, and the sense of defeat which ends each section indicates a resignation to the situation and an acceptance that one can not escape the pain of old age. This sentiment is echoed in the *hanka*, which confirms that the wish for unchanging, eternal life can never be realized. While these sentiments are certainly appropriate to the theme stated in the title of the sequence, "lamenting the hardship of the world," it seems at odds with the goal Okura articulates in his preface, "to drive out the sorrows of the two shades of hair." Rather than driving out the sorrow of old age, Okura practically wallows in it. It is possible, then, that the preface was a later addition, perhaps added to match the form of the other Kama poems but not a part of the original poem, which simply emphasized the pain of old age.

[64] Itô 1995, v.5, p.55.

While the reference to the Buddhist "eight pains" and the general sense of the world's uncertainty seems to make a Buddhist interpretation appropriate, once again Okura is simply using Buddhist terminology to describe the world rather than composing a Buddhist treatise. In the Buddhist sense, recognition of the illusory nature of pleasure and the accompanying ability to turn one's back on it is what leads one to salvation. However, in Okura's poem, it leads only to despair. In the first part of each of Okura's two middle sections, he seems to rejoice in the pleasures of youth. When the realization comes that such pleasures do not last, it leads only to despair. And in both the final lines of the *chôka* and in the accompanying *hanka*, he reaffirms that life is precious and his only desire is for eternal youth. Okura's use of Buddhism seems to extend no further than the recognition of the truth that life is uncertain and ever-changing; it does not extend to a hope for salvation.

Thus, rather than looking to the Buddhist "pain of old age" for the theme to Okura's work, it makes more sense to see links in the earlier mentioned Six Dynasties theme of the sadness of old age. The Buddhist terminology is employed only in the service of that theme, as an additional layer of meaning added to the traditional literary trope of the dichotomy between the joys of youth and the sorrows of old age. As in the other two Kama compositions, Okura is placing differing philosophies together and comparing them in the light of his worldly experience.

Okura's ability to place different philosophies into dialogue in this way relied on an extensive familiarity with a broad range of Chinese texts. Of course, with several years spent in the Tang capital of Chang'an, time spent as a Chinese scholar in the service of the court, and close attention to Chinese models in the compiling of his poetry

anthology, the *Ruijû karin*, Okura may have been uniquely qualified to deal with Chinese texts in this way. At the same time, however, we cannot underestimate the importance to this practice of the cultural climate of the Nara period, with its extensive importation of continental texts. It may be that the way in which Chinese texts were received in Japan has as much to do with the successful implementation of the form as did Okura's own knowledge of Chinese.

The Reception of Chinese Texts in Japan

The Nara period showed a rapid increase in the number and variety of Chinese texts that were entering Japan. The embassy to China in 701, in which Okura served as a junior scribe, was the first after a gap of three decades, but it was followed by far more regular contact, not only through official embassies, but through less formal cultural exchange, the regular hosting of foreign visitors, and a huge influx of foreign texts.[65] And the sources of the numerous *Man'yôshû* allusions to these texts have been exhaustively catalogued by Japanese scholars, beginning with Keichû's seventeenth century *Daishôki* and continuing to the present.[66] However, the availability of original texts may conceal the fact that Japanese poets were not necessarily looking to the original in their allusions. Often, they relied instead on Chinese literary compilations, collections of quotes, and other secondary texts rather than the original documents, and this practice necessarily colored their own literary activity.

The most important of these examples is the *Wen xuan* (文選). As the earlier examination of Okura's poems should make clear, the *Wen xuan* was an invaluable source

[65] Hu 1998, pp. 13-9.
[66] An outline of this research can be found in Ono 1999.

for the Japanese literati. In fact, for many Chinese literary works it is the only remaining source, as the original has since been lost. It was first compiled in the early-sixth century and there is evidence that it had entered Japan as early as the early-seventh century and influenced the wording of Shôtoku Taishi's *Seventeen Article Constitution*.[67] Its thirty-seven classifications of poetry, its numerous models of Chinese literature, as well as the later commentary by Li Shan, provided a framework on which to build a Japanese poetic tradition and inspired those who, like Okura, were working toward the creation of a literature of Japan.[68]

However, although the *Wen xuan* classifications and commentary were ostensibly secondary sources, the literary works themselves were included in their entirety and thus served as primary source materials. This was not the case with texts such as the *Yiwen leiju* (藝文類聚), which were composed of collections of literary quotes removed from their larger context and organized thematically. As we saw in the second chapter, the classification system of the *Yiwen leiju* may have served as a model for Okura's *Ruijû karin*, but its influence may have been far more pervasive. The inclusion and comparison of different texts on a single theme in Okura's poetry may have been a direct outgrowth of the way such texts were organized.

In the case of "Poem Lamenting the Hardships of the World," for example, we saw numerous references to aging, a regular theme for Okura and one which appears in the Chinese literary tradition, but one which was highly unusual in the *Man'yôshû* as a whole. As we saw in the analysis of that poem, however, it is difficult to pin down influence from any single Chinese source, particularly given Okura's obvious

[67] Kakimura 1947, pp. 49-53.
[68] Haga 1993, pp.360-1.

indebtedness to the wealth of Chinese sources in the section on "aging" (老) in the *Yiwen leiju*. While the modern impulse is to track down the "original" which inspired Okura, the paths by which Chinese texts entered Japan, either in complete or excerpt form, were many and varied, and the context provided by the original source is not always that in which the Japanese encountered the work. Although it is possible that Okura did indeed have access to original sources, the *Yiwen leiju* provided a ready source of inspiration, with numerous quotes from multiple sources on any given topic.

We must remember that texts must have been precious objects in the Nara period, usually able to be obtained only by borrowing and painstakingly copying a source text. Given the immense difficulty in gathering texts, this type of resource, called by the general term *lei shu* (類書 – J. *ruisho*), or "categorized texts," must have been invaluable to the literati of the time. In fact, although few *lei shu* from the Nara period are extant, there is evidence that a large number were in use at that time. The *Yiwen leiju* is the most important of these, both for its inspiration of categorization techniques and the extensive evidence of its use in Japan, but also for the fact that it has survived in its entirety to the present day.[69] Also extant are the Sui era *Beitang shuchao* (北堂書鈔) and the early Tang *Chuxueji* (初学記). Other works which are known to have existed at the time but which have since been lost include the Six Dynasties era *Leiyuan* (類苑), *Hualin bianlue* (華林遍略), *Shouguang shuyuan* (寿光書苑), and *Shengshoutang yulan* (聖寿堂御覧); the Sui era *Changzhou yujing* (長洲玉鏡); and the early Tang era *Cefu* (策府), *Wensi boyao* (文思博要), *Sanjiao zhuying* (三教珠英), and *Hanyuan* (翰苑).[70] These served as

[69] Haga 1993, p. 366.
[70] Ibid., p. 365.

"literary encyclopedias" in an age when the original Chinese literary texts to which they referred were difficult or impossible to locate.

The same type of texts existed for Buddhist thought as well. Although Okura certainly had access to the more important sutras of the time, such as the earlier mentioned *Nirvana Sutra* and *Sutra of Golden Light*, he would also have been exposed to a wide range of Buddhist stories, quotes from Buddhist scripture, Buddhist poems, and biographies of virtuous monks in the form of collections of Buddhist materials. In addition to the *Hongmingji* (弘明集) mentioned earlier as a source of inspiration for Okura's "Poem to Turn a Confused Mind," several other works show evidence of having been referenced by Okura, including the *Guang Hongmingji* (広弘明集), the *Gaoseng zhuan* (高僧伝), and the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* (続高僧伝).[71]

Like the literary works that made up the *Wen xuan*, the contents of these texts were drawn from a variety of sources and they represented a broad spectrum of Buddhist thought, often with context provided through reference to Confucianism or Daoism. Thus, despite their Buddhist content, reference to popular texts of this type cannot be viewed in the same context as reference to a sutra, and drawing on the materials found in these texts did not necessarily imply a desire to espouse the merits of Buddhism. As we saw in the case of Okura's response to the story in the *Hongmingji*, it was even possible to use these stories as a point of reference from which to launch a defense of Confucianism and an attack on Buddhism's central tenets. The urge to classify Okura's poems as Buddhist simply because of the presence of Buddhist terminology is thus

[71] Ibid., p. 359.

misguided, and a more critical examination of his poetry is necessary to understand his attitude toward the philosophy.

In fact, the way in which these texts, both secular and Buddhist, brought many different texts together is related to Okura's own literary activity of exploring different texts by placing them side by side in his poem sequences. Okura borrowed from a very broad range of texts, including the Confucian classics espoused by the *ritsuryô* government, Buddhist sutras, Chinese poetry such as that of Tao Qian and Wang Bo, popular Daoist texts such as the *Baopuzi* (抱朴子), and popular erotic fiction such as the *Youxianku* (遊仙窟). In other words, he took in the entire spectrum of Chinese works that were being introduced to Japan, selected his allusions from among them without regard for whether it represented high or low culture, and placed the disparate texts into dialogue to see how they compared.

Okura's technique of borrowing from the Chinese has the character of a microcosm of the age. A foundation in the classics had already been established with the educational ideals of the *ritsuryô*, and Japan was now ready to expand its horizons. A steady stream of new works to examine, copy, and borrow from were making their way into the country faster than the cultural arbiters could examine them and judge their worth. Among them were many Buddhist texts, many of which were widely read, but the understanding of its tenets was still fairly limited, and its devotees fairly few. Thus religious texts, philosophy, poetry, fantastic short stories, and many other genres commingled in the national consciousness.

But where most limited their response to these texts to the occasional Chinese allusion in a letter, Okura brought them into the realm of Japanese poetry, both by

placing them side by side with Japanese poems and by incorporating their foreign vocabulary into his own Japanese expression. He attempted to cut through the cacophony of inconsistent texts by testing them against one another, and against his own personal understanding of the human experience. He dealt with them not as abstractions and products of a foreign culture, but as living texts, to be questioned rather than simply adopted. And in so doing, he added to the tradition with the creation of literary works of his own.

Chapter Five: The Poetry Sequence as Literary Unit

As we saw in the previous two chapters, Okura and Tabito's poetry sequences can only be understood through the interplay of their various parts. Neglect of any one part, or excessive focus on any one part at the expense of the others, results in a skewed understanding of the poetry sequence as a whole. The basic literary unit for the Tsukushi poets was not the single poem, but the poetry sequence, and the poems required the context created by the surrounding works in order to be fully understood.

. However, in the modern period it has been common to view the individual poem as the basic unit. Although the context provided by notes, preface, and accompanying poems (such as *hanka*) may be considered, this additional information is not viewed as a fundamental part of the poem itself, as evidenced by the practices in some collections of inclusion of poems without the accompanying preface, separation of *hanka* from the *chôka* to which they were attached, and separation of individual poems from the context of the surrounding poems.[1] However, by eliding the context of the sequence, it forces an overly simplistic view of a poem's meaning.

In the previous chapters, the focus on poetry sequences has been simplified by the fact that we were dealing primarily with works of single authorship. Okura's poetry sequences are recognizable as whole literary units primarily because he is accepted as the author of all the component parts, including those usually provided by the anthologist

[1] Examples of this are rampant in the various collections of *Man'yôshû shûka* (Excellent poems from the *Man'yôshû*). The authors of these collections select, reproduce and explicate on individual poems, but typically focus only on *tanka*, and typically simply explain rather than reproduce the context originally provided by the surrounding poems.

rather than the poet. However, in viewing Okura's poetry sequences as a response to Tabito's poem, we move beyond the bounds of a single creative consciousness and are forced to deal with the more complex issue of collective authorship. These complex literary works are composed of smaller individual works of multiple-authorship, and we are thus forced to acknowledge not only the contribution of original poets, but also the presence of whatever creative consciousness guided the organization of the sequence as a whole, whether it was the product of collective tacit agreement dictated by the circumstances of composition or of a single anthologist working with existing poems to create a work that was more than the sum of its parts.

It may seem odd to focus attention on poem sequences when the ordering systems of the *Man'yôshû* are often characterized as chaotic.[2] Of course, this reputation for disjointed ordering is partly due to comparison with the next major Japanese poetry collection, the strictly ordered tenth century *Kokin wakashû* (古今和歌集) or *Kokinshû*. The twenty books of the *Kokinshû* are organized along the principles of association and progression, in which there is a connection between each poem and the next and a sense of a temporal or psychological progression throughout each book.[3] Despite the short form of the *tanka*, these techniques made it possible to use existing works to create a larger work that went beyond the limitations of a single poem.

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[2] It is significant, for example, that in reconstructing a poetry sequence by the poet Manzei, Roy Andrew Miller draws Manzei's poems from various books of the *Man'yôshû* in order to "correct" the activity of anthologists who had supposedly "mutilated" and "dismembered" the intended framework of the sequence by breaking it up into individual poems, seemingly to no purpose. Miller 1981. One of Manzei's poems examined by Miller (*MYS* V:821) is included as part of a different sequence examined in this chapter.

[3] The books of the *Kokinshû* are grouped according to theme, and the poems within each book are organized according to a natural progression. For example, the books on spring open with a poem on the first signs of spring after the winter and progress through the various symbols and stages associated with spring until the final poems dealing with the end of the season. An examination of these organizing principles can be found in Brower and Miner 1961, pp. 319-29.

While these concepts were not as well developed at the time of the *Man'yoshû*'s compilation as they were for the *Kokinshû*, nor were they entirely absent. What is really lacking in the overall scheme of *Man'yôshû* ordering is consistency. The entirety of the *Kokinshû* is governed by similar ideals of ordering, but the *Man'yôshû* is a collection of inconsistent methods of organization, owing to the multiple sources which were incorporated into the final anthology. In some cases, the reason for a given method of classification is made explicit, as in the thematic divisions in books seven, eight, or ten.[4] In some cases, however, such as with the simple overall title of "miscellany" for book five, there are few guideposts to tell us why a group of poems is ordered as it is. However, a key to the ordering of book five was found in the practice of letter exchange examined briefly in chapter three.

In the context of letter exchange, Okura's *Yamato banka* and his three Kama compositions have meaning both as individual poetry sequences, but also in the context of their selection together as a presumed response to Tabito's "Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings." They were the product of a process of mutual inspiration through the sharing of and response to written poetry that was the source of most of the poetry now collected in book five. In fact, Harada Sadayoshi has suggested that, if Tabito had sent his letter only to the "two gentlemen" who had first sent him the "dreadful tidings," without also making his response available to Okura, then not only would book five never have existed, but Yakamochi would probably not have been the one to compile the *Man'yôshû*.[5] While Harada may be engaging in a bit of hyperbole, the reliance of the Tsukushi poets on a network of poets exchanging and expanding on their written works is

[4] See Appendix A for a breakdown of the contents of the *Man'yôshû*, book by book.
[5] Harada 2001, p. 348.

undeniable, and the reliance of Yakamochi on the products of these collaborations in compiling book five is clear.

The poems of book five were part of a culture of shared poetic inspiration, in which a poem sequence was circulated and expanded with additional poems, and Yakamochi's inclusion of these poems in their original form thus gives a glimpse of the collaborative process. This chapter will focus on two such expanded sequences in order to examine the greater context of collective authorship which characterized the book as a whole. While evidence of the sequences' circulation and expansion through letter exchange is clear, the sequences are also unusual in that they were ostensibly composed as collaborations from the beginning, with poems either of multiple authorship or by a single author composing in multiple personae.

The first of these sequences, comprised of the thirty-two poems of Tabito's famous plum blossom viewing banquet, represents a conscious adoption of Chinese literary tropes in the manner typical of Book Five. However, it is also seemingly a throwback to the earlier, oral mode of poetry composed spontaneously on formal occasions, and thus inconsistent with the new mode of written poetry which characterizes the rest of the book. I will attempt to reconcile these seeming inconsistencies with a focus on the sequence, rather than its constituent poems, as a literary unit.

Tabito's Plum Blossom Viewing Banquet

On the thirteenth day of the first lunar month in 730, thirty-two poets from various locations in Tsukushi gathered at the home of Ôtomo Tabito in Dazaifu for a banquet. It was the first month of spring and, according to the preface which precedes

the poems, the plum blossoms were in full bloom, the weather was mild, and the revelers were spontaneously moved by the beauty of the scene to compose poetry on the subject of the blossoms. The image of a group of officials so far from the capital gathering for the refined purpose of composing poetry is an enduring one, and the poem sequence has become one of the most famous in the *Man'yôshû*. Of course, it is possible that the banquet may not have occurred as described, and the preface's description of the refined banquet may simply be a polite fiction designed to provide an appropriate context for the poems which followed. Still, whether or not it corresponds to reality, the sequence is clearly meant to represent an elegant gathering in the manner of Prince Nagaya's poetry circle in Nara or numerous Chinese literary examples.

The preface which precedes the sequence is in Chinese parallel prose, and is thought to have been composed either by Okura or by the host himself.[6] It relies heavily on Chinese spring imagery, in particular that of Wang Yizhi's "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Collection" (蘭亭集序) and defines the context as distinctly continental in flavor.[7] The plum tree was itself a fairly recent import to Japan, and a plum blossom viewing party must have been a conscious imitation of a Chinese practice, in the same vein as the Tanabata parties which had become popular among Nagaya's group.[8] Of course, the Tsukushi poets were unusual in composing poetry in Japanese rather than Chinese. Just as Okura had earlier gone against the grain by composing *uta* rather than

[6] Of course, this speculation is largely based on the simple facts that both Okura and Tabito were present, and that both were known for composing Chinese prefaces to their poetry. The Okura attribution is earlier, beginning with the *Daishôki* and continuing until the modern period, when the Tabito attribution has become the standard based primarily on his status as host.
[7] The preface's indebtedness to Wang Yizhi was noted as early as the *Daishôki*.
[8] Although there are 118 examples of *Man'yôshû* poems with the plum as theme, not one exists from the early songs in books one and two or from the folk song of books eleven and sixteen. Itô 1995, v. 5, p. 91.

Chinese poems at Nagaya's Tanabata gatherings, the composing of Japanese poetry on an ostensibly Chinese topic worked toward a merging of the poetic traditions.

The poets had gathered from as far away as Tsukushi's southernmost province of Satsuma and its northernmost island of Tsushima, and represented a fairly broad range of Tsukushi's official class. In addition to high ranking provincial governors and Tabito's Dazaifu subordinates, monks, scholars, and others without official position were included as well. While names are listed and many of those present can be identified by their position, the identities of many of the poets remain unknown. Compounding the difficulty is the practice in the sequence of transcribing only the first character of many of the surnames, perhaps in imitation of single-character Chinese surnames. In my translation, I have included the full surname where the identity is clear and noted in the footnotes where it is not.

The poems, except for that composed by the host, are in descending order according to each poet's rank, which suggests a seating arrangement reliant on position. The first set of eight poems, which conclude with that of the host, thus represent those seated to one side of Tabito, and the poem sequence then continues with those seated on his opposite side before moving on to the lesser personages at the gathering. After the first half, the ordering system by rank seems to break down, though it is difficult to say with any certainty since many of these guests are unknown and their rank must be deduced from their office.

Although the techniques linking poems together are not as advanced as those found in the *Kokinshû*, there seems to be a certain element of association involved between some of the poems in the sequence. It has even been suggested that the poetry

composed at the gathering represented an early kind of *renga* (連歌), or linked verse, with each poet drawing on an element from the previous poem in composing the next.[9] Of course, even without this interpretation, some repetition of language and imagery is only natural given that the theme does not change throughout the sequence and, as a relatively new topic, the available store of poetic Japanese phrases for the plum blossoms was probably quite limited. In addition, this interpretation relies on the assumption that the poems were all composed spontaneously rather than prepared in advance. For now, though, I will withhold analysis and move directly to the sequence itself.

Thirty two poems on the plum blossoms, with preface

On the thirteenth day of the first month, Tempyô year two (730), we held a banquet at the home of the venerable Commander. It was the fine first month of spring, and the weather was mild and the wind gentle.

The plum blossoms opened, [white] as powder before a mirror.
The orchids gave off an aroma, as fragrance trailing a sachet.

In addition,

On the dawn peaks the clouds trailed,
and the pines were draped with fine silk, wearing shawls.
In the twilight caves the mist gathered,
and the birds were caught in gossamer, lost in the woods.
In the garden, the new butterflies dance.
In the sky, the old geese return.

And thus,

With our roof the sky, and our seat the earth
With our knees nearly touching, and our wine cups flying
Words were forgotten within our gathering
Our collars were opened to the outside mist
Giving in to one's own thoughts
Delighting in one's own fulfillment

If not for the garden of verse, how could we express our thoughts? There are works in Chinese poetry on the falling plum blossoms, and how is the present any different from the past? Let us create a few *tanka* to make poetry of this garden of plum.

[9] This has been suggested in Doi 1977 and the possible links are examined in Itô 1995.

815 *mutsuki tachi*
haru no kitaraba
kakushi koso
ume o okitsutsu
tanoshiki oeme

The first month
and springtime has come –
this is the way
we greet the plum blossoms
and push pleasure to its limits.

The honorable Master Ki, Vice-Commander of Dazaifu[10]

816 *ume no hana*
ima sakeru goto
chiri sugizu
wagae no sono ni
ari kosenu ka mo

The plum blossoms
as they are now in bloom –
if only they
would bloom so always
and never scatter away.

The honorable Master Ono, Junior Vice-Commander of Dazaifu[11]

817 *ume no hana*
sakitaru sono no
aoyagi wa
kadzura ni subeku
narinikerazu ya

In the garden,
where plum blossoms bloom,
have not the willows
grown so lush that we might
decorate our hair with them?

The honorable Master Awata, Junior Vice-Commander of Dazaifu[12]

818 *haru sareba*
madzu saku yado no
ume no hana
hitori mitsutsu ya
haruhi kurasamu

When spring comes
the blossoms by my home
are first to bloom.
Will I gaze on them alone
when this spring day fades?

The honorable Master Yamanoue, Governor of Chikuzen

819 *yo no naka wa*
koishigeshieya
kakushi araba
ume no hana ni mo
naramashi mono o

Within this world
the temptations are many.
If this is so,
than it would be my wish
to be reborn a plum blossom.

The honorable Master Ôtomo, Governor of Bungo[13]

[10] Probably Ki no Ohito, whose Chinese poetry is preserved in the *Kaifûsô*
[11] Ono Oyu
[12] Awata Hitokami
[13] Unclear, but possibly Ôtomo Miyori

820 *ume no hana* — The plum blossoms –
ima sakari nari — they are now in full bloom.
omou dochi — Like-minded friends,
kazashi ni shite na — decorate yourselves with them –
ima sakari nari — they are now in full bloom.

The honorable Master Fujii, Governor of Chikugo[14]

821 *aoyanagi* — The willows
ume to no hana o — along with blossoms of plum –
ori kazashi — pluck them down.
nomite no nochi wa — Only after we have drunk,
chirinu to mo yoshi — then they may scatter away.

Kasa, the Monk[15]

822 *wa ga sono ni* — In my garden
ume no hana chiru — the plum blossoms scatter.
hisakata no — Is this snow
ame yori yuki no — that has come flowing
nagare kuru ka mo — from the distant heavens?

The host

823 *ume no hana* — The plum blossoms
chiraku wa idzuku — scatter everywhere.
shika suga ni — Even so,
kono Ki no yama ni — on this Mountain of Ki
yuki wa furitsutsu — the snow goes on falling.

Ôtomo no Momoyo, Greater Secretary[16]

824 *ume no hana* — The plum blossoms –
chiramaku oshimi — in sadness at their scattering,
wa ga sono no — in this forest
take no hayashi ni — of bamboo in my garden,
uguisu naku mo — the nightingale cries out.

Abe no Okishima, Lesser Secretary

[14] Fujii Ônari
[15] The Priest Manzei
[16] Beginning with this entry, the full surnames of the guests are not presented. Rather, they are reduced to a single character and the character for clan: "氏." For example, rather than the full surname "大伴," Momoyo was referred to as "伴氏." This was probably intended as an imitation of Chinese naming conventions.

825 *ume no hana*
sakitaru sono no
aoyanagi o
kadzura ni shitsutsu
asobi kurasana

In the garden
where plum blossoms bloom,
with willows
we decorate our hair
and revel the day away.

Hanishi no Momomura, Lesser Secretary

826 *uchinabiku*
haru no yanagi to
wa ga yado no
ume no hana to o
ika ni ka wakamu

The swaying
boughs of the spring willow
and the blossoms
of plum beside my home –
how can I choose between them?

Shi [?] no Ôhara, Greater Clerk[17]

827 *haru sareba*
konure gakurite
uguisu zo
nakite inu naru
ume ga shidzue ni

Spring has come
and hidden in the branches
the nightingale
cries out and descends
to the lower branches of plum.

Yamaguchi no Wakamaro, Lesser Clerk

828 *hito goto ni*
ori kazashitsutsu
asobedomo
iyame dzurashiki
ume no hana ka mo

Each of us
takes a branch to adorn
in our revelry,
yet ever more wonderful
are the blossoms of plum.

Tajihi[?] no Maro, Greater Judge[18]

829 *ume no hana*
sakite chirinaba
sakurabana
tsugite saku beku
narinite arazu ya

The plum blossoms –
when they bloom and then scatter
the cherry blossoms
must bloom in their turn.
Is this not the way it is?

Chô no Fukushi, Master of Medicine

[17] Here the use of a single character for the surname makes it unclear to whom this refers.
[18] It is also possible that the intended surname is Taniwa or Niu. The identity of the poet is unknown, but judging by his office, his rank should be higher than the previous two poets. Beginning from this point, the strict order of descending rank seems to break down.

830 *yorodzu yo ni*
toshi wa kiyu to mo
ume no hana
tayuru koto naku
saki wataru beshi

Through the ages
however many years may come,
the plum blossoms
never ceasing, without fail,
will continue to bloom.

Saeki no Ko'obito, Assistant Governor of Chikuzen

831 *haru nareba*
ube mo sakitaru
ume no hana
kimi o omou to
yoi mo nenaku ni

When it is spring
and you are in full bloom,
oh, plum blossom,
when I think of you
I cannot sleep through the night.

Itamochi no Yasumaro, Governor of Iki

832 *ume no hana*
orite kazaseru
morohito wa
kyô no aida wa
tanoshiku aru beshi

Those of us who
take for decoration branches
of plum blossoms
as long as the day lasts
shall live in pleasure.

Arakida[?] no Inashiki, Head Priest[19]

833 *toshi no ha ni*
haru no kitaraba
kakushi koso
ume o kazashite
tanoshiku nomame

Every year,
when spring arrives,
let us adorn
ourselves with plum in this way
as we take pleasure in drink.

Ono no Sukunamaro, Judicial Secretary

834 *ume no hana*
ima sakari nari
momotori no
koe no kôshiki
haru kitaru rashi

The plum blossoms
are now in full bloom
and a hundred birds
cry out in sweet song;
it seems that spring is here.

Tanabe[?] no Komahito, Assistant Judicial Secretary[20]

[19] Ths surname may also be Araki or Arata. His identity is unknown.
[20] The surname may also be Tanaka, Taguchi, etc. His identity is unknown.

835 *haru saraba*
awamu to moishi
ume no hana
kyô no asobi ni
ai mitsuru ka mo

It is spring
and so I hoped to meet
the plum blossoms.
At today's festivities
we come face to face.

Kô[?] no Yoshimichi, Master of Medicine[21]

836 *ume no hana*
taori kazashite
asobedomo
aki daranu hi wa
kyô ni shi arikeri

The plum blossoms
we pluck to adorn ourselves
in our revelry,
and yet we never get our fill;
today is just such a day.

Isobe no Norimaro, Yin-Yang Master[22]

837 *haru no no ni*
naku ya uguisu
natsukemu to
wagae no sono ni
ume ga hana saku

In spring fields
the nightingale cries.
As if to tame it,
the plum blossoms bloom
in the garden of my home.

Shiki no Ômichi, Secretary of Accounting

838 *ume no hana*
chiri magaitaru
okabi ni wa
uguisu naku mo
haru katamakete

The plum blossoms
fall and scatter away
over the hills
where nightingales cry.
Spring has now arrived.

Enoi [?] no Hachimaro, Ôsumi Clerk[23]

839 *haru no no ni*
kiri tachi watari
furu yuki to
hito no miru made
ume no hana chiru

In the mist
trailing over the spring fields,
is snow falling?
So it seems to the eyes of men –
the scattering plum blossoms.

Tanabe no Makami, Chikuzen Clerk

[21] The surname may be Takada, Takaya, Takahashi, Takamuko or Takayasu. If he is an immigrant, a distinct possibility given his status as a physician, his surname may also be simply Kô. His identity is unknown.
[22] His identity is unknown.
[23] The surname may also be Enomoto. His identity is unknown.

840 *haruyanagi*
kadzura ni orishi
ume no hana
tare ka ukabeshi
sakadzuki no e ni

The plum blossoms,
taken from among spring willows
to adorn our brows –
who has placed them instead
to float in our sake cups.

Murakuni no Ochikata, Iki Clerk[24]

841 *uguisu no*
oto kiku nae ni
ume no hana
wagie no sono ni
sakite chiru miyu

When I hear
the voice of the nightingale,
I see plum blossoms
bloom, then scatter away
in the garden of my home.

Takamuko no Oyu, Tsushima Clerk

842 *wa ga yado no*
ume no shidzue ni
asobitsutsu
uguisu naku mo
chiramaku oshimi

Near my home,
playing in the lower branches
of the plum,
the nightingale cries out
in sadness at their falling.

Takamuko [?] no Ama, Satsuma Clerk[25]

843 *ume no hana*
ori kazashitsutsu
morohito no
asobu o mireba
miyako shizo mou

Plum blossoms
plucked to adorn themselves,
all the people –
watching them in their revelry
makes me think of the capital.

Hanishi no Mimichi[26]

844 *imo ga e ni*
yuki ka mo furu to
miru made ni
kokoda mo magau
ume no hana ka mo

It looks as though
it is snow that is falling
at my woman's home,
so numerous are these
swirling blossoms of plum.

Ono no Kunikata[27]

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[24] The surname may also be Murakami, Murayama, etc. His identity is unknown.
[25] Like the poet of number 835, this surname may be read Takada, Takaya, Takahashi, Takayasu, or, if he is an immigrant, simply Kô. Although the first character of his surname is the same as that of the previous poet, Takamuko no Oyu, his identity is unknown and his surname may be different.
[26] This poet is listed without office, and his surname is given in full rather than in the single-character Chinese style. Given the common surname, it is possible that he was a younger clan member accompanying Hanishi Momomura, the poet of poem 825.

845 *uguisu no* The nightingale
machikate ni seshi has been waiting for you,
ume ga hana oh plum blossoms.
chirazu ari koso Remain there unfalling,
omou ko ga tame for the one who is in my thoughts.

Kadobe no Ishitari, Chikuzen Administrator

846 *kasumi tatsu* As mist rises
nagaki haru hi o through the long spring day,
kazaseredo though we adorn
iya natsukashiki ourselves with plum blossoms,
ume no hana ka mo we long for them all the more.

Ono no Tamori[28]

The image of a group of elegant courtiers so moved by the beauty of the plum blossoms and the sadness of their falling that they can only express their thoughts in poetry is an appealing one, and many have taken the description of the banquet provided in the preface at face value. Doi Kôchi writes:

> These thirty-two poems were not prepared in advance to be recited and ranked, nor did someone transcribe the poems as they were recited and place them afterwards into an appropriate order. Rather, it is thought that each poet in turn composed a verse, wrote it down himself, then recited it, leaving the next poet to think of a link to the previous verse to continue, the only goal the enjoyment of the banquet itself.[29]

To Doi, the preface's description of a group of companions so attuned to each other's feelings that they needed no words beyond their elegant lines of verse represented, if not the reality of the poets' experience, then the ideal of their gathering. The poets were gathered for pleasure, and pleasure was the only necessary product of their efforts; the

[27] Like the previous poet, this poet and the poet of poem 846 are listed without office, and their surnames are given in full. They may be younger clan members accompanying Ono no Oyu, the poet of poem 816.
[28] See previous note.
[29] Doi 1977, p. 218.

fact that the resulting poetry sequence would be worthy of inclusion in a collection such as the *Man'yôshû* was incidental to the process.

Of course, this description conforms too closely to the idealized notion of poetry as a spontaneous outpouring of the emotions to be accepted uncritically. There are several elements, both in the preface and in the sequence as a whole, which raise doubts regarding the authenticity of the occasion, and some have speculated that the banquet was a fiction, the sequence deliberately crafted from existing poems in order to simulate an idealized poetry banquet.[30] For example, the thirteenth day of the first lunar month, the specified date of the gathering, corresponds to the eighth of February on the solar calendar, about a month early for the blossoming of the plum.[31] It is possible that the plum tree, which was a recent import from China, was still unusual enough that only its reputation for early blooming rather than the exact dates of that blooming, were known, and the date was mistakenly chosen after the fact. On the other hand, Ôkubo Hiroyuki has examined early records of the Tenmangû temple which suggest that the plum blossoms generally bloomed by February the twentieth, and sometimes as early as the tenth had it been a warm winter, meaning the date, though unusually early, was certainly not impossible.[32] Certainly a basis in reality is a simpler explanation, since the thirteenth day of the first month has no particular significance with relation to the plum and there would be no meaning in simply inventing a date arbitrarily. And even if the plums were not yet in full bloom, gazing on the half-opened buds and imagining them in full bloom would not be unusual as a literary conceit.[33]

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[30] Kinoshita 1974.
[31] Itô 1995 v.5, p.81.
[32] Ôkubo 1998, p. 296.
[33] Itô 1995 v.5, p. 82.

The very fact of a gathering at which so many poems were retained may also make the reality of the event suspect. Accounts of poetry gatherings prior to the fourth era of the *Man'yôshû* are far fewer, both in number of occasions and in the number of poems recorded, than later gatherings, and a poetry gathering with all of thirty-two poems retained was unheard of.[34] The symmetry of four groups of eight poets and the complete recording of all thirty-two poems and poets' names does give a sense of an idealized banquet rather than an actual event. On the other hand, this symmetry can be accounted for if the gathering was from the beginning conceived of as a literary event rather than merely a social one, the main purpose the creation of a written poetry sequence.

In the two previous chapters, I examined the compositions which open book five as evidence of Okura and Tabito's conscious creation of literary works, and it is in this context that I believe we must view the plum blossom poems as well. Given that this was among the first poetry gatherings centered on the plum blossom in Japan, it is difficult to imagine that there was not an awareness of the desire to create a literary event along the lines of the only available prior models, those observed in Chinese literature. In fact, the very presence of an extended preface in Chinese parallel prose rather than simply a straightforward description of the occasion supports the contention that the sequence was intended as a unified literary work.

If we accept that the banquet did not necessarily occur as it is described in the preface, than there are three main questions regarding the circumstances of composition and the ordering of the sequence. The first is whether the poems were composed in advance or whether each was a spontaneous response to the poem which preceded it. The second is, whether or not the poems were composed in advance, if they were indeed

[34] Ôkubo 2000b, p.144.

recited in the order in which they are listed or were instead arranged in that order by a compiler. And if we find that someone may have been involved in the ordering of the poems after the fact, the final question becomes whether or not all thirty-two members were even in attendance at the same time or if there poems were instead put together later. All three questions naturally relate to the extent to which the sequence was a work of collective composition and the extent to which it was the product of one controlling consciousness.

One clue to finding these answers may lie in the phrase "my home" which appears frequently throughout the sequence. It appears in several variations, including *wa ga he* (816, 837), *wa gi he* (841), and *wa ga yado* (826, 842), as well as the related phrase *wa ga sono* ("my garden" – 822, 824). If the participants were gathered at the home of Tabito, then the use of "my" in all of these phrases except Tabito's own is unusual, especially when compared with phrases from other banquet poems, in which the more appropriate phrases "your house" or "my lord's house" (*kimi ga he*, *kimi ga yado*, *wa ga seko no yado*) are far more common.[35] While most commentaries have interpreted the poems including these phrases as the participants' imagining the plum blossoms blooming at their own homes, the frequent repetition of the trope is unusual, especially if the plums were in full bloom before their very eyes. Itô Haku has speculated that the guests were all referring to Tabito's garden as their own shared "garden of verse," emphasizing the camaraderie of the preface.[36]

Of course, the poems make the most sense if they are interpreted as having been composed at the homes of the participants themselves rather than at the banquet in

[35] Harada 2001, p. 198.
[36] Itô 1995 v. 5, p. 83.

Tabito's garden. This is also suggested by the fact that none of the poems in this group mentions the trope of breaking of branches of plum to adorn the hair, which seems to have been a particularly popular image at the banquet, appearing in nearly one third of the total poems. Instead, they conform to the more common literary themes of Six Dynasties era poetry on the plum blossom.[37] The possibility thus exists that these poems were not composed spontaneously on observing the festivities, but were rather composed in advance on more general themes.

Further evidence that the poems may have been composed separately is provided by Harada Sadayoshi. In an analysis of the transcription method employed in the sequence, Harada found that there was a consistency in the usage of one-syllable-per-character phonograph transcription in twenty of the poems, suggesting they were transcribed by a single person.[38] Among the twelve poems that are exceptions to the rule, are the last seven poems in the sequence, including the representatives from the farthest provinces of Tsushima and Satsuma. While it is possible that these poems were prepared in advance and then transcribed exactly as composed by the poets, it is unlikely that a scribe would be used for most of the poems while others were left to be written by the poets themselves. Another explanation is that the poets whose poems do not fit the standard pattern did not actually attend, but merely sent their poems to be recited on the day of the banquet, or perhaps even after the fact. At any rate, the differing transcription standards indicate that there were individualistic styles present in some of the cases, but a standard style in most.

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[37] Harada 2001, p. 223.
[38] Ibid., pp. 198-205. The poems which differ from the standard transcription style are 816, 822, 824, 830, 837, and 840-846.

More importantly, of the poems which refer to "my home," all but one are among those poems which were not consistent with the standard transcription method.[39] In other words, nearly all of the poems which speak of the poet's home were probably transcribed by a different hand, and thus possibly at a different time and place. It may be that the poets were in fact composing the poems while looking at the plums by their own home, just as the poems say, and that the poets merely sent their poems to the banquet rather than attending themselves.

Finally, there is the case of poem 845, by the Chikuzen Administrator, Kadobe no Ishitari. While this poem does not conform to the standard transcription method, it does show a correlation with the style of Kadobe's superior in Chikuzen, Yamanoue Okura, including many characters which were characteristic of Okura's usual practice of phonographic transcription.[40] On the other hand, Okura's own poem does not show these hallmarks of his usual transcription style, but rather adheres to the standard transcription for the banquet. This suggests that Okura transcribed, or perhaps even composed, a poem on behalf of his subordinate who was not at the banquet but sent his poem instead. Okura, who was in attendance, would have recited his own poem at the banquet, to be recorded by the scribe.

It is impossible to recreate exactly what occurred in the creation of the plum blossom sequence, but the evidence suggests that the preface and ordering can not be accepted at face value. Rather, like the prefaces in Okura and Tabito's other sequences, this preface provides a poetic context in which the poem sequence as a whole can be read. Because the context is that of an elegant poetic banquet, the order of the poems

[39] Ibid., p. 205. In addition to the seven poems listed earlier, Harada also includes poem 844, with the phrase "*imo ga he*" (my woman's house).

duplicate the style of a banquet. And because the banquet as described in the preface is an ideal rather than reality, the thirty-two poems are included in a consistent and complete manner, unlike the messy reality of other banquets represented in the *Man'yôshû*, in which only a few poems are preserved.

In this way, what first appears to be the product of collective composition in the tradition of earlier oral poetry banquets is, in fact a crafted literary sequence with an overriding consciousness guiding the composition. Rather than composing for the simple pleasure of poetry composition itself, as the preface suggests, the goal was the creation of an idealized image of a poetic banquet to match those found in Chinese literature. And, like the work of the anthologist examined in previous chapters, it involves the selection and placing of existing works by a variety of poets and the ordering of them in a cohesive way, in this case dictated by the conventions of the banquet.

Even more important to the sequence's status as a literary artifact is its later inspiration of other poets to add to it. Poem 846 may represent the end of the banquet, but it does not end the sequence. Immediately following that poem in book five, we find the following six poems:

Two poems not numbering among these, on thinking of home

847	*wa ga sakari*	My prime of life
	itaku kutachinu	has long since passed away.
	kumo ni tobu	Even should I drink
	kusuri hamu to mo	the cloud-soaring elixir,
	mata ochime ya mo	how could my youth return?
848	*kumo ni tobu*	Rather than drink
	kusuri hamu yo wa	the cloud-soaring elixir,
	miyako miba	if I gaze on the capital
	iyashiki a ga mi	this wretched mortal flesh
	mata ochinubeshi	might return to its youth.

[40] Ibid., p. 206.

Four poems written afterwards, following in the manner of the plum blossom poems

849	*nokoritaru*	Blending with
	yuki ni majireru	the last remaining snow,
	ume no hana	oh plum blossoms,
	hayaku na chiri so	do not hurry to scatter away
	yuki wa kenu to mo	though the snow may disappear.
850	*yuki no iro o*	Stealing the color
	ubaite sakeru	of the snow as they bloom,
	ume no hana	the plum blossoms
	ima sakari nari	are now in their full flourish –
	mimu hito mo ga mo	if only someone were here to see them.
851	*wa ga yado ni*	By my home,
	sakari ni sakeru	they have reached full bloom;
	ume no hana	the plum blossoms
	chirubeku narinu	are about to scatter away
	mimu hito mo ga mo	if only someone were here to see them.
852	*ume no hana*	The plum blossoms
	ime ni kataraku	spoke to me thus in dreams:
	miyabitaru	"We are flowers
	hana to are mou	that think ourselves refined,
	sake ni ukabe koso	if only you would float us in *sake*."
	[One text reads:	]
	[*itadzura ni*	"Do not let us]
	[*are o chirasu na*	scatter away uselessly.]
	[*sake ni ukabe koso*	if only you would float us in *sake*."][41]

The description of the two poems on longing for home as "not numbering among these" (員外), has usually been taken to refer to the poet's lack of inclusion in the preceding plum blossom sequence. However, since evidence has emerged that the poet may be the host, Tabito himself, this interpretation may be false, and the description may

[41] These three lines are listed as alternatives for the last three lines of the final poem

be taken instead to refer to the poems rather than the poet.[42] In other words, the two poems were included here alongside the plum blossom poems, but were not counted among that set. In fact, aside from a possible echo with the mention of the capital in poem 843, they seem to have no thematic link whatsoever with the preceding poetry sequence. I will thus put aside these two poems for the moment and turn instead to the next four.

In these poems, the link to the plum blossom sequence is explicit. Although the poet or poets who composed them is not specified, their collective title specifies that they were composed "following in the manner of" or "in harmony with" (追和) the thirty-two poems of the banquet. Their primary emotion is one of longing for the elegant camaraderie of the poetic gathering, written either as one who could not be present at the original banquet, or as one who was there but wishes it had never ended. The longing for someone with whom to share the beauty of the plum blossoms in poems 850 and 851, and the plum blossoms' wish for a cup of *sake* in which to float in poem 852 both reflect the longing for the banquet itself. The plum blossoms are still in bloom, but without the elegant context of the banquet they are somehow lacking, requiring appreciation by the refined sensibilities of the Tsukushi poets in order to be truly fulfilled.

The style of transcription indicates that the poet of these four poems, like the two preceding ones, is Tabito.[43] Thus the poems were not written by some lonely outsider wishing he had been included in the banquet, but by the host himself, perhaps mourning for the earlier occasion much as one mourns for the fallen plum blossoms and the beauty that has passed. If this is the case, there is an echo of Okura's poem number 818, in

[42] Ôkubo 2000b, pp. 157-9.
[43] This determination is according to the research of Inaoka Kôji in Inaoka 1976.

which the poet is among his compatriots at the banquet but wonders if he will be alone when the day is through. The poem's sense of mournful solitude stands in stark contrast with the festive nature of most of the poems in the sequence, perhaps another aspect of the recognition that all joy is fleeting and that change is inevitable, as expressed in Okura's "Poem Lamenting the Hardships of the World." By the time Tabito composes his poems in response to the sequence, Okura's sad prediction has come to pass and Tabito is left to view the blossoms alone.

The acceptance of Tabito as the poet of these verses has given rise to speculation regarding an autobiographical context for the poems. In the context of Tabito's recent loss, the subject of the first poem in book five, the person with whom he longs to share the beauty of the flowers may be not one of his fellow poets, but his late wife.[44] In fact, Itô Haku has suggested that Okura's poem was itself a reference to this, a way of giving sympathy to his friend and host who had lost so much in recent years.[45] Although Tabito was among friends and enjoying the pleasures of the season, Okura was sensitive enough to understand that the one with whom he most wanted to spend the day was gone, and to express that sadness in his poem.

The interpretation of Tabito's feelings of solitude having their source in the loss of his wife may also provide a link to the previous two poems, which had seemed entirely unrelated. In both Okura's *Yamato banka* and in the poems composed by Tabito on the occasion of his return to the capital later that year (*MYS* III: 451-3), Tabito's wife is associated with thoughts of home. She passed away so soon after their arrival in Tsukushi that his memories of her would always be tied to the home in the capital rather

[44] Ôkubo 2000b, p. 159.
[45] Itô 1995 v. 5, p. 89.

than his official post in Dazaifu. Thus his loneliness and longing for her were linked to his desire to return to the capital, and he was as unable to "return to his youth" as he was to have his wife restored to him.

Of course, the main reason for the inclusion of the two poems longing for the capital was that the poems were, in fact, being sent to the capital. Tabito enclosed the plum blossom sequence and the six poems which follow it, as well as the next sequence in book five, "Excursion to Matsuda River" (*MYS* V: 853-60) and the three poems which followed it (*MYS* V:861-3) in a letter to his acquaintance Kichida Yoroshi in the capital.[46] Yoroshi is among the poets represented in the *Kaifûsô*, and Tabito may have known him from his time participating in Prince Nagaya's poetry circle. This would certainly explain Tabito's reasons for sending him the plum blossom poetry sequence, since the poetry gathering in Tsukushi was the very image of those held by Prince Nagaya, albeit with a focus on Japanese rather than Chinese. The preface to the *Kaifûsô* describes the poetry gatherings hosted by Emperor Tenji in the following way:

> At times the emperor summoned men of letters often great banquets were held. On these occasions the imperial brush let fall prose; the courtiers offered their eulogies in verse.[47]

By referring to these earlier gatherings, the composers of the Chinese verse gathered in the *Kaifûsô* were identifying their poetic activity with a larger tradition. In the same way, through hosting his own poetry circle in Tsukushi, Tabito was consciously participating in that same tradition. And in sending the fruits of this gathering to another who had

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[46] The name of the letter's recipient, 吉田宜, has sometimes been rendered "Yoshida Yoroshi." However, the surname Yoshida was, in fact, a later branch of the Urabe family line, and the surname as included in the *Shinsen shôjiroku* is believed to be pronounced Kichida instead. Kichida was an immigrant from Paekche, and the pronunciation is believed to have been derived from a Paekche surname. Nakamura 1994, p. 115.

[47] Translation in deBary 1957, p. 89.

participated in the Chinese poetry circles, he was affirming the poetry sequence's status as literature, despite the fact that it was composed in Japanese rather than Chinese.

Of course, circulating the poetry sequence in this way also served to expand the range of the work. The poetry sequence had ostensibly been made complete with thirty-two poems. However, with Tabito's addition of four more poems, it began to move beyond these boundaries. The sequence was now a dynamic literary work, inspiring other poets to compose works which in turn became part of it. Thus Tabito's sending of the sequence to Yoroshi was not merely a demonstration of poetic accomplishment, but an invitation to participate in its further elaboration. And Yoroshi responded to this invitation with the following poem:[48]

A poem presented in reply to the various poets' plum blossom verses

864	*okure ite*	Left behind
	naga koisezu wa	to spend long hours longing for you,
	misono fu no	I would rather
	ume no hana ni mo	become a plum blossom
	naramashi mono o	growing in your lovely garden.

The main theme of Yoroshi's poem is his longing for his distant friend Tabito, but he frames the sentiment in the language of the plum blossom banquet. His use of two of the most common phrases from the sequence, "plum blossoms" (*ume no hana*) and "garden" (*sono*), make the link between his poem and the others of the sequence explicit, and places his poem in the same contextual framework. In this way the verse composed by Yoroshi, who was, of course, not present at the plum blossom banquet, becomes a part of the sequence. At the same time, Yoroshi's sentiment is also a response to Tabito's loneliness and longing for home, expressed in the six poems following the plum blossom

[48] This poem is included in a letter from Yoroshi which includes a lengthy letter in Chinese and three other poems, to be examined later.

sequence. Unlike traditional banquets in which the focus was oral poetry, the plum blossom banquet has no end, continuing to grow as long as it continued to circulate, inspiring other poets to add to it.

This was one of the fundamental differences between poetry as oral song and poetry as written literature. Because song was only realized through performance, it existed in the moment and then disappeared. It had the potential to be recalled, but not to be built on, since any changes erased what had come before. A literary work, on the other hand, had a fixed form to which poets could allude and to which they could add, with each addition increasing the potential of the original form, altering the meaning of the sequence even as the original was preserved.

Yoroshi's poem is the last referring directly to the plum blossom sequence, but it does not mark the end of the larger collaborative project. As mentioned earlier, Tabito also sent Yoroshi a sequence of poems centered on a trip to the Matsura River, and that sequence, even more than the poems on plum blossoms, exemplifies the potential of the collaborative literary works that make up book five.

An Excursion to the Matsura River

If Tabito's plum blossom banquet poem sequence presents an idealized version of a poetry banquet, then the sequence on a trip to the Matsura River does the same for the literary trope of the chance meeting in the remote provinces. It combines the erotic theme of the nobleman encountering beautiful provincial maidens with the theme of discovery of a wellborn woman hidden away far from the capital, and overlays it with the Chinese trope of encountering immortal beauties.

In the preface, a traveler to Matsura encounters beautiful women fishing in the river. They claim to be the simple daughters of fishermen but the traveler recognizes them as something more, perhaps the daughters of a noble clan or even heavenly maidens in mortal guise. They then engage in an exchange of poems in which the traveler presses them for information on their identities and expresses interest in a romantic encounter. The women admit that they are of good family and indicate that the romantic interest is reciprocated. In short, it is an idealized account of an unexpected and elegant romantic meeting, and we should not expect that it had any basis in reality.

The poet of the sequence is not identified, perhaps deliberately to add to the air of fantasy about the piece, and it is attributed by some to Tabito and by others to Okura. As we shall see, the nature of the work makes the process of attributing authorship of the preface and the poem exchange itself, much less of the additional poems written afterwards in response, no simple matter. Through the process of reply and expansion, the sequence becomes impossible to attribute to a single author and its nature as a collective composition must be recognized.

Preface on an Excursion to the Matsura River

I...
    chanced to be wandering in the District of Matsura
    and happened to visit the Waters of Tamashima
where I came upon some fishing maidens,
    their flowerlike faces without equal,
    their brilliant forms beyond compare,
    their brows like unfurled willow leaves,
    their cheeks like blooming peach blossoms,
    their lively spirit above the clouds,
    their elegant style beyond this world.
I asked them, "Of what village, what family are you? Could you perhaps be immortals?"

Laughing, the girls replied, "We...
are daughters of fisherfolk,
are dwellers in grass huts,
without village, without family,
how can we presume, to tell you our names?
It is simply our nature to enjoy the water.
It is in our hearts to take pleasure in the mountains.
Sometimes by the waters of the Lo,[49] we sit and admire the gemlike fish.
Sometimes at the gorge of Wu,[50] we lie and daydream in the smoky mist.
Now that we meet a noble guest,
we cannot control our excitement
and reveal our most private thoughts
For now and forever, how can you not [marry and] grow old with us?
This humble official replied, "Yes, I would be honored to accept your command."
But the sun was sinking to the west of the mountains,
And my black mount was anxious to go.
In the end I expressed my troubled thoughts,
by composing a poem for them which said:

853	*asari suru*	Daughters of those
	ama no kodomo to	who must fish for their sustenance,
	hito wa iedo	or so they say.
	miru ni shiraenu	Yet when I saw you I knew
	umahito no ko to	you are the daughters of noblemen.

Their poem in reply

854	*tamashima no*	Upstream on
	kono kawakami ni	this Tamashima River
	ie wa aredo	we have our home,
	kimi o yasashimi	yet shy before our lord
	arawasazu ariki	we could not reveal it.

Three more poems sent by the lowly traveler

855	*Matsuragawa*	On Matsura River,
	kawa no se hikari	the shallows are shimmering.
	ayu tsuru to	Young maiden,
	tataseru imo ga	who stands fishing for trout,

[49] The River of Lo, a river associated with heavenly beings in the "*Loshenfu*" (洛神賦) in *Wen xuan* book 19.

[50] The Gorge of Wu on the Yangzi River, associated with the heavenly beings in the "*Gaotangfu*" (高唐賦) in *Wen xuan* book 19.

	mo no suso nurenu	your hem has gotten wet.
856	*Matsura naru* *Tamashimagawa ni* *ayu tsuru to* *tataseru kora ga* *ieji shirazu mo*	In Matsura on the Tamashima River, Young maidens who stand fishing for trout, I know not the way to your home.
857	*tôtsu hito* *Matsura no kawa ni* *wakayu tsuru* *imo ga tamoto o* *ware koso makame*	For a distant lover the Matsura River is waiting.[51] On the arm, of a maiden fishing for young trout I would pillow my head.

A further reply from the maidens

858	*wakayu tsuru* *Matsura no kawa no* *kawanami ni* *nami ni shi mowaba* *ware koime ya mo*	On Matsura River, where we fish for young trout, if I am to you but another wave among many why should I long for you so?
859	*haru sareba* *wagie no sato no* *kawato ni wa* *ayuko sabashiru* *kimi machigate ni*	In the spring, in the river ford beside our village, the young trout rush about eagerly awaiting our lord.
860	*Matsuragawa* *nanase no yodo wa* *yodomu to mo* *ware wa yodomazu* *kimi o shi matamu*	On Matsura River, in the still water of its seven shoals, it may be still, but I cannot still myself for I am awaiting my lord.

Three poems added by a later person (the venerable Commander)

861	*Matsuragawa* *kawa no se hayami* *kurenai no* *mo no suso nurete* *ayu ga tsuru ramu*	On Matsura River The river shoals are swift. Are they fishing there for trout, in their skirts, the scarlet hems growing wet?

[51] The first two lines of this poem hinge on the homonym of the word "to wait," "*matsu*," and the first two syllables of Matsura.

862	*hito mina no*	Everyone else
	miramu Matsura no	has gazed on the Tamashima
	Tamashima o	in Matsura.
	mizute ya ware wa	Am I the only one who stays,
	koitsutsu oramu	yearning, but not seeing it?
863	*Matsuragawa*	On Matsura River
	Tamashima no ura ni	and the bay of Tamashima, they fish
	wakayu tsuru	for young trout.
	imora o miramu	Oh how jealous I am of those
	hito no tomoshisa	who have seen the maidens there.

The preface is clearly indebted to Chinese sources, most particularly the stories of immortals from the *Wen xuan* and the popular erotic work, the *Dwelling of Playful Goddesses* (*Youxianku* – 遊仙窟).[52] The names Matsura and Tamashima both refer to the same river, which runs through the province of Bizen not far from Okura and Tabito in Chikuzen, but the elaborate Chinese references overlay the nearby geography with foreign place names evocative of supernatural beings. Thus, as with the preface to the plum blossom poems, an idealized world with a veneer of reality is created to act as a context for the poems which follow. Without the preface, the poem exchange depicts an attempt at seduction of a provincial maiden by a traveler, but with the preface it becomes a fantasy tale of a mortal man wooing immortal beauties.

The evidence for both Okura and Tabito is largely circumstantial, but given the focus on the two poets in book five and the context of the surrounding poems, the conclusion is not unreasonable. Both poets are also believed to have composed similar works on immortal maidens elsewhere. Tabito's "Poem on a Paulownia Zither" (*MYS* V: 810-11) is an exchange of poems between the poet and the zither of the title, taking the

form of a young woman to visit the poet in dreams. Okura, on the other hand, may have composed a poem sequence in book sixteen's section of "Miscellaneous poems with a Story" (有由縁雑謌) in which an old bamboo cutter encounters nine immortal maidens (*MYS* XVI:3791-3802).[53] The fact that Tabito is known to have sent the sequence, along with the plum blossom sequence, to Kichida Yoroshi in the capital makes him the most likely author, but theories vary.[54]

The difficulty in determining authorship extends to the question of how many poems were originally composed with the preface. There is little doubt that the first two poems are meant to accompany the preface, but the next six may or may not be by the same poet, and the last three are specifically identified as of differing authorship. The fact that some later scribe has added an interlinear note identifying the author of the last three poems as "the venerable Commander" (帥老) has only complicated the issue. The phrase is the same as that used in the preface to the plum blossom banquet, and presumably refers to Tabito, since his position was Dazaifu Commander (太宰帥). Thus it is possible that Tabito wrote the poems himself, perhaps crafting the entirety of the sequence as though it were by multiple authors in order to approach different aspects of the same theme.

Examination of the conventions of phonographic character usage for the poems has yielded some additional information, though not enough to answer the questions definitively. The transcription style of the first two poems conforms to Tabito's style, but

[52] Hayashida 1999, pp. 191-3
[53] The authorship of this piece is uncertain, but it is attributed to Okura by many commentators, including Tatsumi Masaaki, due to its similarities with *Youxianku*. Tastumi 2000, pp. 168-70.
[54] For an outline of the major theories, see Tatsumi 2000, p. 171.

the rest do not, and the style of the last three poems have similarities with Okura's style.[55] For this reason, the most common theory is that Tabito composed the preface and first two poems, some other poet or poets composed the following six poems as an extension of the theme begun by Tabito, and Okura responded later by adding three poems from a different point of view.[56] Of course, this theory ignores the attribution of the final poems to Tabito, but most commentators have been willing to simply dismiss the note as an error.

The question of the specific authorship of each poem is not particularly important to this study. What is more significant is that, like the plum blossom sequence, the Matsura River sequence was a dynamic literary work, its scope expanded through a succession of poetic contributions. At its most basic level, it consists of the preface in Chinese and the first two poems, which serve only to answer the question of the girls' identity posed in the preface. Whether or not the poems that follow are by the same author or another, they serve to move the poem beyond its earlier boundaries, each elaborating on a different aspect of the romantic relationship that is sought. Poem 855 introduces an erotic element with the image of the wet skirt hems, while 856 and 857 push forward with a more direct advance by the traveler, asking the way to a maiden's home and expressing overt interest in being her lover. The maidens' poems of reply elaborate in turn on their side of the relationship. In poem 858, a maiden expresses distrust that the traveler is no more interested in her than in any other girl, yet she admits to interest in him, while poems 859 and 860 express her excitement more fully.

[55] Itô 1995 v. 5, pp. 139-40.
[56] Ibid.

It is with the next three poems by a "later person" that the tone changes, with the introduction of a new voice. Throughout the first six poems, regardless of the reality or fiction of the event, the voices were of those within the world articulated by the preface. Beginning with poem 861, however, the poems represent a reaction not only to the events which are occurring, but to the literary work itself. The speaker in that poem was not present at the described scene and has experienced it only through the literary work. Thus in poem 861 he wonders whether the girls in the poem are still there fishing, while in 862 and 863 he expresses regret at having been excluded from the trip and yearns to see them. Whether or not the poet is the same as that of the earlier poems, the point of view expressed is that of a reader experiencing a literary work rather than someone experiencing actual events.

This reader response makes clear the successful creation of the poetry sequence as an independent literary work, since it is in the interaction between text and reader that literature is created. A literary work is a dynamic object, changing its meaning through the interaction with each new reader. And when the reactions themselves are captured, as in these poems of response, the boundaries of the literary work expand to encompass the new work and the meaning created by it. The "later person" is now a part of the sequence himself.

With the poems by the "later person," the sequence ends, but only temporarily. As noted earlier, Tabito included these poems in his letter to Kichida Yoroshi in the capital, along with the plum blossom sequence. In reply, Yoroshi sent the earlier mentioned poem in the style of the plum blossom poems, as well as the following verses:

A poem in reply to the poems on the immortals of Matsura

865	*kimi o matsu*	Waiting for their lord,
	Matsura no ura no	the young maidens of the bay
	otomera wa	of Matsura –
	tokoyo no kuni no	might they not be fishing girls
	ama otome ka mo	from the land of eternity?

Two more poems written when I was unable to stop thinking of you:

866	*haro haro ni*	Far and away
	omôyuru ka mo	I send my longing;
	shirakumo no	separated from me
	chie ni hedateru	by a thousand ranks of white cloud,
	Tsukushi no kuni wa	is the land of Tsukushi.
867	*kimi ga yuki*	Many days
	ke nagaku narinu	have passed since you left.
	Naraji naru	On the Nara road
	shima no kotachi mo	the trees of your garden
	kamu sabinikeri	have grown gnarled with age.

seventh month, tenth day, second year of Tempyô (730)

With his first verse, Yoroshi further expands the Matsura poetry sequence, adding his own speculation on the girls' identity to that of the traveler, and returning to the supernatural aspect suggested in the preface. As with his addition to the plum blossom sequence, he is participating vicariously in Tabito's activities in Tsukushi through his reading of and response to Tabito's literary works. He shares the point of view of the "later person" in the Matsura sequence, able to participate in the events only through his participation in the act of literary creation.

The other two poems included by Yoroshi were presumably meant as a response to Tabito's two poems longing for home, which followed the plum blossom sequence. Although their meaning is incidental to the Matsura River sequence, they add an additional element to the sequence in the echoes of the longing expressed by the "later person." Both are unable to travel to Matsura and can only yearn from afar, but the

object of Yoroshi's yearning is not the river maidens, but Tabito and the elegant literary circle which surrounds him in Tsukushi. Though they are not explicitly connected to the sequence, the poems' inclusion by the compiler adds their meaning into the larger context, since their presence places them within the same context of the letter exchange through which the literary work is being created.

Of course, Yoroshi was not the only one to whom Tabito showed the Matsura River sequence. Following Yoroshi's poems are a set from Okura which are also believed to be a response to the Matsura poems:

Offered with great respect and humility by Okura

I, Okura, have heard:
The lords of the four mountains
and commanders of the provinces
in accordance with the law
must travel about the lands under their authority
to observe the local customs.
Many thoughts are in my mind
but they are difficult to express.
Thus with these three wretched poems
I hope to dispel these inner feelings.
The poems read:

868	*Matsuragata*	Matsura District,
	Sayohime no ko ga	where the Princess Saho[57]
	hire furishi	waved her scarf,
	yama no na nomi ya	will the name of the mountain
	kikitsutsu oramu	be all that I know of it?
869	*Tarashi hime*	Princess Tarashi,[58]
	kami no mikoto no	the divine sovereign –
	na tsurasu to	who has seen
	mitatashi serishi	the stone on which she stood
	ishi o tare miki	in order to catch her fish.

[57] Princess Sayo features in a legend explaining the place name Hirefurumine, or "Scarf-waving mountain." *Zenshû* v. 5, pp. 153-4.
[58] Princess Tarashi refers to the Empress Jingû, who stopped to fish from a rock in Matsura using a thread drawn from her robe. *Zenshû*, v. 5, pp. 153-4.

[One variant reads:]
[*ayu tsuru to* in order to fish for trout][59]

870 *momoka shi mo* Not a hundred days
yukanu Matsuraji does it take on the road to Matsura.
kyô yukite Leave today,
asu wa kinamu o and I could return tomorrow.
nani ka sayareru What is it that holds me back?

Presented by Yamanoue Okura, Governor of Chikuzen on the seventh month, eleventh day, second year of Tempyô (730)

Okura's title is a model of extreme humility, while his preface uses elaborately formal Chinese language, giving the impression of a fawning subordinate praising his superior. However, it is likely that Okura was being tongue-in-cheek, as his letter is so ostentatiously formal that it is unlikely he meant it literally. The official titles to which he refers are those of old Chinese kingdoms rather than the modern Japanese bureaucracy, and he thus places Tabito in the metaphorical position of commander of an ancient fiefdom. Through the excessive formality, he implies that Tabito's trip to Matsura should have been part of his duties as Dazaifu Commander rather than a pleasure trip, and pretends to be offended at not being invited along.

Rather than referring directly to the poems of the maidens mentioned in the original sequence, Okura instead draws on legends associated with the area. His desire to see Matsura parallels that of the "later person," but Okura pretends he wishes only to see for himself the mountain of Princess Saho and the stone on which Empress Jingû stood rather than the young provincial maidens at their fishing. In his final poem, he speaks of Matsura not as a distant dream of a place, but as one close-at-hand and available to him should he but choose to visit. The only thing keeping him from fulfilling his desire is his

[59] This is a variant for the third line of the poem, but it corresponds to the last line of my translation.

own inertia, and the contrast with the intense outbursts of longing from the earlier poems is apparent. Okura's compositions seem stiff and excessively formal if taken literally, but in the context of the flights of fancy of the earlier poems, they become almost a parody of what has come before.

Thus the Matsura poetry sequence began with the fictionalized encounter between a traveler and a provincial maiden, dressed in the language of Chinese tales of immortals. With the added responses of those who had read the sequence, a sense of longing for the idealized world presented in the original poem is added to the work. And with Okura's poetry, the poem comes full circle as the sequence becomes a parody of itself. The place name is once again placed in the realm of legend, but now it is a domestic Yamato legend tied to the land rather than a Chinese import. Itô Haku has called this type of progression "*Man'yô no renga*," or "*Man'yôshû* linked verse," with each new poem linked to the ones that had come before, and each new link changing the meaning of the series as a whole.[60]

The comparison to the later *renga* linked verse form is an apt one. In *renga*, a poet looks to the verse which precedes his own and composes a poem based on a link to that poem. The mark of quality in the verse is based not merely on the verse itself, but on its relationship to the previous one. A verse of particularly good quality had the ability to draw out of a verse meaning that was not apparent before, thus changing the meaning of the original after the fact. Meaning was not isolated in an individual poem, but was rather created in the interplay between them, and thus was the product not of a single guiding consciousness, but of a collective effort.

This "*Man'yô no renga*" does not end with Okura's three poems, but continues with the new theme of Princess Sayo. As in the Matsura River sequence, the poets who

add to the series are not named, and the poems are attributed simply to a "later person," a "still later person," and finally an "even still later person."[61] As before, these may be real poets responding to Okura, or they may simply be Okura the work of himself composing in different personae. And, as before, it does not really matter either way. Whether the "later person" is a real person or merely a foil, his poem is composed from the perspective of a reader encountering Okura's poem and thus expands the scope of the literary work through incorporating an additional reader's perspective.

Itô speculates that the fact that these poems were not attributed by name to any poet does not indicate neglect or disrespect, but was rather a conscious decision on the part of the poets. He writes:

> In a series such as this, in which there were multiple poets, it is easy to surmise that Okura and the others would have considered it foolish to point out the name of each one. And in a sequence such as 'first person –> later person –> still later person –> even still later person,' the poet is actually being deliberately hidden. To put it differently, it is not too much to say that 'first person,' 'later person,' etc. serve as the signatures themselves. Naming the actual poets one by one would run contrary to the purpose of the composition, and would destroy the whole thing. Of course, they themselves knew who had composed each poem. However, it was in allowing each poet's mask to remain in place that the elegance and the pleasure of balancing truth and fiction came about.[62]

The participants involved in the poetry sequence are not interested in whether the poem is based in fact, since they are all participating in maintaining the fiction. For example, the poems of the Matsura River sequence depend on a willingness to suspend disbelief and imagine the poems as a dialogue rather than the product of an individual poet. Further, even if Tabito himself was the poet of both the preface and the three poems identified as by a "later person," the illusion that the later person was not present on the excursion

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[60] Itô 1974 v.1, p. 293.
[61] 後人 –> 最後人 –> 最々後人 (*MYS* V:872-5)
[62] Ibid., pp. 293-4.

must be maintained, so that the additional perspective can be retained as a part of the sequence.

In fact, the same might even be said of the poems of the plum blossom sequence, despite the presence of poets' names. In this case, the event was expected to embody the ideals of elegance articulated in the preface. Thus, even if the event did not occur in reality exactly as described, the literary work depended on the illusion that it had. Even if a guest had merely submitted his poem in absentia, he would still be listed in his proper seat as though he had been there. The reality of the plum blossom banquet was secondary to its status as a literary work.

It is thus not surprising in the context of these collaborative works that we do not always find a poet listed. After all, it is the sequences themselves that are important as literary works, and the overall sequences have no single author. And as the uneven quality of the poems in the plum blossom sequence shows, the individual poems are not particularly important on their own, but are necessary to creating a cohesive whole. Meaning is created out of the whole rather than the separate parts.

Of course, there is no reason that the Matsura River sequence should end here. Another response to it appears a bit later in the book, in the form of a poem by Prince Mishima (*MYS* V: 883) responding to the sequence. Nor, in fact, did the series necessarily begin with the Matsura River preface. It is possible that Tabito had been inspired by Okura's "Poem on Heart Calming Stones" (*MYS* V:813-4), which had mentioned the Princess Tarashi (Empress Jingû) travelling to Tsukushi. All these interrelated sequences were created through the format of the letter exchange, and it was from these letters that Yakamochi drew the source materials for book five.

In fact, it is possible to view the entirety of book five as simply the product of the Tsukushi poets' poem exchange. Harada Sadayoshi writes:

> ...the most important characteristic of the book is not simply that it was made up of exchanged letters or of Chinese/Japanese compound form poetry and prose arranged in chronological order, but that these recorded texts were fundamentally connected. This was entirely due to the fact that these works by Okura, Tabito, and the others were created through the mutual one-upmanship of letter exchange. The compiler of book five then arranged the poems so as to show the exact details of the works' composition.[63]

Yakamochi was placing the poems not simply in the order in which they were composed, or in their context as part of a larger sequence, but in the order in which they were exchanged. Thus the two poems by Tabito longing for the capital are placed following the plum blossom sequence, despite their lack of connection to the sequence's theme, simply because all were included in the same letter to Kichida, inviting a response to both works together. book five is thus an image of the process of collective poetry composition rather than simply its final product.

Conclusion

In this glimpse of the creative process of the Tsukushi poets, we can observe the paths by which Okura and Tabito created a written literature. By incorporating aspects of letter writing and anthologization, they managed to replace an aural tradition with a visual one. By combining disparate written elements into a larger sequence, they were able to deal with far more complex themes. And by expanding the poetry sequence to include poems of multiple authorship, they acknowledged the perspective of the reader in shaping a literary work.

[63] Harada 2001, p. 360.

The experience of reading poetry has become so common that we do not now give it even a second thought, but it must have represented a profound paradigm shift to the Nara Japanese. That Okura and Tabito were able to achieve it is testament to their skill, but they were also in large part simply products of their time. Steeped in the Chinese classics and exposed to an ever increasing body of literary works, they embodied the ideals of the *ritsuryô*, not merely as articulated in the abstract, but as applied in reality. Their progress toward assimilation of Chinese was paralleled by Japan's own, and the image we have of their creative process thus gives us insight into Japan's process of selecting those elements of foreign culture which, like writing, would become so naturalized that its foreign origins could almost be forgotten.

Thus, for all its seeming aberrations, complex allusions, and themes that would not be treated again in Japanese poetry until the modern period, book five is a success story. The poems seem strange in relation to other *Man'yôshû* works only because the elements which were not naturalized are the ones that stand out. The innovations that were successful, on the other hand, have become so common that we no longer see them. Whether or not Okura and Tabito were setting out to divorce poetry from its context in performance or were simply forced to do so by their separation from the cultural life of the capital, they succeeded in creating poetry that could stand alone as a literary work, and changed forever what Japanese poetry would be.

APPENDIX A

Outline of *Man'yôshû* Contents

Major poetry classifications:

banka – 挽歌 – elegies
sômon – 相聞 – poetry exchanges
zôka – 雑謌 – miscellaneous poems
hiyuka – 比喩謌 – metaphorical poems
mondô – 問答 – dialogue poems

Poetry forms:

tanka	– 短歌	– 31 syllables	– 5-7-5-7-7
chôka	– 長謌	– indeterminate	– 5-7-5-7- ... -5-7-7
sedôka	– 旋頭歌	– 38 syllables	– 5-7-7-5-7-7
bussokusekika	– 佛足石謌	– 38 syllables	– 5-7-5-7-7-7

Book one (poems 1-84)

zôka

arranged chronologically by reign
early poetry to 714 CE
"miscellaneous" poems primarily centered on court activities, official functions, imperial excursions, and other public occasions

84 total poems: 68 *tanka*, 16 *chôka*
Similarity in ordering and transcription conventions with book two
Combination of logographs and phonographs, with many phonographs employing the native Japanese (*kun*) reading

Book two (poems 85-234)

sômon (poems 85-140)

arranged chronologically by reign
early poems to reign of Jitô (686-697 CE)
53 *tanka*, 3 *chôka*

banka (poems141-234)

arranged chronologically by reign
early poems to 715 CE
78 *tanka*, 16 *chôka*

150 total poems: 131 *tanka*, 19 *chôka*
Similarity in ordering and transcription conventions with book one
Combination of logographs and phonographs

Book three (poems 235-483)

zôka (poems 235-389)
few dates, but roughly chronological, judging by poet and occasions of composition
early poems to 733 CE
144 *tanka*, 14 *chôka*

hiyuka (poems 390-414)
no dates, ordering system unknown
late-seventh to mid-eighth centuries
25 *tanka*

banka (poems 415-483)
chronological
mid-seventh century to 744 CE
60 *tanka*, 9 *chôka*

252 total poems: 229 *tanka*, 23 *chôka*
Similarity in ordering and transcription conventions with book four
Not overtly organized with reign date headings, as in the first two books, but still roughly chronological; poems by the Ôtomo family and associated poets dominate the later poems, and are the most consistently dated
Primarily logographic transcription, with some combination with phonographs (mostly *on* reading)

Book four (poems 484-792)

sômon
chronological
mid-seventh century to 743 CE

309 total poems: 301 *tanka*, 7 *chôka*, 1 *sedôka*
Similarity in ordering and transcription conventions with book three
Poems by the Ôtomo family and associated poets dominate the later poems
Primarily logographic transcription, with some combination with phonographs (mostly *on* reading)

Book five (poems 793-906)

zôka
chronological
728 to 733 CE
despite classification as *zôka*, includes *sômon* and *banka*

114 total poems: 104 *tanka*, 10 *chôka*
In addition to the 114 Japanese poems, 2 Chinese poems, 10 Chinese prefaces, 1 Chinese essay, and 5 letter exchanges are also included
Poems center on Ôtomo Tabito, Yamanoue Okura, and the poets surrounding Tabito's circle in Dazaifu
Primarily one syllable per character, with occasional multiple syllable phonographs

Book six (poems 907-1067)

zôka

chronological, 723 - 743 CE

160 total poems: 132 *tanka*, 27 *chôka*, 1 *sedôka*

Miscellaneous poems believed to have been culled from throughout the collection, with an emphasis on court poems and the poems of Yamabe Akahito and Kasa Kanamura

Combination of logographs and phonographs

Book seven (poems 1068-1417)

zôka (poems 1068-1295)

miscellaneous poems, organized thematically

62 *eibetsu*, poems composed on a certain object, grouped under headings such as "on the sky," "on the moon," "on mountains," etc.; Within this group only 2 poems headed "thinking of home" violate the system of nomenclature

31 poems composed at a specific location: 5 "at Yoshino," 5 "at Yamashiro," and 21 "at Settsu"

90 poems composed "on a journey"

4 *mondô*, dialogue poems, 2 "on birds" and 2 "on fisherfolk"

12 poems "on an occasion"

3 poems on "feelings evoked at a certain place" (1 *sedôka*)

1 poem on "thoughts evoked through reference" (similar to a group of poems in books 11 and 12)

1 poem "on the road"

24 *sedôka* on various topics

poets and dates unknown (except for the attribution of a group of seven poems to an unspecified Fujiwara)

203 *tanka*, 25 *sedôka*

hiyuka (poems 1296-1403)

metaphorical poems, organized thematically

kibutsu, poems referring metaphorically to an object, grouped under headings such as "referring to a robe," "referring to thread," "referring to grass," etc.; Some topics appear twice, since the first fifteen poems (under six headings) are grouped together by common source, the *Hitomaro collection*, and some categories in that group are repeated later

1 *sedôka*

poets and dates unknown

107 *tanka*, 1 *sedôka*

banka (poems 1404-1417)

elegies, with no topics except for the final poem, with the heading "on a journey"

poets and dates unknown

14 *tanka*

350 total poems: 324 *tanka*, 26 *sedôka*
Many poems are attributed to the *Hitomaro Collection* (56 poems) and *Collection of Ancient Poems* (54 poems)
Primarily logographic transcription, with some combination with phonographs

Book eight (poems 1418-1663)
spring *zôka* (poems 1418-1447)
28 *tanka*, 2 *chôka*
spring *sômon* (poems 1448-1464)
16 *tanka*, 1 *chôka*
summer *zôka* (poems 1465-1497)
33 *tanka*
summer *sômon* (poems 1498-1510)
12 *tanka*, 1 *chôka*
autumn *zôka* (poems 1511-1605)
91 *tanka*, 1 *chôka*, 3 *sedôka*
autumn *sômon* (poems 1606-1635)
28 *tanka*, 1 *chôka*, 1 *sedôka*
winter *zôka* (poems 1636-1654)
19 *tanka*
winter *sômon* (poems 1655-1663)
9 *tanka*
246 total poems: 236 *tanka*, 6 *chôka*, 4 *sedôka*
Roughly chronological within each topic
Early poems to 743 CE
Same ordering system as book ten
Combination of logographs and phonographs

Book nine (poems 1664-1811)
zôka (poems 1664-1765)
roughly chronological
89 *tanka*, 12 *chôka*, 1 *sedôka*
sômon (poems 1766-1794)
roughly chronological
24 *tanka*, 5 *chôka*
banka (poems 1795-1811)
roughly chronological
12 *tanka*, 5 *chôka*
148 total poems: 125 *tanka*, 22 *chôka*, 1 *sedôka*
Early poems to reign of Shômu (724-748 CE)
Includes poems drawn from all known previous collections.
Combination of logographs and phonographs

Book ten (poems 1812-2350)

spring *zôka* (poems 1812-1889)
76 *tanka*, 2 *sedôka*
spring *sômon* (poems 1890-1936)
47 *tanka*
summer *zôka* (poems 1937-1978)
41 *tanka*, 1 *chôka*
summer *sômon* (poems 1979-1995)
17 *tanka*
autumn *zôka* (poems 1996-2238)
241 *tanka*, 2 *chôka*
autumn *sômon* (poems 2239-2311)
71 *tanka*, 2 *sedôka*
winter *zôka* (poems 2312-2332)
21 *tanka*
winter *sômon* (poems 2333-2350)
18 *tanka*
539 total poems: 532 *tanka*, 3 *chôka*, 4 *sedôka*
Same ordering system as book eight
Poets unknown
Some poems drawn from *Hitomaro Collection* and *Collection of Ancient Poems*
Primarily logographic transcription, with some combination with phonographs

Book eleven (poems 2351-2840)

sedôka (poems 2351-2367)
17 *sedôka*
"direct expression of feeling" – 正述心緒 (poems 2368-2414)
47 *tanka*
"thoughts expressed through allusion" – 寄物陳思 (poems 2415-2507)
94 *tanka*
mondô (poems 2508-2516)
9 *tanka*
"direct expression of feeling" – 正述心緒 (poems 2517-2618)
104 *tanka*
"thoughts expressed through allusion" – 寄物陳思 (poems 2619-2807)
193 *tanka*
mondô (poems 2808-2827)
20 *tanka*
hiyu (poems 2828-2840)
13 *tanka*
497 total poems: 480 *tanka*, 17 *sedôka*
The poems of the first four sections are drawn from the *Hitomaro Collection*, with five additional poems from the *Collection of Ancient Poems.*
Poets and dates unknown
Combination of logographs and phonographs; poems from *Hitomaro Collection* in abbreviated form

Book twelve (poems 2841-3220)

"direct expression of feeling" – 正述心緒 (poems 2841-2850)
10 *tanka*

"thoughts expressed through allusion" – 寄物陳思 (poems 2851-2863)
13 *tanka*

"direct expression of feeling" – 正述心緒 (poems 2864-2963)
100 *tanka*

"thoughts expressed through allusion" – 寄物陳思 (poems 2964-3100)
139 *tanka*

mondôka (poems 3101-3126)
26 *tanka*

"thoughts evoked on a journey" – 羇旅発思 (poems 3127-3179)
53 *tanka*

"poems of sadness at parting" – 悲別歌 (poems 3180-3210)
31 *tanka*

mondô (poems 3211-3220)
10 *tanka*

383 total poems, all *tanka*

The poems of the first two sections, and four of the poems on travel, are attributed to the *Hitomaro Collection*. The rest are unattributed.

Poets and dates unknown

Combination of logographs and phonographs; most poems from *Hitomaro Collection* in abbreviated form

Book thirteen (poems 3221-3347)

zôka (poems 3221-3247)
10 *tanka*, 16 *chôka*, 1 *sedôka*

sômon (poems 3248-3304)
28 *tanka*, 29 *chôka*

mondô (poems 3305-3322)
7 *tanka*, 11 *chôka*

hiyuka (poem 3323)
1 *chôka*

banka (poems 3324-3347)
11 *tanka*, 13 *chôka*

127 total poems: 56 *tanka*, 70 *chôka*, 1 *sedôka*

Roughly chronological, but exact dates unknown

Poets unknown

Combination of logographs and phonographs

Book fourteen (poems 3348-3577)

azumauta (3348-3352)
5 *tanka*

sômon (poems 3353-3428)
81 *tanka*

hiyuka (poems 3429-3437)
9 *tanka*

zôka (poems 3438-3454)
17 *tanka*

sômon (poems 3455-3566)
115 *tanka*

sakimori no uta (3567-3571)
5 *tanka*

hiyuka (poems 3572-3576)
5 *tanka*

banka (poem 3577)
1 *tanka*

238 total poems: all *tanka*

The heading "Poems of the Eastern Provinces," or *azumauta*, for the first section of poems is usually taken to refer to book fourteen as a whole. The first three sections are organized according to geographical location, while the locations for the later books are not specified.

Poets and dates unknown

Primarily one syllable per character

Book fifteen (poems 3578-3785)

unspecified (3578-3722)
chronological, 736-737 CE
poems by members of an embassy to Silla
137 *tanka*, 5 *chôka*, 3 *sedôka*

unspecified (3723-3785)
chronological, 739 CE
poems exchanged between Sano Otogami and Nakatomi Yakamori
63 *tanka*

208 total poems: 200 *tanka*, 5 *chôka*, 3 *sedôka*

Primarily one syllable per character

Book sixteen (poems 3786-3889)

"poems with a story" (有由縁謌) and *zôka*

104 total poems: 91 *tanka*, 8 *chôka*, 3 *sedôka*, 1 *bussokusekika*

Early poems to 744 CE

Combination of logographs and phonographs

Book seventeen (poems 3890-4031)
unspecified
142 total poems: 127 *tanka*, 14 *chôka*, 1 *sedôka*
Also includes 8 Chinese poems and letters
The first book of Yakamochi's poetic diary
Chronological, 725-748 CE
Primarily one syllable per character

Book eighteen (poems 4032-4138)
unspecified
107 total poems: 97 *tanka*, 10 *chôka*
Also includes 4 poem prefaces
The second book of Yakamochi's poetic diary
Chronological, 748-750 CE
Primarily one syllable per character

Book nineteen (poems 4139-4292)
unspecified
154 total poems: 131 *tanka*, 23 *chôka*
The third book of Yakamochi's poetic diary
Chronological, 750-753 CE (also includes some older poems)
Combination of logographs and phonographs

Book twenty (poems 4293-4516)
unspecified
224 total poems: 218 *tanka*, 6 *chôka*
The final book of Yakamochi's poetic diary
Chronological, 753-759 CE
Includes songs of the border guards
Primarily one syllable per character

APPENDIX B

Contents of *Man'yôshû* Book Five

Poem #	Title (works untitled in the original are marked with an asterisk (*)
793	A Poem in Reply to Dreadful Tidings by Lord Ôtomo, ruler of Dazaifu
N/A	*Untitled Chinese poem and preface by Yamanoue Okura
794-799	A Japanese Elegy - one poem
800-801	A Poem to Turn a Straying Heart (with preface)
802-803	A Poem on Thinking of Children (with preface)
804-805	A Poem Lamenting the Hardships of the World (with preface)
806-809	*A letter and four poems exchanged between Ôtomo Tabito and someone in the capital
810-811	*A letter and two poems sent by Ôtomo Tabito to Fujiwara no Fusasaki to accompany a Japanese *koto*
812	*A letter and poem sent by Fujiwara no Fusasaki in reply
813-814	*A poem (with preface) by Yamanoue Okura in praise of Heart-Calming stones
815-846	Thirty-two poems (with preface) on Plum Blossoms
847-848	Two additional poems on longing for the capital
849-852	Four poems composed later in response [to the plum blossom poems]
853-863	A preface [and poems] on an Excursion to the Matsura River
864-867	*A letter and four poems by Yoshida no Yoroshi
868-870	*A letter and three poems by Yamanoue no Okura
871-875	*Five poems (with preface) of Praise for Hirefuri Peak
876-879	Four Yamato poems on the occasion of Ôtomo Tabito's farewell party in the Dazaifu Library

880-882	Three poems expressing [Tabito's?] own feelings on the occasion
883	A poem on the Princess of Matsura in the same style, written later by Mishima no Ôkimi
884-885	Two poems of Ôtomo Kumagori, written by the scribe Asada no Yôshun
886-891	Six poems (with preface) by the Chikuzen Governor Yamanoue Okura, in respectful reply, expressing Kumagori's thoughts for him
892-893	A Poem of Dialogue with the Impoverished (with *tanka*)
894-896	A poem (with two envoys) for successful departure and successful return
N/A	An essay by Yamanoue Okura on lamenting his own descent into illness
N/A	A Chinese poem (with preface) of sorrow for life in this world
897-903	Seven poems (a *chôka* and six *tanka*) on disease afflicting my already aged body, on the difficulty of the passing years, and of longing for my children
904-906	Three poems (a *chôka* and two *tanka*) on Mourning for a boy named Furuhi

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