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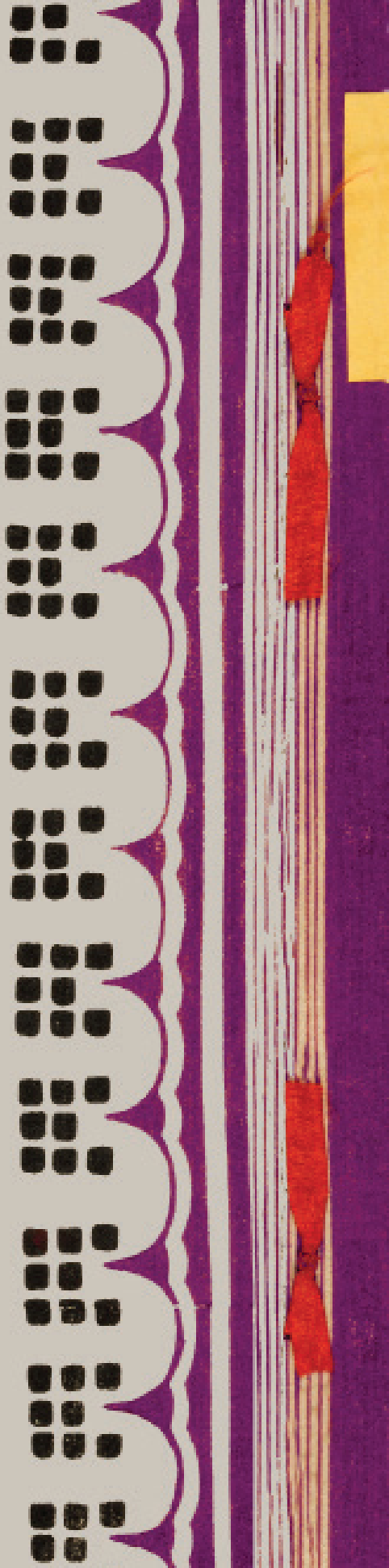

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Contents

Editorial Intent

Special Number: The Emperor and the Japanese Culture

In 2019, the imperial succession rites were conducted and Japan entered a new era referred to as Reiwa 令和, leaving behind the previous Heisei 平成 period. The new emperor formally ascended to the Chrysanthemum throne, and the former one became emperor emeritus. However, when Japan shifted from Shōwa 昭和 to Heisei in 1989, it was because the Shōwa emperor had passed away, not as a result of an abdication as in 2019.

For this reason, among others, in 2019 many Japanese seemed to welcome the change of era in a celebratory mood. For example, as the new imperial era "Reiwa" takes its name from ancient poetry, the region in which those poems were read for the first time became a frequent topic in conversations. Also, numerous worshippers paid visit to sanctuaries to receive the seal stamp commemorative of Reiwa's first year. In other contexts, people often talked about the scarcity of heirs to Japan's throne, and the possibility of a future empress was extensively debated. Any topic related to "the emperor" received wide media coverage, and interest on the subject increased throughout the country.

In that Japanese culture revolves around the emperor's figure, his presence is an element of the utmost importance in rituals, religion and culture. This is the reason why we decided to set up the issue number two of *Kokugakuin Japan Studies* as a special issue devoted to the emperor's figure.

Among the contributions to the issue, the article by Professor Tosa Hidesato is an attempt to shed light on Empress Genmei's (660-721 CE) personal feelings, this by means of a thorough investigation on the poems she left in the compilation *Man'yōshū* (759 CE). Truly, in times like these, when many people debate on whether a woman can ascend the Chrysanthemum throne, it is crucial to know more about the existence of ancient empresses in Japan.

On the other hand, Professor Ōishi Yasuo focuses on the *Man'yōshū*'s poems known as *baika no uta* 梅花の歌 ("plum blossom poems") from which stemmed the new era's name "Reiwa." His study provides new insights on the intention behind the composition of such poems, and at the same time, explores the possible image that people from the Nara

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period may have had about plum blossoms.

At the occasion of the rite Daijōsai 大嘗祭 performed for the new Heisei emperor in 1989, critical debate spread throughout the country on topics such as the separation of politics and religion. Conversely, no criticism whatsoever seems to have arisen at the time of the Reiwa succession. This relates to the article by Professor Motegi Sadasumi, which, looking in retrospect to the Heisei enthronement rites, discusses the meaning of performing ancient Court Shinto rituals in modern times.

It is our intention to present here these three different outlooks on the emperor's figure, three purposeful works whose content cover a vast historical period, from *Man'yōshū*'s era to the present times.

KJS Editorial Committee

Portrait of the Solitary Empress: Genmei Tennō in *Man'yōshū*

Tosa Hidesato

Keywords: *Man'yōshū* 万葉集, Genmei Tennō 元明天皇, the move of the capital to Nara (*Heijō sento* 平城遷都), *Daijōsai* 大嘗祭, divine marriage (*shinkon* 神婚)

Author's Statement

Genmei Tennō has, until now, largely been discussed in terms of her political accomplishments and not her humanity. However, this paper attempts to ask to what extent we might be able to understand the life and sentiments of the empress through her poetry.

Introduction

The preface of the *Kojiki* 古事記 praises Tenmu Tennō 天武天皇, who commissioned the compilation's editing, remarking that "the way he governed surpassed that of the Yellow emperor/The virtue of his royal influence exceeded that of the Zhou Lord."[1] At the same time, the text praises Genmei Tennō 元明天皇, who brought the project to its completion, saying, "Your majesty's repute exceeds that of the sovereign Cultured Mandate./Your Majesty's virtue surpasses that of the sovereign First of Heaven."[2] That Genmei would be so exalted in this context alongside Tenmu is not entirely unsurprising.

It is without question true that, beginning with the move of the capital to Nara, the start of the Genmei Era 元明朝 was an epoch-defining imperial succession. If we are to follow the events proceeding from the composition of the *Kojiki*, from the progression of new cultural and political projects such as the minting of the *Wadō kaichin* 和同開珎, the Imperial rescript on setting a standard currency value (*chikusen joi* 蓄銭叙位) and for

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* This article is a translation of Tosa Hidesato 土佐秀里, "*Kodoku na jotei no shōzō*: *Man'yōshū ga kataru Genmei Tennō*" 孤独な女帝の肖像—万葉集が語る元明天皇—. *Kokugakuin Daigaku kiyō* 國學院大學紀要 56 (2018), pp. 103–129. Translated by Nathaniel Gallant.

[1] Heldt, *Kojiki*, p. 55.

[2] Heldt, *Kojiki*, p. 58.

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the composition of the provincial cadastral surveys (*Fudoki* 風土記), to the establishment of roads—such as the opening of the Kiso Road—and the new domains under the Ritsuryō State system (*Ryōseikoku* 令制国), such as Dewa 出羽 and Tango 丹後, all of these are the work of the Genmei era. The groundwork for each of these measures, however, has come to be seen as predicated on the principles of the Taihō Legal Code (*Taihō ritusryō* 大宝律令), set down during the reign of Tenmu. While the work of Minister of the Right Fujiwara no Fuhito 藤原不比等 is significant in having made such a reign possible, it still cannot be denied that the political might which made these works achievable was furnished by Genmei herself. Considering this, we must conclude that the verses in praise of Genmei in the *Kojiki* preface are not mere exaggeration or ornament.

However, Tenmu Tennō, whose reign was inaugurated by his victory in the Jinshin War (*Jinshin no ran* 壬申の乱), is memorialized as the singular hero of this period not only in the preface of the *Kojiki* but in the *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, as well, and in comparison to his deified portrayal in the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集, no praise for Genmei Tennō as the ideal sovereign can be found in either verse or traditional records. Even more curious is the issue of why the reign of Genmei also featured an absence of court poets who sang the praises of the sovereign? Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂 was banished to the provinces during the Monmu Era 文武朝, and the appearance of Ōtomo no kanamura 大伴金村 on the poetic scene was forestalled until the Genshō Era 元正朝. This period, in which it is thought that not just the *Kojiki*, but the *Nihon Shoki* and the *Fudoki*, as well as the first scroll of the *Man'yōshū* were all edited, is thus an interregnum in the creative efforts of "song," or "poems" (*uta* 歌), contrary to the image of "completion" of this era in the editorial history of each of these collections.

As such, what shape did the *Man'yōshū* give to Genmei Tennō during her reign, which is otherwise a vacuum of court poets and song? And how does this differ from the image of Genmei as presented in the preface of the *Kojiki* or the subsequent *Nihon Shoki*? This essay will explore this question in detail below.

1. Imperial Succession from Son to Mother

On the fifth day of the sixth month of Keiun 慶雲 4 [707], Monmu Tennō 文武天皇 passed away at the young age of twenty-five. What followed was the ascension of the then forty-seven-year-old mother of Monmu, Genmei Tennō.[3] What was at that time an unprecedented imperial succession from son to mother in and of itself speaks to the deep uncertainties of this period—on top of what must have been the agony of Genmei as an

[3] There are many theories related to the "Law of Succession" and the within the context of the history of empresses with response to the unorthodox example of Genmei's succession, however there is not space in this paper to give them full treatment. For a recent, representative example summarizing the theories of rule during the Genmei period and of Genmei Tennō, see Watanabe, *Genmei Tennō/Genshō Tennō*, or Yoshie, *Nihon kodai jotei ron*.

individual.

While there had been a precedent of empresses before the enthronement of Genmei, in the case of both Suiko Tennō 推古天皇, formerly the queen to Bidatsu 敏達, and Jitō Tennō 持統天皇, formerly the queen to Tenmu, the order of succession had been from husband to wife. Given that the same was true in the case of Empress Jingū 神功皇后, who essentially served the function of the sovereign, it is conjectured that Queen Yamatohime 倭姫皇后 also served in the place of the Tenji Tennō 天智天皇 immediately following his death. In other words, in the interregnum between reigns, a queen's role as acting sovereign could be considered to have been to a certain extent standard practice.

The succession from Seinei 清寧 to Queen Iitoyo 飯豊王 (Iitoyoao no himemiko 飯豊青皇女) remains as an outlier, since this instance overlapped with a major shift in lineages from the Ingyō line 允恭系 to the Richū line 履中系, and thus is rather distinct from the other examples of a queen's accession to the throne. The pseudo shrine-maiden life of Queen Iitoyo, who "ultimately desired no encounters with men"[4] was modeled and popularly understood as in tandem to that of the pseudo shrine-priestly life of Seinei, who "had neither queen nor child", and whose "hair was white from his birth."[5] In other words, precisely because Seinei had no "queen," room was thus made for Iitoyo to inherit the throne. While Jingū Tennō's pseudo shrine-maiden life is, in the same fashion, an instance in which we can see some of the foundational logic of an empress's claim to power (the later accession of Genshō would also base itself on this principle of this shrine-maidenly quality), at the same time, this was not a reversal of the standard of succession from husband to wife, but rather shows other possibilities which are in line with those standard terms of succession.

Reconsidered in this sense, Genmei's accession is an anomaly among anomalies. So why were the precedents of imperial succession from parent to child, brother to sister, and husband to wife broken? It could be said that the fundamental ground was laid in the already unprecedented situation of Monmu's accession at the young age of fifteen.[6] In a sense, Genmei's accession at the age of forty-seven was rather more in keeping with existing precedent. It is likely then that Monmu's premature accession and his premature death made possible the reversal in tradition that was the "son to mother" succession of the throne.

That being said, there were other factors besides these which prevented the "husband to wife" succession in the case of Monmu. Monmu never formally had a "queen," and thus Fujiwara no Fuhito's daughter, Miyako 宮子, never occupied the position of "wife." As

[4] *Seinenki* 清寧紀 month seven, year three. *Nihon shoki*, SNKZ 3, pp. 216–217.
[5] *Sokui zenki* 即位前紀.
[6] On the issue of Monmu's accession, see Tosa, "Monmu Tennō no kanshi."

can also been seen from the issues that arose from the treatment of Miyako, the biological mother of Shōmu 聖武, after his death, in her being neither the empress nor member of the imperial line, she would not have been permitted to serve in succession of Monmu.

However, Genmei Tennō, then Princess Ahe (*Ahe no himemiko* 阿閇皇女), also did not occupy the position of a queen. Princess Ahe was the royal consort to Prince Kusakabe 草壁皇子, whose accession never ultimately came to pass. Had the formal investiture (*rittaishi* 立太子) of Kusakabe actually occurred, Princess Ahe would have become the imperial consort of the Crown Prince (*kōtaishihi* 皇太子妃), though prior to the establishment of the Taihō Legal Code, it could not be said for sure whether that position would have ultimately been respected. After Monmu's accession, the status of living mother of the current sovereign granted one the position of Empress Emerita (*Kōtaihi* 皇太妃). Haruna Hiroaki 春名宏昭 reads the position of empress dowager, as determined by the Taihō legal codes, to have "equal capacity" to that of the sovereign, and therefore effecting "service in the place of imperial authority"[7], however, whether or not this in fact was "equal" cannot be derived from in a circular fashion out of Genmei's succession, but rather requires further examples. In addition, in Haruna's explanation, the queen (*kōgō* 皇后), empress dowager (*kōtaigō* 皇太后), the mother of the empress dowager (*taikōtaigō* 太皇太后), the biological mother of the sovereign's mother (*taikōtaihi* 太皇太妃), her husband (*taikōtaifujin* 太皇太夫人), the biological mother of the sovereign (*kōtaihi* 皇太妃) and her husband (*kōtaifujin* 皇太夫人) are all said to be of "equal station." If this were indeed the case, one might be correct in thinking that from the Genmei Era onwards, this would have produced many further instances of divergent manners of imperial succession and representative rule, but the question of why Genmei would be the only outlier would still remain unexplained.

Alternatively, Ikegami Miyuki 池上みゆき has suggested Genmei as the *Ōtoji* 大刀自 (second wife) within the imperial line, thus considering her matrilineal position within the imperial clan as the basis of her accession.[8] However, if this were the case, it remains strange that we find no other examples of similar accession from anyone besides Genmei. The notion that her place as the *Ōtoji*, within the logic of a society of clans, does not go so far as to rule out the potential of a psychological or emotional use for justifying Genmei's accession. Nevertheless, given that Genmei is the absolute single exception to the rule of accession, we cannot generalize using this logic.

Given its abnormality, asking why Genmei's accession was possible is not an altogether productive question. Asking why she was an anomaly will only give us back an answer that justifies her anomaly. That she was the empress emerita or the imperial consort offers

[7] Haruna, "Kōtaihi Ahe no hime miko ni tsuite," p. 48.
[8] Ikegami, "'Ōtoji' ron kara mita Genmei sokui no ichi yōin."

little more than justifications for the fact of her accession. At the time of Monmu's death, Prince Shiki 志貴皇子, Prince Naga 長皇子, Prince Toneri 舎人皇子, Prince Niitabe 新田部皇子, and Prince Hozumi 穂積皇子 were all alive and in good health. However, the fact remains that each of these powerful candidates for succession were passed over and the Princess Ahe took the throne. In light of this, we need not again ask why, against all reason, it had to be Princess Ahe that acceded—the answer is already clear. The fact is that it was precisely because there were so many other powerful candidates for succession that the possibility of their succession had to be actively quashed.

The often-cited discourse on the "persistence towards Tenmu's direct line" (*Tenmu chokkei e no kodawari* 天武直系へのこだわり) is very clearly a *post-facto* invention. The idea of Tenmu's direct line is no more than another justification, given that, as shown above, whichever prince ascended, they would have been of the bloodline of Tenji or Tenmu. It was the Jitō Tennō and Fujiwara no fuhito who "persisted," in this case. As Jitō, whose prince was not able to ascend the throne, had longed for her grandson, the Prince Karu 軽皇子, to become the sovereign, Fuhito as well, who was married to [Jito's] daughter by Karu, also likely would have lost the chance of her grandson ascending as the Crown Prince. That "persistence" would have meant Prince Karu ascending the throne at age fifteen, or Genmei or Genshō being forced to ascend.

The long reigns of Jitō, Gemei and Gensho thus cannot be properly called "intermediary". These women did not merely "take the baton," as it were, but rather by ascending to the throne themselves, they did everything in their power to prevent the possibility of these princes' taking the throne. And for them to have the legitimacy of passing over these choices recognized required, more than anything, for them to secure their own reign for themselves. Thus, the aggressive policymaking during the reigns of Jitō, Genmei, and Genshō was indispensable to ensuring the certainty of these Empress's rules.

In considerations of why Genmei succeeded the throne, or why she was able to, it should thus be no surprise that it was a result of her ability to orchestrate her environment in this way. In fact, I would say that this shows that she was able to overcome the fact of her accession's unnaturalness and improbability, and that from this we must derive something of the extent of the fortitude required in the power wielded by Genmei herself.

In terms of how improbable or how unnatural it might have been, a simple look at the records prior to Genmei's accession from the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 and the declaration of Genmei's succession make matters clear. The *Sokui zenki* 即位前紀 states that, "In the eleventh month of the third year of Keiun, Toyo'ōji Tennō [Monmu] began making preparations, and first announced the intention of abdication. The sovereign [Genmei], with the greatest respect, firmly declined the offer and did not accept." We can also trace this within the declaration of accession,

> in the eleventh month of the previous year, I was addressed by the Sovereign, my Lord, [who said] 'as a result of my exhaustion, I intend to take time in order to recover. I must impress onto you the duties of the throne, in which I sit according to the Great Mandate of Heaven,' while understanding the great mandate which was before me, I replied with great sorrow, that "I could not take on [this responsibility]," and did not accept, however as a great many days went by, it weighed on me more and more heavily, and thus on the fifth day of the sixth month of this year, I have announced that 'I accept the wishes of the sovereign.'

As such, Genmei's enthronement is repeatedly emphasized as resulting from the "abdication" of Monmu.

This rhetoric effectively creates a situation in which no one else could have possibly known the facts of the situation outside of those involved, since from start to finish, the back and forth among those involved was conducted in complete secrecy. While an abdication from "prince to mother" may have been somehow "unnatural," beyond being at the behest of the then late Monmu Tennō, it served Genmei's logic that this must come to pass as his dying wish. While it may be somewhat suspect as fact, these conversations were held within the intimacy of the parent and child relationship, with no opportunity for mediation by a third party, and what's more, because it was the wish of a now deceased son, it would be emotionally difficult to intercede with—thus, we can see the calculations at work.

While there remains the inexplicable issue of whether the intention to abdicate was expressed to his mother a half-year prior to his death, we can see how intentionally Genmei puts on display her initial refusal. What's more, the witness for this was Genmei herself, and thus she can play both sides. In terms of the date of the eleventh month of Keiun 3, the *Monmu ki* 文武紀 shows that he had issued the Shiragikokuō 新羅国王 edict, and does not appear to have been afflicted with any illness, so this is not suggested in written records. In the first month of the following year of Keiun, an imperial rescript was issued for a discussion on moving the capital, and proceedings were underway for his own public appearance in the Great Hall of the palace. In the fourth month [of that year] emerged an announcement praising Fujiwara no Fuhito, and in month five he was awarded the position of envoy to Tang China. At least as visible in the *Shoku Nihongi*, Monmu appears unexpectedly energetic during this period, and thus his death seems rather sudden, occurring without warning in the sixth month of that year. Viewed in this light, the narrative of this having been Monmu's dying wish seems somewhat suspect.

We can consider the "abdication" narrative to have been fabricated specifically because of the unnatural nature of the succession from son to mother. In other words, if Ahe were

to ascend the throne, precisely because she anticipated that there would be a great deal of opposition and skeptical sentiment from within the royal family and clans, she had to create the established fact that the sovereign had already desired to abdicate while he was still alive, and by including the story that, in response, she had initially declined, Ahe herself seems to be attempting to emphasize the fact that her succession to the throne was not of her own doing (and was thus undesired).

Among the many irreconcilable opinions concerning the succession there is also the often-cited record of Prince Kadono 葛野王 in his *Kaifūsō* 懐風藻, which interrogates the conditions relating to the selection of a new sovereign in saying that there was no shortage of "people with things to say". This is likely also a manifestation of the then still extant customary record of the selection of sovereigns based on the representative system (*gōgisei* 合議制) prior to the Taika 大化 (Great Transformation). If the discussion had turned to the decision of who would succeed Monmu, the potential to garner support for the irregular succession of prince to mother would have no doubt been low. In order to carry out this rather unlikely plan of imperial succession, it was necessary that the decision-making process go unspoken. In the first place, Monmu's own accession had been through an "abdication" on the part of Jitō, so we can naturally assume that this had been a forceful measure taken up to ensure that no one raised objection to the dangers of enthroning someone so young. In using Monmu's accession as a kind of "precedent," the announcement of succession was an apparent effort to soften any possible psychological resistance to Genmei's enthronement.

Within this announcement of succession, the much debated "Unchangeable Law of Imperial Succession of Tenji Tennō" (*Kawaru majiki tsune no nori* 不改常典) can be seen as taking a central role in the basis of Genmei's own accession. The issue perhaps lies less in the matter of what is contained within this "Unchangeable Law of Succession," but rather why it would be necessary in this case to call upon the this "Law". The rules of imperial succession were not determined in Taihō legal code. It is possible that this is because imperial authority transcended the Taihō codes, however, more than this, according to custom, and the trends of the representative system, it was because the matter was of such difficulty that changing the rules of imperial succession, which had been arbitrarily carried over from earlier times, itself could be said to be impossible. So then why does this "Law," the singular legal document capable of making the impossible possible, not ultimately make anything clearer? Within the pronouncement of accession, it is in neither the writing nor the content, but rather only the naming of the "Law" which confers the privilege of rule. The "Unchangeable Law of Imperial Succession of the Tenji Tennō" is in fact used not for its substance, but rather on authority alone. It's method of deployment is not to say that a matter has been set down in such and such a way in the "Law," but rather that because something finds its basis in the "Law," it is absolutely correct—

which is to say that the Law both cannot be challenged and can be used for any purpose. Without being subject to view, it was solemnly carried forth like prophecy—and in this case, in the name of Tenji Tennō, because Genmei was a "direct descendent of Tenji," and in order to serve as the basis for Genmei's accession. The "Law" could thus be considered 1further could be considered as yet another justification prepared for the enthronement of Genmei.

Incidentally, Monmu was cremated and interred in the eleventh month of the third year of Keiun, and thus given the appellation of *Yamato Neko Toyo Ōji no Sumera Mikoto* 倭根子豊祖父天皇 (The Honored Imperial Grandfather, Seminal Son of Yamato).[9] While it is somewhat strange that Monmu, who passed away at twenty-five, would be given the title of "Imperial Grandfather", there was perhaps some intention here of forestalling questions of the failure of his accession at such a young age, and the essential goal of his posthumous name was thus no doubt to announce in advance that Monmu's imperial line would be protected into the future. While there would be a temporary reversion in succession from son to mother, there was thus certainty that future imperial succession would be reserved for those in the direct lineage of Monmu, and he thus would have to be known as "Honored Imperial Grandfather".

What we must observe in Genmei's accession is, more than anything, the proliferation of a kind of rhetorical strategy. We can imagine that the more widespread this rhetoric became, the more difficult a situation Genmei's accession was. As well, it was likely that Genmei herself, more than anyone, would have had a difficult time accepting her accession, having just faced the death of her son. In this sense, too, Genmei's fulfilling her responsibility as sovereign, like Fujiwara no Fuhito, was seemingly the result of the sense of anticipation of the eventual succession of their grandchild as the heir apparent. On this count, Genmei and Fuhito's interests were united.

2. "Stand the shields"

The poems handed down by the *Man'yōshū* related to Genmei are thought to offer a portrait of a solitary empress, one which does not appear in any official historical record. First, I would like to look at the following imperial composition (*gyosei* 御製) created during the change of the reign era to Wadō 和銅, in the second year of Genmei's rule:

> The first year of Wadō
>
> *Poem by the Empress Genmei*

[9] On the designation of Monmu as *ōji* 祖父 ("grandfather"), Shinkawa theorizes that this appellation fulfilled Monmu's unrealized wish to abdicate and be in retirement. See Shinkawa, *Nihon kodai bunkashi no kōsō*.

I can hear the bowstrings twang
on the brave men's leather armbands
as the warrior's general
stands the shields for drill. (1.76)[10]

Poem presented by Princess Minabe in response

Do not worry over things, my Lord,
for I am ever by your side,
where the gods have bestowed me. (1.77)[11]

According to Keichū's 契沖 notes in the *Man'yō daishōki* 万葉代匠記, "This song was composed during the conducting of the *Daijōsai* 大嘗祭 rite," however this is contradicted by Kamo no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵, who says in his *Man'yō Kō* 万葉考 that:

> At this time, when there was a rebellion in the outlying provinces of Echigo in Eizo, [the sovereign] dispatched his armies. Military exercises were thus [performed] in the capital, and on hearing the clamor of the drums and the sounds of the archers' leather armbands, the new sovereign was filled with feelings of sadness, and composed this song.

The mention of "stand[ing] the shields" would make Keichū's explanation seem more appropriate, however why is it that Mabuchi's, which lacks any basis in comparison, overwhelmingly supported? While it of course makes use of ideas about succession circulating within the factions internal to the National Learning School (*kokugakuha* 国学派), and beyond this, it lends more drama to the context to see the poem as occasioned by a military action, and to interpret Genmei's "worry over things" as a political issue, seem to strengthen support for Mabuchi's reading.

The person who has voiced the strongest opposition to the now rampant and thinly defensible reading by Mabuchi is Yoshinaga Minoru 吉永登.[12] Yoshinaga's critique of Mabuchi's reading follows a few key points: first, since the Ezo expedition did not occur until the following year, in Wadō 2, the poem thus could not have been from Wadō 1; second, that there are no attested incidents recounting any military actions in Wadō 1; and third, we do not see any examples of the term *ōigumi* 大臣 ("general") being used to mean the *shogun* 将軍; and finally, the phrase "stands the shields" was limited to the

[10] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 75.
[11] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 75.
[12] See Yoshinaga, "'Tate tatsu rashi mo' no haigo ni aru mono " and "'Tate tatsu rashi mo' no haigo ni aru mono: Tsuikō."

occasion of funerals. I am in agreement with all of these observations. However, it is difficult to agree on the idea that the "concern" of this poem is for moving the castle to Nara. I thus feel Keichū's explanation of its composition in celebration of the *Daijōsai* to be far more likely and reasonable.

We must first consider what kind of year Wadō 1 had been. Yoshinaga points to the imperial rescript on moving the capital to Nara in the second month of the year, however I would like to make note of the decree from the seventh month of that year issued to call on Minister of the Left Iso no Kami no Maro 石上麻呂 and Minister of the Right Fujiwara no Fuhito. The decree notes that "On consideration, based on the state of things from the [court officials], starting with the many ministers down to the people of the realm, we have opened on a period of harmony, a long-lasting peace," the political situation seems to have been going well, indicating that there was a general understanding that there was harmony among the people of the realm. One wonders how those who support Mabuchi's claims, and read Genmei's concern as there being some movement of military unrest, would interpret this pronouncement of Genmei's? Would they say that she was merely lying?

In addition, the *Daijōsai* ceremony of Genmei's enthronement was held in the eleventh month of the first year of Wadō. Given the significance of this being the year in which she participated in the *Daijōsai*, this would have been a year deeply attached to the essential rites of Genmei truly becoming the sovereign.

That Iso no Kami (the *Mono no be* 物部) conducted the ceremony of "stand[ing] the shields" on the occasion of the *Daijōsai* and the enthronement conforms to Keichū's descriptions.[13] As recognized both before and after the Genmei era, at the enthronement ceremonies of a succeeding sovereign, "Mononobe no Maro no Ason stood the great shields,"[14] and at the anniversary celebration of Monmu's enthronement, "Iso no Maro, Ason of Yamato, Jikikōshi of Enoi Hiro[kuni] stood the great shields, and the Jikikōshi, Ōtomo Sukune Teuchi, stood the shields and spears,"[15] and further at the same event honoring the Shōmu Tennō, it is recorded that, "The nobleman Ason of Iso no Kami of the Fifth rank of nobility, Iso no kami Ason no Iso no Maro, and the noblemen Ason Iso no Kami of the Sixth Rank, the Ason of Enoi Ōshima of the Seventh Rank, serving as the *Mono no be*, stood the shields for the *kami* at the north and south gates of the sacred grounds."[16] Into the Tenpyō 天平 period, if we follow the logic of Yoshinaga's argument, we would see a "stand[ing] of the shields" ceremony related to moving the capital, however, all of the mentions of matters related to the moving of the capital are

[13] On the *Mono no be* ceremonial role of standing the shields, see Emura, "Mononobe no tate o megutte."
[14] *Jitōki* 持統紀 month one, year four.
[15] *Monmu* 文武 month eleven, year two.
[16] Jingi 神亀 month eleven year one.

concentrated around the period of the so-called, "five years of wandering during the reign of Shōmu Tennō," and seems thus to appear as an anomalous occurrence. Looking at its appearance in the historical records prior to this, in keeping with the above examples, this ceremony was conducted only in relation to the enthronement of new sovereigns. At the *Daijōsai* ceremony of the enthronement in the *Engishiki* as well, it was set down that "two persons each from the Iso no Kami and the Enoi Uji, wearing Court dress, lead 40 of the inner Mononobe […] They set up shields and spears for the *kami* at the north and south gates of the Daijō-gū."[17] As recorded in the *Shokki* [*Shoku Nihongi*] from the eleventh month of the first year of Wadō, it is stated only that "[in] Tsuchinoto 己卯, there was a great celebration. The two lands of Tootoumi 遠江 and Tajima 但馬 participated in the ceremonies," there being no other detailed records of other similar ceremonies on behalf of the sovereign. Thus, in the same fashion as the commemorative celebrations of Monmu before her and Shōmu after, that of Genmei also naturally saw the ceremony of the "stand[ing] of the shields."

What is more, the minister of the left at the time was Iso no Kami (*Mono no be*) no Maro, who had stood the shields at the enthronement ceremony of Jitō. As Keichū and Kishimoto Yuzuru's 岸本由豆流 *Man'yōshū kōshō* 万葉集攷證 point out, the *Mono no be shi* 物部氏 mentioned in the Genmei poem is no doubt referring to Minister of the Left Iso no Kami no Maro. Given the other examples of "*Mono no be shi*" being referred to as the "Great Hero Iso no Kami" (3.369), this is not an unreasonable assumption. From the poem in question, it is imagined that in the commemoration of Genmei's enthronement, Iso no Kami no Maro, the top of the listed of ministers, had himself led the *Mono no be shi*, and conducted the ceremony of standing the shields.

Iso no Kami (*Mono no be*) was part of the military clan at the same time as being in the palace ritual clan. His armor and weaponry, as is clear by the selection of *kagura* 神楽 implements, were not only functional in their ability to injure (and to protect), but as well functioned as ritual implements with magical efficacy. In the origins of the ceremony in which the *Mono no be* stands the shields of course were contained militaristic elements, and precisely for this reason, if it were not for the palace divination rituals (*saishi girei* 祭祀儀礼), there would be no military action. In other words, within the rites of commemoration, in using weaponry and armor, it was of a form that was not entirely without an apparent display of military prowess or discipline. To immediately make the association to something threatening in response to the "stand[ing] the shields" must be considered the shortsightedness of those ignorant of ancient ritual.

As well, Kamochi Masazumi's 鹿持雅澄 *Man'yōshū Kogi* 万葉集古義 critiques Keichū's explanation of the *Daijōsai*, remarking that, "When an arrow is launched, the sound of

[17] Translated in Bock, *Engi-shiki*, p. 46.

the leather arm band would certainly not be sung of [in a poem].” Yamada Yoshio’s 山田孝雄 *Man’yōshū Kōgi* 万葉集講義 also states that “there would be no acts of martial display such as the launching of arrows and thus the sounding of the leather armbands at a *Daijōsai*,” offering a similar interpretation. However, one wonders whether they might be limited in their readings, as well. As shown above, in addition to their being an intimate relationship between weaponry and the divine rites, within the day-long *Daijōsai* celebrations, which had a long history of being performed, we cannot say for certain that there were absolutely no scenes of ritual archery. There are thought to potentially be purification or exorcism rituals involving archery or swordsmanship as a means of ensuring the purity and solemnity of the ritual space (*saijo* 斎場), giving the site of a ritual its dignity. Looking now at the Engishiki from the *senso daijōsai shiki* 践祚大嘗祭式 (“succession ritual”), we can gather that before and after a ritual in which armor and spears were used, “The various guards stand up their staves and the various officials line up the articles,”[18] and that “The Left and Right Captains of the Inner Palace Guards and below each lead a squad and, dividing right and left, guard their respective sides,”[19] armed imperial guards were mobilized and there were military demonstrations by the warriors (*eji* 衛士). These were rituals intended to protect the essential ceremony that is the enthronement rite of the sovereign, it is a performance meant to visualize that solemn act “protection,” perhaps in the wielding of a sword or the loosing of an arrow.

Yoshinaga Minoru interprets the *tomo no oto* 鞆の音 (“twang/on the brave men’s leather armbands”) as the reverberation of the string of the bow or the breaking of the string.[20] Nagase Osamu holds that the “armband” is a “divinely ritual object meant to drive away evil.”[21] These explanations are more than sufficient. At the beginning of such an important ritual, it is likely that the “twang/on the brave men’s leather armbands” would be intentionally made as a means of first making the air around the site pure, and thus perform the function of driving away evil. In other words, the sounding of one’s armband is something akin to signaling the beginning of a sacred ceremony. By starting with this presumption, the logic by which we can assume Genmei encountered the “twang on the armband,” and based on this, the ceremony of “stand[ing] the shields” is clearer. They constitute different stages of the same, continuous ceremony, which describe the context in which the *Daijōsai* was inaugurated.

In following the above considerations, primarily that 1) the ceremony in which “the brave warrior stands the shields” is the ceremony by which the *Daijōsai* was conducted;

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[18] Translated in Bock, *Engi-shiki*, p. 46.
[19] Translated in Bock, *Engi-shiki*, p. 46.
[20] Yoshinaga, “‘Tate tatsu rashi mo’ no haigo ni aru mono :Tsuikō.” The example of the sound of the arrows can also be seen in 4.532.
[21] Nagase, “Tomo no oto,” p. 68.

2) that the year of Wadō 1 in the poem's notes was the year in which the *Daijōsai* was conducted to mark the occasion of the enthronement of Genmei; and 3) that in the course of that Wadō 1, seeing no signs of military activity, nor any easily confirmable evidence in the historical records, I would posit that Mabuchi's theory of military action does not hold up, and Keichū's theory of the *Daijōsai* thus proves to be the most likely scenario.

If we then take Genmei's composition in question to be of the occasion of her own enthronement ceremony, then what is the poem trying to say? We are thus left to ask this question again. Further, there is the issue of the meaning of Princess Minabe's song, offered in response to Genmei's. The life of Mabuchi's reading has been extended such that it has become synonymous with a general understanding that "the meaning must relate to how, on this occasion, given the victory they were about to achieve, an unquestionable one at that, the warriors played their victory song without reserve, and thus [she] beseeches her sovereign for peace throughout the realm to be protected." Thus, we are left with the need to reassess the two verses.

First, in terms of the interpretation of the Genmei's poem, there are the *nari* なり and *rashi* らし auxiliary verbs (*jodōshi* 助動詞) that make up *oto su* ***nari*** 音すなり and *tatsu rashi mo* 立つらしも. On the expression of the two auxiliary verbs, we can see that Fujitani Mitsue's 富士谷御杖 *Man'yōshū tō* 万葉集燈 parses the difference between the "twang/on the leather armbands" as expressing as overheard speech, and that the "standing of the shields" as being non-overheard speech. However, this analysis alone will not suffice. Both *nari* and *rashi* are fundamentally auxiliary verbs which express a presumption. In the edited editions from the Edo period, while there are many places in which the overheard speech *nari* and the predicate *nari* are indistinguishable, there was no attention paid to the idea that the "twang/on the leather armbands" might be a presumptive declaration. The presumption of "standing the shields" might be based on the sound of the armband. However, since the "sound of the armband" could have only been presumptive, the poem is in fact expressing a presumption as based on a presumption.

This uncertainty, ultimately, shows the position of the poem's author. In other words, in that moment, Genmei Tennō was in a position in which she was unable to directly see and confirm whether or not there was in fact a "twang/on the armbands" or whether the "shields" were in fact being stood. What's more, her position would seem to have been in enough physical proximity to these events that it was possible to somehow (but barely) hear what seemed to have been the "twang/on the armbands"—so somewhere close to the ceremony but not within clear sight of it.

Matsue presumes this place to be the "eternal seat of the sovereign," in other words the throne of the Seiryōden 清涼殿. However, if this were to have been in the middle of the Seiryōden, and the new empress has already entered the Great Palace, should we not have

seen the empress appearing in the ritual chamber (*kairyūden* 廻立殿) in order to change for the ritual bathing? Still, as the central figure of the enthronement, from the view of Genmei at the center of a secret ceremony, it would not have been possible for her to see with her own eyes what made the sound on the armband of the warriors, or the *Mono no be* standing the shields. Relevant to this too may be the hunting poems of Prince Nakatsu 中皇命 (1.3), in which we find the lines that, "[The sovereign's catalpa bow's] golden tips must be resounding (*nakahazu no oto su nari* 奈加弭の音すなり」, and "Now he must be setting out on his morning hunt,"(*Asa'ak ni ima tatasu rashi* 朝璃に今立たすらし」(1.3), which are not unlike the contexts in which the position of the speaker has no direct sight of the events.

The presumptive tense as expressed by *nari* and *rashi* on the one hand can be said to show with certainty what the circumstances were, in which Genmei was located somewhere that she could not see the ceremony that was occurring outside, while she was in the inner sanctum of the ritual chamber. On the other hand, beyond this, while we would expect this to be a matter of her own coronation, this would amount to reading into this as though her feelings were those of another. Fundamentally, while *rashi* and *oto su nari* are expressions of blessing (*shukufuku hyōgen* 祝福表現)[22], the *Man'yōshū* contains many opportunities to see that they may well have functioned to express a sense of distance within the presumptive tense.

In the case of the Uchi wild's hunting poem, the two above cited phrases demonstrate the physical distance between the sovereign and the author of the poem, and the author's distance can thus work in itself to show due respect towards the sovereign.[23] However, in the case of the Genmei poem, the figure at the center of the ceremony and the author of the poem are the same, and thus we would expect no such distance. In this sense, that Genmei, the expected center of affairs, would be declaring her sense of alienation (or reading into this as such), which is seemingly directed towards to the enthronement ceremony itself.

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[22] The *rashi* らし, such as in "Spring has passed, summer seems to be (*rashi*) coming" (1.38), and "the waters of Kei seem (*rashi*) calm" (3.256), or the *nari* in "it must be (*nari*) the sound of the catalpa bows," (1.3) or the *kokuyu* of "[it] could be heard (*kikoyu* 聞こゆ) all the way inside the palace" (3.239), are all expressions of blessing (祝福表現) which express a deep sense of the will of the *kami*, connected to the tradition of travel poems (*kunimi uta* 国見歌), and exclaim fertility and arrival of auspicious days. Especially visible in poems in praise of the Osaka (Naniwa) Palace about fishery, such as「海未通女棚無小舟榜ぎ出らし　客のやどりに梶の音聞こゆ 」(6.930), or「朝なぎに梶の音聞こゆ　み食つ国野鳥の海子の船にしあるらし」(6.934) resemble the structure of Genmei's poem. Although *nari* does differ with respect to *kikoyu* in its presumptive function.

[23] As can be seen in the use of *ramu* らむ in all three of Hitomaru's "Three Poems Away from the Capital" (1.40 - 42), *ramu* was often used within the genre of travel poetry, and we can see how the speaker of the poems stays at a distance from things in their praising the imperial tours. On the other hand, it is the case that this "distance" calls on a sense of solitude, and thus functions contrary to the act of "praise". The rhetoric of ritual/the rites continually offers a great deal of potential for emotional reinterpretation. See Tosa, "Gengo jujutsu no rinkai."

As a result, where may Genmei's intentions have lain? If we are to read her as declaring she has overheard the smooth procession of the ceremonies, we could see Genmei as praising the ceremony for her own sake. However, if we are to read the ceremony, which is for her as being faintly audible to her as though she were someone else, it is also possible to see the enthronement as something which went against her true wishes, or in her alienation, a kind of sneering at all of the preparations made by the male court officials in the warriors and Lords.

In this way, Genmei's composition leaves us with room to interpret several possibilities in either direction. However, we find no use of language expressing anxiety or concern. So, if we were to consider why Genmei's poem has been read into as something expressing anxiety and concern, it would be a result of what was composed in the response of Princess Minabe—or rather, we could consider the response as an occasion to invite various speculations.

Let us then revisit the meaning of Princess Minabe's poem. This poem [contains a discrepancy among edition] in one of the verses (*shiku* 四句). in the Nishi Honganji 西本願寺 edition, the [third verse] reads 嗣而賜流, and the Kishū 紀州 and Hirose 広瀬 editions, it reads 副而賜流. While in the existing recensions the character 嗣 is used, in the latest recensions, such as the new collected editions and the Iwanami Bunko version, there is a trend towards using the character 副. Looking at the preference towards 副, expressing attachment to the body rather than the character 嗣, which expresses a sense of sequence or continuity in succession, it fits the content of the edited response poem better, and in this essay I have opted for 副. As such, the "I" (*ware* 吾) of Princess Minabe, thus is narrated with the devotional self-consciousness of one who is attached to Empress Genmei as "my Sovereign" and having been blessed by the Divine Sovereign (*sume kami* すめ神). Princess Minabe was the elder daughter of the same mother of Genmei. The interwoven senses of both intimacy with her younger sister and humility towards the empress shows in the choice of the term of being "attached" to. Contained within this single term is the resolution to protect Genmei as both older sister and as subject. The central purport of the poem lies in the assertion of Princess Minabe's own *raison d'etre*, that "I am ever at your side." It would deviate too far from the interpretation of the poem itself to read this as extending to the presence of Prince Nagaya, the son of Minabe.[24]

[24] The notion that Minabe's response is somehow hinting at the Prince Nagaya has been accepted by a great deal of existing scholarship, see Watanabe, *Genmei Tennō/Genshō Tennō*, and Sasayama, "Tachi haki no toneri hokō," however it would make Minabe a rather terrible sister to so insensitively declare to Genmei, whose child just passed away, that "My son is doing very well." The level of sensitivity of scholars who would consider there being such malicious intent in this poem is no different, however one wonders whether Prince Nagaya was in that reliable a position, given that in the four years leading up to Wadō 1 he was a "commoner". When he finally did receive a title, it was in the following year, Wadō 2, at the age of 31 when he was given station in the palace, and so there is reason to think that, from what we can tell about their relationship both before and after this, Genmei did not turn in Prince Nagaya in any matters,

What is being asserted here with certainty is the relationship between Genmei and Minabe, the destiny of their relationship as sisters.

As such, "Do not worry over things" needs not be seen as superficial encouragement. Originally, the phrases for "worrying over things," *mono omoi* 物思ひ and *mono o omou* 物を思ふ, were not used in the context of facing pressing issues or real problems. Of its possible senses, it is a term whose nuance was of indistinct or incoherent preoccupation. Within the collection, these phrases are used in large part in correlation.

> The road I treat/in the shadow of the orange trees/forks eight ways/and things confuse me (*mono o so omou* 物をそ念ふ)/unable to meet my girl. (2.125)[25]

> Acting as though absorbed in myself, without a care for others, I pretend as though all is well, but I am wracked with longing (*mono omou* 物念ふ). (4.613)

> If I am to keep longing so intensely, I'd rather be a rock or tree, never longing for anything (*mono omowazu shite* 物思はずして) (4.722)

For example, *mono (wo) omoi* above could be said to have the same meaning as the word for to "long for," *kou* 恋ふ in each instance. Since *kou* was a term to express the sensation of loneliness, *mono o omou* takes on the sense of loneliness when used in the *Man'yōshū*. Not encountering one's "younger sister" or "son" is lonesome, and thus one is made to "worry about things." The reading of Genmei's "worry about things" as signifying not a political anxiety, but a personal reflection of solitude, would then align more generally with the *Man'yōshū*.

We can see the similarity of the wording and structure of Minabe's poem are very similar to the following poem, as well:

> My love, do not worry about things/no matter what arises, whether fire or flood, I will be at your side (*ware nake naku ni* 吾莫けなくに). (4.506)

This is clearly a poem of longing. Abe no Iratsume 阿部女郎, guessing by this poem's placement [in the collection] is a poet from the second period of the *Man'yō*'s composition, making her a contemporary of Genmei and Minabe. While the two poems

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and only called on him on for the sake of Minabe. As well, as Nomura, "Genmei Tennō to Genshō Tennō" reads the final line of her response, *waga nake naku ni* as containing a sense of rivalry, confident that she will "forever take her place," though if this were the case, Abe no Iratsume would then also then be telling her lover that she would "forever be taking your place." When it comes to interpreting the *Man'yōshū*, we must make overall judgements from examples and patterns from the entire collection, rather than focusing in on the images of a single poem.

[25] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 94.

do not have an established relationship, the compositions are from around the same time and are similar in concept. As such, Minabe's composition must be understood as an emotional expression of her affection in verse. The poem says, I am with you, you need not "worry about things" (*mono omoi* 物思ひ), you are not alone. Minabe's poem also affects a similar mode of address.

What we must also consider here is that is has been a mere half-year since Genmei's own son, Monmu, passed away in the eleventh month of Wadō 1. The then forty-seven-year-old Genmei, was forced into inheriting in the responsibilities of sovereign, which would not have allowed her the space to mourn the death of her son. The death of her husband, Kusakabe, at twenty-eight, in the fourth month of Jitō 3, occurred twenty years prior. Thus, one can only imagine Genmei's sense of solitude. For Minabe as well, the death of her husband, Prince Takashi, ten years earlier in Jitō 10 must have left her living in an air of solitude, as well. The solitude of a younger sister is certainly not a solitary affair—but a shared experience in this case. Thus, for the older sister, Minabe, the phrasing of her sister's seeming distance from the "twang/on the brave men's armbands" and the "stand[ing] of the shields" perhaps felt as though she was writing a lamentation of her solitude, having had her heart broken. Much more so, then, for Minabe, since she would have overheard what "seems to have happened" (*nari* and *rashi*), this is certainly an address to her sister to not "worry about things". She seems to be saying, while everyone important to you may no longer be here, I am.

This composition by Genmei was written from her official station as sovereign. However, her older sister, deeply sensitive to the air of solitude surrounding her, offers her a "poem of solace", thick with personal sentiment. In other words, these two verses constitute a poetic exchange that is both personal and official. This can be considered then an intimate exchange precisely because it was between the solitary empress and her biological sister.

3. "Love" for the Dead

Genmei's poems collected in the *Man'yōshū* are few and far between. However, one occupies an ambiguous position,[26] and its authorship by Genmei is somewhat unclear. It reads:

> *In spring, the second month, the third year of Wadō* [710], *the capital was moved from the Fujiwara Palace to the Nara Palace. The following poem was written at this time, as the imperial carriage was stopped on the fields of Nagaya and the poet gazed back in the distance at our old home.*

[26] Kikuchi, "Heijō sento tojōka kō" and Shinzawa, "Man'yōshū kan ichi nana-jū-hachi ban uta wa Genmei gyosei de attaka."

If I depart, and leave behind
the village of Asuka,
  where the birds fly,
I shall no longer be able
  to see the place where you abide. (1.78)[27]

The poem's notes do not list the author. In the Nishi Honganji edition, however they use the honorific which marks a composition by a sovereign, *gosakka* 御作歌 however in the Genryaku and Hirose editions, it mere says that it was a *sakka* 作歌, without the honorific appellation. Since it was general practice to list compositions by sovereigns as a *gyosei* 御製, and this is listed as a *sakka* 作歌, it is difficult to think that this was a composition of Genmei's. However, given the use of the expression "the imperial carriage was stopped" (*mikoshi o tomete* 御輿を停めて), it would seem to make sense that this was the work of a sovereign. While this phrasing was not limited to use with sovereigns, it would be correct to identify it as a term of respect for the imperial family. As well, from the line's use of the second person pronoun *kimi ga atari* 君があたり, we can intuit that the author was likely a woman. As such, the author was either a female member of the imperial family or an empress.

In the context of the Heian period compositions such as the *Shin Kokinshū* 新古今集, this poem is clearly listed as a composition by Genmei. Within the history of reception of the poem, it has been even more decidedly recognized as Genmei's work, and it is certain that it came to be read in this way subsequently. While the phrasing of the poem's notes is ambiguous, in the expression of the poem, we could perhaps say that there are elements which point us towards reading this as the work of Genmei.

In the note appended to the heading of the poem, it relates that in "one writing," the poem is said to be the work of the "Retired Sovereign" (*daijō tennō* 太上天皇), and while there is a longstanding view that this abdicated sovereign is Genmei after her abdication from being empress, and it thus seems possible to attribute the poem to her on the basis of this, according to Itō Haku's 伊藤博 note in the *Man'yōshū shakuchū* 万葉集釈注, in Scroll 1 of the "Revised and Enlarged Edition" (*sōhobu* 増補部), when the term "retired sovereign" is used, it referred to the abdicated Jitō Tennō, and it would be difficult to consider only this instance as the outlier. In other words, as described in the *Shakuchū*, since this poem was originally a poem of lamentation for the old capital, composed by

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both critique the idea that this was an imperial composition. Further, there are no shortage of examples in the collection which list a poem composed by an emperor as a *miuta* 御歌. We must acknowledge that there is no unity in the way the headings/titles were composed, and so we cannot make a determination of its provenance based on this.

[27] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 75.

Jitō Tennō on the occasion of the Fujiwara's move of the capital (from the Kiyomigahara to the Fujiwara), there is thought to have been a movement to revive the poem on the occasion of the move of the capital to Nara (from the Fujiwara to the Nara Palace), as well. This would as well be a natural way to see the poem in light also of the differences in the lines of the poem itself.

Looking at the "Song of Miwa Mountain" (*Miwa-yama no uta* 三輪山の歌) (1.17), considered to be the starting point of poems of lamentation to the old capital, we can see from the citation of the *Ruijū karin* 類聚歌林, that the notes read that this is an "Imperial Composition on seeing Miwa Mountain emerge on the occasion of moving the capital to Ōmi 近江国," which has come to be understood as meaning that this was a composition of Tenji Tennō. If this were the case, then it is thus possible for a sovereign to compose a poem in lamentation of an old capital on the occasion of the capital being moved. Yet, regardless of the possibility of it having been written in his name only, if Tenji did in fact compose a poem of lamentation on the occasion of the capital's move to Ōmi, with this as precedent, it is possible to think that Jitō, at the time of the capital moving to the Fujiwara Palace, and Genmei, at the time of the capital moving to the Nara, could have composed a lamentation for the old capital which expressed their individual, private emotions. In both the method of expressing the distance from the old capital as affection, and the fact of no longer being able to see a place ever again that one longs to continue to see, we can see the influence of Song #78 from the "Song to Miwa Mountain".

Given that when the Fujiwaras moved the capital to Kyoto, Prince Shiki composed the poem "The Asuka winds" (1.151), we can consider the potential that Jitō Tennō as well composed a lamentation for the old capital.[28] The move of the capital, in the twelfth month of the eigth year of Jitō era, occurred eight years after the death of Tenmu, and five years after the death of Kusakabe, however it was in the prior year that Jitō had memorialized Tenmu in a poem that he composed in a dream (2.162). That the thoughts of affection for the deceased husband of Jitō had in no way subsided is clear here. If Jitō did take Song #78 as the original source for his composition, the "you" (*kimi ga atari* 君があたり) written here is the burial site as circumscribed by Tenmu, or Mayu-oka 真弓岡 where Kusakabe rests. The departure from the Asuka Kiyomihara Palace meant being separated from the resting place of those passed in the "land of Asuka."

That Jitō's composition may also speak for Genmei's feelings operates on the idea that, in addition to the resemblance between situations of outliving both her husband and son,

[28] The "Asuka Winds" poem's use of the "maiden's sleeve," and "uselessness" means it is not simply a poem of lamentation for the old capital, but rather there is a certain craft being deployed to give the poem a sense of intimacy. If Poem #78 is indeed by Jitō, we can imagine that the site of this poem is what was called for by the poem's emotional logic. The idea of introduction a sense of personal intimacy to a poem about the old capital originates in Prince Nukata's "Song of Mount Miwa," however it is possible to find traces of this in later poems about the capital.

Jitō's son—Kusakabe—was also Genmei's husband, and thus the objects of the poem's sorrow are one in the same. Jitō was Genmei's mother-in-law, an older sister of a different mother. Monmu was interred at the Mount Hinokuma no Ako 檜隈安古山 tomb, and Tenmu and Kusakabe had their resting places in the "land of Asuka." While the Fujiwara capital was close to Asuka, when it was moved to the Nara capital, they were then put at a great distance from Asuka. It would only be natural that Genmei would be overcome with sorrow at possibly needing to go to the "land of Asuka" where those who passed are at rest.

Even if we cannot say with certainty that the poem from the time of moving the capital to Nara was the work of Genmei, at the very least it speaks with certainty of Genmei's sentiments, and in aligning with the story eloquently told in the history of the reception of the edited poems, we cannot think it of absolute, essential importance whether or not Genmei was in fact the true author of the poem. Rather, I would like to turn our attention to a poem which reveals sentiments equivalent to those in song #78 among the prior poetic works of Genmei:

> A song composed by the Princess Ahe, when crossing over Se Mountain.
>
> Ah, here it is,
> the one I loved back in Yamato;
> the one they say lies by the road to Ki
> bearing his name,
> Se Mountain,
> "mountain of my husband." (1.35)[29]

This poem was of the occasion of an imperial tour of Ki in the ninth month of the fourth year of Jitō's reign, long before Genmei's ascension. At the time, the Princess Ahe was thirty years of age. It was a mere half-year earlier when her husband, Prince Kusakabe, died during his own tour. Precisely for this reason, Ahe asserts her being in a state of constantly thinking longingly of "Se Mountain." The famed Mt. Imose on the road to Kii juxtaposes the coupled pair of the Imo (female or wife mount) and the Se (male or husband mount), and thus the name become known as such, and widely used in poetry. However, the Princess Ahe ignores Mt. Imo, contrary to expectation given its fame, and writes of having longed only for Se Mountain. In other words, Mount Imo is the Princess Ahe herself, and Mount Se represents her husband, the Prince Kusakabe. Ahe's composition suggest that now, she has finally encountered the husband who she has

[29] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 56.

been longing to see. In the opposing fashion, having until then been "back in Yamato" professes her having been wracked with feelings of solitude since his passing.

Princess Ahe's "Song on Crossing Se Mountain", at least on first glance, seems to merely be a verse resembling those from the imperial tours, which sings of famous sights along the route. However, if we consider the preference her poetic expression shows in longing for only Se Mountain, with no mention of the Imo Mountain, in combination with the proximity to her husband's passing, the poem comes to express such a clear personal sense of affection and sorrow that we could not consider it to be the work of sightseeing. Thus, we find an Empress Genmei as poet, who in fact does compose on such topics.

The life of the Princess Ahe, later Genmei Tennō, was marked by repeated experiences of premature departures. Those who she loved were all too quickly taken from this world, one after another. And, left alone into her old age, she was then called upon to ascend the throne herself. We must consider Genmei Tennō, having taken on the sum of responsibilities of the sovereign under such cruel circumstances, and having been thrust into the reality of enormous political issues, to have been a woman of enormous strength. However, perhaps because of this, it is inevitable that she must have been consumed by both solitude and sorrow. The poems of the *Man'yōshū* and from the records of the "Preface" of the *Kojiki* and the *Shoku Nihongi*, document her appearance as one which was rather unfathomable. Song #78, regardless of its true authorship by Genmei, as well must be considered as one which reflects her solitude.

4. "I too will come and go"

Immediately following the previously cited song #78, there is recorded the truly mysterious composition, entitled "A Song" (*aru uta* 或歌) from the move of the capital to Nara. Perhaps this poem is directed to Genmei, conscious of her solitude. I will conclude here with an exploration into this anonymous *chōka* 長歌.

One book has the following poem, on the occasion of the move from the Fujiwara Palace to the Nara Palace

In awe of our Emperor's command,
we left our homes,
    and our soft living,
and set our ships afloat
down the Hatsuse River,
    down that hidden land.
Not one of its eighty bends

did we sail by
without looking back
ten thousand times.

We trod til dusk
came over our path,
straight as a spear of jade,
and reached the Saho River
by the capital at Nara,
beautiful in blue earth.
As we perceived the morning moon
crystalline above our sleeping clothes
we saw, where evening frost had fallen
white as brilliant mulberry cloth,
the river frozen
like a bed of stone.

Come, o Lord, into the house
that we have toiled,
back and forth,
in that chill night,
unresting,
to build you. Come
for a thousand generations
and I too shall go
back and forth
there, to serve you.

Envoy

I too shall go back and forth
to your house in Nara,
beautiful in blue earth,
for then thousand generations
Do not think I may forget. (1.80)[30]

There are many enigmatic parts in this poem, and it would be difficult to say that adequate interpretations have been reached even now. Because it was of a "house" built

[30] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, pp. 76 – 77.

to be gone to "back and forth," (*kayoitsutsu tsukureru ie* 通ひつつ作れる家) the poem's speaker could possibly be an official or courtier, however what might it mean then that someone of this position exclaims to their "Lord" (*Ookimi* おほきみ [多公]) that "I too shall go back and forth". Given the pretense visible in the speaker's tone, what might it mean that, in the first poem, even after the establishment of a new capital, that they do not live there, nor do they return to anywhere else, but rather that they "go back and forth" to Nara? In the first line of the poem's envoy, we find the line "do not think I may forget," (*wasuru to omou na* 忘ると念ふな), which shows an even more elevated position of the speaker, commented on by Kajikawa Nobuyuki as "friendly speech".[31]

Kajikawa, in comparing the author of this poem to Ōtomo no Tauchi 大伴手拍, considers the "Lord" in the poem to be the Prince Shiki. Since the two were close as "old family acquaintances", he says that they "spoke as friends". However, regardless of how far back their knowing each other as family went, would an imperial subject use such a familiar way of speaking when creating something like a "song"? To say, "do not think I may forget" is an expression of the utmost intimacy, one which was not bound to the romantic relationships between men and women.[32]

> There are many who come/and flip their sleeves in careless departure/as though beasts on the high mountains/but I will never forget you. (11.2493)
>
> I shall not dispatch letter to you, my lord, out into the thicket of human folly, but please do not think I have forgotten. (11.2586)

The other examples of this in the collection are all straightforward love poems. On the issue of the verb "to forget 忘る *wasuru*" in the *Man'yōshū*, there are contexts in which one pronounces that their romantic partner should never "forget" (忘れない *wasurenai*) their love, such as in *wasurete omoe ya* 忘れて思へや ("I would never forget"), *ware wa wasureji* われは忘れじ ("I will not forget"), *ware wa wasurezu* われは忘れず ("I have not forgotten"), or *ware wasureme ya* われ忘れめや ("How could I forget"), and so on. There are also instances of "wanting to forget" (忘れたい *wasuretai*) the love of one's youth, such as the poetic phrases of *wasure gusa* 忘れ草 ("parting reeds," a classical name for the tiger lilies) or *wasure gai*「忘れ貝」("parted shell"). Regardless of the context in which these issues were taken up, they were all nevertheless about the depth of one's romantic affection or love. In other words, "to forget" was a term of affection, and in particular

[31] Kajikawa, "Tameguchi nano wa naze?"

[32] Translator's note: While difficult to reflect in the short form of translated "song", this phrase uses no honorific speech in referring directly to the sovereign, which is very unusual in classical literary Japanese, implying the utmost intimacy.

when one asked another to "not forget," it was almost certainly a pronouncement towards the object of one's romantic affections.

Looking at this again from the perspective of romantic relationships between men and women, we can understand the necessity of using the term "to come and go" (*kayō* 通ふ) in this poem. The use of "to come and go" in the collection can be seen in use for the occasion of imperial tours, however the more common usage was of course to express when a man "visits" with a woman. There were examples of courtiers "coming and going" at the imperial villas, however, it would be impossible to "visit" the city in which one must have their permanent residence. However, if this is a man "visiting" the house of a woman, the phrase (comes through kayō pun)—the poem must have in some way been composed out of someone's affections. In the unexpected phrasing of *waga yado taru kinu no ue* 我が宿たる衣の上, as well, it makes perfect sense to see this as a an expression of familiarity. Indeed, for someone to speak "as equals" out of affection would not be strange at all. What, then, would the expressions of this verse look like reread from the perspective of affection?

Let's begin again from the top of the *chōka*. We find here the line, "In awe of our Emperor's command," given that this is a poem from the occasion of the capital's move to Nara, as described in the title, would of course make the "Emperor," "my Lord" Genmei Tennō. As well, for the "building of the house", given that this was on the "order of the emperor," it would not make much sense if this "home" were either the residence of a subject or that of a prince. "Homes" built on imperial edict would almost certainly be those of the sovereign.

While it would be rather strange to call the imperial palace a "home," in the *Man'yōshū*, this term refers not to a dwelling or building, but rather is a term of affection meaning something similar to "wife."[33] Viewed together, regardless of the size of one's dwelling or the relative rank of one's station, one could be called *ie* 家. The *ie* (house) of Tenji Tennō's "Constantly I would gaze/upon your house./Would that my house/were on Ōshima Peak/ in Yamato." (2.91)[34], is the residence of the imperial family, but having no relation to any actual structure, functions as a term implicating romantic relations. This being the case, we could consider there to be potential that the phrase *Tennō no ie* 天皇の家, as it stands, aligns the "sovereign" as the "woman," and the poems speaker as the "wife."

That a husband or lover would "build a house" is a bit odd, however if we look at the poem of Prince Nakatsu, which says that, "If you, my husband/lack the grass to build/

[33] On the difference in meaning between *ie* 家 and *yado* 宿 in the *Man'yōshū*, see Gotō, "Ie to yado" and Manabe, "Ie mo aranaku ni" for a detailed theory. Regardless, "Home" (*ie* 家) refers not simply to an edifice, but has a more personified sense.

[34] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 84.

your temporary shelter,/cut the grass/beneath the young pines"(1.11)[35], there were at least some similar precedents for temporary lodgings during travel. In Prince Nukata's 額田王 poem, "I remember/our temporary shelter/by Uji's palace ground,/when we cut the splendid grass/on the autumn fields/and sojourned under thatch," (1.7)[36] too, it is based in the same idea. Regardless of when the imperial tours occurred, it would be difficult to imagine that the men of the imperial family were actually building temporary shelter with their own hands, however this is considered to be the form in which men built a "home" for women in intention. This was thus not an actual labor of constructing an edifice, but the thought by which an intimate space could emerge from in the form of a "home".

On the other hand, the idea of a traditional *murohogai*「室ほがひ」("consecration of a residence"), was primarily the creation of central pillars and the thatching of roofs on homes, and thus a central motif of the poetic rhetoric about concrete structures. Looking at the language of consecrating new homes by wishing for their longevity (*murohogi* 室寿) in the era prior to the esoteric initiations (*kenshū sokui* 顕宗即位), or the incantations used in the Imperial Palace, individual portions of residences were sung of. Typical expressions such as *miya-bashira futoshiku* 宮柱太敷く("May the palace pillars stand strong"), among others, were based in traditions of consecrating new homes as such, and thus in the two above poems by Prince Nakatsu and Nukata, the poeticization of the grass as roofing material is emphasized.

The next imperial compositions celebrate a "constructed house" as "eternal" (*yorozuyo* 万代), a point which can be seen in the expression of the edited song #79.

A Poem by the Retired Sovereign

May the house made using (*mochi tsukureru shitsu* 用ち造れる室) rough-cut lumber, decorated with pampas grass, flowing backwards in the wind, stand for all time. (8.636)

A Poem by the Sovereign

However long the house made using (*mochi tsukureru ie* 用ち造れる家) the mountain of Nara's rough-cut timber stands, it will remain unadorned. (8.637)

The above is a *murohogi* poem sings of the visitation by the then abdicated Genshō Tennō and Shōmu Tennō to the sakura on the Saho River at the residence of Prince Nagaya. As a matter of course it praises the building material and structure, and sings of the permanence of the a "house" that had been built. From the use of the term "house made…" (*tsukureru ie* 造れる家) in these two verses, we can imagine that this term was

[35] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 44.
[36] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 41.

a stock term of *nii murohogi* 新室寿 (new building consecrations) praise for the long life of newly built edifices. We can likely then understand the "house" built in song #79 as containing same type of term of praise.

In the *nii murohogi*, while the material is praised, in making a new house or in managing the construction of a new capital, the first thing needed is an enormous volume of timber. The central topic of the "songs of the laborers" is the process by which culled timber was transported along the flowing river from afar.

> A poem composed by conscripted laborers for [building] the Fujiwara Palace
>
> Our Great Lady, who is full of peace, a high shining child of the sun, at the same time as [she] deigned to think with [her] divine nature, to look over the land that [she] rules, from the top of Pudipara [Fujiwara] Field which is like rough cloth made from mulberry bark tree and to govern highly from [her] capital [there], both Heaven and Earth approached [to serve her]. Like jewel seaweed, [Heaven and Earth] make float down Udi river, where many clans of officials [live], the roughly cut cypress lumber, the split real trees, from Mt. Tanakami, which is like a sleeve, in Apumi province, where [gentle waves] run on the rocks. Intending to take that [lumber], the people making noises, too, forget about their homes, and being completely oblivious of themselves, are floating in the water like wild ducks. [When] unknown lands that [Empress] would bring closer, [come] along the Kose road to the Imperial Palace, which we are building, our country will become the land of eternal life. A miraculous tortoise carrying an [auspicious] writing [on its carapace] announced the new age. The roughly cut lumber of the real trees that [they all – Heaven, Earth, and people] bring over to Idumi river, [they] make [it] go up [the river] making it into [at least] fifty rafts, but short of a [sic] hundred. When [one] sees how [they all compete] it appears that [Empress] has the divine nature. (1.50)[37]

On first glance, the "Song of the laborers at the Fujiwara Palace" and the "Song of moving the capital to Nara" have several points of similarity, and the latter seems to have been influenced by the former. Both poems hinge on the pathway to the new capital as a river. In the laborers' poem, we can see poetic images of "scraps of cut cyprus" culled from Ōmi flowing down the Uji River, and then the Kizu River. That said, in song #79, the "I" goes from the Hatsuse River to the Saho River by boat, and does not mention hauling any lumber in the poem. While the laborers' poem that explain the provenance of a building's materials is expected of the tradition of *murohogi*, this is similar but distinct in #79.

[37] Vovin, *Man'yōshū*, pp. 129-130.

The possible similarity between where the laborer dedicate themselves to a laborer who "forget[s] about [their] home" (*ie wasure* 家忘れ) and where the "I" of song #79 "leaves [their] worn in homes" (*nikibi nishi ie o oki* 柔びにし家を択き) is of course distinct in the way they are expressed. "*ie wasure*" is a phrase which emphasizes a kind of devotional attitude, whereas *ie o oki* has a meaning which emphasizes passage to the Nara capital. The "Gate of Light I made" and the "constructed house" are as well similar, however the authoritative "Imperial Palace" (*hi no Mikado* 日の御門) and the intimate space of the "house" show opposing differences in meaning.

In this way, in the laborer's poem and poem #79 we can recognize some similarity in concept and rhetoric, however there are of course still some points where they diverge. The "I" of song #79 does not seem like a laborer by any means. The making of a home and its visitation implies a something of romantic relations—and precisely because of this there is the possibility of saying something such as "do not think I may forget."

The readings which distinguish the "*Ōkimi*" 天皇 (sovereign) in the head of the *chōka* and the "*Ōkimi*" 多公 ("my lord") of end of the chōka have largely been the focus until now, in which it has come to be said, without any basis, that the latter *ōkimi* 多公 is not the sovereign but rather the prince.[38] However, since they are both read "*ōkimi*" and both used in the same context, to suggest that they each refer to a separate person based only on the difference in how they are written is, I would say, an entirely irrational interpretation, which appears a bit too convenient.

If this were the original construction of the residence of a prince, and it were the case that the duties of the officials and laborers were over with its completion, then there would be no reason for anyone to continue passing through there after it was finished. To insist that, despite this, some laborers finishing the work were "all the time continuing to pass through" under the watch of the Prince would be rather strange. Or else, some might hold that the "I" is not a laborer, but a courtier under the prince, however if this were the case, then the courtier would then have made a "home" for the Prince. Perhaps there may exist some precedent for a courtier to have passed into town from afar to build a home for their Lord—however I am unaware of any such examples.

As I have already shown, the "house" for the "*Ōkimi*" was made at the order of the "*Tennō*." As well, this "*Tennō*" is Genmei, and if we also take the *ōkimi* 多公 for whom the "I" is about to come for to be a woman, would it not make sense then to see them as one and the same. There would be no issue in seeing the use of 天皇 and 多公 as a case of variant kanji, and the use of *ōkimi* in the poem could be seen as referring to the very same Genmei Tennō who led the move of the capital to Nara. As such, the "house that

[38] See Omodaka, *Man'yōshū Chūshaku*; Itō, *Man'yōshū Shakuchū*; Kajikawa, "Tameguchi nano wa naze?" and Hashimoto, "Kan ichi nana-jū-kū ban uta wa Kasa no Kanamura no saku ka."

was made" would of course become the imperial palace. We could as well understand the rather strange turn of phrase *Nara no ie* 寧楽の家 ("the house of Nara") if seen to be an intentional moniker for the Nara Palace.

So, who was this "man" who was passing through under the watch of the now aging Genmei, having outlived her husband for quite some time by then? Who could have possibly been this great "man" who, while showing all due respect, we find in a context in which he can use vernacular speech to refer to the sovereign as an equal? Among actual people, the imperial family included, there was no one in existence who would match the description. It then being the case that this "man" was not an actual person, what kind of being was this? What's more, this man, seeming to have been intending to continuously "pass into" the capital from the "outside," where is this place?

Noda Hiroko 野田浩子 has suggested that the "I" of "I will pass through" could "perhaps be a *kami*."[39] While the view the "I" is a *kami* seems accurate to me, Noda claims the subject of the poem is the *ietoji* 家刀自, and makes a complicated interpretation of the *kami* as appearing in a dream to the poem's "I" as a woman in the form of the poem's speaker—which is difficult to fathom. In Noda's reading, the "I" of "my flowing river" (*waga yuku kawa* わが行く河) and "my abode" (*waga yado taru* わが宿たる) is the *ietoji*, and the "I" of "I too will come and go" seems to be the *kami*, however I do not quite understand why the subject would need to have changed. It was a general understanding of that period that the subject of "coming and going" (*kayō* 通ふ) was a man, and therefore we would expect that if this "I" were merely a single male figure, the text would make sense in this context from start to finish. This would mean then that this man is the kami in question.

Would it not be possible then that within the poem itself is established a basis to think that this non-human or divine "man," is paying visits to the sovereign ? This would mean then that a *kami* creating a home for the sovereign. It may sound strange, but it is not without precedent. If we look at the *Kogo Shūi* 古語拾遺, there is a record of Ame no Tomi no Mikoto 天富命, leading the descendents of Taoki Hōi 手置帆負 and Hikosashiri 彦狭知, and constructing the Kashiwara Palace 橿原宮 for Jinmu Tennō 神武天皇. This is a repeat succession, as transmitted down from the Inbe 忌部 clan themselves, for which it was recorded that under the direction of Futodama no Kami 太玉神, Taoki Hōi and Hikosashri constructed the *Zuiden* 瑞殿 (lit. "Auspicious Palace") for Amaterasu. Within the capital, there was held a ceremony wishing peace on the new palace (*Ōto no hogai* 大殿祭) for new construction or the moving of palace buildings, and the *Kogo Shūi* argues that it was the responsibility of the Inbe clan leader to preside over the ceremonies. If we look at the *Engishiki* for the incantations 祝詞 for the new palace ceremonies, it was

[39] Noda, "Akatsuki no yume, Ietoji no murohogi," p. 64.

Yafune Kukunochi no Mikoto 屋船久久遅命 and Yafune Toyoukebime no Mikoto 屋船豊宇気姫命 who protected the sovereign's "Auspicious Palace" (*mizu no miaraka* 瑞の御殿), and we can see *kami* here related to housing and building material from the names. As well, though it was not the Imperial Palace, if we look at the examples of recorded Taihō district names of Tatenui region 楯縫 or the town of Kizuki 杵築 in the Izumo region 出雲 from the *Izumo no kuni Fudoki* 出雲国風土記, we find tales in which various gods serve in the building of the Kizuki Shrine 杵築大社, also known as the Palace of Ōnamuchi. Thus, the idea that *kami* built and protected homes was not entirely out of place in this context.

On the occasion of the capital's move to Nara in the eleventh month of the first year of Wadō there was held a ceremony to pray to the *kami* of the land on which new construction is to occur (*Jichinsai* 地鎮祭). This ceremony was also held when the Fujiwara capital move occurred, and while the exact names of the divinities involved were not recorded, it was certainly a palace rite conducted for the principle land *kami* (*Jinushi no kami* 地主神) of Yamato. Both the protection and aid of the kami were necessary in the construction of the imperial palace. If we consider the "creation of a home for the sovereign" to refer to the overall construction of the Nara Palace, in other words the new capital, it is perhaps accurate to understand this to mean something closer to protection by the principal *kami* of that place, rather than about the actual act of constructing the edifice itself.

If the "I" is in fact a *kami*, what kind of *kami* are they? The biggest clue lies in the place name—the "river of Hatsuse". If we consider why the Hatsuse River was chosen as the starting place, we can see it as also designating the abode of that *kami*—the "*kami*" who, in order to protect the Sovereign and the new capital, set off by boat from Hatsuse, is endowed with the strength of power to defend the land of the Yamato kingdom, and is as well a male *kami* who could have been understood to have "visited" (*kayō* 通ふ) a woman. Such a *kami* who so perfectly fits these conditions could be thought as none other than the Ōmono nushi no kami 大物主神 of Miwa Mountain.

The Miwa Mountain poem of Prince Nukata was composed on the occasion of the capital's move, and so amidst this backdrop, we can guess that there was a divination rite at Miwa Mountain praying for a safe moving of the capital.[40] Because Ōmono nushi is a guardian deity, the principal land deity, Ōmono nushi of Yamato, there is a high probability that this ceremony was conducted on the occasion of the capital's move. At the very least, the recollection of the Miwa Mountain composition by Prince Nukada as a precedent for a poem composed on the occasion of a capital's move is a natural association, and it would seem there is an inevitability to Ōmono nushi's being at the

[40] See Tosa, "Nukata no ōkimi 'miwa yama no uta' no kinō."

center in this endeavor.

In the case of Prince Nukada's poem, the content is formed by announcing a separation from the *kami* of Miwa Mountain because of his leaving of the land of Yamato. In the case of the move of the capital to Nara, the move is taken place within the sphere of Yamato. Since compared to the Fujiwara capital move it was rather at a distance from the site of the Miwa Mountain divination ceremony, thus emerged the necessity to so strongly propitiate Ōmono nushi to ensure there was continuous protection of the palace after the move. Here, the aforementioned poem #78 becomes the model for the poem about Ōmono nushi "coming and going" (*kayō* 通ふ) to the new capital at the behest of the sovereign. As well, Ōmono nushi had come to have an image as an amorous *kami* who would "come and go" in the sense of "visiting"(*kayō* 通ふ) with women night after night. We can see the expressions and concepts which draw on the Miwa Mountain legends in various places in the *Man'yōshū*'s poems, such as Prince Inohe's 井戸王 response poem (*shōwa uta* 唱和歌) (1.19) or Princess Kagami 鏡王女 and Fujiwara no Kamatari's poetic exchange (2.93 – 94), among others.[41] Therefore, we can think of the protection of the Nara capital as containing the intimate nuance of "visiting" the "house" of the sovereign.

If we consider these images together, the people at the service of the palace's poem in which the line "Will the great fields of Uda be remembered" (2.191)[42] are presented as a connection of place to Prince Kusakabe, and Hitomaru composed a poem which associated "my lord, who passed away," (1.47), the spirit of Kusakabe, with the Aki hunting grounds, which are also[43] close to the Hatsuse River. Hatsuse was an ancient burial ground, and considering as well about the strong sense of otherworldliness in its association with rebirth and death in the *Man'yōshū*[44], in the image of Ōmono nushi taking a boat from the Hatsuse River, perhaps as well accords with the image of Kusakabe.

Still, there exists a possibility that this "*kami*" is the "husband" of Genmei. If we consider the possibility of Genmei, then long widowed, as "shrine maiden," it is not difficult to see the motif of the Miwa Mountain legend appearing here. The narrative[45] of a male deity traversing a long and difficult road is an element shared among many divine

[41] On the reception of the Mount Miwa legend in the *Man'yōshū*, there are several examples, see Satake, "Hebi muko iri no genryū"; on the Inoe Poem. See Murata, "Shin'en no hōzō" for the Princess Kagami poem, and see Tosa, "Fujiwara no maro zōka san shu no shukō," for a new interpretation.

[42] Translated in Levy, *Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 122.

[43] On the interpretation of the Uchi wild's poem, see Tosa, "Yoru no jūgasha."

[44] On the relationship between death, rebirth and the otherworldliness of Hatsuse, see Wada, *Hatsuse Oguni*, for a detailed treatment.

[45] See Noda "Akatsuki no yume, Ietoji no murohogi," who sees the expressions of travel in poem #79 as having the character of the "celebration of divine marriage" poems. However, Noda does not consider this to be a case of divine marriage itself, but rather since it is seen as poem true to life, in which the *ōtoji* blesses the marriage of her daughter, this reading differs on this point from that of this essay.

marriage *setsuwa* 説話 (folk tales) such as the Yachihoko no kami 八千矛神 in the *Shingo* 神語, among others. In Scroll 21 of the *Man'yōshū*, we see a poem narrating a divine marriage (13.3310 – 3313) which shares common lines with the *Shingo*, so it would seem that song #79 was conceived out of the accumulation of divine marriage tales that developed around these uses of Miwa and Hatsuse.

Still, the original phrasing of the third line of the end of the poem in question, across various editions, was「千代二手来座多公與吾毛通武」(in Man'yōgana), and so to follow this phrasing, it would read「来ませおほきみよ」("come forth, my lord"). In this case, it would be possible to understand this "come forth" as from the Fujiwara capital to the Nara capital. However, as Omodaka Hisataka 沢瀉久孝 says in the *Man'yōshū Chūshaku* 万葉集注釈, while we might expect the latter "*Ōkimi*" to reside in the "house" built in the poem, it would not follow to address the permanent occupant of that house with the phrase "come forth". Therefore, Mabuchi's *Kō* asserts that the *kanji* for "come" 来 is in fact an error, and should have been 尓, which we can reread then as "stay for a thousand years"—which has largely been the understanding of this passage up until today. While we must be careful about the basing our readings on simple transcription errors/misread kanji, to hazard a guess based on similar examples, such as「常磐に座せ *tokiwa ni imase* 貴き吾が君 *tōtoki waga kimi*」("May you remain here unchanged forever, my honorable Lord")(6.988) or「やつよにを *yatsuyo nio* いませ *imase* わがせこ *waga seko*」("May you stay, now and forever, in good spirits") (20.4448), it would make sense to read「千代までにいませ *chiyo madeni imase* おほきみよ *ōkimi yo*」as "May you remain here, my Lord," an expression of praise.

The *kami* said to the sovereign, "please remain here forever," along with wishing for her long life and lengthy reign, the *kami* itself then remark that it will "visit on the empress's palace forever," a promise of eternal protection.[46] Such a verse becomes a poem whose narrative import is almost parodic of myth which celebrates a capital move through the imitation of a divine marriage. While we could not imagine Genmei's solitude and boredom would have been cured through such a poem, if the empress were not a widow, she likely would not have been able to create a poem with such a conceit. To see this as a ritual poem would be incorrect, and it is at complete odds with the conception of divinizing the empress, yet because the center of the Nara palace is the "Empress," we can imagine the conception of such a pseudo-divine-marriage poem. The effort to introduce

[46] Emura's, *Kodai no miyako* to *kamigami* holds that propitiating the *kami* was a phenomenon from after the move of the capital to Heian, and during the Nara period, the *kami* would not be propitiated from within the capital for its protection. This assertion would offer a fitting explanation as to why *Ōmono no nushi*, who protects the capital, would have to "come and go" to the Nara capital. Further, that the *Ōmono no nushi*, who protects the line of the gods (*tenson* 天孫) is the *kunitsu kami* 国つ神, in other words, the principal land *kami* (*jinushi no kami* 地主神 or *ubusuna kami* 産土神, can thus be thought of as the fundamental reason why the *kami* would have to come and go from the "outside" of "heaven," i.e., the capital.

narrativity and creativity to court poetry had flowered on all fronts during the era of Shōmu[47], and it is possible to see this poem as serving as their precedent.

As I have hoped to show in this essay, this strange, anonymous poem of the capital's transition to Nara can be said to speak with authority of Genmei Tennō's solitude.

Conclusion

Despite a lengthy discussion, I have tried here to conduct an orderly examination of five instances of "song" of the Genmei era as they were recorded in the *Man'yōshū*. Taken together, the poetry related to Genmei in the *Man'yōshū* can be said to concern simultaneously Genmei the "Empress" and Genmei the solitary "woman" who lost both son and husband. In other words, the *Man'yōshū* casts some light on the personal emotional life of Genmei, rather than her official posture.

These were sentiments which did not ultimately appear in the austere pronouncement of Genmei's accession, yet Genmei is decidedly not verbose in revealing her own sentiments in the *Man'yōshū*, either. Rather, the Genmei of the *Man'yōshū* can be said to show her sentiments in the body of peculiar expressions, and chose ambiguous expressions, which left much room for interpretation. The work of this essays, too, is no more than one interpretation of this polysemy. Yet, for the empress, the imperial family and the court officials must have needed a place to divulge their delicate sentiments, in forms ambiguous, and this place we can say was poetry.

The history told in the *Man'yōshū* is not different in substance from that of the *Nihon Shoki* and the *Shoku Nihongi*. Rather, they must be said to supplement each other. And while the few words spoken in the history of the Genmei era too accord without contradiction to the record of the *Shokki*, when it comes to the appearance of Genmei which arises in these works, the *Man'yōshū* can be said to contain a much darker visage—one on which I hope this paper has shed some light.

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[47] As we enter the reign of Shōmu, Kasa no Kanamura 笠金村 created travel poetry in the conventions of a feminine voice, and Kuromochi no Chitose created poems of affectionate poetry in the genre of poems of the imperial tours. While they were not court poets, in the same period, Yama no Ue no Okura 山上憶良 also wrote in the voice of narrative poetry, thus is it possible to image that poem #79 could be of a similar style and lineage. Hashimoto, "Kan ichi nana-jū-kū ban uta wa Kasa no Kanamura no saku ka" theorizes that poem #79 is a work composed by Kanamura for Prince Shiki, which is interesting, however there are some issues with this, given that it was much too early for this to be a work by Kanamura (although Kanamura's oldest poem is from five years later), and the peculiarities of the author in the manner of notation. Yet, there is no doubt that, besides Kanamura, the author was a poet with particular ability. While the laborer poems and Mii poems, among others in Scroll 3 have been thought to be of the class of authors known as the "shadow court poets", I would like to wait for further reflection on this matter.

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Abbreviation

SNKZ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集. 88 vols. Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1994–2001.

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The Composition of the "Plum-blossom Poems" in *Man'yōshū*

Ōishi Yasuo

Keywords: *Man'yōshū* 万葉集, plum-blossom poems 梅花の歌, the thirteenth day of first lunar month of the second year of Tenpyō 天平二年正月十三日, Ōtomo clan 大伴氏, tree blossoms 木に咲く花.

Author's Statement

A word from the poetic anthology *Man'yōshū* (759 CE) was adopted to name a new Japanese era, which means that such a designation stems from grammar books on Japanese classics. To me, this is an unprecedented and epoch-making event. Yet, it has also raised two particular concerns in my mind.

First, we must be aware that the source element for the era name Reiwa comes from the set of poems called *baika* 梅花 ("plum-blossom"), which were the result of an attempt to refinement in the world of Japanese poetry. Concretely, this attempt consisted in including material from elegant poetry into folk songs, and thus drawing near these two genres. However, rather than believing that those poets created a new poetic genre by just copying elements from Chinese poems, we must assume that those poets merged the traditional tree-blossom songs that originated from ancient *kayō* (Japanese songs) with classical Chinese poems.

The second issue is that, in present-day Japan, there is a widely-held assumption that "from the Heian period the most well-loved flower was the cherry blossom, whereas up to the Nara period, it had been the plum blossom". However, it should be emphasized that the term *ume* ("plum") is a loan-word borrowed from Chinese, and that the plum tree is a non-native plant species in Japan. No reference to plums can be found on previous texts such as the *Fudoki* 風土記, let alone in the *Kojiki* 古事記 or the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀. Also, references to plums hardly occur in the *Man'yōshū* itself before the event of the second year of Tenpyō 天平 (730 CE). What is more, if we examine the identity of the authors of those poems, we will realize that all of them testify to a strong connection to the clan Ōtomo. As plum blossoms should be considered as a theme almost circumscribed to the Ōtomo poetic circle, it would be fallacious to extrapolate and assert that plum blossoms poems were a favorite genre to all people in the Nara period.

These are my two main concerns about the new era name, and through this paper I will attempt to shed light on both of them.

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* This article is a translation of Ōishi Yasuo 大石泰夫, "Ume no hana no uta no seiritsu" 梅の花の歌の成立. *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雑誌 120(10) (2019), pp. 1–13. Translated by Quirós Ignacio.

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Introduction

For the first time in Japanese history, a word stemming from the poetic anthology *Man'yōshū* (759 CE) has been adopted to designate a new era. Since the appearance of the name Reiwa 令和, much attention has been devoted to *Man'yōshū*, more concretely to the *baika* 梅花 ("plum-blossom") poems, source elements for the new era name. Included in the fifth book of the compilation (items 815~846), these poems form a set of 32 items, all of them composed and chanted by the government officials of the Dazaifu 大宰府 province at the occasion of a banquet held at the house of the governor, Ōtomo no Tabito 大伴旅人, on the thirteenth day of first lunar month of the second year of Tenpyō 天平 (February 4th , 730 CE).

Almost no mention to the appreciation of plum blossom can be found in the *Man'yōshū* poems preceding this event. As the poems featuring the subject of plum-blossom represent,[1] with a total of 120 items, the second largest theme in the *Man'yōshū* category of flower poems, the great significance of the Dazaifu banquet as breeding ground for those poems become clear.

The source passage for the era name Reiwa is found in the preface to this set of poems, whose similarities with classic Chinese poem books, such as the *Lán tíng jì* 蘭亭序 (353) by Wáng xī zhī 王義之, or the *Gui tian fu* 帰田賦 (138) by Zhang Heng 張衡, has been pointed out. The choice of plum blossom as main subject of the Dazaifu poetic gathering is supposed to derive from the influence of Yuefu -style Chinese poems[2] such as the *mei hua luo* ("The Mume Blossoms"). On the ground of such history of research, Tatsumi Masaaki 辰巳正明 holds that in order to really grasp the significance of this preface, we need to understand that the Dazaifu banquet was as important as those held in the Imperial Court in Nara, where poets and writers used to gather. In brief, it was meant to be an elegant event with a flavor of the capital. The Yuefu-type poem *méi huā luò* puts a lot of stress on homesickness, so it is possible to infer that this was also the underlying theme of the *baika* poems chanted at the poetic gathering of the second year of Tenpyō, as all the government officials were heading to their homeland Nara. According to Tatsumi, up to the Tenpyō era (729–749 CE) the world depicted in elegant poetry had also started to be used as material to folk songs, so the creation of this *baika* poems can be considered a new attempt to refinement, this by means of drawing near these two genres, folk songs, and poetry.

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[1] [Translator's note (hereafter, TN)] In this paper, the specific term *baika no uta* 梅花の歌 will be used to designate only the plum-blossom poems read at the house of Ōtomo no Tabito, the governor of Dazaifu, in 730. In contrast, when designating any poem about plum blossom, we will simply refer to it as "plum flower poem" (*ume no hana no uta* 梅の花の歌).

[2] Chinese poems composed in a folk song style.

Also, among all the "plum-blossom poems", it is possible to affirm that this set of poems is the first one for which the composition date is known. As Tatsumi appropriately points out, this is the result of a will from the artistic world of the time, which aimed to bring closer poetry and songs by means of transferring poetic material into songs.

However, inasmuch the universe of expressions about "flowers" featured in folk songs was in the roots of those "plum blossom poems", it is also necessary to look at the latter under the light of traditional expressions used in folk songs.

In this paper, I will attempt to shed light on the expressions featuring the subject of "flowers" in the world of folk songs up to the emergence of the *baika* poems. Then, by means of this approach, I will try to situate the formation of the more general "plum-blossom poems" in the history of expression featured in folk songs.

1. On the "Plum-blossom" Poems

Among the general public, the assumption that "from the Heian period the most well-loved flower was the cherry blossom, whereas up to the Nara period, it had been the plum blossom" has, for some reason, become widely accepted. Perhaps I shall say a brief word on this subject, even if I digress somewhat from the main issue of this paper.

In fact, the *Man'yōshū* features a total of 150 or 160 vegetal species, among which the plum blossom, with 120 poems, is only second to bush clover (*hagi* 萩) in number of instances. Judging only from the figures, it seems that the most well-loved flower for people of that era was the bush clover (140 songs) rather than the plum blossom. In addition to the thirty-two precited *baika* poems chanted at the banquet held at the house of the governor of Dazaifu, four more followed as "sequel poems", recorded in book 5 of *Man'yōshū* as poems 849–852. Further, in the tenth year of Tenpyō (740 CE), the poet Ōtomo no Fumimochi 大伴書持 presented six compositions known as the "six new poems inspired in the *baika* poetry event at Dazaifu,"[3] which are recorded in book 17 of *Man'yōshū* as poems 3901–3906. With these new compositions, the number of poems related to those chanted at the house of the governor Ōtomo no Tabito amounts to forty-two. In other words, one third of the *Man'yōshū* poems about plum blossoms are connected to the *baika* elements chanted at Tabito's house in the second year of Tenpyō. If we choose to disregard those, the number of poems to be thematically ascribed to plum blossoms is just 84 items in the whole book.

First, it should be emphasized that *ume* ("plum") is a loan-word borrowed from Chinese, and that the plum tree is a non-native plant species in Japan. No reference to plums can be found on previous texts such as the *Fudoki* 風土記, let alone in the *Kojiki*

[3] *Dasai no toki no baikuwa ni tsuiwa suru aratashiki uta rokushu* 太宰の時の梅歌に追和する新しき歌六首. *Man'yōshū*, SNKZ 9, p. 152.

古事記 or the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀. Further, as stated previously, references to plums hardly occur in the *Man'yōshū* itself before the event of the second year of Tenpyō. Here is a succinct list of the occurrences in the different books of *Man'yōshū*: book 1 (five instances), book 4 (three instances), book 5 (thirty-seven instances), book 6 (two instances), book 8 (twenty-one instances), book 10 (thirty-one instances), book 17 (six instances), book 18 (two instances), book 19 (eight instances), book 20 (four instances). It becomes clear that in the books containing the poems from the first and second period of *Man'yōshū*, namely books 1 and 2, no composition about plum blossoms can be found. The same goes for books 11 to 16, which contain a big number of songs written by ordinary people. Therefore, plums may be considered as an elegant figure of speech used by Court officials in their poetry. Apart from the *baika* poems included in book 5, numerous poems about plum blossoms are recorded in books 8 and 10.

Regarding the authorship, if we take aside the unknown ones, these are the poets who have composed more than two poems related to plum blossoms:

- Ōtomo no Yakamochi 大伴家持: eight poems (book 4, poems 786 and 788; book 8, poem 1649; book 18, poem 4134; book 19, poems 4174, 4238 and 4287)
- Ōtomo no Tabito 大伴旅人: seven poems (book 3, poem 453; book 5, poems 822 and 849 to 852; book 8, poem 1640)
- Ōtomo no Fumimochi 大伴書持: six poems (book 17, poems 3901 to 3906)
- Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume 大伴坂上郎女: three poems (book 8, poems 1445, 1651 and 1656)
- Ōtomo no Surugamaro 大伴駿河麻呂: three poems (book 3, poem 400; book 8, poems 1438 and 1660)
- Ōtomo no Murakami 大伴村上: two poems (book 8, poems 1436 and 1437)
- Ōtomo no Momoyo 大伴百代: two poems (book 3, poem 392; book 5, poem 823)
- Ki no Iratsume 紀女郎: three poems (book 8, poems 1452, 1648 and 1661)
- Fujiwara no Yatsuka 藤原八束: two poems (book 3, poems 398 and 399)

All those poets have the name Ōtomo, except for the last two, Ki no Iratsume and Fujiwara no Yatsuka. However, even these two were closely related to the Ōtomo clan of poets. As book 10, whose authorship is unknown, include 31 poems on plum blossoms, we cannot make a strong assertion, but it can nonetheless be said that plum blossom is a thematic figure typical of the Ōtomo clan.

Broadly speaking, from the Heian period, the cherry blossom emerged as favorite flower expression, but this does not mean that inside the *Man'yōshū* the cherry blossom theme appeared later than the plum's. If the cherry blossom actually replaced the plum as main flower subject with the advent of the Heian period, the reason for this replacement has to be explained. As plum is a subject unrelated to classical Japanese literature, probably the Ōtomo family's initiative of "composing poems with plums as a poetic

figure" was an attempt to incorporate to Japanese poetry the refined style they had learnt from the Chinese poetic world. Seen in this light, it appears clearly that all members of Ōtomo family, starting from Ōtomo no Tabito's closer ones, had a liking for such a lyrical approach.

2. The Baika Poems Chanted on the Thirteenth Day of the First Lunar Month of the Second Year of Tenpyō.

We can affirm that the *baika* poems chanted on that day opened up a new horizon not only in the frame of *Man'yōshū*, but also in the history of *waka* 和歌 poetry. Although it will become a long citation, I intend first to transcribe here all those *baika* poems along with their respective authors, then analyze their contents. I will start by the preface:[4]

> Thirty-two poems on plum blossoms with a preface.
>
> On the thirteenth day of first lunar month of the second year of Tenpyō, we gathered in the house of the old man, the Governor [of Dazaifu], who humbly provided the banquet meeting. At this time it was the beginning of spring, a wonderful month, the weather was fine, and the wind gentle. Plums were opening [their blossoms] like powdered [face of a beauty] before a mirror, and were fragrant like orchid-scented bags behind the belt [of a nobleman]. In addition, clouds were dispersed at the peaks by dawn, and the gauze[-like mist] hanging on pines was inclining [like] a shade. In the evening, the fog covered mountain peaks, and birds being engulfed in the gauze[-like mist] were lost in the forest. In the garden new butterflies were dancing and in the sky wild geese [who came] last [year] were returning [to their nesting place]. And therefore, with sky as a shade [we] sat on the ground with [our] knees close [to each other] and let the wine cup fly [from person to person], 'forgetting words inside the room.' [We] opened our collars to the smoke and mist outside. [We] relaxed without any worries, and 'were merrily content.' If [it] was not the garden of writing brushes, how could [we] express our feelings? [There were] collections of [Chinese] poems that described the falling plum [blossoms]. What could be the difference between the past and the present? [We] should then compose some short poems glorifying plum blossoms in the garden.
>
> (*Preface*)

[4] [TN] To render the contents of this preface and the subsequent poems into English, we will follow the translation provided by Alexander Vovin (see Vovin, *Man'yōshū Book 5*, pp. 55–87). However, for the transcription of the poets' names, the author opted to follow the *kana* readings used in the collection *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集 (SNKZ), in which possible titles such as Onmyōji 陰陽師 (probably, "Fortune-teller") or Shujin 主人 (most probably, "the Host") are left untranslated. See *Man'yōshū*, SNKZ 7, pp. 40–50.

When the first lunar month begins, and the spring has come, let [us], therefore, enjoy the pleasure to the end while picking plum blossoms.

Daini Ki Kyō 大貳紀卿
(*Poem 815*)

Plum blossoms! I wonder whether [you] would not stay [for me] in the garden of my house without falling and blooming like now.

Shōni Ono Daibu 少貳小野大夫
(*Poem 816*)

Did [it] not come to the point that [we] should make [our] wigs out of the green willows in the garden where the plum blossoms have bloomed?

Shōni Awata Daibu 少貳粟田大夫
(*Poem 817*)

When spring comes, will [I] spend the spring day looking alone at the plum blossoms that bloomed first in my house?

Chikuzen no Kami Yamanoue Daibu 筑前守山上大夫
(*Poem 818*)

The longing in this world is so intense! If it is so [I] would like to become a plum blossom, but…

Bungo no Kami Ōtomo Daibu 豊後守大伴大夫
(*Poem 819*)

Plum blossoms are now at their peak. [My] friends who think [in the same way], let us decorate [ourselves with them]. [They] are now at [their] peak.

Chikugo no Kami Fujii Daibu 筑後守葛井大夫
(*Poem 820*)

[I] do not mind falling [of] green willow and plum blossoms after [we] have drunk, breaking [them] off and decorating [ourselves with them].

Kasa no Sami 笠沙弥
(*Poem 821*)

Plum blossoms are falling in my garden. I wonder [whether it is] snow that flows down from the eternal and strong heaven.

Shujin 主人
(*Poem 822*)

Where [will] the falling [of] the plum blossoms [take place]? As if [it] is so, the snow continues to fall on this Castle mountain.

Daigen Banshi no Momoyo 大監伴氏百代
(*Poem 823*)

Because the bush warbler regrets that the plum blossoms will fall, [he] sings in the bamboo grove of my garden!

Shōgen Ashi no Okishima 少監阿氏奥島
(*Poem 824*)

[I] wish [we] will enjoy ourselves the whole day making the wigs out of the green willow [branches] in the garden where plum blossoms are blooming.

Shōgen Toshi no Momomura 少監土氏百村

(*Poem 825*)

How would [I] decide [which one is better]: plum blossoms at my home, [or] dropping spring willows?

Daiten Shishi no Ōhara 大典史氏大原

(*Poem 826*)

When the spring comes, [they] say that the bush warbler, that was hiding in the upper branches of trees, will go to sing in the lower branches of the plum [trees].

Shōten Sanshi no Wakamaro 少典山氏若麻呂

(*Poem 827*)

Although every person enjoys himself breaking [plum blossoms] and decorating [his hair with them], the plum blossoms are more and more lovely!

Daihanji Tanshi no Maro 大判事丹氏麻呂

(*Poem 828*)

If the plum blossoms have bloomed and fallen, has [it] not become so that *sakura* blossoms should bloom after?

Kusushi Chōshi no Fukushi 藥師張氏福子

(*Poem 829*)

Even though years will come and pass for ten thousand generations, plum blossoms would continue to bloom without interruption.

Chikuzen no Suke Sashi no Kobito 筑前介佐氏子首

(*Poem 830*)

Plum blossoms that have indeed bloomed when the spring came, thinking about you, I cannot sleep at night.

Iki no Kami Hanshi no Yasumaro 壹岐守板氏安麻呂

(*Poem 831*)

All people who broke off plum blossoms and decorated [with them their hair] must be merry today.

Kamizukasa Kōshi no Inashiki 神司荒氏稲布

(*Poem 832*)

Every year, when the spring comes, let [us] decorate [our hair] with plum [blossoms] and drink merrily.

Dairyōshi Yashi no Sukunamaro 大令史野氏宿奈麻呂

(*Poem 833*)

Now it is the peak [of] plum blossoms. It looks like the spring [with] voices of a hundred birds, that [I] missed, [finally] has come.

Shōryōshi Denshi no Komahito 少令史田氏肥人
(*Poem 834*)

Plum blossoms that [I] thought I would see when the spring comes – we saw each other at today's celebration!

Kusushi Kōshi no Yoshimichi 藥師高氏義通
(*Poem 835*)

Although [I] enjoy myself, breaking off plum blossoms and decorated [my hair with them], it turned out that the day when [I] cannot get enough [of them] is today.

Onmyōji Isoshi no Norimaro 陰陽師磯氏法麻呂
(*Poem 836*)

Plum blossoms are blooming in the garden of my house with a desire to attract a bush warbler who sings in the spring fields!

Sanshi Shiji no Ōmichi 算師志氏大道
(*Poem 837*)

At the side of a hill where plum blossoms are falling in confusion, a bush warbler sings! The spring is finally here…

Ōsumi no Sakan Kashi no Hachimaro 大隅目榎氏鉢麻呂
(*Poem 838*)

In spring fields mist rises over, and plum blossoms fall to such an extent that people will perceive them as falling snow.

Chikuzen no Sakan Denshi no Makami 筑前目田氏真上
(*Poem 839*)

Who made float plum blossoms that I broke off for [my] wig [that is like a wig made of] spring willow on the top of my *sake* cup?

Iki no Sakan Denshi no Ochikata 壱岐目村氏彼方
(*Poem 840*)

At the same time as [I] hear a bush warbler's singing, [I] see that the plum blossoms in the garden of my house are falling after [they] bloomed.

Tsushima no Sakan Kōshi no Oyu 対馬目高氏老
(*Poem 841*)

Playing at lower branches of the plum tree in my garden, a bush warbler sings because [he] regrets that plum blossoms will fall!

Satsuma no Sakan Kōshi no Ama 薩摩目高氏海人
(*Poem 842*)

When [I] see that all people enjoy themselves breaking off plum blossoms and decorating [with them their hair], [I] think of the capital.

Hanishiuji no Mimichi 土師氏御道
(*Poem 843*)

Oh, plum blossoms falling down in extreme confusion to the extent that [I] see [them] as snow falling on the house of my beloved!

Onouji no Kunikata 小野氏国堅
(*Poem 844*)

Plum blossoms [for which] the bush warbler could hardly wait, please do not fall for the sake of the girl that [I] love.

Chikuzen no Shō Monshi no Isotari 筑前掾門氏石足
(*Poem 845*)

Although [I] was wearing [them in my hair] throughout the long spring day, when the mist rises, [I] yearn for the plum blossoms more and more!

Ono no Uji no Tamori 小野氏淡理
(*Poem 846*)

Two poems about the longing for the capital, not included above.

I am awfully past my prime would [I] be rejuvenated again even if [I] take the heavenly medicine?! [Certainly not!]
(*Poem 847*)

Rather than taking the heavenly medicine, my ignoble body would have been rejuvenated again if [I] saw the capital.
(*Poem 848*)

Four poems on plum [blossoms] added afterwards.

I am awfully past my prime would [I] be rejuvenated again even if [I] take the heavenly medicine?! [Certainly not!]
(*Poem 849*)

Now is the peak [of] plum blossoms that are blooming having robbed snow's color. I want people to look [at them].
(*Poem 850*)

Plum blossoms that are at full bloom at my home will fall soon. I want people to look at [them].
(*Poem 851*)

Plum blossoms told [me] in [my] dream: "We think that [we] are elegant blossoms. Please let [us] float in the rice wine [cup]".

Another version says [instead of "We think that [we] are elegant blossoms"]: "do not let us fall in vain".
(*Poem 852*)

First, let us turn to the preface, which ends with the passage: "[There were] collections of [Chinese] poems that described the falling plum [blossoms]. What could be the difference between the past and the present? [We] should then compose some short poems glorifying plum blossoms in the garden." Here we see that the guests of the banquet intended to compose some poems by imitating Chinese poetry on plum

blossoms, and then read them to glorify the blossoms in the garden of Ōtomo no Tabito. As I stated at the beginning of this work, it is possible to accept that this preface is influenced by the Yuefu 楽府-style Chinese poems such as the *mei hua luo* 梅花落, even though there is not any direct reference in the preface to the contents of that classic.

In order to facilitate the analysis, I am going to list up some particular expressions appearing in the precited poems.

(1) Garden plum [blossoms] (*en no ume* 園の梅): It is natural that the expression "glorify the plum blossoms in the garden" appears in the precited poems, but other possibilities exist apart from the word "garden". This last word is included in seven poems, the word "dwelling" (*yado*) in four of them, and the word "house" (*ie* 家) in one. Although I will deal with other texts later in detail, I am already giving an overview here about the subject of "tree blossoms" in the *kayō*-type poems in the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and in other poems of *Man'yōshū*. In those texts, the tree blossoms are almost always contemplated from afar, as those in the mountains. In this sense, the contemplation of tree blossoms at close range, even within hand reach, as when those trees are in a garden, in a dwelling or in a house is a peculiarity of the *baika* poems that needs to be mentioned.

(2) Willow tree (*yanagi* 柳), nightingale (*uguisu* 鶯), and snow (*yuki* 雪): In his analysis of the scenery arrangement described in the corpus of *baika* poems, Tatsumi Masaaki holds that "plum blossoms, willow trees, snow, nightingales and others are important scenery elements in poetry. Since many of these poems include a combination of those elements, it is obvious that the persons present at the [Ōtomo no Tabito's] banquet were familiar with Chinese poetry and composed their "plum blossom poems" under the influence of such knowledge."[5]

Concerning the willow tree, it appears in thirty-six poems within the *Man'yōshū*, twelve of which mention it combined to plum blossoms. Five of those twelve poems belong to the *baika* corpus that we are dealing with in this paper. An interesting fact is that willow trees are not mentioned at all within the first four books of the *Man'yōshū*. In other words, this tree was not taken as a poetic subject during the *Man'yōshū*'s first period (up to approx. 672 CE), nor during the second (672-710 CE), a time span covered by the first two books of the compilation. In this respect, willow trees and plum trees share some similar features as a *Man'yōshū* poetic theme: both are absent from books 1, 2, 7, 12, 15, and 16 of the compilation. Except from five occurrences in book 14, the willow tree is a subject as scarce as the plum tree in the first 16 volumes, as it counts only one instance in book 9, one in book 11, and another one in book 13.

In a similar way, the nightingale is mentioned in fifty-one poems of the compilation, thirteen of which includes it in combination with plum blossoms. Seven of those thirteen

[5] Tatsumi, *Man'yō-shū to chūgoku bungaku*, p. 363.

poems belong to the *baika* corpus. Further, nightingales do not appear in the first four volumes of the *Man'yōshū*, neither in volumes 7, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16, which are the same in which plum trees are absent. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful that a nightingale sitting on a plum tree was a scene that could actually be seen in ancient Japan.

As for snow, it is a subject brought up in one hundred and fifty-two *Man'yōshū* poems, thirty of which mention it combined to plum blossoms. Six of the latter poems belong to the *baika* corpus. Snow is not cited at all within volumes 11 and 15 of the *Man'yōshū*, but as it appears in all the other volumes, no solid correlation can be pointed out between plum blossoms and snow as poetic subjects, contrarily to the "plum blossoms-willow tree" and "plum blossoms-nightingale" thematic combinations.

All things considered, it is likely that willow trees and nightingales were used as *Man'yōshū* poetic themes in the same period as plum blossoms. Even putting aside the combination with plum blossoms, the former two subjects can be classified individually as pertaining to the same *Man'yōshū* period.

On the other hand, snow appears numerous times in *Man'yōshū*, including poems from the first period. Let us examine some examples, starting by a poem wrote by Emperor Tenmu 天武天皇 in volume one:

> *A poem composed by the Emperor*.
>
> At the peak of Mt. Mimiga in the beautiful Yoshino it snows out of time, [and] it rains incessantly. [I] came [there steadily] along that mountain road, [deep in my] thoughts without missing [any single] road bend like that incessant rain, [or] like that snow [that falls] out of time.[6]
>
> (*Poem 25*)

> Our Lord who rules in peace, prince of the high-shining sun, above the prospering palace, snow comes and goes, dispatched by an immemorial heaven, and like the snow, may your rounds continue, indeed forever.
>
> Envoy:
> Nowhere to be seen, what fun of a morning, to dash through madly falling snow.[7]
>
> (*Poems 261 and 262*)

[6] Translation by Vovin, *Man'yōshū Book 1*, pp. 85–86. For the original in Japanese, see *Man'yōshū*, SNKZ 6, p. 40.
[7] Translation by Asuka Historical Museum, asukanet.gr.jp.

> Ever since heaven and earth were parted, it has towered lofty, noble, divine, Mount Fuji in Suruga! When we look up to the plains of heaven, the light of the sky-traversing sun is shaded, the gleam of the shining moon is not seen, white clouds dare not cross it, and for ever it snows. We shall tell of it from mouth to mouth, Oh the lofty mountain of Fuji!
>
> Envoy:
> When going forth I look far from the shore of Tago, how white and glittering is the lofty Peak of Fuji, crowned with snows![8]
>
> (*Poems 317 and 318*)

Snow, cold and the harshness of winter are the main thematic elements of the above poems. In contrast, in the *baika* poems discussed here, the depiction of snow corresponds, for example, to the remaining white patches typical of the early spring, which disappears soon after plum trees start to blossom. It can also be used as a metaphor based on the resemblance between scattered plum blossoms and falling snow, or simply between white flowers and snow. In those *baika* poems, snow does not have winter landscapes or cold weather as a background; it is just evoked as an aesthetic element. Although the beginning of this idea of "aesthetic snow" cannot be easily located in time, perhaps it would be appropriate to affirm that the composition of the *baika* poems in February 4th of the second year of Tenpyō, marked the achievement of a new and elegant style in Japanese poetry.

3. Genealogy of the Poems about Tree Blossoms

Flowers are widely featured in the *kayō* poems within the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, so it is surely worth examining how are they portrayed in those poems. However, insofar as our research object consists in plum blossoms, only *kayō* poems featuring tree blossoms will be examined here. Let us start by two poems from the *Kojiki*.

> Yamashiro river, lined with seedlings, I am sailing upriver! In your shores grows the bilberry; yes, the *sashibu*. Under the *sashibu* tree, growing above the river, below it [there is] a sacred true camelia growing, its flowers are shining, its leaves are broad, as the great lord![9]
>
> (*Kojiki, kayō poem 57*)

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[8] Translation by Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, *The Manyōshū*, pp. 187–88.

[9] [TN] The part from "Yamashiro" to "*sashibu*" follows the translator's personal rendition into English. From "under" until the end, it follows the translation of Vovin, *A Descriptive and Comparative Grammar of Western Old Japanese,* vol. 1, p. 256. For the original in Japanese, see *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, p. 293.

> (…) Growing broad-leafed sacred true camelia, its leaves are broad, its flowers are shining. Present the abundant rice wine to the honorable child of the high-shining sun.[10]
>
> (*Kojiki, kayō poem 101*)

In these two poems, the emperor is likened to camelia leaves and flowers in order to convey his beauty and vitality. The idea stems in the great growing force that pervades plants, which make them grow leaves and, in the end, flowers. Such force may have been perceived at the time as a magic power possessed by plants, so assigning a similar power to the emperor was a way to praise him.

Ide Itaru 井手至 holds that this perception of plants as objects with an inherent magical power is expressed in some *Man'yōshū* poems such as the following:[11]

> Well is the hill of Mimoro guarded; the staggerbush is in bloom at the foot, camellias are in flower at the top; how beautiful she is, a mountain that would soothe even a crying child![12]
>
> (*Poem 3222*)

> (…) Now that the spring has come, in the Imperial City of Kuni, in great Yamato, which my lord and prince was to rule for a myriad ages, the hills are burthened with blossoms, and the *ayu*[13] sport in the river-shallows. When thus the city prospers day by day (…)[14]
>
> (*Poem 475*)

> (…) The Yoshinu Palace, the high abode of our Sovereign (…). In spring the flowers bend the boughs; with autumn's coming the mist rises and floats over all. (…).[15]
>
> (*Poem 923*)

> (…) When [I] go out and look up at Futagami mountain, which is circled by Imizu river, when the spring flowers are at the top of their blooming [and] when autumn leaves take on their colors, is it very awesome because it is the body of the deity? Or is it because of its shape that [I] want to look at [it]? (…).[16]
>
> (*Poem 3985*)

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[10] Translation by Vovin, *Ibid*, p. 256. For the original in Japanese, see *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 352–353.
[11] Ide, *Yūbunroku* (*Man'yō-hen* 万葉篇), vol.1, p. 209.
[12] Translation by Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, *The Manyōshū*, p. 302.
[13] A fresh-water fish (*Plecoglossus altivelis*), several inches long, resembling the brook trout. See *Ibid*., p. 132.
[14] Translation by Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, *The Manyōshū*, p. 132.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 192.
[16] Translation by Vovin, *Man'yōshū*: Book 17, p. 141.

> (…) [In Naniwa] my Great Lord who has a nature of a deity and about whom it is extremely awesome even to speak about, at the beginning of spring, when [grass and trees] bend [gently in the wind], eight thousand varieties of flowers are beautifully blooming in full color, when [one] looks at mountains, [they] are attractive to look at, when [one] looks at rivers, [they] are bright to look at, and [when the Emperor] sees that it is the time when everything is flourishing, [it] brightens [his heart]. (…) Naniwa palace, where [he] is ruling (…).[17]
>
> (*Poem 4360*)

By means of flower metaphors, the above poems praise the country, the capital, or the Court. Those poems chant the flowers in full bloom, and although we cannot deny that the beauty of the blossoms is implicitly conveyed, it is true that no concrete reference or expression related to the beauty or delicacy of flower blossoms can be found in those poems. On this basis, Ide suggests for those poems the presence of a mindset similar to that of the *kayō* poems in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* in which flowers are mentioned. We have seen that in those *kayō* poems, flowers are described as epitomizing life vigor and splendidness, as entities possessing a magical force. This perception of flowers, according to Ide, would also be at the root of the expressions of praise appearing in the above *Man'yōshū* poems, which chant the splendor and glory of the country or the capital.[18] Although the composition periods are different for those poems, the fact is that all those expressions of praise fall into the global composition era of the *Man'yōshū*.

Furthermore, if we look to some later poems inspired in the *kayō* songs in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, we will see that they also feature the subject of "flower blossoms in the mountain." Within the *Man'yōshū*, the first flower that should be mentioned in connection to that subject is the cherry blossom. Even in the case of "flower blossoms on the trees", the cherry blossom will come next after the plum blossom in number of occurrences, forty-one in the whole compilation.

Among the concrete mountains appearing in the poems about cherry blossoms, we can cite Mt. Kagu 香具山, Mt. Tatsuta 龍田, Mt. Itoka 糸鹿の山, Mt. Takamado 高円山, Mt. Tayuraki 絶等寸の山, Mt. Aho 阿保山, or Mt. Saki 佐紀山. Aside from proper nouns, cherry blossoms also appears in connection with the common noun "mountain" (*yama* 山) or the expression "on the peak" (*mine no ue* 峰の上). The word *yamazakura* 山桜 ("wild cherry tree / blossoms") also appears in the compilation. Hence the image of cherry blossoms in the mountains was strong in the *Man'yōshū* period. Although there are also three poems where cherry blossoms are connected with the word dwelling (*yado* 宿), which can convey the notions of gardens, houses or doors, it is clear that the cherry

[17] Translation by Vovin, *Man'yōshū*: Book 20, p. 113.
[18] Ide, *Yūbunroku* (*Man'yō-hen* 万葉篇), vol.1, p. 209.

blossoms in *Man'yōshū* are mainly related to the idea of "mountain."

On the other hand, no example of "mountain plum blossoms" can be observed in the *Man'yōshū*. We cited poems 475 (book three), 3985 (book seventeen) and others as examples of the mountain-blossom relationship, but all of them chant the flowers that blossom in the mountain in spring time. One poem written by princess Nukata no Ōkimi 額田王 from the Ōmi Court 近江朝 in the frame of the "spring and fall poem contest", feature a "flower" blossoming in mountains in spring. This flower corresponds to the one that the deity of the mountains had put in his hair to celebrate spring, which appears in a poem written by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂. Certainly, the common expression to all these poems is simply "flowers" (*hana* 花), but it is reasonable to suppose that, as those flowers are all described as "spring mountain blossom", they must correspond to cherry blossoms.

As for what kind of poetic expressions are used in those poems about "wild cherry blossoms", some of them certainly include phrases about spring and the progress of the seasons, but the most important notions can be divided in two main categories: "blossoming" (15 songs out of 41) and "to be scattered" (15 songs out of 41). Let us examine the most representative examples of these two groups:

a) About the notion of "blossoming":

> Leg-drag mountain, if your cherry blossoms just bloomed like this, day after day, my love might let me be.[19]
>
> (*Poem 1425*)

> Over the hilly road along the river, running round the aisles and hills, but yesterday I crossed it, and only one night I slept there, but the cherry blossoms on the hills by the current of the falls, were swept down! Until the day that my Sovereign will see them, oh wind that comes from the mountains, do not blow! Thus crossing the hills at the shrine that bears the (God's) name, let me pray for a favorable wind![20]
>
> (*Poem 1751*)

b) About the notion of "to be scattered":

> The bloom of the cherry at our house: Is it buffeted by violent gusts of pine-(waiting / longing) wind, so petals fall to the ground?[21]
>
> (*Poem 1458*)

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[19] Translation by Robin D. Gill, *Cherry Blossom Epiphany: The Poetry and Philosophy of a Flowering Tree*, p. 540.
[20] Translation by Jan Lodewijk Pierson, *The Manyosu*, p. 108.
[21] Translation by Robin D. Gill, *Cherry Blossom Epiphany*, p. 596.

Oh, spring rain! Do not fall so heavily, for [we] have not seen the cherry blossom yet, and it will be regrettable that you make them fall.[22]

(*Poem 1870*)

c) About the combination of "blossoming" and "to be scattered":

Composed when the courtiers started on a journey down to Naniwa, in spring, in the third month.
On the peak of Ogura above the rapids, in the mountains of Tatsuta, soaring in white clouds, the cherry-trees are in full bloom, every branch bending with loaded blossoms. But the wind is ceaseless as the peak is lofty, and day after day falls the spring rain; the flowers have scattered from the upper sprays. May the blossoms on the lower branches neither fall nor lose their beauty, till you, who journey, grass for pillow, come home again![23]

Envoy:
Seven days will end our journey; Oh Tatsuta, God of the Wind, never scatter the blossoms before thy breath![24]

(*Poem 1747 and 1748*)

When I go crossing Mount Tatsuta (minding white clouds rising), in the twilight, the cherry blossoms above the falls, having bloomed, are scattered now. But those still in bud, will soon be in full bloom. Though during the blossoming of the flowers, here and there they are [still] unseen, please let them not yet be scattered! [For] however it may be, the Royal Progress of my Lord the Sovereign, will now soon take place.[25]

Envoy:
If I have free time, I shall cross over even when wading [through mountain streams]; even those cherry blossoms on the opposite mountains, how I should like to break them off though![26]

(*Poem 1749 and 1750*)

Cherry blossoms, as soon as they blossom, you see they'll fall, and all whom we see here, now gathering, will scatter.[27]

(*Poem 3129*)

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[22] [TN] Translator's personal rendition, based on the Japanese translation by *Man'yōshū*, SNKZ 8, p. 40.
[23] Translation by Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, *The Manyōshū*, p. 219.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 219.
[25] Translation by Jan Lodewijk Pierson, *The Manyosu*, p. 106.
[26] *Ibid*, p. 104.
[27] Translation by Robin D. Gill, *Cherry Blossom Epiphany*, p. 303.

If we examine the above in detail, we will realize that lyrical expression of flowers blossoming and falling constitutes the main subject of those poems. The poets, rather than just perceiving flowers as an irrelevant aesthetic background, were strongly aware of them as a lyrical object. In that respect, we can say that they managed to express in poetry the deep emotions they experimented when they contemplated cherry flowers in blossom or petals scattered on the ground. In contrast with the "wild mountain blossoms" described some paragraphs above, the cherry blossom poems seem to be rooted in the intense feelings prompted by the sight of blossoming and scattered petals.

In the plum blossom poems, as stated previously, no mention to mountain plum trees can be found in the *Man'yōshū*. Yet the poets' aesthetic perception, as well as the intense emotions triggered in them by the blossoming plum flowers (or their scattered petals), are expressed in a very similar way to the phrasings of the cherry blossom poems in the same compilation. If we reexamine the *baika* poems under this new light, we will be able to pinpoint seven poems mentioning the notion of "blossom", nine related to "scatter", and four featuring the combination of both. In other words, twenty poems out of thirty-eight include the notions of "blossom" and "scatter [petals]."

A thorough examination of classical Chinese poetry will yield that very few poems about cherry blossom can be tracked down until the Six Dynasties Period (222–589 CE). Similarly to Japanese poems on cherry trees, graphs that can express "blossom" or "scatter", such as *fā* 発, *kāi* 開, or *luò* 落, are also included in Chinese poems related to the same subject. However, as I stated in a previous work, not a single example of intense lyrical expression can be pinpointed in those Chinese poems; the cherry trees function just as a background concept meant to convey the beauty of spring.[28]

At the beginning of this paper, I described the point of view of Tatsumi Masaaki, who held that the *baika* poems chanted at the Dazaifu banquet in the second year of Tenpyō were supposed to derive from the influence of Yuefu -style Chinese poems such as those included in the *mei hua luo* . Since the Yuefu poems put a lot of stress on homesickness, Tatsumi inferred that the Dazaifu *baika* poems featured that notion too, as all the governors gathered there were far away from their respective regions. It was then natural for them to compose poems about the melancholic notion of "scattered petals", just as the Yuefu-type poems.

It is no less true that, as "flowers growing in a tree", *Man'yōshū* poets had also a strong perception of the falling and scattering of cherry blossoms, and chanted them in a similar way. Further, those poems certainly derived from traditional *kayō* songs about "mountain flowers" included in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. Nevertheless, *Man'yōshū* poems about cherry blossoms show a clear evolution both in lyrical expression and aesthetic

[28] Ōishi, "Minzoku no sakura to man'yō no sakura to."

viewpoint, and perhaps this perception might indirectly stem from Chinese poetry. When considering them solely as *Man'yōshū* poems, though, surely it is appropriate to think of them as a vehicle to convey the deep emotions triggered in the poets' minds by the lyrical notions of "blossoming" and "scattering", which were prior to the emergence of the plum-blossom poems.

4. Conclusion

The *Man'yōshū* compilation includes the following two poems:

> *A poem about cherry blossoms.*
> For the hairpins in maidens' hair, for the elegant knight's toupee, in every corner of this country over which you reign, my lord, cherry flowers are in full bloom. Oh, how resplendent is their beauty!
>
> Envoy:
> Last year's spring I met you and fell in love, and cherry flowers were blossoming, as if to welcome [that feeling]
>
> (*Poem 1429 and 1430*)
> *The two previous poems were chanted by Wakamiya no Ayumaro* 若宮年魚麻呂.[29]

The above songs chant the beauty of cherry flowers that have blossomed all throughout the country, which is ruled by the emperor. It is possible to think that chanting the blossoms' resplendence was a lyrical means for the poet to praise the country and thus to compose an ode to the emperor. Continuing with the perception of flowers typical to *kayō* songs from the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, these two poems describe blossoms as entities possessing a magical force, full of life vigor and splendidness. Likewise, this description of flowers is an expressive means for the poet to chant the glory of the country or the emperor. However, compared to the *kayō* songs, these *Man'yōshū* poems have gone a step further in their description of blossoms, for they do not perceive them just as entities possessing a magical force, but also as beautiful objects.

On the ground of the expressions, "last year's spring I met you" and "[the two previous poems] were chanted by Wakamiya no Ayumaro", Sakurai Mitsuru 桜井満 hypothesizes that these poems were chanted at a banquet held by the emperor, and that it was held every year.[30] The perspective of chanting at the banquet surely encouraged the poet to develop in his verses an aesthetic description of cherry blossoms.

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[29] [TN] Translator's personal rendition, based on the Japanese translation by *Man'yōshū*, SNKZ 7, p. 297.
[30] Sakurai, *Man'yō no hana: Hana to seikatsu bunka no genten*.

The poetic compilation *Kaifūsō* 懐風藻 (751 CE) originated in the poetry contest banquets held at the court. As shown by the poem that princess Nukata no Ōkimi from the Ōmi Court 近江朝 wrote for the "spring and fall poem contest", it seems that these banquets had been held from a very early point in time. By composing and competing, the Court poets, writers and authors of that time could learn new ways of lyrical expression, and took Japanese indigenous poetry (*waka*) to a new level.

As I stated above, it is quite likely that *Man'yōshū* poems on plum blossoms —the second flower category in number within the poetic compilation— started with the *baika* poems chanted at the gathering of February 4th of the second year of Tenpyō. As indicated in the short preface to those poems (see above), while emulating the style of the "falling plum blossoms" Chinese poems, the poets at the Dazaifu gathering also merged in their verses expressions from the tree-blossom-type waka (Japanese poems), a category of poems whose main representative element is the cherry blossom. In doing so, they pioneered Japanese poetry on plum blossoms."

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Abbreviation

SNKZ Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 新編日本古典文学全集. 88 vols. Shōgakukan, 1994–2001.

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Japan's Imperial Household Rites: Meaning, Significance, and Current Situation

Motegi Sadasumi

Keywords: emperor (*tennō* 天皇), imperial household rites (*kōshitsu saishi* 皇室祭祀), inner court (*naitei* 内廷), Imperial Household Law (*Kōshitsu Tenpan* 皇室典範), Imperial Household Finance Law (*Kōshitsu Keizai Hō* 皇室経済法)

Author's Statement

Throughout Japanese history, emperors performed imperial household rites for the peace of the country, bountiful harvests, and the welfare of the people. These were emperors' most important public duties. After World War II, Allied powers' occupation policies introduced regimes of the freedom of religion and the separation of politics and religion, only allowed the imperial household to engage in Shinto rites in a private capacity, and abolished the legal infrastructure surrounding these rites. However, emperors continued to perform them solemnly. They still do so today, and the present emperor's wholehearted prayers for the peace of the nation often garners its attention. In this context, this paper re-examines the meaning and significance of imperial household rites.

Introduction

Leading up to the Heisei Daijōsai 大嘗祭, there were hardline opposing views in Japan. Proponents of such positions held it would run afoul of the constitutional principle of the separation of politics and religion. This led to a variety of discussions. The Japanese government released its official understanding of the Daijōsai's meaning and significance on 21 December 1989. In short, it asserted that the Daijōsai is a traditional and important harvest ceremony of Japan that has been carried out upon imperial succession. The emperor prays to Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神 and the

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gods of heaven and earth (*tenjinchigi* 天神地祇) for the peace of the state and nation, as well as a rich harvest. Because it is clearly a religious ceremony, by its nature the national government cannot intrude on its content. Therefore, the statement concluded, while the Daijōsai cannot be carried out as an "act in matters of state" (*kokuji kōi* 国事行為), in light of the Constitution of Japan, which dictates that imperial succession shall be dynastic, it is only natural that the national government make it possible for these rites to be held. Its expenses shall be covered by state funds (the "court budget" or *kyūteihi* 宮廷費).[1]

However, people argued that holding the Daijōsai as an imperial succession ceremony was unconstitutional. They pointed to the 1 January 1946 "Beginning of the Year Imperial Rescript on National Revitalization,"[2] as well as the work of Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫, who held that the Daijōsai is a ceremony in which the emperor becomes divine.[3] Centered on the Diet and with mass media serving as a vehicle, a discourse holding that the Daijōsai violated the separation of politics and religion would grow quite heated.[4]

In the end, on 19 September 1990, the government released its understanding of the Daijōkyū No Gi 大嘗宮の儀, the Daijōsai's central ceremony. The statement, touching on the emperor's actions in the Daijōkyū 大嘗宮 (halls constructed for the Daijōsai) and the content of his *otsugebumi* 御告文 address, rejected Orikuchi Shinobu's view that the Daijōsai is a ceremony in which the emperor became divine.[5]

Even following the statement's release, the anti-Daijōsai activities of the National Christian Council in Japan, priests and followers of the Jōdo Shin 浄土真 (True Pure Land) sect of Buddhism, academics, labor unions, civic organizations, and others accelerated. After entering January, such groups held demonstrations throughout the country. The Japan Socialist Party and Japanese Communist Party voiced their opposition right up until the Daijōsai.

Here let us review the argument of the Japan Socialist Party Secretary-General Yamaguchi Tsuruo 山口鶴男, released on 21 November, immediately before the Daijōsai.

> The Daijōsai is said to be a religious ceremony in which the emperor becomes a "god" based on Shinto rituals. Even the government's Enthronement Ceremony Preparatory Committee (21 Dec. 1989) concluded upon examination that "considering its intent, form, and so on, one cannot deny that it has the nature

[1] Saitō, "Seifu Kenkai '"Sokui no rei" no kyokō ni tsuite,'" pp. 128–129.
[2] Nentō, Kokuun Shinkō No Shōsho 年頭、国運振興の詔書. Commonly referred to as the emperor's "Declaration of Humanity" (Ningen Sengen 人間宣言).
[3] Orikuchi laid out this theory in "The True Meaning of the Daijōsai" (Daijōsai No Hongi 大嘗祭の本義), which was released upon Emperor Showa's 1928 Sokui No Rei 即位の礼 ascension ceremony.
[4] Motegi, "Daijōsai o meguru kokkai ronsō."
[5] Saitō, "'Daijōsai no gi' no kenkai."

> of a religious ceremony, and in this sense as well, by its nature the national government cannot intrude on its content." The national government involving itself in this kind of religious ceremony goes against the present constitution's principles of sovereignty residing in the people and the separation of politics and religion.[6]

In this way, he made clear that he was entirely against it. The Japanese Communist Party's understanding was basically the same. Amidst this, even indiscriminate terrorist attacks were carried out by extremists seeking to use force to prevent the Daijōsai from happening. A delayed action bomb went off in an Imperial Household Agency employee dormitory parking lot on 29 April 1989. On a single day in January 1990, ammunition was fired towards the residence of Prince Hitachi and near the Kyoto Imperial Palace's Nashinoki Jinja 梨木神社. In March, three shrines in Tokyo completely burned down due to arson: Shirahige Jinja 白髭神社, Hikawa Jinja 氷川神社, and Shinmei Jinja 神明神社. In June, a room of the Gakushuin Girls' Junior & Senior High School was destroyed due to arson, as was Gokoku Jinja 護国神社 in Akita Prefecture in July. With Akita Prefecture being selected as the Yuki 悠紀 district that would supply rice for the Daijōsai, the Association of Shinto Shrines' prefectural sub-office (*jinjachō* 神社庁) had been taking the lead to establish "celebratory rice fields" (*hōshukuden* 奉祝田) and harvest pure new rice crops from throughout the prefecture.

The leaders of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League's National Committee (Kakumeiteki Kyōsanshugisha Dōmei Zenkoku Iinkai 革命的共産主義者同盟全国委員会; often referred to as the Chūkakuha 中核派), who had issued a statement in late July claiming responsibility for many of these attacks, announced at a gathering that in November the group would storm the Imperial Palace. On 31 July, shrines in Nara Prefecture completely burned down due to arson: Iwasononiimasu Takumushitama Jinja 石園坐多久虫玉神社, Musanimasu Jinja 牟佐坐神社, and Muro Yahata Jinja 室八幡神社. Upon entering August, Fukuoka's Montoguchi Tenmangū 門戸口天満宮 burned down completely, and fire was set to the home of the head of Oita Prefecture's Agricultural Policy Planning Department. Oita Prefecture had been chosen as the Suki 主基 district and was managing a field that would supply rice for the Daijōsai (*saiden* 斎田). In October, the storage shed of Kobe's Gokoku Jinja 護国神社 (Hyogo Prefecture) burned down completely, as did the main building of the Nogi second residence at Nogi Shrine 乃木神社 (Tochigi Prefecture).

In November, the terrorist attacks intensified. On the 12th, when the Sokui No Rei was to take place, fire was set to three shrines in Tokyo: Tabata Hachimangū 田端八幡宮,

[6] Yamaguchi, "Danwa (Daijōsai)," pp. 202–203.

Hiroo Inari Jinja 廣尾稲荷神社, and Tōnomine Naitō Jinja 多武峰内藤神社. They either completely or partially burned down. On the 13th, Ibaraki Prefecture's Takada Jinja 高田神社 completely burned down due to arson. On the 19th, a mortar was shot four times into the grounds of Atsuta Jingū 熱田神宮 in Aichi Prefecture. Fortunately, there was no damage to the main shrine building. On the 21st, Takekoma Jinja 竹駒神社 in Miyagi Prefecture completely burned down, as did Saitama Prefecture's Shinmei Jinja 神明神社 on the 22nd and Ibaraki Prefecture's Yasaka Jinja 八坂神社 on the 23rd. Also on the 23rd, in Yamanashi Prefecture, fire was set to Mishima Jinja 三島神社, but quickly discovered, preventing any damage. On the 30th, Shiga Prefecture's Ōtaki Jinja 大瀧神社 completely burned down. On 5 December, a mortar was fired three times into the Outer Shrine of Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮. Fortunately, there was no immediate damage.

Writing down all of these shrines and other sites of terrorist attacks, one again realizes just how abnormal and crazy these acts were. However, the Sokui No Rei took place on 12 November 1990, as did the Daijōsai from the evening of 22 November to the early morning of the next day. The Daijōsai, which originates in the divine edicts (*shinchoku* 神勅) of the Age of the Gods (*kamiyo* 神代), was carried out solemnly and the Heisei era began. Until stepping down thirty years later, the emperor sought to perform his duties as a symbol of the state and the people's unity, and did so with his entire body and spirit. Then, on 1 May of this year (2019), the now-reigning emperor carried out the ascension ceremony called Kenjitō Shōkei No Gi 剣璽等承継の儀, thereby becoming the new emperor. Preparations are underway for the Sokui No Rei and Daijōsai to be carried out in the fall. This time, there are basically no debates regarding the separation of politics and religion. What changed in the past thirty years? There were many natural disasters, and perhaps understanding of palace rites deepened as people saw the now-retired emperor engaging in prayers for those affected, something which he saw as important. While looking back on the Heisei Daijōsai, in this paper I will review the meaning and significance of the emperor's rites.

1. The Nature of Post-War Imperial Household Rites

Until the end of World War II, state affairs were carried out based on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (below, Meiji Constitution), and Imperial Household-related court matters based on the Imperial Household Law (Kōshitsu Tenpan 皇室典範). Revision of the Meiji Constitution required two-thirds of the Imperial Diet's vote. Diet deliberations were not required to revise the Imperial Household Law: the emperor himself could revise it after consulting with the Imperial Household Council (Kōshitsu Kaigi 皇室会議) and privy councilors (*sūmitsu komon* 枢密顧問). Therefore, there was a clear distinction between ministers of state, who dealt with state affairs, and ministers of the Imperial Household, who saw to court affairs. The latter were not members of the Cabinet.

There was also a clear distinction between state bureaucrats and Imperial Household bureaucrats. However, the emperor, of course, possessed ruling power, and therefore such distinctions were ultimately ambiguous in some ways. Under the Meiji Constitution, various laws and ordinances were enacted and state affairs carried out. Under the Imperial Household Law, various Imperial Household ordinances were established and Imperial Household court affairs carried out. The Imperial Household Law was also positioned as the "family rules of the Imperial Household." State and Imperial Household business was dealt with under the two major law systems of the Meiji Constitution and Imperial Household Law.

Some rites (at Ise Jingū and other shrines) were part of government administration. They were incorporated into the Home Ministry's legal structure. The basic parts of Imperial Household rites were carried out based on the Imperial Household Rites Ordinance (Kōshitsu Saishirei 皇室祭祀令; 18 September 1908), which was an associate ordinance of the Imperial Household Law. In the same way, enthronement-related ceremonies (Senso No Gi 践祚の儀, Sokui No Rei, Daijōsai) were carried out based on the prescriptions in the Ascension Ordinance (Tōkyoku Rei 登極令; 11 February 1909). Also, the Investiture Ceremony Ordinance (Ritcho Rei 立儲令), Imperial Coming of Age Ceremony Ordinance (Kōshitsu Seinenshiki Rei 皇室成年式令), and Imperial Regent Ordinance (Sesshō Rei 摂政令) contained prescriptions for extraordinary (non-regular) rites, and the Imperial Household Tombs Ordinance (Kōshitsu Ryōbo Rei 皇室陵墓令) contained prescriptions for imperial ancestral rites.

After the end of World War II, on 15 February 1945, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (generally referred to as the "GHQ" ["General Headquarters"] in Japanese) issued to the Japanese government the so-called "Shinto Directive,"[7] ordering the complete separation of the state and shrine Shinto. It ordered the separation of "all ceremonies, customs, myths, legends, and everything else related to Shinto" from the state. It was a measure that branded Shinto as a hotbed of ultra-nationalism and militarism. At the same name, under the principle of the freedom of religion, Shinto was allowed to continue to exist if Japanese people so desired. This thereby detached shrines across Japan, which had been under the Home Ministry, and Yasukuni Jinja 靖国神社, which had been under the Ministry of the Army, from state management, turning them into independent religious juridical persons (*shūkyō hōjin* 宗教法人), and also abolished the Institute of Divinities (Jingiin 神祇院), which was the Home Ministry-attached organ in charge of shrine administration.

[7] Full title: "Regarding the Abolition of Government Protection, Support, Supervision, and Proliferation of State Shinto or Shrine Shinto" (Kokka Shintō, Jinja Shintō Ni Taisuru Seifu No Hoshō, Shien, Hozen, Kantoku Narabi Ni Kōfu No Haishi Ni Kansuru Ken" 国家神道、神社神道ニ対スル政府ノ保証、支援、保全、監督並ニ弘布ノ廃止ニ関スル件).

Due to the considerable efforts of individuals who foresaw how severe occupation government administration would be, the Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honchō 神社本庁), a juridical person for overseeing shrines that are not religious juridical persons, was established on 3 February 1946, the day after existing ordinances related to shrines and Shinto were abolished. The traditions of shrine rites were thus just able to be passed down, and without any major disorder, the post-war journey of shrines began. Taking Ise Jingū as its main source of tradition, the Association of Shinto Shrines established priest licensing and training systems, as well as a system for the protection of shrines in which its "head of administration" (*tōri* 統理) approves matters; promoted Shinto education and edification; and distributed Ise Jingū talismans (called *Jingū taima* 神宮大麻). It worked to protect Shinto religious belief and practice from the Shinto Directive under the occupation.

What about Imperial Household rites? This is closely connected to the process by which the Constitution of Japan was created and came into force. Therefore, I want to go over these circumstances.[8] The Shidehara Cabinet, to which the GHQ suggested revising the Meiji Constitution in order to eliminate Japan's militarism and democratize the country, held that naturally revision should be carried out by the Japanese government. It launched a Minister of State Matsumoto Jōji 松本烝治–led Constitutional Issues Research Council (Kenpō Mondai Chōsa Iinkai 憲法問題調査委員会) and drew up a basic outline for constitutional revision. This "Matsumoto draft" was scooped by the newspaper *Mainichi shinbun* 毎日新聞 on 1 February 1946, and the GHQ found out about it. On 8 February, the Japanese government officially submitted a constitutional revision outline based on the Matsumoto draft to the GHQ. However, the GHQ had already examined the Matsumoto draft, which did not allow for basic changes in the emperor's position. The GHQ rejected this outline, and instead they delivered an English-language proposal to the Japanese government on 13 February. This draft had been drawn up by the GHQ's Government Section from the 4th to the 12th. It was based on the so-called "MacArthur's Three Principles."

The Japanese government worked on translating it and modifying expressions, and then completed the Japanese version on 2 March. This Japanese version was then submitted to the GHQ on 4 March. After the details were ironed out regarding all items, agreement was reached and the outline of a constitution revision proposal was completed on 6 March. This outline of a proposal was released to the public after having been explained to Emperor Shōwa in advance.

On 17 April, an actual proposal was created based on it and released to the public at the same time as the Privy Council (Sūmitsuin 枢密院) was asked for its opinion. After

[8] See Shūgiin Kenpō Shinsakai Jimukyoku, "'Nihon koku kenpō no seiritsu katei' ni kansuru shiryō."

being adopted by the Privy Council, following the steps established in Article 73 of the Meiji Constitution, the proposal was submitted with an imperial rescript to the ninetieth Imperial Diet's House of Representatives on 20 June, which, after deliberations and making limited revisions, approved it on 24 August. It was then sent to the House of Peers. The House of Peers also made limited revisions and then approved it on 6 October. On the following day, the House of Representatives agreed to these revisions.

After going through Privy Council deliberations, the constitutional revision proposal received the emperor's approval on 29 October, and was promulgated as the Constitution of Japan on 3 November. It went into effect on 3 May 1947.

MacArthur's three principles were as follows "I. Emperor is at the head of the state. His succession is dynastic. His duties and powers will be exercised in accordance with the Constitution and responsive to the basic will of the people as provided therein. II. War as a sovereign right of the nation is abolished. . . . III. The feudal system of Japan [hereditary peerage] will cease."[9] The first and most important principle forced a major change. It took away the emperor's sovereignty, which included his supreme command over the armed forces.

As a result, Article 1 of the Constitution of Japan became the following: "The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the People, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." Article 2, 3, and 4 became the following: (2) "The Imperial Throne shall be dynastic and succeeded to in accordance with the Imperial House[hold] Law passed by the Diet." (3) "The advice and approval of the Cabinet shall be required for all acts of the Emperor in matters of state, and the Cabinet shall be responsible therefor." (4) "The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government." Article 18 states, "All property of the Imperial Household shall belong to the State. All expenses of the Imperial Household shall be appropriated by the Diet in the budget."

As is clear here, the Imperial Household Law also became subject to the Diet's deliberations and was positioned as an associate law of the Constitution of Japan ("with the Imperial House[hold] Law passed by the Diet"). Also, due to all Imperial Household property becoming that of the state, a law regarding the Imperial Household's finances was seen as necessary. Thus, the drafting of a new Imperial Household law and imperial family finance law was carried out in parallel with constitutional revision deliberations. The Provisional Legislative Investigating Committee (Rinji Hōsei Chōsakai 臨時法制調査会; led by the prime minister) was established by the government, and its first general meeting was held on 11 July. There, Imperial Household-related laws were deliberated

[9] GHQ/SCAP, "Three Basic Points Stated by Supreme Commander to be 'Musts' in Constitutional Revision."

by its First Committee. Proposals were drawn up primarily under the leadership of Ministry of the Imperial Household Councilor Takao Ryō 高尾亮. The First Committee met multiple times to draft them and on 6 August approved a tentative proposal for an outline of an Imperial Household law's bill. After deliberations at the general meeting, on 26 October an outline for the bill was submitted to the prime minister. The Privy Council was asked for its opinions regarding the bill, and it was then submitted to the Diet. On 16 January 1947, it was enacted, and then went into effect on 3 May, along with the Constitution of Japan.[10]

The old Imperial Household Law was thus abolished. Therefore, the Imperial Household ordinances associated with it were also abolished on 2 May 1947 (by the "Kōshitsu Rei Oyobi Fuzoku Hōrei Haishi No Ken" 皇室令及附属法令廃止ノ件). This meant that all ordinances regarding imperial rites ceased to exist. However, rites that had been carried out in the Imperial Palace for many ages did not come to a halt. They would continue due to a 3 May 1947 official note ("Kōshitsu Rei Oyobi Fuzoku Hōrei Haishi Ni Tomonai Jimu Toriatsukai Ni Kansuru Tsūchō" 皇室令及び附属法令廃止に伴い事務取扱いに関する通牒; no. 45). It was sent out by head of the Archives Division (Bunshoka 文書課) of the Imperial Household Agency Grand Steward's Secretariat (Kunaifu Chōkan Kanbō 宮内府長官官房). This official note consisted of instructions divided into five sections. The third is relevant for our purposes, so I will include it in its entirety below.

> With regard to things for which prior prescriptions have been abolished and new prescriptions have not been created, carry out work in accordance with precedents (for example, the legally-established ceremonies of the Imperial Household, and ranks of the imperial family).[11]

Despite the ordinances that served as their basis having been abolished, rites continued to be carried out. This is because these imperial rites emerged in the Age of the Gods and were solemnly passed down by emperors throughout history or revived after being lost.

The Imperial Household Rites Ordinance (the foundational ordinance of regular rites), had been enacted on 18 September 1908. This was due to the existence of the rites that had been passed down since the Age of the Gods, as well as Imperial Household rites having taken shape, switching from a Buddhist to Shinto format after the establishment of the Three Palace Sanctuaries (Kyūchū Sanden 宮中三殿; the Kashiko-dokoro 賢所, Kōrei-den 皇霊殿, and Shinden 神殿) on the imperial grounds in Tokyo after entering the Meiji period. A strong rites tradition first existed, and related legal work had been done

[10] See Takao, *Dokyumento kōshitsu tenpan*.
[11] Fujimoto, *Yoku wakaru kōshitsu seido*, p. 114.

afterwards.

While the various rituals and ceremonies accompanying imperial succession had been prescribed in the Ascension Ordinance, the new Imperial Household Law only prescribed that "if the emperor dies, the crown prince immediately ascends to the throne" (Article 4) and "the Sokui No Rei will be carried out when there has been imperial succession" (Article 24). With the laws and ordinances that served as their basis having been abolished, no one knew what forms they should take. This spurred confusion. Next I will go over the state of Imperial Household rites during the occupation.

2. The State of Imperial Household Rites During the Occupation

On 15 December 1945, the GHQ issued the "Shinto Directive," ordering the abolishment of shrines' state management and State Shinto, as well as the thorough separation of the state and all shrines. It abolished the Institute of Divinities (a government agency), prohibited Shinto education and surveys by public educational institutions, removed Shinto facilities (for example, altars) from facilities (such as schools and government offices), and prohibited shrine visits in an official government capacity. It ordered the thorough separation of the state and "all ceremonies, customs, myths, legends, and everything else related to Shinto." It was a particularly strict measure against shrine Shinto, which it saw as a hotbed of militarism and ultra-nationalism.

With the issuance of the Shinto Directive, there was no choice but to revise the Imperial Household Rites Ordinance. On 22 December 1945, mention of the presentation of offerings (*hōbei* 奉幣) for imperial shrines and national shrines (*kankoku heisha* 官国幣社), government bureaucrat's shrine visits, and other items were removed, and revisions were made to items such as the announcement of important state matters to the Three Palace Sanctuaries and imperial graves. The relationship, though, between the Imperial Household and Ise Shrine was maintained as before. However, on 2 May 1947, the day before the Constitution of Japan went into effect, the old Imperial Household Law was abolished, as were its associated ordinances. Subsequently, based on the aforementioned 3 May official note, imperial rites continued to be carried out. Below I will review developments that followed while referring to the research of Shibukawa Ken'ichi.[12]

In July 1948, the National Holidays Act (Kokumin No Shukujitsu Ni Kansuru Hōritsu 国民の祝日に関する法律) was promulgated and the previous corresponding imperial edict was abolished. This did away with existing national holidays with roots in Imperial Household rites as well as changed one of the Japanese terms used in this context for "holiday" from *kyūjitsu* 休日 (lit., rest day) to *shukujitsu* 祝日 (lit., celebration day).

[12] Shibukawa, "Sengo, kōshitsu saishi no ayumi."

The "Ascension and Founding Holiday" (Kigen Setsu 紀元節) was thus done away with, and the "Meiji Holiday" (Meiji Setsu 明治節) was renamed "Culture Day" (Bunka No Hi 文化の日). Their associated festivals were also abolished. However, they did not simply disappear. On these days, Emperor Shōwa engaged in extraordinary worship, working his hardest to pass on time-honored rites. Subsequently, due to a 23 December 1955 decision based on an inquiry placed to the emperor, the fundamentals continued to be carried out based on the Imperial Household Rites Ordinance, as they are today. The emperor's Meiji Holiday extraordinary worship continued until 1987. The Ascension and Founding Holiday was revived in 1967 as National Foundation Day (Kenkoku Kinen no Hi 建国記念の日). Today, the emperor still carries out extraordinary worship on this day. In other words, Imperial Household rites continued insofar as they did not violate the constitution or laws of Japan. However, ambiguous points remained regarding the relationship with Ise Shrine and shrines where imperial envoys perform rituals (*chokusaisha* 勅祭社). This included the sending of imperial envoys and the presentation of offerings.

There is a related record of pre-Shinto Directive negotiations between the Japanese side (the Central Liaison Office [Shūsen Renraku Jimukyoku 終戦連絡事務局] and Institute of Divinities) and the GHQ'S Civil Information and Education Section on 4 December 1945. According to it, the Japanese side proposed that rites be carried out by shrines themselves based on the free will of the Imperial Household and the people, as well as that state rites be abolished. The state would no longer provide financial support to Ise Shrine but the Imperial Household's monetary offerings would continue. The imperial family would maintain some say in the appointment of the heads of Ise Shrine (*saishu* 祭主, *daigūji* 大宮司). Regarding the Imperial Household's monetary offerings to Ise Shrine, William Bunce, the chief of CIE's Religions Division, expressed his view that while this would be no problem if not taken out of the Imperial Household budget (part of the state's budget), he was concerned that by using the "imperial gift" (*gonaidokin* 御内帑金) funds for offerings, the Imperial Household budget would be indirectly covering them. He said nothing regarding the appointment of Ise Shrine heads.

In the next set of negotiations on 14 December, the Japanese side explained that state minister visits to Ise Shrine announcing assumption of office are not state affairs but, rather, merely visits that have become a custom in recent years. Bunce had asked about this at the previous meeting. The Japanese side also said that they thought it would be excessive for the U.S. to specifically ban such visits, but they were willing to halt Ise Shrine announcements and visits by public officials in a public capacity. Furthermore, they continued by stating that the Ministry of the Imperial Household would not require the attendance of anyone besides members of the Imperial Household and court officers at Shinto-style ceremonies in the Imperial Palace. The U.S.-side also asked if the emperor's worship at Ise Shrine is a public affair, but the Japanese side was unable to provide a clear

reply. In other words, we can see that it was explained in advance to the CIE that Imperial Palace rites have a special relationship with Ise Shrine and shrines where imperial envoys perform rituals, as well as that this relationship cannot be easily cut off.

After the issuance of the Shinto Directive, the sending of imperial envoys and presenting of offerings to these shrines, which were now separate from the state, became an issue. Bunce interviewed the Imperial Household Agency's administrative career bureaucrat (*jimukan* 事務官) Kuroda Minoru 黒田実 and the palace-shrine ritualist (*shōten* 掌典) Yaoita Atsushi 矢尾板敦 in the summer of 1947 regarding this. In essence, they said that Imperial Palace rites were the object of the private religion of the emperor as an individual, that they were cut off from his existence as a public figure of state, and that the employees involved were not state bureaucrats but the emperor's private servants. They said that the same was the case for the emperor's religious activities relating to shrines; offerings were provided with his private funds and dispatched envoys were now the private servants of the emperor. While accepting this explanation, Bunce said that he wanted to look into the issue further because the way in which these imperial envoys—ordinary people—were greeted, as well as the format of the rituals and visits, had not changed, and this would lead to misunderstandings that the separation of politics and religion lacked thoroughness. However, subsequently, no measures were taken.[13]

The GHQ did nothing to intervene in the emperor's religious beliefs and practices as they manifested in Imperial Palace rites. This stands in contrast with its demand that shrine Shinto be completely separated from the state.

Ashizu Uzuhiko 葦津珍彦, who was the managing editor of the journal *Jinja shinpō* 神社新報 at the time, states the following about this.

> The Shinto Directive ordered the thorough separation of the state and Shinto. Certainly, it was quite strictly applied to ordinary shrines that were under the control of the Home Ministry. However, it is evident that the Imperial Household rites under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Imperial Household were treated in a different way. The Shinto Directive banned placing Shinto shrines and physical symbols of Shinto in public facilities and ordered that these items be removed immediately (only Shinto—Buddhism and Christianity were different).
>
> However, while the Imperial Household's mausolea and tombs had become state property, not only were the *saikan* 斎館 and *shinsensho* 神饌所 [Shinto rites and training-related buildings] not removed from them, but not one torii was either. And that is not all—the Three Palace Sanctuaries exist completely unchanged form in the Imperial Palace, which became state land. This was an

[13] Ibid., pp. 66–70.

> era when even the small Shinto shrines in countryside village heads' offices met the misfortune of being removed.[14]

On the other hand, MacArthur, the supreme commander of the occupying army, was seriously aiming to turn Japan into a Christian country in order to democratize it. He favorably treated missionaries, allowing them to use military vehicles and military mail. He even allowed their children to study at schools for military families. In some places crosses were placed on the U.S. military's Quonset huts, making them into churches. From April 1946 to the end of February 1948, 51,819 Old Testaments, 1,432,021 New Testaments, and 701,487 individual Bible volumes were sent to and distributed to Japan. From 1949 to 1952, the total number of such books sent to and distributed in Japan was 8,508,000.

At the Imperial Palace, starting in April 1948, Bible lectures by Uemura Tamaki 植村環 (vice-president of World YWCA) began weekly for the empress and three princesses. They continued for five years and ended after the peace treaty went into effect.[15]

Regarding this, Ashizu Uzuhiko says the following.

> Incidentally, while it is well-known that MacArthur fervently recommended to the emperor that he convert to Christianity, MacArthur never committed the disrespectful act of forcing it on him. MacArthur was harsh in his assessment of ordinary Japanese people. This can be seen in his statement that the Japanese have the minds of a twelve-year-old. However, this was not the case for the emperor. He respected the character of the emperor from the bottom of his heart, and probably thought that if this person converted, then Japan would be saved.
>
> This is nothing more than my speculation, but the devoted Christian (Anglican) MacArthur, hoping that the emperor would convert at his own volition, did not apply pressure or act coercively. He did not apply pressure or act coercively. He must have thought that pressure and coercion get in the way of true, deep-down conversion. Until then, MacArthur [decided to] allow Imperial Household rites to continue as before, not touch the Three Palace Sanctuaries, and also allowed [*sic*] state funds to be used to cover Shinto rites via the inner court budget (*naiteihi* 内廷費). No, actually, he did more than that. In the end, the emperor did not convert to Christianity and maintained the transmitted way (*dōtō* 道統) of the Imperial Household. The circumstances of this were probably best known by Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂 and MacArthur.[16]

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[14] Ashizu Uzuhiko, "Shintō shirei to kōshitsu saishi: Shirarezaru shijitsu o otte (jō)" 神道司令と皇室祭祀―知られざる史実を追って―(上), *Jinja shinpō* 神社新報, 1984.6.11.

[15] Takahashi and Suzuki, *Tennōke no misshi tachi*, pp. 115–117.

3. The State of Post-War Extraordinary Rites

Next, based on the work of Shibukawa Ken'ichi, I will go over the position of the extraordinary rites carried out from the occupation period to after the conclusion of the peace treaty (in other words, after independence).[17]

1. The Funeral of Empress Teimei (22 June 1951)
   A quasi-state funeral for this member of the Imperial Household was carried out in a Shinto fashion at Toshimagaoka Funeral Site. A committee appointed by the prime minister and led by Imperial Household Agency Grand Steward Tajima Michiji 田島道治 oversaw all related matters.
2. The Crown Prince's Coming-of-Age Ceremony/Crown Prince Proclamation Ceremony (10 November 1952)
   (1) At 8:00 AM, emperor and empress worshiped at the Three Palace Sanctuaries and announced the crowning of the crown prince.
   (2) At 10:00 AM, with the emperor and empress at the head, a coming-of-age ceremony was held at the Omote-kita-no-ma 表北の間 (Front North Room) of the Imperial Palace.
   The prime minister, speaker of the House of Representatives, president of the House of Councillors, Supreme Court chief justice, foreign countries' ministers and ambassadors, and other invited guests were present. Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru delivered congratulations (*yogoto* 壽詞).
   (3) At 11:00 AM, with the emperor and empress at the head, the crown prince proclamation ceremony was held at the Omote-kita-no-ma. The proclamation itself (Sensei No Gi 宣制の儀) was carried out, and the prime minister gave a congratulatory address as the representative of the nation. Then, a sword transfer ceremony (Gyoken Denshin No Gi 御剣伝進の儀) was held.
   (4) This was followed by the crown prince visiting the Three Palace Sanctuaries while the East Palace chamberlain (*tōgū jijū* 東宮侍従) held the sword.
   (5) At 3:00 p.m., the crown prince's first audience with the emperor and empress was held at the Omote-nishi-no-ma 表西の間 (Front West Room). This was followed by the presentation of ceremonial clothes and decoration presentation ceremony.
   (6) Then, the crown prince visited Ise Shrine and the mausoleum of Emperor Jinmu.
   The coming-of-age and crown price proclamation ceremonies were carried out as

[16] Ashizu, "Shintō shirei to kōshitsu saishi: Shirarezaru shijitsu o otte (jō)," op. cit.
[17] Shibukawa, "Sengo, kōshitsu saishi no ayumi," pp. 70–73.

acts in matters of state and the others as private matters of the Imperial Household.

3. The Funeral of Yasuhito, Prince Chichibu (12 January 1953)

The prince wished in his will to be used for medical research, cremated, and have a non-religious funeral. His wishes regarding the first two were respected, but a Shinto-style funeral was held and he was buried at Toshimagaoka Cemetery. Expenses were covered with state funds.

4. The Marriage of Crown Prince Akihito

(1) At 10 a.m. on 10 April 1959, the marriage ceremony was held in front of the Kashiko-dokoro. The crown prince wore *sokutai ōninohō* 束帯黄丹袍 and Shōda Michiko 正田美智子 *itsutsuginu-karaginu-mo* 五衣唐衣裳. They worshiped in front of the Kashiko-dokoro, in its outer chamber engaged in a sake sharing ritual, and then announced their marriage at the Kōrei-den and Shinden.

(2) At 2:00 p.m., the prince and princess held their first audience with the emperor and empress. They offered their post-wedding greetings.

(3) Later, on the 13th celebratory banquets were held at the Imperial Palace.

(4) On the 18th, they visited Ise Shrine. Then, they visited the mausoleum of emperor Jinmu, as well as the mausolea of Emperor Taishō and Empress Teimei.

The above ceremonies, rites, and banquets were carried out as acts in matters of state, and the announcement visit at Ise Shrine and those that followed elsewhere were carried out as quasi-matters of state.

Regarding the reason that the marriage ceremony in front of the Kashiko-dokoro was carried out as an act in matters of state, the Imperial Household Agency's Deputy Grand Chamberlain (*jichō* 次長) Uryū Noriyoshi 瓜生順良 said the following in an interview with *Jinja shinpō*.

> It's my interpretation that the Shinto-style marriage ceremony in front of the Kashiko-dokoro being a state ceremony didn't violate the "separation of politics and religion" constitution.
>
> Even at weddings of ordinary members of the nation, it is socially customary for the marriage vow ceremonies to be religious rituals carried out, based on their own religious beliefs, in, for example, a Shinto or Buddhist style.
>
> When it comes to events for which the social custom is for ceremonial forms to be religious, even if the state carries them out as a public event, this does not mean that the state engaged in religious activities, which is prohibited by the constitution. . . .
>
> Weddings are carried out with the vows ceremony and reception being an inseparable set—this is the nation's common sense. Therefore, it was decided

> that the marriage ceremony held in front of the Kashiko-dokoro, the first audience ceremony with the emperor (who is the country's symbol), and the banquets (which are equivalent to a wedding reception) would be carried out as state ceremonies. Insofar as the wedding is carried out as a public event, one surely cannot choose to only have the ceremony in front of the Kasihiko-dokoro—which is socially accepted to be an essential condition of the wedding—be a private event of the Imperial Household.[18]

Subsequently, the weddings of Masahito, Prince Hitachi; Prince Tomohito of Mikasa; and Norihito, Prince Takamado; and so on were all held as public events. Upon the wedding of Prince Hitachi, Uryū said, "Prince Yoshi [=Hitachi] is the next in line for imperial succession [after the crown prince], but it is not definite that he will assume the throne. However, I think that it is not simply a private matter but something like a public matter" (31 January 1959 House of Councillors of Japan Budget Committee meeting).

For the marriage of Crown Prince Akihito, the ceremony in front of the Kashiko-dokoro was held as an act in matters of state, and, using the example of ordinary people in Japan, Uryū expressed the view that even if it had religious characteristics, conventional wisdom held that it does not violate the constitution's principle of the separation of politics and religion. This was a great change; ever since the occupation period, Imperial Household rites were treated as private matters of the Imperial Household. Imperial Household rites thus began to be considered either state or public matters (depending on their content).

However, from the second half of the 1970s, with conservatives and progressives neck and neck, again an attitude of strictly applying the constitution's principle of the separation of politics and religion appeared within the ruling party and bureaucrats. At a House of Councillors Cabinet Committee meeting on 29 May 1975, the Japan Socialist Party's councilor Hata Yutaka 秦豊 suggested that it is a violation of the constitution to send the Grand Chamberlain (*jijū* 侍従), who is a state employee, to Ise Shrine, which is a religious juridical person, as the emperor's representative. Legislation Bureau Director-General (Hōseikyoku Chōkan 法制局長官) Tsunoda Reijirō 角田礼次郎 replied,

> Our understanding is that the emperor visiting Ise Shrine has always been a private act of the emperor. We understand it to be a private act. . . .
>
> There is the issue of who will attend to the emperor when he does various private acts, including religious ones. There was the idea that everything be taken care of just by the people who are, should I perhaps say, the private

[18] Ibid., p. 74.

> servants of the emperor. But, in the first article of the current Imperial Household Agency Law, it says that all Imperial Household-related state business will be dealt with by the Imperial Household Agency—there is this prescription, so after various discussions, at the time it was decided based on this that even tending to the emperor's private sphere will be done by the inner court, that is to say, the emperor's personal servants, as well as the Imperial Household Agency's employees.[19]

As we can see, he held that based on the Imperial Household Agency Law, which had been followed for such matters up until then, this did not violate the constitutional principle of the separation of politics and religion. However, after this exchange, the emperor's "surrogate worship" (*godaihai* 御代拝) came to be carried out by not the grand chamberlain but palace-shrine ritualists (*shōten*), who are inner court employees. Also, the crown prince's surrogate worship, which had been done by the East Palace chamberlain, began to be carried out by palace-shrine ritualists as business of the East Palace. A pronounced tendency emerged for state employees to not be involved in Imperial Household rites.

However, being affairs of the inner court, those on the outside did not know what was actually going on. However, at a meeting of The Society of Shinto Studies (Shintō Shūkyō Gakkai 神道宗教学会) in December 1982, Nagata Tadaoki 永田忠興 (an assistant palace-shrine ritualist or *shōten-ho* 掌典補) discussed the Imperial Palace's changing rites in a presentation. This was published as a special feature article in January of the following year in the magazine *Shūkan bunshun* 週刊文春, with added original coverage. His presentation included the following points: (1) The Grand Chamberlain started performing daily morning surrogate worship in Western morning dress, and the worship location was moved from inside to outside of the Three Sanctuaries. (2) The offering of the kagura ritual dance *Azuma asobi* 東游 to Ōmiya Hikawa Jinja 大宮氷川神社 ceased to be treated as public business. (3) The disposal location for Ōharae 大祓 ritual purification items changed. Regarding this, the Association of Shinto Shrines submitted, in the name of its director, a ten-item written inquiry to the Imperial Household Agency's grand steward (*chōkan* 長官).

> The Cabinet decided that the crown prince's marriage ceremony would be carried out as a Shinto ceremony in front of the Kashiko-dokoro, as well as that it was a state affair. Subsequently, the marriage ceremonies of Prince Hitachi and Prince Tomohito of Misaka were held to be public imperial court matters. It is my understanding that Kashiko-dokoro rituals are, depending

[19] Ōhara, *Shōroku kōshitsu o meguru kokkai rongi*, p. 197.

on the event, sometimes considered to be state matters, public matters, or affairs limited to the inner court. I think that this was the understanding of the Imperial Household Agency authorities after liberation from the Shinto Directive. Do you deny this? If the essence of your understanding is different from your predecessor, I would like for this to be stated publicly.

If one understands the nature of the Kashiko-dokoro as above, then the daily surrogate worship by the grand chamberlain, a state employee, is only natural. However, what is the reason that the daily morning surrogate worship by the grand chamberlain was changed from time-honored traditional vestments to morning dress?

It is my interpretation that the Three Palace Sanctuaries, including the Kashiko-dokoro, are, along with Three Sacred Treasures, covered by Article 7 of the Imperial Family Finance Law, but what is the Imperial Household Agency's understanding? . . .[20]

The Imperial Household Agency sent a reply, dated 13 May 1983, in the name of the chief palace-shrine ritualist (*shōten-chō* 掌典長) Higashisono Motofumi 東園基文.

As you know, the various ceremonies for the marriages of the imperial princes were carried out as state or public affairs. I think that in the future as well, there will be cases in which they could be matters of state, and that sometimes they will be carried out as public matters.

I am fully aware that the grand chamberlain offering daily morning surrogate worship is important. Currently, the same ceremonial wear as [other] ordinary ceremonies [of the Imperial Palace] is used, but the traditional spirit of surrogate worship is not being neglected one bit.

I wish to not have the Three Palace Sanctuaries become state property but remain as [dictated in] Article 7 of the Finance Law.

With regard to Imperial Palace rites, I think that one can tell that their decay is quite exaggerated in the article that is going around in society.

While Imperial Palace rites may have changed somewhat due to various factors, their proper procedures are being carried out without one bit of change,

[20] Shibukawa, "Sengo, kōshitsu saishi no ayumi," pp. 80–81.

and I am confident that they will not change in the future.[21]

Due to these questions from the Association of Shinto Shrines, the state of the post-war Imperial Palace rites over time was confirmed, and their track record of having been carried out as public affairs was affirmed. Furthermore, strict interpretations of the constitutional principle of the separation of politics and religion would be curbed to a degree.

4. Critical Joint Research on the Current Imperial Household Law

The book *Critical Joint Research on the Current Imperial Household Law* (*Kyōdō Kenkyū: Genkō Kōshitsu-hō No Hihanteki Kenkyū* 共同研究　現行皇室法の批判的研究) was released by the Imperial Household Law Research Society (Kōshitsu-hō Kenkyū-kai 皇室法研究会) in December 1987 (pub. Jinja Shinpōsha; non-commercial item). Its introduction, written by the society's secretary Tao Norio, states the following about their joint research: "In the little over three years from its beginnings in the fall of 1981 until the end of 1984, a general outline came together. However, noting that the issue is an important one, we decided it would be best to be cautious and try our hardest to be successful by seeking out the criticisms from as many scholars and researchers as possible. We printed out about two hundred copies. It was mostly Matsuda and I that went around with them, asking learned people for their opinions."[22]

At the time, there had been an increase in the number of government bureaucrats who, strictly interpreting the constitution, saw the rites of the Imperial Household as its private matters. These rites were thereby being forced to change. We can see that in this context, Ashizu Uzuhiko, a friend of Jinja Shinpōsha who had kept a close eye on post-war Imperial Household rites, and others became alarmed and decided to engage in joint research.

In the introduction, Tao states, "The Imperial Household Law was hurriedly enacted during the occupation period, and there are therefore points that deserve criticizing. This book is a fruit of joint research . . . carried out to make this clear, as well as, while noting the existence of many deficiencies, for the purpose of the proper interpretation and administration of the current Imperial Household Law."[23] Here we can see that while the book took aim at the defective current Imperial Household Law, it also makes clear that it is erroneous to hold that proper interpretation and administration of the law would

[21] Jinja Honchō, *Jinja honchō shijū nen shi*, pp. 146–147.
[22] Tao, "Shogen," pp. 9–10.
[23] Ibid., p. 9.

warrant turning the Imperial Household rites of the emperor that are being carried out today into private matters of the Imperial Household.

This voluminous book covers a diverse set of content and therefore its arguments cannot be easily summarized. Instead, I will explain only their essential points, which are premised on the fact that state affairs and imperial court affairs were strictly differentiated between until the end of World War II. As I have already stated, per the Meiji constitution, the government (Cabinet) saw to state affairs, and state affairs' budgets and settling of accounts were subject to Diet deliberations. In contrast, the Ministry of the Imperial Household, which saw to business of the emperor, was positioned as government office that, based on the old Imperial Household Law, saw to imperial court affairs—which were outside the sphere of state affairs. In many cases it was funded by Imperial Household assets, which were not part of the state coffers. It was also placed outside of the sphere of the Diet's political debates. This political form unique to Japan was established based on the Imperial Household's long tradition.

However, as a result of defeat in World War II, Japan was occupied by the Allied Army, and government administration subsequently was primarily done by the United States Army. The actual work of occupation administration would be carried out by U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, who had assumed the position of Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. MacArthur was ordered by the U.S. Department of State to "insure [*sic*] that Japan will not again become a menace to the United States or to the peace and security of the world."[24] This was the ultimate aim of the occupation. As I have discussed, some occupation policies—such as restricting the authority of the emperor, discouraging the nation's veneration of the emperor, and confiscating and turning into state property Imperial Household property—were based on MacArthur's three principles that became the framework for the Constitution of Japan.

Also, the "Shinto Directive" (issued 15 December 1945), seeing shrine Shinto as hotbed of militarism and ultra-nationalism, ordered the complete separation of the state from Shinto and shrines. Based on the principle of the freedom of religious belief, it called for recognizing Shinto only as private religious belief that is divorced from the state and that can be held by Japanese people if they wish.

The same went for Imperial Household Shinto. The directive only permitted the emperor to engage in Shinto ceremonies as private matters. This had a coercive force that went beyond a constitution, and at the time nothing really could be done. This then connected to the drafting of a new constitution. The ideas of the Shinto Directive were carried on by the new constitution's principle of the complete separation of politics and religion, and would cast a dark shadow even after the occupation ended. All of the

[24] State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, "U.S. Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan (SWNCC150/4/A)."

imperial ordinances associated with the old Imperial Household Law would be abolished when the new constitution went into effect. Therefore, in parallel with the drafting of the new constitution, a new Imperial Household law and imperial family finance law were also written. These were quickly enacted amidst the occupying army's strong pressure without time for adequate deliberations. People in Japan strongly felt that its inadequacies should be addressed after Japan became independent.

In this context, Article 7 of the Imperial Household Finance Law established the following:

> All time-honored items that are passed down along with the imperial throne will be received by the imperial heir upon ascension.

"All time-honored items that are passed down along with the imperial throne " refers to the likes of the Three Sacred Treasures, the Three Palace Sanctuaries, and the *Tsubo kiri no gyoken* 壺切の御剣 (a sword). In other words, while generally imperial household assets were being made into state property, this law recognized that these are inseparably tied to the imperial throne and dictated that they be received by the imperial heir upon ascension. The tradition of the Imperial Household clearly shows that to pass down the Sacred Treasures is to pass down Imperial Household rites. Therefore, this was not put down in writing. The law affirmed that the Sacred Treasures are time-honored items inseparable from the imperial throne. Due to the occupation, this was done by positioning their succession in terms of economic rights. It also included in their succession the passing down of the Imperial Household rites that were associated with them. In this way, the essence connecting to the tradition of the Imperial Household was maintained.

However, it was difficult to acquire the U.S.'s approval of this law. Some even held that these items should just be made state property and then given to the current emperor by the head of the Diet or prime minister as the representative of the nation. The passing down of the Sacred Treasures was an issue related to the bedrock of the character of the country of Japan. Article 10 of the old Imperial Household Law dictated, "When the emperor passes away, the imperial heir immediately ascends to the throne and receives the Treasures of the [imperial] ancestors." In order to keep the meaning of this article alive, the above-quoted sentence was included.

In the past, the passing down of the Sacred Treasures was referred to as the Kenjitogyo 剣璽渡御 ("the passing on of the sword and jewel"). It was seen as a manifestation of the intentions of the gods. They were Imperial Household property—different from public property but also not the private property of the emperor. They were always passed down upon imperial ascension and the emperor was prohibited from dividing them up or

disposing of them as he wished. However, the U.S. occupying army had adopted the basic approach of only leaving private assets in the Imperial Household and turning all of its public assets into state property. Therefore, formally these were made into private assets of the inner court while preserving their essential meaning. The occupying army's objective was to ensure that the Imperial Household did not have a massive fortune. It appears that the army, noting that these items had little economic value, therefore allowed this.[25]

Let us next review the meaning of "inner court." The Imperial Household Agency's website states the following. Article 3 of the Imperial Household Finance Law establishes that Imperial Household funds will be the inner court budget, the court budget, and the imperial family budget. Article 4 explains the content of each, establishing that the inner court budget is for the everyday expenses of the emperor, retired emperor, and imperial family members in the inner court, and other inner court expenses. It is spending money and not managed by the Imperial Household Agency. Article 5 establishes that the court budget is public money managed by the Imperial Household agency, and includes funds necessary for the likes of the Imperial Household's public activities (such as ceremonies, hospitality including state and public banquets, imperial visits, and trips to overseas countries), funds necessary for the management of Imperial Household property, and funds necessary for the maintenance of the Imperial Palace and other facilities. Article 6 establishes that imperial family budget is to be used for the maintenance of the imperial family's dignity and will be issued yearly to imperial prince houses. This budget is spending money and not public money managed by the Imperial Household Agency.

While at first glance it seems like there is no problem here, the distinction between the inner court budget and the court budget is ambiguous. Its meaning is not self-evident. Article 5 itself states, "The court budget is for court expenses that are not inner court expenses and is managed by the Imperial Household Agency." The line between everyday life and public things is unavoidably ambiguous. This is true even for food, clothing, and shelter. Furthermore, the Imperial Household's "shelter" is both Imperial Household property and state property.

"Speaking from the perspective of Japan's native thought, all imperial court things are public matters. Inner court expenses are also covered by national funds precisely because they are public matters." However, the management method of the inner court budget was distinguished "from the public money management method of administrative offices, recognizing that it was different from ordinary budgets due to the special circumstances of the Imperial Household that differ from ordinary government offices."[26] However, when the Imperial Household Finance Law's bill was being deliberated, Minister of State

[25] Kōshitsu Hō Kenkyūkai, *Kyōdō kenkyū genkō kōshitsu hō no hihanteki kenkyū*, p. 97.

Kanamori Tokujirō 金森徳次郎 said, "There is no very clear boundary that divides the inner court budget and the court budget. [I] think that generally the inner court budget [is used] for personal things, and that the court budget [is used] for things in which the personal and public are integrated."

This book puts forth the critical view that this ambiguous explanation of this bill then took root amongst scholars and the government. In other words, it became an established idea that private matters of the Imperial Household would be carried out with the inner court budget and public matters of the Imperial Household with the court budget. It also argues that bureaucrats would then appear who saw all important rites of the Imperial Household as private matters, and, eventually, even took the meaning and significance of these rites lightly.

Under occupation, the occupying army issued the Shinto Directive, which ordered the separation of the state from Shinto and Shinto shrines. It strictly prohibited all organs of the state (including the emperor) from engaging in religious acts (particularly all acts relating to Shinto) and only allowed for Shinto ceremonies to be carried out as private matters. The emperor had no choice but to carry out Imperial Household rites as private rites. Explaining that the inner court budget is a private budget, Imperial Household rites were carried out as "private matters." This was unavoidable due to the occupation.

However, when the occupation ended and the Shinto Directive became void, these restrictions ceased to exist. Insofar as the constitution's twentieth article (guaranteed freedom of religion and prohibition of state religious activities) and eighty-ninth article (prohibition on using public money and other public property for religious institutions and associations) were not violated, there was no longer any need to adhere to the previous explanation.

Therefore, as I previously mentioned, the 1959 wedding of Crown Prince Akihito was held in front of the Kashiko-dokoro, and Shinto rituals were carried out as acts in matters of state. This was a landmark move and a good opportunity to go past the explanation offered during the occupation. However, subsequently, the Imperial Household Agency continued to divide acts of the Imperial Household into the three categories of matters of state, public matters, and private matters, as well as discuss the Imperial Household's rituals and ceremonies only as private matters. The interpretation from the occupation was left standing.

The book thus makes the following proposal: "Rites carried out at the will of the emperor (without the cabinet's advice or approval) are important acts of the Imperial Household. Along with the public, non-political social acts that are carried out by the emperor and that are not acts in matters of state, they should be interpreted as valuable

[26] Ibid., p. 71.

public matters on par with the constitution's 'acts in matters of state.'"[27]

5. Conclusion: The Meaning of the Inner Court

Let us again consider the nature of the "inner court." As I have stated, the Ministry of the Imperial Household that existed before the end of World War II was a government office with a different nature than the government (Cabinet), which was rooted in the Meiji Constitution and dealt with state affairs. It was part of a different lineage and rooted in the old Imperial Household Law. It was not an organ of government administration. Ministers of state had to face the Diet and answer exacting questions regarding the country's governance. The Diet was also able to censure ministers of state and the Cabinet, as well as possessed the power and authority to approve or block the budgets of government administration.

Unlike the position of the government that dealt with state affairs, the Ministry of the Imperial Household was outside the sphere of the institutions of governmental administration. It greatly relied on Imperial Household assets that were not part of the state coffers. The management of these assets was outside the scope of Diet discussions—entirely unrelated to the Diet's political debates.

However, after the end of World War II, Japan's constitution, laws and ordinances, and system of government changed. The Ministry of the Imperial Household, which had been located outside the realm of state affairs, ceased to exist, and the majority of its work was inherited by the Imperial Household Agency, an organ of government administration under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's Office. The Ministry of the Imperial Household became subject to Diet discussions along with other organs of government administration. It was now subject to political debates, including budgets and the settlement of accounts. However, it was the wish of policymakers at the time to place only the inner court, which was the core of the Imperial Household and the closely connected to the emperor, outside the sphere of political debates.

This is the meaning of the Imperial Household Finance Law dictating the following in Article 4:

> (1) The inner court budget is for the everyday expenses of the emperor, empress, grand empress dowager, empress dowager, crown prince, crown princess, the emperor's eldest grandson, the emperor's eldest granddaughter, and imperial family members in the inner court, as well as other inner court expenses. An amount established separately by law will be disbursed yearly.
> (2) Disbursed inner court funds will be spending money and will not be public

[27] Ibid., p. 75.

money under the management of the Imperial Household Agency. . . .

"Will not be public money under the management of the Imperial Household Agency" of course does mean that it is private funds of the Imperial Household but, rather, public money that is *not* the public money of the Imperial Household Agency, an organ of government administration. In other words, the simplistic interpretation that "it is not public money and therefore is private money" is incorrect. Therefore, the "inner court" can be seen as what remains of the Ministry of the Imperial Household, which saw to "imperial court matters" that were outside the realm of state affairs. The correct interpretation is to see the Imperial Household rites that have been carried out in the inner court as important ceremonies and public matters of the Imperial Household that are outside the government's secular administrative realm.

> Imperial Household rituals and ceremonies are carried out by the emperor. The authority to carry out them has been with the emperor ever since Japan's beginning. It is a sacred authority. In today's legal terms, it is the emperor's inner court authority (*naitei kengen* 内廷権限). It originates in Japan's uncodified constitution that has existed since Japan began.
>
> Inner court daily life is a realm based on the free will of the emperor. In other words, it is a sacred realm. Stating that Imperial Household rites are inner court acts has quite significant meaning. Japan's sacredness can be maintained precisely because there is this sacred realm.[28]

> Understanding the divine rituals of the inner court, which carries out public worship for the entire realm under heaven (*tenka no ōyake no matsuri* 天下の公の祭り) as the private affairs of the emperor is disrespectful and goes against reason. The son of heaven's worship is single-heartedly praying "may the country be tranquil and the people at peace" (*kuni tairaka ni tami yasukare* 国平らかに民やすかれ). The everlasting mission of emperors that they have inherited from the imperial ancestors is to carry out the rites of the realm under heaven from the beginning to the end of every year that comes, even if the emperor changes. By fulfilling this mission, the outstanding air of the emperor—"only public and nothing private"—arises.[29]

At the time of the Heisei enthronement ceremonies, there was a great debate about the separation of the state and politics, confusion, and disorder. This time, there was none.

[28] Ōishi, "Kōshitsu saigi to kenpō tono kankei," p. 143.
[29] Ashizu, "Tennō ni watakushi nashi: Naitei shinji no tanteki na imi," p. 201.

We find no lines of argument objecting to the basic approach previously outlined by the government. The attitude of the nation regarding imperial rites changed. In a recent *Asahi shinbun* 朝日新聞 public opinion poll (March to April 2019), a question asked (multiple responses permitted) about the best roles for the emperor. "Maintaining traditions such as palace rites" was selected the fourth most frequently (47%), after visiting areas affected by disasters, Imperial Household diplomacy, and memorializing the war dead. 53% of people agreed with using state funds to hold the Daijōsai as an Imperial Household event. It is good news that the number of people who understand the meaning and significance of Imperial Household rites is increasing.

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