

# The Literary Chinese Cosmopolis

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*A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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## Abstract

The thesis is set against the backdrop of literary Chinese as the cosmopolitan written language across East Asia and examines two contemporary literary Chinese writers in the ninth century: Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn from Silla Korea and Sugawara no Michizane from Heian Japan. Though composition in Chinese characters on the peninsula and the archipelago was ancient, a high-water mark within this community appeared in the ninth century. At that time, literary Chinese was embraced by mainstream literati as the medium for poetry and prose, and competent composition in this international written language came to have political as well as cultural significance. The importance of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn and Sugawara no Michizane as the great masters of Chinese letters in Korea and Japan derives in part from their talents and in part from the social and political acceptance of Chinese.

This comparative research primarily draws inspiration from Sheldon Pollock's comparison of the Sanskrit cosmopolis and the Latin cosmopolis. Pollock describes the Latin cosmopolis as coercive and the Sanskrit cosmopolis as voluntaristic. I argue that the history of literary Chinese in East Asia provides a *third* cosmo-political model for the history of interactions among language, literature, and cultural and military power. The literary Chinese cosmopolis can be characterized not as coercive or voluntaristic but as hegemonic. I compare Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn and Sugawara no Michizane for their cosmopolitan identities, transnational experiences, and diglossic worlds. Though there is debate over the appropriateness of the terms "diglossia," "Chinese cosmopolis," and "Sinographic cosmopolis" to describe the world in which Ch'oe and Michizane lived, I argue in favor of "literary Chinese cosmopolis," because I pay attention to the common grammar, syntax, and other linguistic features one must bear in mind when *composing* in literary Chinese (as opposed to *reading*). Localism produced vernaculars, but the unity of the community was based on composition in a cosmopolitan language. That cosmopolitan language was literary Chinese, a hyperglossic language, a language that allowed universal communication in East Asia.

Intersecting with various disciplines and bringing several critical fields into conversation, this work contests and refreshes a series of key issues at the heart of discussions on globalization, namely the intrinsic relationship between language and power. How does cultural power emerge from language? How does writing in a "foreign" script articulate ethnic, local identities? As a meditation on language politics, ethics, and the historical situation of an earlier cosmopolitan ecumene (ninth century CE), this work will, I hope, offer insights into the specificities and mechanisms of a past cosmopolitan era in East Asia, even as it establishes a broader historical and ethical context for contemporary debates on globalization.



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By Xin Wei  
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Keywords: Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, Sugawara no Michizane, Silla, Heian, inter-Asian studies

## Declaration of Authorship

I hereby declare that the contents of this thesis are original and have not been submitted in whole or in part for consideration for any other degree or qualification in this, or any other University. This thesis is the result of my own work, except where specific reference is made to the work of others in the text. The thesis contains less than the maximum 100,000 words, including bibliography and footnotes.



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Xin Wei      28/08/2017

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# Chapter 1: The Literary Chinese Cosmopolis: A Quick Sketch and Introduction

## Introduction

Let me start with our mundane modern life.

If today a Chinese woman arrived in Japan, free of any knowledge of the language, she would be able to get around to a certain extent by following the many signs in “Chinese characters.” She would see a lot of them: shop signs, newspapers, directions, and names of persons and buildings. However, she would not be able to say or pronounce these “Chinese characters” correctly without learning them like any other foreigner. Nor would she be able to understand the meaning of these Chinese characters without a mistake. She would wonder how “a big man” (大丈夫) is “OK” in Japan, or a piece of “toilet paper” (手紙) is what you receive in the mail.

Here is another scenario. I went to Seoul with a Japanese scholar of Chinese studies. He does not know the Korean script. Pointing to the signs which are *hanja-ō* 漢字語 but written only in the Korean *han'gŭl* script (offering the Korean pronunciation of Chinese characters used in Korea), he asked me what they said; I responded with the Chinese pronunciation for the Chinese characters underlying the Korean script on the signs, for example, I said “Jingfugong” instead of “Kyōngbokkung” 경복궁 (景福宮). Every time I did this, he understood the meaning. In his frustration, he commented, “why don’t the Koreans just put all the signs in Chinese characters?” I was amused and said, “If all these signs were to be written in Chinese characters, Seoul would ‘look’ like a Chinese city.” Chinese characters had a different fate in Korea than in Japan, but for

nationalist reasons, they are less and less in use nowadays. Since the Korean alphabetic system devised in the fifteenth century can transcribe Chinese characters efficiently, today, Chinese characters are largely eliminated from written Korean. However, sixty to seventy percent of Korean vocabulary has its origin from Chinese, which is called *hanja-ŏ*, and these words can be written in either Chinese characters or in the Korean alphabet. Starting from approximately the 1960s, due to nationalistic reasons in the Republic of Korea,<sup>1</sup> printed words have appeared more and more in the Korean alphabet instead of in Chinese characters, but knowing more Chinese characters is considered erudite by tradition.

That calls to mind the rapid developments in language in Meiji Japan. For millennia, Chinese characters were used throughout East Asia, but a clear sign of defining modern Japan in the Meiji period was to eradicate the “Chinese influence” by clearing away the “Chinese characters” in the language. Ironically, excluding China, Japanese are the only people in the old cultural sphere based on Chinese who decided to keep the many “Chinese characters” in their modern language, but only after a heated debate in the late nineteenth century. Chinese characters were retained by the Japanese, and moreover, Meiji-era Japanese translated vast amounts of European and American literature, laws, scientific papers, and other materials and created new combinations of Chinese characters to render foreign concepts. Those translated materials were avidly read by Chinese and Koreans, although they were criticized by people with a classical training as being “wrong” or “strange.” Even more ironically, then, these once “wrong” or “strange” Japanese-Chinese expressions invaded the languages of both modern China

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<sup>1</sup> In the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Chinese characters were purged from public discourse from 1949.

and Korea with the expansion of Japanese military and cultural power during the first half of the twentieth century, and the “wrong” Japanese-Chinese expressions came to constitute much of the “modern” vocabulary used by Chinese and Koreans. Chinese and Koreans still use these “modern” terms without realizing they came from Japan. The result is that Koreans are using two systems of Chinese characters: one stems from their heritage of using classical Chinese, and the other is based on the Japanese-Chinese expressions or *kango* (漢語) from their colonial experience with the Japanese. Both types of expressions are called *hanja-ŏ* (漢字語) by Koreans, but in fact the Japanese-invented terms are certainly a different type, not dissimilar from how English vocabulary finds its way into modern Korean. In China, people tend to take Japanese-originated “Chinese vocabulary” as their own language without concern for the origin but hostilely resist the invasion of English terms just because English does not arrive in the form of “Chinese characters,” like their Japanese counterparts did. Additionally, there is a popular view that the Anglophone world represents a competitor, if not a threat. How Japanese-created “Chinese expressions” were exported to China and how they have come to enrich a species of “Chinese expressions” in the Korean language are good examples that language has an intricate relationship with power, and what is “right” or “wrong” depends on the source of that power.<sup>2</sup>

Cultural power links to cultural identity in intimate ways. Language lies at the heart of cultural identity and this is beyond doubt. Linguists have elaborated the close ties

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<sup>2</sup> Here I am using the culture in the sense that language, especially language in relation to literature, is a sublet of culture. Power is reflected in how the meaning of the language in the same written script is decided, a process tied to the circulation, reception from one cultural entity to another. Please see an elaboration of these terms used in a pre-modern setting, Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 2-10.

between language and human identity. For instance, Steven Fischer concludes that language is the ultimate measure of human society. More than any other of life's faculties, it is language that tells us who we are, what we mean, and where we are going.<sup>3</sup>

While Fischer does not make a distinction between written language and spoken language, it is assumed that he is talking about the unification of the two. However, many cultures experience a disjunction between written communication and verbal communication. In post-colonial Africa and Latin America, colonized peoples write their history and literature in their colonizer's languages, despite the fact that they may be able to speak one or more native languages. And in some cultures, the very arrangement of written and spoken or elite and vernacular languages creates a disjunction that goes to the heart of what it means to live in a language. My study focuses on one such instance: the history of the dominance of written Chinese in East Asia particularly in Japan and Korea in the ninth century.

The cases I am studying differ from the African and Latin American post-colonial situations in that China did not colonize Korea and Japan but functioned rather as a source of "civilization" and indeed "culture." Both Korea and Japan admired China, the hegemonic power of the region, for its civilization, and their admiration lasted, though not without modulation, through the whole of pre-modern East Asian history. In the case of Korea, even after the promulgation of a native writing system, *han'gŭl*, in the fifteenth century, most histories, literary works, and the most important official documents were still written in classical Chinese until Korea was colonized by the Japanese following the Russo-Japanese war (1904-05). Although, by the tenth century, the Japanese writing

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<sup>3</sup> Fischer, *A history of language*, 203.

system, *kana*, had fully evolved, and literature written in Japanese in *kana* quickly developed, the Chinese language still had a profound influence on the development of Japanese writing and literary styles, and in some respects *kana* literature can be seen as developing in relation to Chinese-language models. As David Pollock has remarked, “the Japanese were preoccupied with China from the beginning of their recorded history until the opening to the west in the last century.”<sup>4</sup>

The relationship among China, Korea, and Japan also differs from typical post-colonial practices, which have become familiar to European and American scholars since the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), because Koreans and Japanese did not, by and large, speak the Chinese language. The separation between spoken and written languages—which recalls in some respects the separation between the Latin spoken by educated elites and the local vernaculars spoken by commoners in medieval Europe—is at the heart of the semi-colonial, semi-hegemonic relationship this thesis describes. The following analyzes the connections between Korean and Japanese cultural identities in the historical moment when they spoke a vernacular language but wrote in a cosmopolitan language—Chinese.

My immediate interest in the literature written in classical Chinese across East Asia spills out into a series of broader questions that govern this thesis: What are the effects on identity of writing in a “foreign” language? And if, as I am able to show, many Japanese and Korean writers did not consider the Chinese written script to be “foreign,” then how can we describe the structure of their social and linguistic relations? What effects did those relations have on the literature written in Chinese by Korean and

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<sup>4</sup> Pollack, *The Fracture of Meaning*, 3.

Japanese authors, and how did those relations shape their articulation of local sentiments and cultural identities? Is it possible to reject an identification with Chinese culture (worldviews, ethics, conceptual modes, etc.) while writing in Chinese? Or how, indeed, might one even conceive of such a “Chineseness,” which, in this case, emerges just as much from an interior culture as from an exterior culture? To answer the aforementioned questions, my dissertation brings various critical fields into conversation: cultural identity, post-colonial studies, cultural imperialism, trans-lingual studies, and East Asian cultural history.<sup>5</sup>

My argument intends to join with the academic dialogues on Chinese cultural identity, or “Chineseness,” which have been on-going for some time. Just as the People’s Republic of China has risen as an emerging global power, scholars have attempted to deflate its cultural hegemony by pointing to the plurality of Chinese cultures—notably by gesturing towards the wide variety of ethnic, linguistic, and national diversities that have made up “China” over the past millennium. This trend has appeared with particular force due to the influence of theories associated with deconstruction and theories of post-modernism and post-structuralism. Consequently, scholars in the field of Chinese studies have sought to dismantle the geographical boundaries of “China” and question the unity of “Chinese culture.” For instance, Tu Wei-Ming, in “Cultural China: the Periphery as the Center” (1991), strives to de-center the cultural authority of geopolitical China by redefining the Chinese diaspora in the United States as the center rather than the

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<sup>5</sup> China, Korea, and Japan are used as signifiers here. To take an example of China, depending on what composed China throughout history, be it the communist China or Tang China, China is merely a name with no-set content or signified. Though wherever possible I try to use Tang, Silla, and Heian hereafter, China, Korea, and Japan are used for convenience and can be viewed as geo-political monikers in a specific historical period.

periphery. Subsequently, Rey Chow makes a corollary move in “Can one say no to China,” where she argues:

Any discussion of cultural studies and China would be inadequate without some attempts to address the scarcely touched issue of China’s relation to those whom it deems politically and culturally subordinate: to Tibet, Taiwan, and Hong Kong... These other “Chinese” cultures, insofar as they constitute China’s repressed, are and should be a vital part of any consideration of “Chinese Culture Studies.”<sup>6</sup>

Rey Chow’s argument was quickly echoed by a series of studies that attempted to rescue repressed identities that had been excluded by “Chinese culture.” One of the most successful of such endeavors is Shu-Mei Shih’s *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (2007). In her book, Shih highlights how differently Chinese is spoken and written outside of China in areas like Taiwan, pre-1997 Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, and Chinese-America. She successfully shows that identity building is largely attached to visuality under global capitalism and that the dispersal of the so-called Chinese peoples across the world needs to be re-conceptualized in terms of vibrant or vanishing communities of Sinitic-language cultures rather than of ethnicity and nationality. The book breaks down “Chineseness,” albeit within the framework of Chinese ethnicity, and at the same time inaugurates the field of “Sinophone studies.” Tu, Chow, and Shih all consider ways of opening up the traditional geography of Chinese studies.

Other scholars who work on the same issues express doubts about “Chineseness.” They question whether the focus on “Chineseness” is not actually a form of essentialism. Ien Ang’s *On not Speaking Chinese*, challenges Tu’s notion of “Cultural China” as a

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<sup>6</sup> Chow, “Can One Say No to China,” 151.

“move that is driven by a desire for, and motivated by another kind of centrism.”<sup>7</sup> She relates Tu’s “Cultural China” to another form of “Chinese essentialism” in the sense that the periphery’s influence is at the expense of the center. Ang urges Tu to recognize the fact that there are ethnic Chinese who exist outside of either a geopolitical China, or the American Chinese diaspora, and that Tu should acknowledge their mode of intellectual practice or style of knowledge production. Therefore, Ang proposes to break out of the prison of “Chineseness” and to construct open-ended and plural “post-Chinese” identities through intercultural encounters in the world.

Contrasting these two trends, I argue that while “Sinophone studies” may be a timely name to replace “Chinese studies” due to its post-national connotation, there are pitfalls to its ontological and post-ontological focus. Even post-Chinese studies imply ontologies if only through their refusal to categorize them. Suggesting the limits to these critical positions, Sophia McClennen has argued that hegemonic identities have always depended on fluid boundaries: “Why would we think that loosening borders, crossing boundaries, and breaking down barriers were in-and-of-themselves acts of resistance?”<sup>8</sup> If the meaning of “Chineseness” is defined explicitly as fluid and changeable, it actually serves to expand the global power of the PRC, as already noted by Ang. My suspicion is that Sinophone studies will quickly preoccupy itself with defining where it is located, endlessly repeating variations on the same gesture. Though Shih shrewdly identifies an alternative for ethnicity in “Sinophone studies,” the focus on identity only underscores the problem. Similarly, Ang’s cosmopolitan approach in discussing sites of diaspora is a

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<sup>7</sup> Ang, *On not Speaking Chinese*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> McClennen, “Area Studies Beyond Ontology: Notes on Latin American Studies, American Studies, and Inter-American Studies,” 181.

plausible one, but the concept of “togetherness” overlooks the politics involved in the artificial divisions of ethnicities and nationalities.

My research hopes to make an original contribution to this field by pushing the boundaries of Sinophone studies via the introduction of previously ignored ethnicities (i.e., Koreans and Japanese) into the Sinosphere, but my study also moves beyond ontology by addressing the historically material practice of imperialism. Shih admits that her inspiration for “Sinophone studies” comes from colleagues in the field of “Francophone studies.” If Shih’s Sinophone studies is a study of cultural variability within the signifier China, the Sinophone studies I propose would look outside the signifier China by examining the dynamics of interactions between Chinese hegemony and its neighbors in the “imagined community” of the classical Chinese literary corpus. My specific choice of focusing on East Asia in the ninth century is not at the service of projecting questions on whether “Chineseness” should be interpreted pluralistically (“everybody who used Chinese characters was Chinese”), but rather is part of an effort dedicated to examining the global components of human interactions and to probe the relations between language, cultural identity, and power.

With the above questions in mind, my project of analyzing literature written in literary Chinese across East Asia—in Tang China (618-907), Unified Silla Korea (668-935), and Heian Japan (794-1185)—will put to test two hypotheses associated with the spread of Chinese characters across broader East Asia. Following the work of Sheldon Pollock, I refer to this region, which shares the heritage of writing in literary Chinese, as the literary Chinese cosmopolis and compare it to both the Latin and the Sanskrit cosmopolises he analyzes so extensively in *The Language of the Gods in the World of*

*Men*. Pollock describes the Latin cosmopolis as coercive and the Sanskrit cosmopolis as voluntaristic. My work argues that the history of literary Chinese in East Asia provides us with a *third* cosmopolitical model for thinking through the history of the interactions between language, literature, and cultural and military power. My hypotheses are, first, in the literary Chinese cosmopolis, boundaries were clear—as opposed to Benedict Anderson’s generalization that classical language communities lacked limits (*Imagined communities*<sup>9</sup>)—even though these boundaries differed from the ones demarcating polities. Second, the literary Chinese cosmopolis juxtaposed a center, a semi-periphery, and a periphery so as to compose a pre-modern world system of cultural power relations. Intersecting with various disciplines and bringing several critical fields into conversation, this study hopes to intervene, contest, and refresh a series of key issues at the heart of discussions on globalization: the intrinsic relationship between language and power. How does cultural power emerge from language? How does writing in a “foreign” script articulate local identities? As a meditation on language, politics, ethics, and the historical situation of an earlier cosmopolitan ecumene, my research will attempt to offer insights into the specificities and mechanisms of a cosmopolitan era in East Asia, even as I hope to establish a broader historical context for contemporary debates on globalization. Specific to the time frame I examine below, I attempt to show that cosmopolitanism centered on literary Chinese reached a height in the ninth century and from that time onwards, it declined.

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<sup>9</sup> Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 12-13.

## 1.1. The power system: circulation of cultural products

Do literary production and circulation necessarily follow the political-economic systems of power? If the literary sphere operates in another universe, maintaining autonomy and divorcing itself from the power composition of politics and economy, how should one envision it? Under what laws, if there are any, does the literary sphere operate? How does the power of culture, one of its major sublets being language, and the power of politics and economy intertwine with and shape one another? Can world-system analysis be applied to the pre-industrialized, pre-Columbian Exchange world, despite Immanuel Wallerstein's adamant opposition and Andre Gunder Frank's enthusiastic advocacy?<sup>10</sup> Many analytical frames for world literature have been drawn based on empirical studies of core cultures, but what if studies of non-western, especially pre-modern and non-western, traditions contradict the existing models? Should we simply label these cases particularisms and move on? An examination of the literary Chinese cosmopolis will shed light on all these questions.

The literary Chinese cosmopolis can best be pictured by setting it against other cosmopolises: the literary Sanskrit cosmopolis in south Asia and the literary Latin cosmopolis in Europe. In his comparative study, Sheldon Pollock identifies a remarkable parallel in the historical development of literary communication in the two worlds, i.e., a long period of cosmopolitan literary production was followed by a vernacularity whose subsequent millennium-long ascendancy now everywhere shows signs of collapse.<sup>11</sup> The parallel between Sanskrit and Latin is also in the timeline. Just around the time of the

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<sup>10</sup> Wallerstein, *The modern world-system I*, 10; Frank and Gills, *The world system*.

<sup>11</sup> Breckenridge, Bhabha, Pollock, and Chakrabarty, eds, *Cosmopolitanism*, 19.

beginning of the Common Era, both Latin and Sanskrit embarked on an extraordinary process of spatial dissemination and expressive elaboration.<sup>12</sup> In the case of Sanskrit, it had long been a sacred language employed primarily for religious practices until, at the beginning of the Common Era, it was reinvented as a code for literary practice. Within four or five centuries, Sanskrit, used as the medium for literary and political purposes, could be found everywhere from today's Afghanistan to Java and from Sri Lanka to Nepal.<sup>13</sup> Half a world away, Latin spread with the rise of the Roman Empire (27 BCE - 476 CE), approximately at the beginning of the Common Era. At the high-water mark of the Roman Empire, Latin was the literary language that encompassed a vast area from Britannia, Hispania, and Mauretania to Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestina.<sup>14</sup> Although reductive, as he admits, Pollock shows that people, for literary practice, abandoned local languages in preference for the languages that traveled the farthest within the two ecumenes.

In East Asia, the career of classical Chinese resembles those of Sanskrit and Latin in terms of traveling across vast regions in the first millennium. During the Chinese Han Empire (202 BCE - 220 CE), literary Chinese (*wenyanwen*) developed from Old Chinese—mainly the language of the Confucian Classics and the written language of the sixth to second centuries BCE—and became the standard written language of official business and literary expression.<sup>15</sup> Then it embarked on a remarkable journey to the far regions of East Asia, South Asia, and central Asia.

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<sup>12</sup> Breckenridge, Bhabha, Pollock, and Chakrabarty, eds, *Cosmopolitanism*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> Breckenridge, Bhabha, Pollock, and Chakrabarty, eds, *Cosmopolitanism*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> Breckenridge, Bhabha, Pollock, and Chakrabarty, eds, *Cosmopolitanism*, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 19. *Wenyanwen* 文言文 is normally translated into classical Chinese, but, more precisely, it is literary Chinese that had been in use from the Han dynasty to well into the mid-twentieth century. It should not be confused with the written language before it, which is called Old

On the continent, Chinese expansion into the peninsula took a significant step forward, when, in 108 BCE, Han China, as part of its overseas campaigns for expansion, defeated Wiman Chosŏn and established commanderies stretching into the Korean peninsula. In the area of today's Taedong River basin, the area from the Chabi Pass south to the Han River, and in the area of today's southern Hamgyŏng Province in North Korea, Emperor Han Wudi established three commanderies, leaving only the region south of the Han River to be politically autonomous. One year later, another commandery was established in the old territory of Ye in the area of the Yalu and Tongqia River basin. In 82 BCE, two of the commanderies were abolished and brought under the jurisdiction of the other two. In 75 BCE, Han moved one commandery out of the old territory of Ye, and transferred this territory to the jurisdiction of the other remaining commandery, Lelang. In this sense, the Greater Lelang Commandery covered the area from the Yalu and Tongqia basin to the Han River (roughly most of today's North Korea and part of South Korea that falls north of the Han River), and it was under the rule of the Han Empire until the time of Emperor Ling (167-189 CE). The Gongsun clan rose to control Liaodong and extended their control over Lelang. From 204 CE, the Gongsun clan established the Daifang Commandery to the south of Lelang in order to further control exodus of people to the Han 韓 polities to the south.<sup>16</sup> In 236 CE, both were annexed by the Wei Kingdom (one of the three competing kingdoms on mainland China in the post-Han era). Remains unearthed in the T'osŏngni area close to today's P'yŏngyang has shown that the cultural heritage, ranging from the lifestyle of officials, merchants, and

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Chinese, or Classical Chinese with an upper-case C. Hereafter, classical Chinese will be used to refer to *wenyenwen*, or literary Chinese.

<sup>16</sup> Regarding how independent the Gongsun clan is, see Kwon, "The History of Lelang Commandery," 93-96.

other functionaries to the burial objects interred with the bodies clearly indicates Han Chinese culture as the cultural identification.<sup>17</sup> By the time of the fall of Lelang to Koguryō in 313 CE, Chinese existence on the peninsula had come to entail a large cultural overflow from Han China into the peninsula that almost wiped out the old Chosŏn way of life and institutional arrangements. However, the Chin tribal kingdoms in the southern half of the peninsula were able to maintain political independence while also committing to close tributary relationships with Lelang.<sup>18</sup> It is also within the Chin area that Paekche and Silla started to emerge following the collapse of the LeLang and Daifang commanderies.

Chinese characters might have spread across the peninsula well before Han rule, as the earliest archaeological finding of Chinese inscriptions are on a sword dates to 222 BCE. Nevertheless, it was during the Han dynasty that Chinese writing flooded in with the influx of Chinese immigrants to the peninsula. During the turbulent post-Han era, China was divided into three kingdoms (Wei, Shu, and Wu), and later reunified by the Jin Dynasty in 265 CE. At the beginning of the fourth century during the Jin dynasty, China began to lose control of the peninsula, and warfare among the three kingdoms: Koguryō, Paekche, and Silla started to dominate the region. A clear demonstration of the deft usage of literary Chinese by Koguryō writers is the stele of King Kwanggaet'o, erected in 414 in memory of Koguryō's greatest King, Kwanggaet'o. From the calligraphic perspective, the Chinese characters on the stele were inscribed in a popular Han dynasty clerical style (*lishu*, 隸書) with some Korean innovations.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Pai, *Constructing Korean Origins*, 160-166.

<sup>18</sup> Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 21.

<sup>19</sup> Yi and Park, *Kwanggaet'o taewang nŭngbi shinyŏngu*, 50.

Representative of Japanese scholars, Ishikawa Kyūyō estimates that Japan entered the Chinese cosmopolis during the Yayoi period (300 BCE - 300 CE) overlapping the Chinese Han dynasty.<sup>20</sup> His evidence is that in 57 CE, the Han Emperor bestowed a gold seal on a King of the Wa that reads “Han wei nu guo wang (漢委奴國王) [the King of Na of Wa, affiliated with Han].”<sup>21</sup> It shows that Han China incorporated the Japanese archipelago into its world system (or at least licensed certain archipelago people to contact the Han) at least by 57 CE. His point is that the seal inscription is in the cosmopolitan language of the time—literary Chinese. The gold seal was excavated in 1784 in Kyūshū, Japan and is mentioned in Chinese historical records. A treatise appended to the *Hou Hanshu* (後漢書) on eastern barbarians states that the King of Nu of Wa sent a tributary mission to Han, and the Han Emperor conferred a gold seal on the Nu King in 57 CE. Other evidence offered by Ishikawa is the inscriptions in Chinese characters on some pottery from the fourth and fifth centuries CE. His argument is that the spread of Chinese characters should begin, at the latest, around the Common Era, and by the fourth or the fifth century, Chinese had become the elite language, both written and spoken, among the Wa people.<sup>22</sup> Few would argue that spoken Chinese was adopted by the Wa, but it is generally agreed by all that Chinese was employed as a language for court writings.

To sum up, it is clear that literary Chinese began its expansion into the Korean peninsula during the Han dynasty, and by the sixth century, both Koreans and Japanese were able to use classical Chinese for official business and history writing, although

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<sup>20</sup> Ishikawa, *Kanji no bunmei, kana no bunka*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> “Wa” was an ancient name that generally referred to people from the Japanese islands. “Na” is the commonly accepted Japanese reading of this character pronounced *nu* in modern Chinese.

<sup>22</sup> Ishikawa, *Kanji no bunmei, kana no bunka*, 16.

limited written documents survive from this period. In a global context, while Latin was spreading across vast regions of the Mediterranean and Europe, it was also the time of expansion of two world-languages in Asia, namely, Sanskrit in South Asia and classical Chinese in East Asia.

Pollock notes that the similarities between Sanskrit cosmopolitanism and Latin cosmopolitanism are complemented by differences as well. Other than the unbounded spatio-temporal circulation and normativity in literary and intellectual practice that sought to ensure that circulation, the two types of cosmopolitanism show radical divergences. As he observes,

Latin traveled where it did as the language of a conquest state, first Roman and later (through what Claude Nicolet has called the “nostalgia of ecumenism”) in the imperial recreations under Charlemagne and Otto, but also as the language of a missionizing and eventually a conquest church. The state for which Latin spoke was centralized and militarized; it was standardized (in terms of such things as currency and law), and rationalized, with populations enumerated for taxation and territory delimited by frontiers that could be very concrete indeed (Hadrian’s wall in northern Britain, now a UNESCO World Heritage tourist site, was designed as a twelve-foot-high, ten-foot-thick, seventy-five-mile-long barrier to “separate the Romans from the barbarians”). To impose its will, the Roman state employed coercion, taxation, legal machinery, intimidation, and, on occasion, a policy of Romanization in culture and political behavior, with selective award of citizenship to incorporate elites from the periphery.<sup>23</sup>

By contrast, the Sanskrit cosmopolis was created by the circulation of traders, literati, religious professionals, and freelance adventurers. The features of the Sanskrit cosmopolis are described by Pollock as,

Coercion, cooptation, juridical control, and even persuasion are nowhere in evidence. Those who participated in Sanskrit cosmopolitan culture chose to do so, and could choose to do so....The space of Sanskrit culture and the power that culture articulated were never demarcated in any concrete fashion; the populations that inhabited it were never enumerated; nowhere was a standardization of legal practices sought, beyond a vague conception of moral order to which power was

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<sup>23</sup> Breckenridge, Bhabha, Pollock, and Chakrabarty, eds, *Cosmopolitanism*, 24.

universally expected to profess its commitment. Nor was any attempt ever made to transform the world into a metropolitan center; in fact, no recognizable core-periphery conception ever prevailed in the Sanskrit cosmopolis. Every center was infinitely reproducible across cosmopolitan space, such that the golden Mount Meru and the River Ganga could be and were transported everywhere. As a result, people in tenth-century Angkor or Java could see themselves no less than people in tenth-century Karnataka as living not in some overseas extension of India but inside “an Indian world.”<sup>24</sup>

By juxtaposing the two types of cosmopolitanism, Pollock concludes that while Latin cosmopolitanism was realized by state coercion, and participation was compulsory, in the Sanskrit cosmopolis, things worked differently. There existed no core state or polity that exerted power over others. In fact, there were multi-centers and membership of the community was based largely on free choice. Pollock thus defines the former as a coercive cosmopolitanism and the latter as a voluntaristic cosmopolitanism.<sup>25</sup>

In relation to the above two types of cosmopolitanism, how should literary Chinese cosmopolitanism be characterized? Before plunging into a conclusion, we need to understand that the goal here is to shed light on the cosmopolitanism of a historical epoch, which is smaller in scope but was an instance of “globalism” in terms of its temporal speed and spatial stretch; thus the necessity of examining the current globalism becomes imperative. In other words, we must define globalism before discussing it, and the only globalism immediately available is the globalism in our contemporary world. Only when we understand our on-going globalism together with its compelling features can we compare it rightfully with previous globalisms in other historical epochs and regions.

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<sup>24</sup> Breckenridge, Bhabha, Pollock, and Chakrabarty, eds, *Cosmopolitanism*, 26-27.

<sup>25</sup> Breckenridge, Bhabha, Pollock, and Chakrabarty, eds, *Cosmopolitanism*, 19.

Paul Hopper identifies three broad approaches to contemporary globalization, or waves of analysis. First-wave theorists conceive contemporary development and global processes as constituting a new condition or phase within human history. They write of the emergence of an integrated global economy with its emphasis on open markets and the breaking down of national borders. Second-wave theorists, often labeled skeptics, present a range of perspectives that are highly critical of the globalist position. For example, many on the left consider globalization to be simply a further expansion of international capitalism, and deny it constitutes a new epoch, while writers operating from the realist tradition stress that the international order continues to be dominated by certain powerful economic and military states, most notably the United States. Other critics, like Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, have highlighted the “myths” that have become associated with globalization. They maintain that the world economy is far from being genuinely “global”. Trade, investment, and financial flows are concentrated in a triad of Europe, Japan, and North America and look likely to remain so; they therefore contend it is more appropriate to talk of “triadization” rather than globalization. The third-wave theorists stress the unprecedented nature of current economic, political, and cultural flows and levels of global interconnectedness as a result of the combined forces of modernity. Globalization is therefore not just motored by capitalism, but by industrialization, the nation-state, technological and scientific developments, critical thinking, and so on.<sup>26</sup>

It seems that scholars disagree on many aspects of globalization, but here are things they agree on. First, globalization is taking place in a post-colonial era when

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<sup>26</sup> Hopper, *Understanding Cultural Globalization*, 9.

empires have collapsed and colonized territories have almost all gained sovereignty worldwide. Theoretically, every country enjoys equal autonomy and political rights. Second, globalization entails the circulation of cultural products and capital across national boundaries. Third, the flow of cultural products and capital follow certain rules that can be best described as a world-system: stronger countries are able to trade on terms that allow surplus-value to flow from the weaker ones, or the periphery, to the stronger, core countries.<sup>27</sup>

Whether globalization is an intensification of capital expansion is contentious, but labor divisions among different nation-states and a constant incorporation of nation-states into the system are apparently going on. The imbalance between the core and the periphery is dealt with in detail in Joseph E. Stiglitz's *Globalization and its discontents*. The question is the system of cultural products, and specifically, literary circulations, can be mapped onto the world economic system.

Alexander Beecroft attempted to overlay economy and culture in his essay, "World literature without a hyphen." He argues that a more immediate point of the origin of "world literature" is Immanuel Wallerstein. Wallerstein replaces nation-state with historical world-systems as the proper units of analysis, especially for the contemporary world-economy with a large axial division of labor, multiple political centers, and multiple cultures. Beecroft points out that the "world," as in world-system and world-economy, actually has nothing to do with the ontological world, but rather it is a system within which the circulation of capital and the division of labor are taking place. Beecroft borrows Wallerstein's model for his explanation of world-literature in the sense that

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<sup>27</sup> Wallerstein, *World-systems analysis*, 12.

“world-literature” refers to the circulation and production of literature within a system, but not to the sum total of the literature produced in the whole world, or “world literature without a hyphen.” As for whether world-literature systems can or cannot neatly map onto political-economic systems of the “world” per se, his subsequent juxtaposition of two world-literature systems from Pascale Casanova and Franco Moratti shows divergent views on the problem. Casanova’s model of a world-system of literary circulation and exchange centered on Paris and a given nation’s access to “literature” are functions of its recognition as such by Paris. She identifies a parallel between the inequalities of what she calls “national history” and the inequalities in literary resources between nations, but she sees these parallels as analogical rather than causal.<sup>28</sup> In other words, in her system, the circulation of literature and the circulation of political-economic power operate separately. Although the two show parallels with each other, it is not necessary that the former is the result of the latter. On the other hand, Moratti is very clear about the causal relation of the two. In Moratti’s world-system of modern novels, he argues that core cultures develop new genres for export to the periphery and the mapping of that distribution of labor onto the core-periphery relations of the larger economy is too neat to be accidental.<sup>29</sup>

How did the relationship between power and literary circulation operate in the Chinese cosmopolis before 1,000 CE? First, there existed an interstate relationship of core, semi-periphery, and periphery among China, Korea, and Japan in the first millennium, which distinguished it from the political orders in the Latin cosmopolis and the Sanskrit cosmopolis. For the Latin cosmopolis, there was only one political unity;

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<sup>28</sup> Beecroft, “World literature without a hyphen,” 89.

<sup>29</sup> Beecroft, “World literature without a hyphen,” 91.

thus the circulation of literature was horizontal within the empire: no matter that the literature was produced in one part of the empire, it circulated to other parts of the empire without restriction. For the Sanskrit cosmopolis, even though there were different polities within it, there was no center. Literature in Sanskrit circulated freely and horizontally in different polities of the cosmopolis irrespective of the political-economy of the region. Nevertheless, in the Chinese cosmopolis, the circulation of literature was vertical or from the center to the periphery and not vice-versa. Literature produced in classical Chinese in Korea and Japan was not meant to circulate within the whole system but was almost always restrained to the country of production. This vertical circulation and limitation on peripheral production indicated a political, cultural, and economic hierarchy. This mode of literary production somewhat resembled national literatures of the peripheral countries today, not because they were not within the global language of the day, but because circulation of their literatures to the core culture(s) was not abetted by their political-economic power. Indeed, the literary world-system can map nicely onto the world-system of politics and economy in the Chinese cosmopolis. It seems that among the three cosmopolises in question, only the Sanskrit cosmopolis demonstrated a separation of power from literary circulation.

Another major difference between the three is that before the spread of the Latin and Sanskrit languages into contiguous areas, there existed vernacular languages (albeit with no corresponding written scripts in the case of Europe). Latin imposed itself on all these vernacular languages with its projection of political-economic power, but in the Sanskrit cosmopolis, vernacular languages coexisted with Sanskrit. It was only for literature that writers used Sanskrit instead of the vernaculars. Vernaculars were used for

official matters. In contrast to the Latin and Sanskrit cases, before the expansion of the Chinese language, Korea and Japan did not have writing systems, but of course, they did have vernacular languages. In this regard, they had to overcome the barrier of cultural insufficiency. The differences and similarities lead us to conclude that three types of cosmopolitanism existed at approximately the same period of time in the world. If the Latin cosmopolis and the Sanskrit cosmopolis respectively represented a coercive and a voluntaristic cosmopolitanism, the Chinese cosmopolis can best be called a world-system cosmopolis that demonstrates the closest resemblance to the current globalism in power structure, but the literary Chinese cosmopolis was limited by geographical scope.

I propose to test my hypothesis of a Chinese cosmopolis by looking at the two most prominent writers of classical Chinese in ninth-century Korea and Japan, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn from Silla Korea and Sugawara no Michizane from Heian Japan. In my scheme, they are the best representatives of literary production from a semi-periphery and a periphery in the literary Chinese cosmopolis. In the case of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, if the rich reservoir of Korean *hanmun* literature can be somewhat fathomed and its source can be traced to a few individuals, Ch'oe undoubtedly stands out as “the first person to break all precedents.”<sup>30</sup> Through Korean history, Ch'oe has been associated with legends, folktales, and is the misattributed author of texts that borrowed his name but may be later forgeries. In the Chosŏn dynasty, he was worshipped in the Confucian shrines along with Confucius. In a nutshell, his position as the founding figure of Korean Confucianism and Korean *hanmun* literature is deeply rooted in Korean culture. Likewise, Sugawara no Michizane in Japan enjoyed an equally well-known

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<sup>30</sup> This comment is made by Yi Kyubo (1168-1241) of the Koryŏ dynasty.

name for his literary achievements in *kanbun* and scholarship in general. He was deified as the god of scholarship enshrined in the many Tenmangu shrines across Japan. The Tenmangu are one of the most important categories of Shinto shrines in modern Japan. Thus, Ch'oe and Sugawara parallel each other not only as temporal contemporaries, but also as being the most influential writers of their time. Before moving to these specific case studies, let us first bring our historical narrative forward to sketch their cosmopolis.

From the political aspect, the Han Empire collapsed in 202 CE and from the beginning of the fourth century, mainland Chinese powers lost political control of the northeastern territories, although large parts of these areas had been under the rule of the Han Empire. The post-Han situation in the area saw the three Korean kingdoms competing with each other to realize unification of the whole peninsula. Their competition actively adopted advanced cultural elements from mainland Chinese polities, but they were also involved in wars with the Chinese polities, especially in the Koguryō case. Koguryō's struggle with Chinese states and the other two Korean states lasted for nearly three centuries until it was overtaken by the allied military forces of Silla and Tang China in 668 CE. A few years before that, the allied forces had already defeated the Kingdom of Paekche, which led to a large influx of refugees into Japan. Japan's involvement with political struggles on the continent had been on-going for quite some time, and it had been an ally of Paekche. Taking advantage of Tang's engagement with Tibet in the west, Unified Silla, the newly victorious state on the peninsula, repulsed Tang's army from the peninsula. During the Han, China was an ambitious colonizer, but from the fourth century, China's position in the area can be best described as that of a

hegemon. The leadership in the area was based on mutual consent, but not on political subjugation, even though Chinese armies campaigned against Koguryō in the Sui and Tang periods without successfully bringing it under Chinese control.

Economically, China maintained tributary relationships with all peripheral countries. Hamashita Takeshi analyzed the ancient Chinese “tribute” system and proposed a separate Chinese-based Asian world-economy in his articles entitled “The tribute trade system and modern Asia” and “Japan and China in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.” Hamashita argues that East Asian history is the history of a unified system characterized by internal tribute-trade relations, with China at the center.

The ideal of Sinocentrism was not solely a preoccupation of China but substantially shared throughout the tribute zone.... Satellite tribute zones surrounding the Chinese-dominated one had a historical existence of their own which continued.... Thus all these countries maintained satellite tribute relations with each other that constituted links in a continuous chain. The other fundamental feature of the system that must be kept sight of is its basis in commercial transactions. The tribute system in fact paralleled, or was in symbiosis with, the network of commercial trade relations. For example, trade between Siam, Japan and Southern China had long been maintained on the basis of profits from the tribute missions, even when much of the non-tribute trade was scarcely remunerative....the story of the commercial penetration of Chinese merchants into South-East Asia and the emigration of Chinese merchants into South-East Asia and the emigration of “overseas Chinese” is historically intertwined with the building of this trade network. Commercial expansion and the tribute-trade network developed together. Trade relations in East and South-East Asia expanded as tribute relations expanded. It should be noted that this tribute trade functioned as an intermediated trade between European countries and the countries of East Asia.... tribute relationships in fact constituted a network of tribute trade of a multilateral type, absorbing commodities from outside the network...to sum up, the entire tribute and interregional trade zone had its own structural rules which exercised systematic control through silver circulation and with the Chinese tribute system at the center. This system, encompassing East and South-East Asia was articulated with neighboring trade zones such as India, the Islamic regions and Europe.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted by Frank in Frank, *ReOrient*, 113. Originally in Hamashita, “The Tribute System and Modern Asia,” 94, 92, 97.

It seems that tributary relationships, normally considered to be a gesture of political subjugation, can be shed light from a different angle. Even if tributary relationships were based on hierarchy, for example, Koreans and Japanese sent tributary missions to China, and they returned with lavish Chinese gifts, not vice versa, the tributary structure was the means by which countries built up trade relations with one another, because the tributary structures contained control mechanisms licensing traders and policing pirates.

China's core position both economically and politically accorded well with its cultural importance. The flow of cultural capital, foremost of which were Chinese characters, exemplified the core, semi-periphery, and periphery world order of the Chinese cosmopolis. Here, to explain the mechanism of how culture products circulate, I will focus on Korea's position as semi-periphery in transmitting Chinese culture to the Japanese archipelago. In elaborating semi-periphery, Wallerstein writes,

In the beginning of the twenty-first century, some obvious countries to be labeled semiperipheral are South Korea, Brazil, and India—countries with strong enterprises that export products (for example steel, automobiles, pharmaceuticals) to peripheral zones, but that also regularly relate to core zones as importers of more “advanced” products.<sup>32</sup>

Whether Korea's place as a semi-periphery both in pre-modern and modern globalizations is contingent or fateful is an interesting topic, but Korea's function as a transmitter of Chinese culture to Japan is beyond doubt.

First, it may have been the Koreans who first taught the Japanese how to utilize Chinese characters to transcribe their language. It seems clear to us today that the large numbers of Chinese characters (*kanji* in Japanese, *hanja* in Korean) existing in both the Japanese and Korean languages indicate close ties with Chinese. In fact, the Korean and

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<sup>32</sup> Wallerstein, *World-systems analysis*, 30.

Japanese languages do not share any common grammatical features with Chinese. In contrast to Chinese, Korean and Japanese have a subject-object-verb syntax and inflected verbal and adjectival forms that are characteristic of, for example, Turkish and Mongolian. How to use the Chinese script to transcribe the inflected forms and particles of vernacular Korean became a real challenge. Sölch'ong is said to be the first person on the peninsula to devise a transcribing system called *idu* (clerk reading) in the late seventh century in Silla. Basically, it used Chinese characters to represent Korean particles and the inflected forms of verbs and adjectives. For example, this sentence is from a *Hyangga* (folk song) from the seventh (?) century, “善化公主主隱...” Up to the first four characters, it makes perfect sense in Chinese, meaning Princess Sönhwa, but the fifth and the sixth characters merely represent the sound of an honorific suffix (님) and a particle in Korean (은). The use of Chinese characters to represent Korean suffixes, post-positions, honorifics, and even verb conjugations was innovative and a similar practice occurred in Japan at the same time. In other words, regarding the fifth and sixth characters (主 and 隱), the Chinese readings were probably phonetically close to the Korean honorific suffix and that of a particle and were borrowed merely for their sound value, regardless of their Chinese meanings. This type of hybrid form of Korean songs, written in the oldest of the *idu* family called *hyangch'al*, is believed to be the earliest recorded vernacular literature in Korea.

In the same vein, *Manyōshū*, the first anthology of Japanese poetry compiled in 759 CE, which is deemed by many to preserve one of the earliest forms of the Japanese language, is written in a hybrid form similar to Korean *hyangch'al*. Actually, the Chinese characters used as phonograms in *Manyōshū* came to be called *manyōgana*, or an

adaptation of Chinese characters that set a foundation for later development into the Japanese script or *kana* in the tenth century. Pointing out that there are two types of phonograms in the *Man'yōshū*: *ongana* and *kungana*, depending on whether the *on* or the *kun* readings of the characters is utilized, Christopher Seeley gives an example of how *ongana*, more commonly found in the *Manyōshū*, and *kungana* work in poem 1118,

古尔 有險人母 如吾等架 弥和乃 桧原尔 挿頭折兼

*Kun reading*: いにしへにありけむ人も我がごとか三輪の桧原にかざし折りけむ

*In kana*: いにしへに,ありけむひとも,わがごとか,みわのひはらに,かざしをりけむ

(*Manyōshū*, University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center)

The sentence in question is 有險人母 (ありけむひとも). According to Seeley, to the character 險 with its middle Chinese reading being *kem*, is added a close vowel to the final consonant, in this case, *u*, to represent two syllables *kemu*. Thus, grammatically, *ke* is the past suffix and *mu* is a “probability” suffix.<sup>33</sup> To illustrate this part of the poem would be the following: 有 retains its Chinese meaning “to have;” 險 takes on the functions of suffixes to indicate past tense and probability; 人 keeps its Chinese meaning of “person,” but 母 is *ongana* with its *on* reading being utilized here to represent a Japanese particle も (meaning “too”). Then this part of the sentence can be translated to, “A person who was probably in the past, too...”<sup>34</sup>

However, is *manyōgana* a true invention of the Japanese? Regarding the origin of *manyōgana*, John Bentley studied the oldest extant inscriptions of Koguryō, Paekche, and

<sup>33</sup> Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan*, 50.

<sup>34</sup> For more recent illustrations on *Man'yōgana*, see Lurie, *Realms of Literary*, 259ff.

Silla that used Chinese graphs as phonograms and concluded that the Chinese orthographic system took the following journey from China on its way to the Japanese archipelago: China—Koguryō—Paekche and Silla, then Paekche—Yamato. Therefore, *man'yōgana* is indebted most to the Paekche people.<sup>35</sup> His argument is corroborated by the ancient Japanese texts, the *Kojiki* (620 CE) and *Nihon shoki* (720 CE), when they record that Paekche savants taught Chinese and probably the use of Chinese characters to render suffixes and inflections to the Yamato court.

Exporting the Chinese language and its accompanying literature, aesthetics, and ethics to the archipelago by the Koreans may have well continued into the Heian period. As pointed out by Robert Borgen,

When Japan's first university was established [for learning Confucian classics], probably as part of the *omi* Codes promulgated around 670, its first president was a Korean. Details of this early institution are few, but the names of five professors from the seventh century survive, all with Korean surnames. The services of such men were officially recognized when two groups of low-ranking scribes said to have been descended from Japan's earliest Korean teachers were specifically given the privilege of admission to the university. Korean influence continued through the Nara period, when of the twenty-two professors whose names survive, nine were of Korean origin, as were seven of the thirteen men known to have taken the civil service examination.<sup>36</sup>

Initially, Korea played an important role in introducing Chinese culture to Japan, but later on, especially, during the Heian period, the Japanese earnestly modeled themselves after the Tang Chinese by maintaining direct and frequent contact with the continent up to the tenth century.

Korea and Japan during the first millennium were quickly transformed by the cultural norms brought in from China, but this does not mean an acculturation or a

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<sup>35</sup> Bentley, "The Origin of Man'yōgana," 72.

<sup>36</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 71.

displacement of native cultures in the two regions. At any given moment, one will find the elements of Chinese culture coexisting with native cultures. By the tenth century, large numbers of literary works in Chinese had been produced, and there appeared prominent literary figures whose Chinese literary skills paralleled those of the best writers in China, among whom are Kūkai (774-875, Japanese), Sugawara no Michizane (845-903, Japanese), and Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn (857-?, Korean). What follows is a comparative study on the two most famous literary Chinese writers, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn (857-?) in Silla Korea, and Sugawara no Michizane (845-903) in Heian Japan. The fact that they were contemporaries may strike us as a coincidence, but this comparative study will go back to the vibrant network of scholarship of their time to examine whether their lives were coincidental or aspects of a larger whole.

## 1.2. Defining terms: What is literary Chinese? What is the “literary Chinese cosmopolis”?

### a. Generalizations and theoretical issues

The rationale of a “literary Chinese cosmopolis” rests upon a language called literary Chinese that has its origin in geographical China but travelled beyond its origin far into other territories that were linguistically heterogeneous. Literary Chinese thus is seen as a cohesive and cosmopolitan language that is communicable within this multi-lingual area, and this area is what is referred to here as the “literary Chinese cosmopolis.” The very notion of “literary Chinese cosmopolis” immediately invites at least two questions: First, is literary Chinese a cohesive language? Second, if we accept that there is a language called literary Chinese that travelled to linguistically heterogeneous areas, there must have been a split between this language and the local vernaculars. How should we describe such a split or indeed was there such a split in the first place? Nearly all discussions hereafter focus on the first millennium and attempt to explain the formation of a literary Chinese cosmopolis.

With regard to what is literary Chinese, the first useful step towards a clarification would be to separate literary Chinese used in geographical China from that used in other areas. In a sense, we are dealing with generalization while not losing sight of details. The other way around makes good sense too, that is, we are dealing with specific cases while not losing the whole picture. Cleaving to either end: an overgeneralization or a particularization, will obstruct the view and lead to biased observations. If we accept that there is a language called Chinese that has its history (no matter how much it indeed represents or conceptualizes the diverse realities over the broad span of history), we are

talking about a general term “Chinese” that constructs a linguistic community as a unity in general and the written language for that linguistic community is called “literary Chinese.” In all, whenever I mention China, I mean linguistic China based on the language of spoken and written Chinese with acknowledgement of the gap between the two and a geographical China with different demarcations over history. In other words, though there must be “travel” of certain styles of writing or dialect within this community, the premise here is that exchange was an internal issue and the Chinese language was stable over history *in general*.

It is noticeable that different terms are used loosely for the writing culture of pre-modern China, such as literary Chinese, classical Chinese, or Classical Chinese. There are conventional usages of these terms and let us begin with those, while my usage will be defined later. To begin with, Classical Chinese (with an uppercase C) refers to the language in use in the philosophical canons composed mainly during the Spring and Autumn period. Its development, according to Wilkinson, is “from the Han onward, literary Chinese modeled on Classical Chinese developed. As time went by it was left behind by developments in the standard vernacular and in the dialects.”<sup>37</sup> This is to say, Classical Chinese, literary Chinese, vernacular Chinese in various dialects should be treated as different species within one family of the Chinese language. The caveats: first, Classical Chinese may have died with the bygone era when Confucius and other master philosophers were alive. Classical Chinese is supposed to be the spoken language of that era as, for example, the *Analects* is a record of the speeches and utterances of Confucius, which means that is the way Confucius spoke. Literary Chinese, based on the model of

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<sup>37</sup> Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 19.

Classical Chinese, was an effort to retrieve a language of the past, and thus a contrived language. It does not accord to the vernacular language from the Han era on, but evolved by gaining influence from the vernacular. While literary Chinese strove to be like Classical Chinese, it enriched itself by absorbing vocabulary and expressions from the vernacular but kept the form of Classical Chinese. Or to put it another way, literary Chinese is a hybrid of a dead language and a living language. Both Classical Chinese and literary Chinese are referred to as “classical Chinese” in a general sense. On the contrary, vernacular Chinese in different dialects kept evolving at their own paces, but they certainly intertwined with literary Chinese through exchanging vocabulary and the like. So, to what extent can we claim the death of classical Chinese? Classical Chinese (with an uppercase C) regained its life through literary Chinese, and literary Chinese evolved with time, thus, the only dead language is the Classical Chinese of the pre-Qin era, not the literary Chinese used from the Han dynasty onward.

The above is an outline of the conventional usages of Classical Chinese, literary Chinese, and classical Chinese. Now, let us turn to my usage of the three terms and the concept of “literary Chinese,” in particular, which takes account of stylistic and prosodic differences. “Literary Chinese” was first introduced to refer to Han-dynasty (written) Chinese, also called *shiwēn* 時文 (modern prose) as opposed to “classical Chinese,” a contrived style modeled on pre-Qin writing. This “classical Chinese” was associated with the *guwēn* 古文 (ancient-style prose), when it made a strong comeback in the mid-Tang dynasty. The competition between *guwēn* and *shiwēn* has been consistent in the writing culture of China, and I use “literary Chinese” to mean a combination of the two as a written language, with *shiwēn* and *guwēn* being its variations pertaining to the style

employed. The pre-Qin writings, such as the *Analects* and other Master literature, are referred to as “Classical Chinese.” Throughout this research, I use “classical Chinese” (with a lower case C) to refer to the *guwen* style of writing, one variation of “literary Chinese,” as opposed to *shiwēn* (modern prose). My use of “classical Chinese” is different from the conventional usage, which, as mentioned above, includes both “Classical Chinese” and “literary Chinese.” However, I do not use “literary Chinese” for the diverse writing cultures in Korea (*hanmun*), Japan (*kanbun*), and elsewhere. I opt for a term “literary Sinitic,” which was coined by Victor Mair. In this regard, I agree with Ross King<sup>38</sup> in preferring the term “Sinitic,” but for different reasons that will be explained later. The following flowchart will be helpful in understanding my definition of terms.

Classical Chinese (pre-Qin)  
Literary Chinese (Han onwards) --- *guwen* (classical Chinese; a contrived style modeled on Classical Chinese)  
 --- *shiwēn* (modern prose)

To have at least two categories that separate “literary Chinese” from *hanmun* and *kanbun* (or as defined above “literary Sinitic”) is useful, as there is no evidence showing that literary Chinese is a linguistically or genetically different species than spoken Chinese over history. Literary Chinese, to a certain extent, accords to the grammar of spoken Chinese apparently more than spoken Korean and spoken Japanese—it is by far the only code of writing by the Chinese literati for nearly two thousand years, as opposed to other options for Koreans and Japanese such as *idu* or *kana*. Recent scholarship has been devoted to highlighting the “silent” feature of literary Chinese, that is, it is a *written*

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<sup>38</sup> King, “Ditching ‘diglossia’: Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea,” 1-19.

language—no one can converse in it and that makes it startlingly different from Latin and Sanskrit. Moving along this vein, literary Chinese has come to gain the misnomers of “silent language” or even “dead language” to indicate its “divorce” from speech. It is at this particular point that scholars direct their deconstructive arsenal towards the integrity of “literary Chinese” in China by highlighting the diversity of its forms and modes of production due to such a divorce. A corollary of this stance is to view those writings by Koreans and Japanese on a par with that of the Chinese in terms of validity and legitimacy, as we can see below from the example of using the term “literary Sinitic” to merge the two categories: literary Chinese used inside China and that used outside China.

The current scholarly debates unexceptionally focus on literary Chinese used outside of geographical China such as in Korea and Japan and the oblique and enduring question rendered in a prosaic way is, if Koreans and Japanese wrote in literary Chinese and its deviations, how should their writings be defined? A consensus seems to have been formed in recent years, that is, to ditch “Chinese” whenever possible. Cho Tong-il, for one, has written, “The visual aspect of the common classical language of East Asia confirms the unity of a civilization, the audial aspect its diversity. The term classical or written ‘Chinese’ is inadequate, as it leads to misunderstanding of both aspects.” Cho goes on to claim that “since no-one in Korea, Japan or Vietnam can opt for the term ‘Chinese,’ this term is in effect out-voted.”<sup>39</sup>

The audial aspect refers to the phonetics of literary Chinese used in Korea. Cho’s argument concerning the phonetic aspects of literary Chinese in Korea echoes what Samuel Martin calls the pronunciation of Chinese characters in Korea as “corrupted.” It is

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<sup>39</sup> King, “Ditching ‘diglossia’: Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea,” 7.

widely assumed that by the time of *Hunmin chǒng'ŭm* in the fifteenth century CE, there were indeed different ways to pronounce Chinese characters in Korea (just as in China itself), but they were largely unified by the promulgations of two regulations: *Hunmin chǒng'ŭm* (訓民正音) and *Tongguk chǒng'ŭn* (東國正韻). However, these pronunciations, without a doubt, reflect middle Chinese pronunciations if not preserving them. It is probably not proper to call Korean pronunciations “corrupted;” “localized pronunciations derived from middle Chinese” would be fairer. However, the phonetics of Chinese characters used in Korea was not a pure invention on the part of the Koreans as they were perhaps closer to middle Chinese than the modern standardized Mandarin or *Putonghua*, and the *hundok* (J. *kundoku*) of “Chinese characters” has been almost entirely lost in Korea.

If in Korea, the audial aspect was unified after the reign of King Sejong, Japan presents a contrast. Even in modern Japanese, there have been no unified readings of “Chinese characters.” It is true, as pointed out by Peter Kornicki, that there is no “authentic” or “correct” way of pronouncing literary Chinese. However, that does not mean phonetics are totally random. Other than the *kunyomi* of the characters, they largely derived from three areas and reflected three systems of pronunciation: *goon* (吳音), *kan'on* (漢音) and *tōon* (唐音). They each reflect the pronunciation of the Wu Kingdom in the Jiangnan area (one of the three Kingdoms in the post-Han era, *goon*), the pronunciation of Chang'an as Tang's capital (*kan'on*), and the pronunciation of the central area of the Song dynasty (*tōon*). The three co-exist in modern readings of Japanese *kanji*. They show traces of middle Chinese pronunciations, and are by no means invented by the Japanese. This way of reading *kanji* is called *onyomi* as opposed to

*kunyomi* (gloss-reading). It is natural that *onyomi* reflects the diverse and un-unified pronunciations of Chinese characters in China.

It is exactly the gloss-reading (*hundok* or *kundoku*) traditions in Korea and Japan we must turn to, because for a lot of scholars focusing on Korea and Japan, the local way or vernacular way of reading literary Chinese texts supports the claim of “literary Chinese” as a “silent language,” in addition to the fact that in China, the language was not conversable,<sup>40</sup> not because you could not read this language out loud, but because different traditions developed in Korea and Japan to “read” literary Chinese texts. Scholars have commonly pointed out that, in this sense, the vernaculars had always existed or were present simultaneously with the literary Chinese texts, but hidden from view. Cho goes on to suggest that this is why, in the medieval period in Korea, there was no need to replace *hanmun*, because it was viewed as an ethno-national language. Given the fact the *hyangch'al* developed in Silla to transcribe vernacular Korean, it is highly unlikely that Koreans were not aware of the differences between the two. Their deftness in dealing with “literary Chinese” may be the real reason why they did not feel the urge to replace the language. No one doubts that they could read literary Chinese texts in a vernacular way, however, it is highly improbable that they considered literary Chinese texts to be in a “Korean vernacular” through their *hundok* tradition, a technique developed out of “configuring” the *hanmun* text into Korean. If indeed they thought *hanmun* were the same as their vernacular, then writing *hansi* would be akin to writing *h'yangga*, but but in reality they were clearly differentiated via suffixes *han* and *hyang*

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<sup>40</sup> Had “literary Chinese” been conversable, the same would have happened in other regions into which it was transmitted. Its non-conversable feature in China itself predetermined how it would be transmitted into other speech communities.

devised by the Korean literati, and the Korean literati showed a preference for composing *hanshi*.

Developing arguments about configuring literary Chinese texts to be “read” in Korean or Japanese, Kin Bunkyō of Kyoto University has been particularly strong in viewing the *kundoku* tradition as a common, shared tradition of East Asia. He tries to prove that the vernaculars presented themselves in gloss-reading traditions throughout East Asia, not just in Korea and in Japan, but even in China itself. He gives examples of how Chinese put verbs at the end of sentences, and argues that this proves to be the same feature as in Japanese and Korean vernaculars. He is probably mistaken in this regard. First, there was no *kunyomi* for Chinese characters in China, while such a tradition existed in Korea and Japan. Chinese as a language developed, so that the gap between different periods was filled by notes for comprehension purposes. The alleged project was to convert literary Chinese to vernacular Chinese, but the examples he offers show only how literary Chinese was rendered into the modern vernacular, *Putonghua*; his examples are not demonstrations of any gloss-reading tradition over the history of China. If he wants to claim the existence of such a systematic technique and tradition in China, like in Korea and Japan, he must provide more evidence, instead of just offering sporadic examples.<sup>41</sup> The gloss-reading cultures in Korea and Japan should be viewed as configuration techniques of a language from a different culture, and the configuration traversed cultural differences rather than merely historical differences of the same language. Again, I am separating China from the rest. If Chinese literati can be shown to have been writing in a foreign language, such a claim would make sense, but Chinese

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<sup>41</sup> I am referring to the argument Kin made in Kin, *Kanbun to higashi ajia*, 164.

literati were not writing in other languages, such as Koreans and Japanese. Thus, a division between gloss-reading cultures inside and outside of China should be drawn clearly.

Another candidate for this common, written, classical language is the so-called “East Asian script” by a historian of Japanese language, David Lurie. This term further smashes the hierarchy of “cosmopolitan” and “vernacular” when different linguistic communities in East Asia are enabled by access to the meaning and grammar of literary Chinese used in China, ignoring the process of how Japanese took time to figure out the meaning and usages of literary Chinese and experiment with it until they became deft with the language, not to mention the role Koreans played when they first brought “Chinese” writings to Japan and functioned as instructors to educate the islanders in literary Chinese. The experimental stage in Japan with Chinese characters is well addressed by Christoph Seeley in *A history of writing in Japan*. Seeley makes clear that the education took time and was sometimes arduous. If we cannot view East Asia as a linguistically (in terms of a vernacular language) and a politically unified area, then we cannot use “East Asian script” to represent the same written language. As long as political boundaries existed and linguistic barriers obstructed the unity, a term such as “East Asian script” is not helpful.

The above are alternatives proposed by different scholars when they discard “Chinese” (more precisely “literary Chinese”) as a common, classical, written language in East Asia. More recently, following this thread, Ross King has been explicit in rejecting “Chinese” and preferring “literary Sinitic,” a term coined by Victor Mair,

By now it will be clear that I prefer Victor Mair's term 'Literary Sinitic,' if only because of the need to steer away, whenever possible, from the word 'Chinese' when discussing phenomena that require far more than just a knowledge of China and Chinese in order to understand the cosmopolitan formation in question.<sup>42</sup>

As King observes, "For Mair, Literary Sinitic is a 'demicryptography largely divorced from speech' and therefore essentially 'unsayable'."<sup>43</sup> The divorce Mair describes is a split between "written" and "spoken/vernacular" Chinese within geographical China, an internal split that I referred to above, whilst in Korea and Japan, the split is between (written) literary Chinese and (spoken) vernaculars, thus a cosmopolitan-vernacular split or external split. It is apparent here that King is confusing or substituting what is described by Mair as an internal "divorce" in China with an external "divorce" in the Korean and Japanese situations. The two splits resemble each other with regards to the gap between written and spoken traditions, however, it is the latter split that "requires far more than just a knowledge of China and Chinese in order to understand the cosmopolitan formation in question." King applies Mair's term "Literary Sinitic" indiscriminately to Korea and Japan or he expands on Mair's term "Literary Sinitic" to refer to *hanmun*, *kanbun*, or other local variations of utilizing literary Chinese without clarification. Personally, I would prefer to use "literary Chinese" for texts produced in China, and "literary Sinitic" for texts produced by non-Chinese speakers such as in *hanmun* or *kanbun*, in order to differentiate the two kinds of splits. I applaud Mair's term "Literary Sinitic," but to overemphasize the detachment of literary Chinese from the vernacular and portray it as a silent, static language is not helpful, as obviously, the two

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<sup>42</sup> King, "Ditching 'diglossia': Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea." 6-7.

<sup>43</sup> King, "Ditching 'diglossia': Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea," 5.

interacted and defined the development of each other. That changing discourse or development has always been associated with the brushes of Chinese literati over various dynasties as creators of literary Chinese texts and these were circulated widely to other regions (not the other way around). In a nutshell, for this research, I prefer to use the term “literary Chinese” whenever I talk about written culture in China, and the hyperglossic form of writing in Korea, Japan, and elsewhere. Otherwise, the writings were literary Sinitic.

It is the term “hyperglossia” that I would now like to consider. Above, I identified two kinds of splits. One between literary Chinese and spoken Chinese in China and the second split between the cosmopolitan language, in this case, literary Chinese (written) and local vernaculars (spoken) in Korea and Japan. Now let us challenge the splits. With regards to the first type of split, no disagreement has been voiced, that is, there is no denial of the dis-accord between language in writing and language in speaking in pre-modern China. It is the second split that draws our attention. Before we direct our discussion to the second type of split, it is necessary to first look at the technical term “diglossia.” In a large sense, the term “diglossia” describes both types of splits mentioned above (inside and outside China). The term starts with Ferguson (1959)

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> King, “Ditching ‘diglossia’: Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea,” 1.

In the case of China, this definition can refer to literary Chinese that derived from the “Classical Chinese” of the pre-Qin period, “an earlier period,” that “is learned largely by formal education,” and is “used for most written purposes.” In the cases outside China, this definition can refer to the writing culture in “literary Chinese” (often reconfigured to conform to cultural contexts and contacts in Korea and Japan with the literary Chinese texts in China, in addition to Korean and Japanese formal education in the same pre-Qin texts) produced by “another speech community” and is “used for most written purposes,” too. As we can see, the term is meant to be all-encompassing without discrimination of linguistic or “speech” communities involved. Thus, diglossia can be applied to both situations I referred to above, an internal split and an external split. I highly doubt Sinologists would argue the absence of such a diglossia in pre-modern China. This is particularly true in the split between *guwen* (classical Chinese) and vernacular spoken Chinese. Now let us move on to whether this definition can describe the language situation in Korea and Japan.

Ross King rejects “diglossia,” at least for Korea. The main reason cited for his rejection of the term is the “dualism” the term implies; the reason is that “Korean linguistic and inscriptional variety [was] every bit as complex as Japan, and thus ‘diglossia’ will simply not do.”<sup>45</sup> The situation in Japan was, as he quotes Wiebke Denecke in his essay,

Due to the lack of direct exposure to China, Japanese literature developed a unique trilingual constellation, in which literacy consists of the mastery of Chinese, Sino-Japanese, and Japanese literary idioms. Sino-Japanese is a highly hybrid language.... It is impossible to describe this Sino-Japanese ‘third space’ on pure linguistic grounds.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> King, “Ditching ‘diglossia’: Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea,” 9.

<sup>46</sup> King, “Ditching ‘diglossia’: Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea,” 9.

It seems that Denecke is describing modes of writing anywhere between Chinese and Japanese vernacular literacy (*kana*). Due to the multiple variations in between, di- as in diglossia suggesting “twoness,” cannot properly capture the complex multiplicity or in-betweenness. It is for this exact reason that King proposes to ditch “diglossia” for Korea.

King is correct in pointing out that “diglossia” does not describe the Korean or Japanese writing multiplicity. But the split the term implies is between the highest pole and the lowest pole, even if we acknowledge there are numerous varieties in between, so in that sense, there at least existed a hierarchy among the variations of writing modes, and they leaned towards either pole. King, however, does not specify whether the hierarchy was discarded together with the term diglossia. On the other hand, Sheldon Pollock discarded the term “diglossia” as well, but for completely different reasons. For Pollock,

That term [diglossia] as well as ‘bilingualism’ is inadequate for capturing the extreme compartmentalization—and the fact that it is society-wide—let alone difference in cultural opportunity, which are in evidence in the case of Sanskrit and such regional languages as I consider here (Kannada, Khmer, Javanese). This difference lies not merely in internal split (di-) but extreme superposition (hyper-) of different languages. The tension between, say, Sanskrit and Kannada, in the fact of this superposition marks the entire history of the latter (Pollock, 1996, 208). ...For what we encounter is not an internal split (di-) in registers and norms, typically between literary and colloquial usage, in what local actors conceived of as a single language, but a relationship of extreme superposition (hyper-) between two languages that local actors knew to be entirely different. This modality, which I will call “hyperglossia,” was ubiquitous in southern Asia before the vernacular revolution....<sup>47</sup>

Pollock’s position is that the term diglossia describes an “internal split” to the extent that we are not dealing with genetically different languages. While I do not oppose using “diglossia” to describe the split between “literary Chinese” and “spoken Chinese” in

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted by King. King, “Ditching ‘diglossia’: Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea,” 10-11.

China as mentioned before, because they are the same language, I prefer Pollock's term "hyperglossia" for Korea and Japan when it comes to writing cultures outside of China. The hyperglossic language was "literary Chinese" or the cosmopolitan language. I use "literary Sinitic" to highlight the different modes of localized "literary Chinese"—*hanmun* and *kanbun* in Korea and Japan, for example.

With regard to the "literary Chinese cosmopolis" term I propose here, I advocate that attention should be put on the common grammar, syntax, and other linguistic features one bears in mind when *composing* in literary Chinese (as opposed to *reading*). That is where the unity of this community was based, and where a cosmopolitan language can be detected. If all writers followed the same compositional rules in their production (no matter how good or bad the end products turned out to be), then they were engaging with the "cosmpololis." Emphasizing the diverse reading cultures across East Asia, and various types of "dissolved literary Chinese" in the vernaculars, as Kin Bunkyō, David Lurie, and Ross King appear to be doing, ignores the hierarchy of culture that was in play and is akin to throwing the baby out with the bathwater. For after all, if there was no cosmopolitan language in the first place, why bother with the concept of cosmopolis? In all, I prefer the term "hyperglossia" to emphasize hierarchy and describe the external split in Korea and Japan. The hyperglossic form in the "hyperglossia" was "literary Chinese" as the cosmopolitan language.

To re-state matters, I use "Classical Chinese" to refer to the pre-Qin form of written Chinese. I use "literary Chinese" to refer to the post-Han adaptations of pre-Qin forms inside China, and I use "literary Sinitic" to refer to how "literary Chinese" ended up in Korea and Japan or became a "localized literary Chinese." My title, "Literary

Chinese Cosmopolis” then refers to the engagement by Korean and Japanese writers not in their localized literary Chinese spheres, but in the cosmopolis when they wrote in a language that was intelligible to native Chinese writers, as well as to one another. In short, the literary Chinese cosmopolis was a community where literary Chinese (*wenyan*) functioned as a cosmopolitan, written language that was universally comprehensible and used as a means of communication as well as for literature. Ross King prefers “Sinographic Cosmopolis,” but this term only refers to content or syntax and ignores the prosody based on the oral values of Chinese characters. This point will be addressed in the contextualized examples that follow.

b. Contextualized examples: cross-cultural communications in the ninth century

To balance the above generalization and theoretical issues, the following will focus on the mechanisms of communication in “literary Chinese” outside of geographical China in the ninth century. My intention of contextualization lies in that, without a specific context when vernaculars and a cosmopolitan language are in use at one particular moment, all discussions above would be a seesaw game between “overgeneralization and particularization.” In the ninth century, cross-cultural communications, during which literary Chinese skills were indispensable, were normally conducted through “brush-talk.” These talks took place between diplomats and among literati of different countries. This form of communication was commonplace in the ninth century and well extended to later periods. Here the focus is rather on a literary genre developed out of the cross-cultural special context of the “literary Chinese cosmopolis” as a hyperglossic form, the *chang-he* 唱和 poems or *chou-chang* 酬唱 poems (*sing-echo*

poems, thank-in-return poems). If brush-talk is prosaic, the latter is a way to showcase excellence in literary achievements conducted at diplomatic occasions and normally involved top figures demonstrating the best writing skills in literary Chinese in that country. By way of example, here we will see the exchanges between Parhae/Bohai envoys and Sugawara no Michizane in the ninth century.

Starting from 772, the kingdom of Parhae/Bohai remitted a total of thirty-four embassies to Nara-Heian Japan during its two hundred or so years of history. A well-documented one involving Michizane was a mission headed by Ambassador Pae Chǒng (裴頌 Ch. Pei Ting) with a group of one hundred and five followers who disembarked on the shore of Kaga province on the fourteenth day, the eleventh month of 882. The embassy was treated with liberal hospitality. The efforts taken by the court include delivering wine and delicacies: meat, fish, pheasant, and garlic, to Kaga province for feasting the envoys; repairing official guesthouses, roads, and bridges along the route they took to enter the capital and interring unknown corpses on the roadside. At the same time, the court appointed special-occasional officials to handle the reception of the foreign embassy. In recognizing that the Parhae/Bohai Ambassador, Pae Chǒng, was a particularly talented scholar skilled in Chinese verses, Sugawara no Michizane and his former tutor, Shimada no Tadaomi, known as the best poets of their time, were promoted to receive the guests from afar with Michizane given the post of senior assistant minister of civil affairs from his original post of “junior assistant minister of ceremonial and professor of literature.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 231-232.

Japanese official chronicles record an awkward incident on the seventh or eighth day of the month at the farewell banquet after the official trade between the envoys and the court were concluded. Borgen describes it as below,

At the last moment, the official who had been delegated to serve as personal attendant to the foreign guests had had to withdraw. Fujiwara no Yoshitsumu, a man known for his grace and good manners, was quickly summoned to perform those duties, Ambassador Pae Chōng was impressed with him, and during the course of the banquet suddenly reached for his brush and inkstone with the intention of presenting him a poem. Yoshitsumu, however, was either not skilled at composition or had not had time to prepare any poems for the occasion. In any event, he was not ready to exchange verses and hastily absented himself.<sup>49</sup>

Following the description, Borgen also points out that,

This seemingly minor incident, carefully recorded in Japanese official chronicle, reveals the importance of *kanshi* as a part of diplomacy. To be caught without a poem in Chinese was a great source of embarrassment. The Japanese had gone to great lengths to entertain their guests magnificently and were anxious also to display their literary accomplishments. Such efforts were essential if Japan was to maintain the fiction that it was a superior nation to which Parhae/Bohai was a mere vassal. Michizane and Tadaomi were in effect officially designated poet laureates whom the court hoped would represent Japan well in a sort of poetic competition with Ambassador Pae.<sup>50</sup>

Composing Chinese verses in a competition to showcase a nation's literary accomplishment and indicate their close ties with Chinese civilization, had been conducted at diplomatic occasions as a routine, and in this particular case, between Parhae/Bohai and Heian outside of China. It was communication as well as competition, and, more importantly, these compositions were indicators of ranking in the hierarchy of the literary Chinese cosmopolis. Michizane's grandson is even more explicit in linking Chinese verses with diplomacy, indeed, with prestige,

Some years later, Michizane's grandson Fumitoki (899-981) made this connection between poetry and diplomacy more explicit. In 957, he presented a memorial

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<sup>49</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 235.

<sup>50</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 235.

recommending, among other things, that the Foreign Envoy's Quarters, then in ruins, be rebuilt. His reasoning was that foreign guests of state were always received by men of learning, and so a new building would inspire poets to study literature in Chinese.<sup>51</sup>

If the above is about how important it was for Japanese literati of the time to master Chinese verses and compose them at diplomatic occasions representing their nation, the following describes Michizane's composition techniques.

*Chang-he* poems involve at least two parties: the first person, the initiator or the singing person, sets up a rhyme scheme, and the other one, the respondent or the echoing person, composes a poem using the rhyme scheme designated by the first person. The *Kanke bunsō* collects Michizane's *chang-he* poems exchanged with Ambassador Pae.

According to the preface Michizane wrote reporting their activities to the court, the poetic exchange started on the twenty-ninth day of the fourth month with poems using the rhyme of “line,”<sup>52</sup> and concluded on the eleventh day of the fifth month with poems of gratitude for the imperial gifts of clothing that had been received.

The rhyme scheme of the character “line” can be seen in Poem 104, collected in Book 2 of the *Kanke bunsō*,<sup>53</sup>

掌上明珠舌下霜  
風情潤色使星光  
春遊惣轡州司馬  
夏熱交襟典客朗  
恨我分庭勞引導  
饒君遇境富文章  
若教毫末逢閑日  
莫惜縱容損數行

<sup>51</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 235.

<sup>52</sup> Borgen translated it as “to go,” but in the context, this character means line. It has two readings in modern Chinese, *xing* (to go) and *hang* (line).

<sup>53</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 190-191.

First, it is a modern-style, regulated, seven-syllable poem. Since it is regulated, the two lines in each of the four couplets should be parallel. More importantly, the ending characters of the four couplets should belong to the same rhyme group. It is apparent here that the underlined four characters are all in the same rhyme group of *hang* in the *Qieyun*, a rhyme book from the Six Dynasty period in China. When the scheme is set, that is, the four characters are set, the echoing person can compose a totally different poem but target the four characters as the rhyme. Thus, the singing party and the echoing party achieve harmony. We see that an immediate poem following Poem 104 used the same rhyme scheme, which means that Michizane was playing with the scheme multiple times. Indeed, numerous poems can be composed bearing these characters as the rhyme scheme.

However, since Ambassador Pae and Michizane were following the same rhyming scheme, that means there was a convention that can be followed and that convention was widely acknowledged and used. We can discover today that they were following the rhyme table of *Qieyun*. The transmission of *Qieyun* together with a dictionary regulating the reading of Chinese characters, the *Yupian*, to Japan is credited to the Monk Kūkai, also in the ninth century. Since Parhae/Bohai was geographically closer to China, it was probably easier and speedier for transmission of this type of composition regulation to Parhae/Bohai than to Heian. We can safely argue that the Parhae/Bohai Ambassador and Michizane were composing *kanshi* in totally different geographical regions, but following what was deemed to be the convention of the day, that is, the compositional rules laid out in Tang China. They were engaged with the “literary Chinese cosmopolis” and not with a “Classical Chinese cosmopolis” or with a “literary Sinitic” cosmopolis.

## Summation

To sum up, the recent discussions on a relationship between a cosmopolitan written language and vernaculars in East Asia have drifted away from an irreconcilable dichotomy between a high language and a low language and towards an emphasis on the diversity of “reading” cultures. Thus, many scholars have arrived at a dissolved “cosmopolitan” written language in different cultural contexts that would be considered a vernacular rather than a cosmopolitan language. By inverting the frame to leave the center and look from the peripheries, this produces a problem for Sheldon Pollock. If scholars like Sheldon Pollock are going to look at the area, the question to ask would be more likely “where is the cosmopolitan language” rather than “where is the vernacular”?<sup>54</sup> One cannot help wonder if there is a danger involved in tossing out “diglossia,” indeed, in ditching “Chinese,” and confusing the hierarchy of different cultural productions outside of China, which ends up ignoring the existence of a “cosmopolitan language.” I, for one, would advocate “literary Chinese” as the “intended” mode of literary production and the hyperglossic form of writing in this cosmopolis. If no hierarchy existed or the cosmopolitan and the vernacular(s) were indeed equivalent, why are we drawing any difference in the first place between cosmopolitan and vernaculars?

The rest of my argument thus moved to a much more contextualized discussion of how “literary Chinese” was used as a hyperglossic form in cross-cultural communication.

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<sup>54</sup> I pose this in response to a comment by Ross King where he rejects diglossia, “[s]o in one sense, when scholars like Pollock familiar with historical processes of vernacularization in South Asia or Europe look to pre-modern East Asia and ask ‘where’s the vernacular?’ the answer is that the vernaculars were always there, but hidden from view behind *kundoku*-type vernacular reading practices.” King, “Ditching ‘diglossia’: Describing ecologies of the spoken and inscribed in pre-modern Korea,” 5.

The local actors clearly knew that they were not writing *waka* poems, but *kanshi*, and doing it in a cosmopolitan language, not in a *kundoku* version. A poem written by Michizane using the rhyme scheme of his *sing-echo* poems exchanged with Ambassador Pae of the Parhae/Bohai Kingdom shows that such rhyme schemes did not work solely in Heian, but in Parhae/Bohai and in other regions where literary Chinese was deemed to be a coherent and hyperglossic language. Its compositional rules were paid ample attention and there were criteria regarding whether the poems were “literary Chinese” works or not.

### 1.3. Defining borders: *Sakimori no uta* or Songs of the border-guards

The primary purpose of this section is to define where the boundaries lay between Silla Korea and Nara-Heian Japan in the ninth century to establish the fact that there were boundaries across which cosmopolitans of the age had to reach using a hyperglossic language. It begins with the rather puzzling identity of Tsushima, a small island in the sea between Pusan and Hakata. The close proximity of Tsushima to Pusan rather than Hakata has facilitated a misbelief among Koreans that Tsushima had been part of the royal territory of Chosŏn kings and that sovereignty extended to antiquity. This section clarifies the ambiguity Tsushima acquired in medieval and early-modern times by turning to Tsushima's appearance in the oldest extant literary anthology of Japan, the *Man'yōshū*, and particularly to a group of songs called *sakimori no uta* or "songs of the border-guards." I argue that the ancient identity of Tsushima is rather clear-cut; the *sakimori* on Tsushima, along with their sorrows and grief, longings and prayers in the *Man'yōshū*, are the best proof on where the boundaries were between Silla and Nara-Heian.

#### a. Tsushima as a frontier

The identity of Tsushima, a small island of "roughly 70 kilometers long, some 53 kilometers from the southern tip of Korea and about 90 kilometers from Kyūshū,"<sup>55</sup> can be best described as "ambiguous" in Japan's medieval and early-modern periods.

Kenneth Robinson's research on Tsushima in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries distinguishes between the island of Tsushima and the islanders on Tsushima in order to sharpen the distinction between the territorial and the jurisdictional sovereign claims of

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<sup>55</sup> Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan*, 17.

the Chosŏn kings. His argument is that Tsushima was under the territorial sovereignty of Chosŏn, but outside the jurisdictional authority of Chosŏn. In other words, Tsushima, as an island, was thought by the Chosŏn government to belong to Chosŏn, but its islanders were Japanese. His strongest piece of evidence is an entry in the *Chŏsŏn wangjo sillok*,

In early 1420 the court readily agreed to a request delivered by a Tsushima man who presented himself as Sadamori's envoy. This man informed the court that the governor wished for Tsushima to be placed within Kyŏngsang Province at the administrative level of prefecture and for the governor to be issued a seal. The Chosŏn court ordered that the governor of Tsushima no longer send communications to the Board of Rites, as had been the practice for foreign relations, and from now to address them to the governor of Kyŏngsang Province.<sup>56</sup>

This piece of evidence shows that the island was “officially” incorporated into the territorial sovereignty of Chosŏn in 1420. Even before that, a couple of years earlier, the retired King T'aejong had made a claim (without proof) that the island was within the royal realm and had his son, King Sejong, launch a campaign against the pirates inhabiting Tsushima on the nineteenth day of the sixth month in 1419.<sup>57</sup> Although Tsushima, the island, may have belonged to the Chosŏn state, its inhabitants enjoyed jurisdictional autonomy. They participated in the cultural, political, and financial lives of Kyŏngsang Province, but the islanders did not identify themselves as Koreans. Rather, they derived their political and jurisdictional authority from powers on the Japanese islands.

James Lewis attempts to capture Tsushima's liminality in the post-Imjin War<sup>58</sup> period. He draws attention to the particularities of Tsushima that mark it as Japanese: the

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<sup>56</sup> Robinson, “An Island's Place in History,” 45.

<sup>57</sup> Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan*, 25.

<sup>58</sup> Imjin War or Imjin Waeran is the Korean term for Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea in 1592-98. In Japan it is called Bunroku-Keichō no eki. Recently, new English designations have appeared: “The East Asian

“language is a Japanese dialect, and the politics, economics, social structure, and most daily customs were predominantly Japanese in that similarities with other parts of the islands outweighed similarities with peninsular models.”<sup>59</sup> “The prose of Tsushima early-modern documents was a standard Japanese epistolary style, not classical Chinese or *idu* as in Korea during the time; and the majority of important political questions for Tsushima involved the Tokugawa bakufu, not the Chosŏn government,” continues Lewis.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, he highlights Tsushima’s institutional borrowings from the peninsula: its *kanshaku* or land assessment system that more closely resembled Chosŏn Korea’s *kyŏlbu* system than Japan’s *kokudaka* system and the expansion of “unfree labor” (or slavery) to become the most common form of punishment in contrast to the general elimination of slavery on the main Japanese islands. Even more curiously, about 1,030 *tōjin* (唐人, a term used by Japanese in the Tokugawa period that referred to Koreans) were recruited by the Tsushima *daimyō* to invade Korea in Hideyoshi’s campaign. Tsushima’s ambiguous nature is further elaborated by his evidence of how much Tsushima was integrated into an economic zone that encompassed Kyŏngsang province, Tsushima, and the Waegwan in Pusan.<sup>61</sup>

The dubious nature and the ambiguity Tsushima Island had acquired by the Chosŏn period contrast to what seems to have been its clear and transparent territorial and jurisdictional sovereignty during the Nara-Heian governments or during the corresponding Unified Silla period. This section addresses the rather less ambiguous

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War” or the “Great East Asian War.” See Lewis, ed, *The East Asian War, 1592-1598*, 2015. Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan*, 33.

<sup>60</sup> Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan*, 33.

<sup>61</sup> Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan*, 27.

identity of Tsushima during the earlier period. The evidence is a cluster of *sakimori no uta* or “songs of the border-guards” in the *Man'yōshū*. My point is that this group of songs offers ethnographic evidence of Nara-Heian’s border on the west, especially with Silla. That border was demarcated by humans stationed in the coastal areas, rather than demarcated by a line in the sea between Pusan and Tsushima (as is the case today) or by an obscure zone in the sea between Tsushima and the Korean peninsula as Batten suggests.<sup>62</sup> Any non-Japanese ships that crossed the straits under the watchful eyes of the *sakimori* guards would have been subject to their military action, which constituted the deployment of Heian border control. In other words, the border was composed of about 2,000 to 3,000 human guards in Tsukushi (today’s Hakata bay area or Fukuoka City) and on Tsushima and Iki islands. As these men were concrete and real, they constituted Heian’s border on the west, and, by extension, their counterparts in southeast Korea constituted Silla’s border on the east.

*Sakimori* is the *kunyomi* (gloss-reading) of the term 防人.<sup>63</sup> In the *Man'yōshū*, this term first appears in four Chinese characters as phonograms, which means these characters are borrowed by their phonetic values rather than meaning, also referred to as *ongana*, as in the following poem,<sup>64</sup>

Poem 3569, Book 14, the *Man'yōshū*

[原文]佐伎母理尔 多知之安佐氣乃 可奈刀R尔 手婆奈礼乎思美 奈吉思兒良  
<波>母

<sup>62</sup> Batten, *To the ends of Japan*, 28-34.

<sup>63</sup> Nihon daihyakka zensho, JapanKnowledge Lib, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=1001000100272>, accessed 19 July 2017.

<sup>64</sup> Apparently this term appears as a set of four different characters in the *Man'yōshū*, which accounts for the multiple pronunciations of the term, such as in Poem 4364, Book 20. The four characters are 佐伎牟理 (*sa-ki-mu-ri*). Since Poem 3569 is sequentially before Poem 4364 in the *Man'yōshū*, I use the pronunciation of *sakimori* in this section. *Sakimori* is also commonly used in the secondary literature.

[訓読]防人に立ちし朝開の金戸出にたばなれ惜しみ泣きし子らはも<sup>65</sup>

English: When I was leaving home, conscripted as a frontier guard, she weeping bitterly, could not let go my hand.<sup>66</sup>

The underlined four characters (佐伎母理), read as *sa-ki-mo-ri*, are stripped of their original meanings and borrowed merely for their pronunciations to represent a Japanese term, *sakimori*. In this specific case, the term refers to what was probably a Japanese local official 崎守. *Saki* means peninsula and *mori*, derived from the verb *mamoru* (守る), means to “keep,” so the local term initially meant “peninsula keeper” or “peninsula guards.” Later these two characters were replaced by 防人, when the Japanese discovered in the Tang sources that Tang Chinese were using 防人 to mean frontier guards.<sup>67</sup> In Japan, when the two characters 防人 replaced the local Japanese term 崎守 (*sakimori*), the *kunyomi* of the term originated by assigning the native Japanese word to the Tang-era official title. In all, *Sakimori* refers to the border-guards who staffed the small islands of today’s northern Kyūshū area for military purposes, mainly in the Tsukushi area, on Tsushima, and on Iki islands, following the debacle of the Paekch’ŏn River battle in 663 in which the allied forces of Tang and Silla defeated those of Paekche and Yamato.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Poems (both the original and the *kundoku*) quoted are from the *Man’yōshū* online text at Japanese Text Initiative hosted by Virginia University and Pittsburg University.

<http://jti.lib.virginia.edu/japanese/manyoshu/AnoMany.html>, accessed 19 July 2017.

<sup>66</sup> Honda, *The Man’yōshū*, 262. Unless otherwise specified, all English translations are by H. H. Honda. This choice of Honda is primarily because Honda has provided a complete translation of the *Man’yōshū*, and that allows for consistency in cross-referencing, but occasionally other translations are borrowed because of their greater accuracy.

<sup>67</sup> Nihon daihyakkazensho, JapanKnowledge Lib,

<http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=1001000100272>, accessed 19 July 2017.

<sup>68</sup> For a detailed account of the battle, see Farris, *Heavenly Warriors*, 39. The battle in the Chinese and Korean sources is called *Paekganggu-jŏn* or the Battle of the mouth of the Paekgang [River] (白江口戰). Japanese sources call it the *Hakusukinoe no tataikai* (白村江の戦い), which is often taken by Western

In the *Man'yōshū*, there are five *sakimori no uta* in Book 14.<sup>69</sup> A group of 84 songs composed in 755 and nine “*sakimori no uta* of bygone years” (昔年防人歌) are collected in Book 20. In total, there are 98 *sakimori no uta* included in the *Man'yōshū*.<sup>70</sup> Being a major component of *sakimori no uta*, those from the year 755 in Book 20 offer informative glimpses of how this border-defense apparatus functioned in general and specifically in 755.

First, we know that these border-guards, as the manpower for border defense, were sourced from the Azuma no kuni (東国), which is on today's Honshu. As can be deduced from the origins of *sakimori* and the *azuma no uta* in the *Man'yōshū*, in the past, Azuma no kuni included at least the following provinces: Tōtōmi (遠江), Suruga (駿河), Izu (伊豆), Kai (甲斐), Sugami (相模), Awa (安房), Kazusa (上総), Shimōsa (下総), Hitachi (常陸) in Tōkaidō (東海道); and Shinano (信濃), Kōzuke (上野), Shimotsuke (下野), Musashi (武蔵) in Tōsandō (東山道).<sup>71</sup> However, in the late eighth and ninth centuries, there occurred a shift in the source of border-guards from Azuma no kuni to the seven provinces of mainland Kyūshū. As noted by Batten, the “[r]easons cited for this shift include the cost of transporting *sakimori* long distances, the hardships faced by the

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scholars of Japan, such as Farris, and mistakenly Romanized into Korean as the “Battle of the Paekch'on'gang (白村江).”

<sup>69</sup> Poem 3567-3571. According to Alexander Vovin, none of the poems in Book 14 are dated except one, 3399, and all poems are anonymous. The five *sakimori no uta* are from unidentified provinces as a sub-variety of relationship poems (相聞歌). Book 14 was possibly compiled before 771 AD. Vovin, *Man'yōshū: Book 14*, 2-3.

<sup>70</sup> My calculation is that only poems collected under the title of *sakimori no uta* are counted. Horton has a different calculation by including poems that mentioned *sakimori* in the content or poems for the *sakimori* in other books. See Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 526.

<sup>71</sup> Not all Eastern provinces contributed to *sakimori no uta*. Vovin has a table specifying contributions of each province for the *sakimori no uta* of 755 in Book 20. Vovin, *Man'yōshū: Book 20*, 2.

guards themselves, and the need for additional manpower along the emishi frontier.”<sup>72</sup>

This system of border defense came to an end at the beginning of the tenth century.<sup>73</sup>

To have a concrete idea of how border-guards were recruited, let us turn to Poem 4408 in the *Man'yōshū*, which describes a departure scene in the second month of 755. A border-guard was embarking on his mission.

Conscripted as a coastal guard, as I was leaving home, my mother said, caressing me together with my father whose tears streamed down his snow-white beard, “We are sad to see our only son depart; we thought to have you by us somewhat longer.” My wife and children stood beside me, piteously weeping. They clung to me, and would not let me go; By taking heart I started, looking back at each turn of the road to see my people standing still. I went my way to take ship at Naniwa. There praying at the Suminoe Shrine, with a votive offering for the god’s protection to let me survive many outward and homeward sails from isle to isle, I embarked for the perilous sea at dawn.<sup>74</sup>

This poem is from the same group of *sakimori no uta* collected in Book 20 with a headnote, “Songs of the border-guards sent in exchange to Tsukushi and other provinces in the second month of the seventh year in the era of Tenpyō shōhō (749.7.2 - 757.8.18).” That group of border-guards, though collected from different provinces, all embarked on their journeys from the port of Naniwa (in the region of today’s Osaka) as mentioned in

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<sup>72</sup> Batten, “Cross-border Traffic on the Kyushu Coast, 794-1086,” 361.

<sup>73</sup> Nihon daihyakkazensho, JapanKnowledge Lib,

<http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=1001000100272>, accessed 19 July 2017.

<sup>74</sup> 20: 4408. According to Vovin, this poem is composed by Opotōmō-nō Yakamōti, but not by border-guards. The headnote of poems 4408-4412 is, “...I composed about the feelings of *sakimori*, who grieved about parting.” Vovin, *Man'yōshū*, Book 20, 173. Vovin also employs dialectical differences between a Western dialect and an Eastern dialect to assist in determining the original location of authorship. The question of authorship raises the question of how we should treat *sakimori no uta* by impersonated author(s) and whether poems by impersonated *sakimori* are authentic and can illustrate a sense of boundary. I thank Prof. Mary Elizabeth Berry’s question on the authorship of the *sakimori no uta* at my presentation of a paper at the Association for Asian Studies annual conference for 2016 in Seattle, which alerted me to this matter. Authorship of the poem or poems does not determine the existence or non-existence of the boundaries I am investigating. In fact, if a metropole author takes on the persona of a *sakimori*, then this is evidence that the popularity of *sakimori no uta* has established as a minor literary genre and any impersonated production would still be a valid engagement of the genre and indicate widespread acceptance of the boundaries witnessed by the *sakimori*.

poem 4381, “How sad to see the wayworn fellow soldiers from many provinces set sail at Naniwa!”<sup>75</sup> Some passed by the mountain ranges in Nara on their way to Naniwa, “I set sail from Naniwa Harbor, and see white clouds above Ikoma’s range (in today’s Nara),” wrote a border-guard.<sup>76</sup> Their destination was Tsukushi as indicated in the headnote and also mentioned in poem 4398, “. . .I crossed the mountain range, and duly reached Naniwa. There now I wait for wind and tide to set sail for Tsukushi. . .”<sup>77</sup> It becomes clear that these border-guards were gathered from various provinces to set sail from Naniwa and cross the length of the Seto Inland Sea to reach Tsukushi in “lofty decorated ships.”<sup>78</sup>

With modern navigation and ship-building technology, a sea voyage through the Seto Inland Sea connecting Osaka to Kitakyūshū would take 12 hours, but in the eighth century, it probably took weeks or even months. Sailing away from home to an unknown frontier territory, we can well imagine the hardship involved in this long-distance relocation, and it was well expressed in the *sakimori no uta*. These songs are replete with sorrow, tears, prayers, painful yearnings, and fear. Departure scenes when the border-guards bid farewell to their families are the most common. Before we turn to them, let us first focus on the positive side of their experiences. In poem 4331, a border-guard expresses his pride at being enlisted to protect the royal realm. He writes,

The counties of Tsukushi where the local government is  
are the bulwark to protect this land  
against its enemies.  
We have brave men everywhere  
here in the country,  
but no warriors can compare  
with those of Kanto.  
Therefore I, a native thereof, start now,

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<sup>75</sup> 20: 4381, by *sakimori*. For authorship, Vovin, *Man’yōshū: Book 20*, 1.

<sup>76</sup> 20: 4380, by *sakimori*. For authorship, Vovin, *Man’yōshū: Book 20*, 1.

<sup>77</sup> 20: 4398, by non-*sakimori*. For authorship, Vovin, *Man’yōshū: Book 20*, 1.

<sup>78</sup> As mentioned in Poem 4329, by *sakimori*. For authorship, Vovin, *Man’yōshū: Book 20*, 1.

Leaving my mother and my wife;  
and, after months of traveling to reach Naniwa,  
I will set sail from Mitsu Harbor there  
aboard a lofty ship with many oars  
to do my duty in the distant province, well aware  
that my wife is praying every day for me,  
setting a jug of sake in the alcove,  
and at night, lying all alone  
with her black tresses spread<sup>79</sup>

From the above, we know that his origin is Kanto and he takes great pride in the bravery of Kanto men. Before he reached Naniwa, he had travelled months from Kanto to join the other enlisted soldiers to sail toward Tsukushi. It can also be known from this poem that Tsukushi was the site of the local government for border defense, and we can assume that he is referring to the Dazaifu.

The description of departure in poem 4408 (and others) presents the most heart-breaking moment, but the longing for home, parents, and wives dominated the frontier lives of the *sakimori* thereafter. In many poems, border-guards expressed their longing for parents; for example, “I will pray for the safety of my parents fervently till I have spent my years across the sea” (poem 4326); “Bitterly I regret with no words kind to have left my parents both behind (poem 4337);” “My parents, praying for my safety, wait for me. I will return with pearls of the Tsukushi Sea (poem 4340).” Other than parents or mothers featuring in the longing, poems describing intimate love lost between husbands and wives are predominant, too. For example, a soldier describes the girdle fastened by his love, “I never shall untie my girdle fastened by my love, although it may grow threadbare.” “Untie” is the negation of tie, indicating a union is formed as in “tie the

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<sup>79</sup> 20: 4331, by non-*sakimori*. For authorship, Vovin, *Man'yōshū: Book 20*, 1.

knot.” By “never untie” the author is expressing his loyalty in the marriage union. If men are not untying their girdles, women are doing the same at home. In a poem written by a wife at home, she wrote, “now my husband does not change his clothing, and I, his wife, must not untie my girdle (poem 4416).” These collected love songs are produced mainly by husbands in the frontier, but occasionally by wives at home, offering glimpses into the mutual longing traversing great distances. A typical love song by a guard longing for his wife is, “I wish now I beheld my wife so closely as this fair pearl that in my palm is shining! (poem 4415)”

Indeed, the *sakimori no uta* offer us valuable insights into the lives of frontier soldiers, from their departure, praying in the shrine for a safe journey, sailing across the sea, to their longing for home, parents, and lovers. As ethnographic evidence, these songs attest to the Nara-Heian frontier policies, sources of human power, and their frontier lives. Moreover, the producers of these songs concretize the borders of Nara-Heian Japan on the west.

#### b. Incidents on the border in the ninth century

Above, we have discerned who the *sakimori* were, how they came to the frontier, and their thoughts towards home during their time in the frontier. Now, let us turn to how *sakimori* functioned in the frontier specifically in the ninth century. In 834, a group of Sillans accidentally crossed the sea and arrived at the shore of the Dazaifu area. Just as they set their feet on dry land, the locals shot them with arrows. Several of them were injured. The officials of Dazaifu ordered the governor of Chikuzen to capture these shooters for their delinquency and send the wounded Sillans for medical care. Later, they

were sent back to Silla on government funds.<sup>80</sup> This group of Sillans seemed to have been castaways who had landed in the Dazaifu area accidentally. The local reaction towards Sillans, as can be seen from this incident, was extremely unfriendly and offers us a glimpse into the general attitude in the islands towards Sillans. At least these islanders were full of mistrust and suspicion, and their actions illustrate the concrete and visible popular boundaries between Silla and Heian in the ninth century. That the authorities disciplined them, tended to the injured, and repatriated the Sillans at state expense illustrates the government commitment to the care of castaways and a responsible state attitude towards foreign relations.

As can be gleaned from the Japanese sources, the safety of the frontier in the ninth century was the foremost concern of the Dazaifu, while the Japanese authorities were dealing with all kinds of Sillans intentionally or accidentally crossing the straits. In 841, the Dazaifu relocated 104 persons to Tsushima Island. Not only for internal colonization, but these people also functioned as border-guards.<sup>81</sup> In the next year, the Dazaifu formally banned Sillans from landing in Heian. The reasons, as expressed in an admonishment a Fujiwara minister proposed to the Dazaifu, were,

Tributary missions from Silla have a long history, dating to the reign of Shōmu Tennō (聖武皇帝, 701-756). When it comes to the current reign, they did not follow the usual protocols, were often treacherous, and did not bring any tribute to us. They sent merchants to spy on our activities. Nowadays, people are poor and without food. We should protect ourselves against the unexpected, and so we plead that all Sillans should definitely be prohibited from entering our country.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Kuroita, ed, *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 24. Entry for Second day, Second month, 834 (hereafter dates are rendered 02. 02. 834), Book 3.

<sup>81</sup> Kuroita, ed, *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 122. 19. 08. 841, Book 10.

<sup>82</sup> Kuroita, ed, *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 143. 15. 08. 842, Book 12.

In 843, the border-guards on the northern tip of Tsushima reported to the Dazaifu that something strange was happening on the other side of the sea. From the middle of the first month (in 843) till the sixth day of the eighth month in 843, they heard drumming sounds emanating from Silla. Every day the drums were beaten three times. Normally the sound started in the hour of the snake (between 9 to 11am). When dusk fell, fires could be seen. The court was alerted and a royal edict was sent to the Dazaifu. It read,

When in peace one should not forget about times of disaster. Ancients explicitly warned against arrogant generals and lazy soldiers. What we fear is some military intention. Though there have been no incidents, one should be always on guard.<sup>83</sup>

The Dazaifu responded,

According to the Tsushima officials, in the reign of Enryaku (782-805), people from the provinces of Azuma no kuni were drafted to be border guards, and later people from Tsukushi were included. Now, both plans have been abolished. In the reign of Kōnin (810-823), many people of Azuma no kuni died of epidemics. If there is a sudden attack from bandits, how can the border be defended? We plead to be allowed to follow the old tradition and recruit people of Tsukushi to be the border-guards.<sup>84</sup>

The court acceded.

As the Japanese records indicate, tensions mounted between Heian and Silla during the years 841 to 843, when the Dazaifu distributed heavy manpower to the frontier area and prepared for the worst, even though invasions from Silla did not happen. What really happened in Silla around this time were internal political struggles involving Chang Pogo. In a short span of three years, the throne in Silla changed four times from King Hūigang (836) to King Min'ae (838) to King Sinmu (839) to King Munsōng (839). Chang Pogo, with his extensive economic resources derived from international trade and

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<sup>83</sup> Kuroita, ed, *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 160-161. 22. 08. 843, Book 13.

<sup>84</sup> Kuroita, ed, *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 161. 22. 08. 843, Book 13.

international connections and operating from his secure base in Wando, possessed sufficient military strength to counteract strong factions within the Sillan government and interfere with royal successions.

According to the *Samguk sagi*, Chang first appeared in the royal conflicts in 837. At the death of King Hūngdōk in 836, both his cousin, Kyūnjōng, and the son of another cousin, Cheyōn, wanted to be the next king. They led their followers to meet and fight in the royal palace. Kyūnjōng was killed in the battle and Cheyōn became the next king, that is, he became King Hūigang. Kyūnjōng's son, Ujing, with his wife and son, fled to Chang Pogo in the fifth month of 837 seeking shelter and support. In 838, King Hūigang hung himself as his followers, Kim Myōng and Yi Hong, who originally put him on the throne, took up arms against him in a rebellion. Kim Myōng took the throne and became King Min'ae. Upon hearing this news, Ujing said to Chang Pogo, "Kim Myōng killed the king and crowned himself. Yi Hong killed my father, the [previous legitimate] king. I cannot be under the same heaven with them. Please lend me your army, and I will avenge my father." Chang agreed. He entrusted five thousand soldiers to his friend, Chōng Nyōn, and told him, "Only you can pacify the disaster." Thus, Ujing, Chōng Nyōn, and others led soldiers from Ch'ōnghaejin (or Ch'ōnghae Garrison), met the royal army in Ch'ōlya prefecture, and defeated the royalists. In the next year 839, they again won a decisive battle with the royal army and killed King Min'ae. In the same year, Ujing ascended to the throne and became King Sinmu. However, almost immediately in the seventh month of 839, he died of disease. His son, King Munsōng, succeeded to the throne and granted the title "General of Pacifying the Sea" to Chang Pogo in acknowledgement of his merit in the power struggle that brought his father back to the throne. Chang probably felt over

confident as the most important merit subject of the new king. Chang made the fatal move of attempting to insert himself into Sillan aristocracy by marrying his daughter to the new King Munsōng, but his request was rejected. He went back to Ch'ōnghaejin, declared a rebellion, and was killed in 841 by an assassin in the disguise of a deserter from the king.<sup>85</sup> His subordinates and followers were killed or forced into exile, and his base in Wando was razed. As the Japanese records show, the impact and aftermath of the Chang Pogo incident reached to Silla's neighbour across the sea.

In a nutshell, border-guards were stationed on small islands off the coast of Kyūshū, on Tsushima and Iki islands in particular, and in the Tsukushi area. The border-guards were keen observers of the situation across the straits. The close proximity between Tsushima and the Korean peninsula is clear when one considers that the guards detected fires and heard drums with their bare eyes and ears. Their reports assisted the Dazaifu to augment the border defense system, which was a major administrative commitment of the Dazaifu. The Dazaifu's reports to Heian-kyō helped the central government make decisions on its border policy. Thusly, the functionaries on the borders,

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<sup>85</sup> Up until here all information comes from Books 10 and 11 of the Silla annals, *Samguk sagi*, except information on Chang's death in 841, which is from the *Shoku Nihon kōki*. There is a discrepancy regarding the year of Chang's death between Japanese and Korean historical records. Chang's death is recorded in *Samguk sagi* as 846, so 846 has been commonly accepted in South and North Korea as the official year of Chang's death. In Book 11, *Samguk sagi*, Chang Pogo is said to have rebelled in the eighth month of 846, and was killed in that year. However, in *Shoku Nihon kōki*, Dazaifu was informed of Chang's death in the eleventh month of 841. According to Hamada Kōsaku, *Samguk sagi* compiler, Kim Pusik, was probably estimating the dates of Chang's life according to his biography in *Xin Tangshu*. Unfortunately, Chang's biography in the *Xin Tangshu* only indicates that Chang died in the Huichang reign (841-846 during Emperor Wuzong), so Kim Pusik probably used the last year of Huichang, 846, to date the death of Chang in *Samguk sagi*. Ennin met Chang's subordinate in 845 who was on the run in Tang after Chang's death, so it seems certain that Chang had died before 845. *Shoku Nihon kōki* is probably more reliable regarding the year of Chang's death, and I have adopted the year 841 for Chang's death. This would also place Chang's revolt about five or six years earlier than recorded in *Samguk sagi*. See Hamada, *Shiragi kokushi no kenkyū*, 287-288.

the *sakimori*, were at the heart of the border-defense system of Heian Japan. To put it in another way, the *sakimori* demarcated where the borders were between Silla and Heian.

c. Tsushima in the *Man'yōshū*

As we can see from official historical records, there were quite a number of *sakimori* at any given moment during the time span of its establishment. It is estimated from the information available that there were normally about three thousand border-guards deployed in coastal areas: in Tsukushi, on Iki, and Tsushima islands.<sup>86</sup> Above we considered their songs collected in the *Man'yōshū*, especially in Book 20, and considered the functions of the *sakimori* in securing Japan's coastal border, but now let us focus on Tsushima's particular appearances in the *Man'yōshū*.

Tsushima as a geographical appellation appears in at least three poems, excluding headnotes or footnotes. The first appearance of Tsushima is in Poem 62 in Book 1,

[原文]在根良 對馬乃渡々中尔 <幣>取向而 早還許年  
[訓読]在り嶺よし對馬の渡り海中に幣取り向けて早帰り来ね

English: As you sail across Tsushima Straits, give offerings to the deity of the sea, and after duty done abroad, return posthaste to me<sup>87</sup>

The headnote mentions that this poem was written by Kasuga no Kurabito Oyu (春日藏首老) on the occasion when Mino Nomuraji (三野連) was sailing for a mission to the

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<sup>86</sup> Hoshino, *Sakimori no uta kenkyū*, 137.

<sup>87</sup> 1: 62 (hereafter stands for Poem 62 in Book 1, *Man'yōshū*).

Tang.<sup>88</sup> However, across the Tsushima strait, was the land of Silla, not Tang. It implies that Japanese envoys were taking the route to Tang via Silla.

On a different occasion, in Book 14, there is an *Azuma no uta* or Eastern song, Poem 3516, that mentions Tsushima,

[原文]對馬能祢波 之多具毛安良南敷 可牟能祢尔 多奈婢久君毛乎 見都追思  
努<波>毛  
[訓読]対馬の嶺は下雲あらなふ可牟の嶺にたなびく雲を見つつ偲はも

English translation: Unclouded are these lower slopes of the (Tsushima) mountains where I roam, but my mind dwells in upper clouds and thinks of you at home.<sup>89</sup> (Tsushima in the Parentheses added)

In this poem, the author is looking up to the clouds above Tsushima and longing for his loved one(s) at home. From where the poem was collected, we know that this unknown author was from Azuma no kuni. He was conscripted to be a border-guard and at the time of composition, he was on duty in Tsushima.

The poem combines the two concepts at question, *sakimori* and Tsushima, and offers the exact views we seek. The position of the author is unsettled: he is up in the air between upper clouds and lower clouds, presumably on top of a slope in Tsushima. The unsettled position he occupies bespeaks his current life situation manning the border. We know that he was “uprooted” from his hometown and transported to be stationed in Tsushima temporarily. However, during his stationing, his movements were confined to the island. In other words, he can move up vertically in the mountains to watch the

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<sup>88</sup> Horton dates this poem to 702. The headnote is, “A verse composed by Kasuga no Kurabito Oyu when Mino no Muraji (first name missing) departed for the Tang.” Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 235.

<sup>89</sup> 14: 3516. According to Vovin, this poem, written by a border guard stationed in Tsushima, is from unidentified provinces. It seems to be a response to the previous poem composed by a wife or lover. Vovin, *Man'yōshū*, Book 14, 204. Poem 3515: Whenever my face you forget, the clouds above our peak, will teach you to remember me. Honda, *The Man'yōshū*, 259.

clouds, but he cannot move horizontally away from where he is stationed. His confinement contrasts to the free movement of the clouds above his head. His wish for free movement is expressed by approaching the upper clouds, to their free movement, but his movement is exhausted at the point where he currently is, between the upper and lower clouds on top of a slope. When he regains his freedom, he will be able to see his lover, but for the time being, he is only half way to freedom, up in the air, so to speak.

Likewise, Tsushima also appears in poem 3697,

[原文]毛母布祢乃 波都流對馬能 安佐治山 志具礼能安米尔 毛美多比尔家里  
[訓読]百船の泊つる對馬の浅茅山しぐれの雨にもみたひにけり

Horton's translation: Asaji Mountain on Tsushima, where the hundred ships moor, has, in the chilling rain, turned to yellow.<sup>90</sup>

This poem is collected in Book 15, one of a total of 145 poems dedicated to the Japanese mission sent to Silla in the sixth month of 736. As described by Horton in *Traversing the frontier*, “The envoys undertook the mission—during a period of strained relations with the country of their destination, met with adverse winds and disease during the voyage, and returned empty-handed.”<sup>91</sup> It is presumable that, at the time the poem was composed, the mission with a hundred ships had reached Tsushima; it was raining hard, and Mt. Asaji was visible. From the headnote, we know that the mission was awaiting a tailwind to set sail across the strait of Tsushima. With no tailwind, the envoys had to moor there for five days.<sup>92</sup> Since there is no indication in the poem that the mission has already

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<sup>90</sup> Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 39. I use Horton's translation here because the English translation by Honda, “The maple leaves on Mt. Asaji are turned red in the autumn showers,” omitted “Tsushima” and “one hundred ships.”

<sup>91</sup> Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 1.

<sup>92</sup> The headnote translated by Horton is “After reaching Asaji Bay at the island of Tsushima and mooring the ship, they waited five days for a fair wind. There they viewed the lovely scenery and expressed their melancholy thoughts in three verses.” Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 38.

reached Silla, Tsushima here appears to be the final stop before the mission reaches a foreign land.

### Summation

Tsushima's position became ambiguous as the turmoil of medieval and early-modern Japanese politics unfolded. The later periods are well known, but this section traced the border identity of Tsushima backward to antiquity to unveil a less ambiguous Tsushima. This research relies on a group of *sakimori no uta* collected in the earliest Japanese anthology, the *Man'yōshū*. No record of Tsushima survives in *Samguk sagi* or *Samguk yusa*, and so the Korean view is difficult to explore.

Firstly, I probed the origin of the term *sakimori* and how the border-guard system operated. *Sakimori* appears in *Man'yōshū* as 佐伎母理, the *ongana* of the term. In *kungana*, the term is written as 崎守: *saki*, as in Nagasaki (長崎), means peninsula and *mori* is from the verb 守る (*mamoru*). The two characters were replaced very early on by a Sino-term, 防人, but the *kunyomi* of the term remained as *sakimori*. The *sakimori* system worked as the border defense apparatus for Nara-Heian Japan. Particularly, the songs collected in the *Man'yōshū* tell us about the guards' departures from family, lovers, and home. In the case of the group of *sakimori* enlisted in 755, they gathered at Naniwa, some by traversing mountain ranges in Nara; some by traveling months to reach Naniwa from Kanto. They set sail to Tsukushi across the Seto Inland Sea on lofty decorated ships with many oars. They took great pride, were drenched in sorrow, shed many tears, and prayed along their way, leaving behind the waving hands and wrinkled faces of their parents, and promises of reunion with wives. Japanese and Korean historical records help

us to discern the state of the border in the ninth century and how the *sakimori* functioned. The border-guards stationed on Tsushima were able to detect fires with their bare eyes and hear drum beats across the straits. When reports were sent to the Dazaifu, the local government worked closely with the capital to carry out defense orders. The western border was clearly under the close control of the central government in the Heian capital, given the exchange of documents and because men of Azuma no kuni in the capital vicinity and further east were mobilized to carry out the border-defense scheme. The information highlights a historical point when the maritime prince of Silla, Chang Pogo, rose to his most influential and then fell into disgrace and was eventually assassinated. Tensions built up on the border and the Heian government tightened control over Sillans attempting to enter the country.

Finally, I considered closely three poems collected in the *Man'yōshū* that mention Tsushima. Two poems mention Tsushima as the starting point to sail to the continent either on a mission to the Tang or to Silla. In this sense, Tsushima was seen as the end point of the Heian realm. Whether the missions sent to the Tang via Tsushima were scheduled to land in Silla or they simply planned to follow the Sillan coastline is uncertain, but Tsushima was the point where people bid their farewells and offered final wishes to their disappearing homeland of Japan. These embassies were not small if we note the mention of a hundred ships on a mission to Silla, as seen in the third poem. Meanwhile, a poem written by a *sakimori* on Tsushima is luckily included in the *Man'yōshū* as well. The poem describes his temporal life situation in Tsushima and his longing for home as he climbs up a slope on the island and looks up to the clouds drifting towards home on the mainland.

We can conclude that, rather than ambiguous, Tsushima's identity in the Nara-Heian period possessed clarity as an end point that was within the control of the Nara and Heian governments. Its residents, mainly being the *sakimori*, had little involvement with the political, economic, or cultural activities of the peninsula, which they deemed to be a foreign country if not an enemy country. They were dislocated Honshu or Kyūshū people at the foremost frontier on the west of the royal realm, but they were also sentimentally involved with people far inland in the vicinity of the capital or on Kyūshū. They flesh out and mark where the borderline of Nara and Heian was on the west.

## Chapter 2: Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn: A Sillan literatus in late Tang

In Chapter 1, I laid theoretical foundations that support a comparative study of two of the best-known literati of literary Chinese in ninth-century East Asia: Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn and Sugawara no Michizane. I claimed that, theoretically, this comparative project intends to join and contribute to the on-going scholarly discussions on three pressing topics: power relations between language and culture; Sinophone studies; and a broader comparative project involving the Sanskrit and Latin cosmopolis. Chapter 1 defined the term classical Chinese or literary Chinese by clarifying some commonly accepted misconceptions about literary Chinese, especially when it was en-route to Korea and Japan, notably the mistaken notion that it was a silent language and a dead language. I followed this discussion by contesting the claim that pre-modern polities lacked boundaries and that borders are porous and negotiable, as I am able to show that Tsushima functioned as a distinctive border between Silla and Heian. The evidence provided by a group of *sakimori no uta* (songs of border-guardians) from the *Manyōshū* clearly demonstrate that the border was much less porous than in later centuries, probably due to the lingering military confrontation from the Silla-Tang peninsular wars of the seventh century.

With the above theoretical concerns in mind, what unfolds here presents our first case study of the literary Chinese cosmopolis: Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn from Silla Korea. Concentrating on a specific case study with concrete and solid data on the operation of the literary Chinese cultural sphere will inform us about both cultural registers and

cultural embodiments. This chapter consists of two parts: part one, “Setting the stage,” situates Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn (857-?) in his historical background; part two, “Reconfiguration of the Dao: A Sillan-cosmopolitan perspective,” discusses first the content and then the style of Ch’oe’s poems and prose to discern continental influences.

## 2.1. Setting the stage

Before turning to Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn’s poetry and prose to examine his internalization of a cosmopolitan perspective, our first step must be to situate Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn’s life in the historical context of his era. His era, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, marked a high point in East Asian history in terms of mobility, connection, and integration. Mobility was enabled by technology. The technologies of the ninth century that enabled mobility were ship-building and navigation. Connection was a natural outcome of such mobility as people were able to dislocate themselves to different places. In this way places were connected and people were able to flow back and forth. Integration was about how dislocated people acquired social position, rooted themselves, and became part of another society. What follows examines these three issues in the ninth century in terms of the Literary Chinese Cosmopolis that bounded Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn’s life.

At the turn of the ninth century, Chinese intellectuals launched a campaign spearheaded by Han Yu to restore the Confucian tradition and target Buddhism. When the Japanese monk Ennin (793/794-864) came to the Tang accompanying the last Heian ambassadorial mission to Chang’an (838), the Tang court was about to

successfully denounce Buddhism through a large-scale persecution—the Huichang persecution (840-846). While Ennin wrote of the ups and downs of his journey in the Tang, he accidentally sheds light on the marine power of the Sillans. They are seen in the diary as interpreters, sailors, ship-builders, monks, and students, and we learn a great deal about their activities and leaders. The legendary Chang Pogo (787-841),<sup>93</sup> appears in Ennin’s diary, as well he should. Du Mu (803-852), a leading literatus of the Tang, devoted a biography in his collected works to Chang. Chang’s fleets are also dealt with in detail in other Japanese historical resources. At that time the scale and degree of interaction was clearly intense and intimate.

The main source for the following historical account is Ennin’s diary, which details his sojourn in China from 838 to 847. Pioneering research has been carried out on this diary, notably Edwin Reischauer’s landmark translation of the diary into English entitled, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (*Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*), published in 1955, which was based on his doctoral thesis in 1939. Along with this complete translation, in the same year, he published *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, which was an introduction and also a standalone research monograph on Ennin’s diary, tackling various intriguing issues he encountered while translating the diary.<sup>94</sup> Following Reischauer, Ono Katsutoshi completed a thorough annotation and study of the diary, *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki no*

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<sup>93</sup> Please refer to Note 85 above for discrepancies in the year for Chang’s death in Korean and Japanese sources.

<sup>94</sup> Though being criticized for various problems in his translation, Reischauer’s research is still celebrated as the beginning of Japanese studies in post-war US academia. Interestingly, the needs of Reischauer’s research led to the necessity to create a Romanization system for the Korean language, which later was partially named after him, the McCune-Reischauer system that was first published in 1939. For a detailed account regarding the birth of the McCune-Reischauer system, please refer to Reischauer, *My Life between Japan and America*, 69-70.

*kenkyū* (A study on Ennin’s pilgrimage to Tang in search of the law), which was published in 1964. In Japan, Ono’s annotation on this text is still considered to be authoritative and complete, and was widely used and has been introduced to, for example, Chinese-speaking academia. These initial efforts laid up the foundation for what follows to be my utilization of the diary for a historical narrative of the era.<sup>95</sup>

Other sources employed in this study include *Samguk sagi*, *Shoku Nihon kōki*, and the two official histories of the Tang dynasty: *Xin Tangshu* and *Jiu Tangshu*, together with *Quan Tangshi* and other Tang sources. Among them, *Samguk sagi* is partially translated into English. Jonathan Best translated the Paekche annals and published his research as *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche, together with an Annotated Translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk sagi*, in 2007. More recently the Koguryō Annals of the *Samguk sagi* was translated into English by Edward Shultz and Hugh Kang with Daniel Kane and Kenneth Gardiner and published under the sponsorship of the Academy of Korean Studies in 2011. This was followed by Shultz and Kang’s translation with Daniel Kane of the Silla annals

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<sup>95</sup> Ennin’s diary first received research attention from Japanese scholars as early as the 1920s from such scholars as Okada Masayuki (“Jikaku Daishi no *Nittō noriyuki* ni tsuite,” 1921) and Imanishi Ryu (“Jikaku Daishi *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* o yomite,” 1933). The diary since the 1960s has been studied by many, especially Japanese scholars, who have treated various topics related to Ennin and his Buddhist legacy in Japan. For example, Saeki Arikao published *Jikaku Daishi den no kenkyū* (Studies on the biography of Master Jikaku) in 1986 and *Ennin* in 1989. Among the most recent endeavors, Tanaka Fumio and Suzuki Yasutami have led a research cluster from 2001-08, sponsored by the Kagaku kenkyūhi hojokin (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research). As an outcome, they created a database on Ennin’s diary at the following website: <http://www.junreikoki.jp/database.html>, along with conference proceedings and papers. There also appeared in 2009 a Ph.D. dissertation entitled, “Search for the Law: Ennin’s Journal as a Key to the Heian Appropriation of Tang Culture,” by Jesse D. Palmer of the University of California, Irvine. More interestingly, Virginia Anami, inspired by Reischauer’s research decided to follow Ennin’s footsteps and spent twenty-five years in China and Japan on fieldtrips before completing the book, *Following the Tracks of Ennin’s 9th C. Journey: Diary of a Japanese Monk Revived in Today’s China*, published in 2007. The same book was translated into Japanese and published in Japan in the same year. She also has an article, entitled “Encounters with Korean Communities of Tang China Depicted in Monk Ennin’s Diary,” published in the *Sillasa hakpo* in 2008 in English.

in the *Samguk sagi* in 2012. I know of no English translation projects targeting the *Shoku Nihon kōki* or the two official histories of the Tang dynasty, but there are modern translations of, for example, the *Shoku Nihon kōki* into modern Japanese by Morita Tei, published in 2010. Moreover, these primary sources have been extensively quoted by generations of scholars in English, thus my translation of these primary sources will be indebted to them, but the English translations below are made from the commonly accepted authoritative editions and are mine, unless otherwise specified.

With Ennin's diary and others as primary sources of information, my inquiries into the era centers on the following three matters: mobility, connection, and integration. To tackle the first question of "mobility," my focus is the renowned Chang Pogo. Chang, dubbed the "maritime prince of trade" in the popular culture of South Korea, has dramas, musicals, and even a festival in Wando dedicated to him. For sure, he is a household Silla-period name in today's South Korea. Equally, Chang has attracted research attention from a fair number of scholars in East Asia. Most notably, the Haesangwang Chang Pogo ki'nyōm saōphoe [Chang Pogo Memorial Foundation] in Korea has published extensively on Chang. For example, in 2006, a book in English entitled, *Chang Po-go, the Maritime Prince: A Man of Vision Who Paved the Way to the Prince*, by Choi Gwangsik, Jung Unyong, Choi Geunsik, and Yun Jaeun, well echoes the name Chang enjoys in the popular culture of South Korea. One significant contribution by the Chang Pogo Memorial Foundation is a collection of articles on Chang from Korean, Chinese, and Japanese scholars. One volume of this two-volume collection gathers articles on Chang by Korean scholars,

whilst articles by Chinese and Japanese scholars are collected in the other volume. The two volumes include essays by leading scholars in the field of Korean studies, including famous pioneers such as Imanishi Ryū (1875-1932) from the Japanese colonial period in Korea.<sup>96</sup> The two-volume book, entitled *Chang Pogo kwallyŏn yŏn'gu nonmun sŏnjip* (Selected works of Chang Pogo, related research), was first published 2002. Another major contribution of the Foundation is a collection of annotated historical materials from China, Korea, and Japan by Kim Mun'gyŏng, under the title, *7-10 segi Han-Chung-Il kyoyŏk kwangye charyo yŏkchu* (Annotated historical materials on the exchanges and relations among Korea, China, and Japan from the seventh to the tenth centuries). Again, this collection is in two volumes: one includes Japanese sources; the other includes Chinese and Korean sources, published in 2003. They have been extensively quoted below in order to fashion a coherent narrative.

The second question turns to “connections” that were enabled by the mobility provided by Chang Pogo and his network. Connections were manifested by the large numbers of relocated Sillans who lived in Tang China, from students, monks, and merchants to slaves. Reischauer commented that no other ethnic group had found their way to integrate so thoroughly into Tang society than the Koreans. Previous scholarship on Sillan students in the Tang include Yan Gengwang's research, which was later compiled and published both in Taiwan and in mainland China, along with Yan's other research on the Tang dynasty. Students, monks, and merchants are the most obvious to track, but slaves add an unusual dimension. The issue of Sillan

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<sup>96</sup> Imanishi published extensively on Chang Pogo, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, and Ennin, and established the foundation for research in Japanese on these people.

slaves in Tang was first raised by Tamai Zehaku in the Japanese colonial period. The topic has most recently been expanded upon by scholars such as Hamada Kōsaku.

The last question of “integration” tackles the apparatus or institutions in Tang that functioned to incorporate the non-Chinese into the Chinese administrative and cultural sphere, namely, the *bingong* examination or the civil service examination devised for foreigners. Earlier research, such as by Yan Gengwang, has touched on this special examination in Tang. Recent scholars like Gao Mingshi, Zhang Bowei, and Kawamoto Yoshiaki all have articles dealing with the history and function of this exam in the Tang dynasty. Sillan students were particularly successful in this examination and through this springboard they gained official posts and served in the Tang government. The best example is Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn, but other than Ch’oe, many Sillan scholars left their names and poems in China. Some of these poems were later collected in the *Quan Tangshi* (全唐詩), commissioned in 1705 by the Kangxi Emperor.

The above three sections on mobility, connection, and integration, are followed by a synthetic trinity, that is, a history of Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn’s career. Part one closes by showcasing Ch’oe’s career in the Tang as an embodiment of mobility, connection, and integration —Ch’oe crossed the Yellow Sea or the West Sea and reached China on one of the established sea routes at the prime of Sillan maritime power. Ch’oe probably dwelled in the Sillan communities for a time and became one of the most successful Sillan students in Tang. He began his studies in Tang at the age of twelve and passed the *bingong* examination within ten years. After serving in Tang government as a minor official, he moved up to become a secretary to General

Gao Pian, who was entrusted by the Tang emperor with the mission of pacifying the Huang Chao Rebellion. Ch'oe made his name in China and returned to Silla to become the founding figure of Confucianism and Chinese learning in the eastern kingdom.

#### 2.1.1. Mobility: Silla's golden maritime era in the ninth century

The year was 869. On a commercial ship that was on its usual passage crossing the inner sea of what is nowadays called the West Sea (by Koreans) or the Yellow Sea (by Chinese), Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, a young boy of twelve years old, was bound for the Tang for the first time. His father's admonishment echoed in his ears, "If you do not pass the civil service examination in ten years, do not call yourself my son, nor would I regard you as my son..."<sup>97</sup> Ch'oe did not realize at that point that while the ship was on its path trespassing the cultural boundaries that marked what he called the inner-sea (海内 *haenae*) from the outer-sea (海外 *haewoe*), he was on his path in search for knowledge and cultural exposure. While moving between two distinctive linguistic spheres and bridging the middle kingdom and the eastern kingdom as a concrete human subject, he could not have expected that one day he would enjoy a reputable name in the years to come and, even one thousand years later, be revered as the forefather of scholarship in the Eastern Land (*tongguk* 東國) of Korea.

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<sup>97</sup> *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, sŏ (preface):1a-b, 右臣自年十二. 離家西泛. 當乘桴之際. 亡父誠之曰. 十年不第進士. 則勿謂吾兒. 吾亦不謂有兒. 往矣勤哉. 無隳乃力.

Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn was born into a head-rank six (*yukdup 'um*, 六頭品) family of the Kyŏngju Ch'oe clan. His father, Ch'oe Kyŏn'il (崔肩逸) was a younger brother of Master Hyŏnjun (賢俊), a Buddhist monk, who was appointed by the royal house to manage rituals at the famous Hae'in Temple. Ch'oe Kyŏn'il was believed to have participated in the Buddhist ritual for the reconstruction of the Kok-sa Temple (鵲寺), according to the Kyŏngju Ch'oe genealogy. One of his sons, a brother of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, was clearly a Buddhist monk.<sup>98</sup> To utter words such as “I won't regard you as my son...,” seem harsh coming from a father to his son of twelve years old while sending him off alone on a trip to a foreign land, but the decision was made out of sound consideration on the part of the father and was in the interest of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's future. Studying in Tang China would have opened up possibilities for social mobility through obtaining official positions in the Tang government, given the fact that Tang was very open to incorporating non-Chinese into its administrative system. As a head-rank six, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's advancement in Silla was foreclosed due to the bone rank system. Even if, in the end, he had failed to obtain official posts in the Tang and returned to Silla after he finished studying in the Tang, the experience alone would have carried high prestige, bringing him social recognition and the possibility of upward mobility. An example of this trajectory can be found in the *Samguk sagi*, dated in the ninth month of 789 during the reign of King Wonsŏng,

When Chaok became *Sosu* [Deputy Magistrate] of Yangkŭn-hyŏn, *Chipsasa* [Scribe of the Chancellor's Office] Moch'o protested saying, “As Chaok is not [listed] under the civil registration, he is not suitable to hold a regional office.” The Chief Minister disputed this saying, “Even though he is not

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<sup>98</sup> Chang, *Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn ūi sahoesasang yŏn'gu*, 82-83.

[listed] under the civil registration, as he once entered Tang and became a student, does not this also make him employable?” The King agreed.<sup>99</sup>

From this entry, we can surmise that many Sillans of the time headed to Tang for higher education instead of attending the Silla National Academy. Ch’oe was one of the many Sillan youths of the time who sought opportunities in the Tang.

In the Silla-Tang war that generally concluded in 676, Silla defeated Tang’s navy on the sea, drove Tang out of the old territories of Paekche and Silla, and unified the southern part of the peninsula, that is, the territories south of the Taedong River, which flows by P’yöngyang. Following these events, Silla sought peace with the Tang and accepted tributary status (蕃国).<sup>100</sup> Silla’s victory on the seas might have been that luck was on their side as Tang was engaged in a war with Tibet on the western frontier, but the victory is also a good indication of Silla’s strong military power at sea in the seventh century. It foretells an even more prosperous maritime era for Silla two centuries later. With the emergence of a powerful sailing figure, Commissioner Chang Pogo, the Sillan court attempted to reach beyond the land and control the seas. Based in Wando and appointed as a Commissioner, Chang and his

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<sup>99</sup> *Samguk sagi*, 10:3b, 以子玉爲楊根縣小守. 執事史毛肖駁言. 子玉不以文籍出身. 不可委分憂之職. 侍中議云. 雖不以文籍出身. 曾入大唐爲學生. 不亦可用耶. 王從之. Shultz and Kang, *The Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, 321-322. In their translation, 文籍 is translated as “civil registration,” which is not clear. This term refers to the Silla National Academy or the Silla *kukhak*. In other words, Moch’o is protesting that Chaok did not attend the National Academy of Silla and therefore lacks qualifications for appointment. For a discussion of this entry, see Hamada, *Shiragi kokushi no kenkyū*, 107-108.

<sup>100</sup> How Silla defeated Tang in the war is unclear. The existing scholarship on the victory of Silla is mostly from the Korean side. Recently, there have appeared studies on this war from Chinese scholars, who argue that Tang maintained a government in the old territory of Koguryō in order to manage the post-war affairs on the peninsula. Therefore, it is not correct to say Silla drove Tang out of the peninsula; rather, it seems that Silla and Tang divided the peninsula at the Taedong River. Silla quickly sought to consolidate its ties with Tang by accepting tributary status after the war. Unified Silla did not include the vast territory of the former Koguryō. It was within this part of the peninsula and beyond that the state of Parhae (K.) or Bohai (Ch.) was founded after Tang completely withdrew from the area.

fleets controlled much of the sea traffic across a large area of the western Pacific. At its prime, Commissioner Chang's fleets were seen traveling in a vast network encompassing the sealanes that linked Heian, Silla, and Tang. Because of Chang's influence on the seas, Sillans became the major power behind the flow of goods, scholars, tributary missions, monks, and others in the region. Though Chang's political ambition of challenging the bone rank system through marrying his daughter to the Silla King cost him his life, his legacy in creating a naval network set the foundation for continuous exchange among the continent, the peninsula, and the archipelago. When Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn set off to the Tang in 869, Silla's dominance on the seas was still in its prime and in the afterglow of Chang's maritime empire. Indeed, the ninth century saw Silla's power on the sea reach its apex, and it could aptly be called the golden era of Sillan maritime power. The commercial ship that Ch'oe boarded was one of the many ordinary ships sailing on its usual routes between Silla and Tang at that time.

To gain a close-up view of Silla's golden maritime era, the best resource today remains the Japanese monk Ennin's *Nittō guhō junreikōki* (入唐求法巡禮行記, The record of a pilgrimage to Tang in search of the law). Monk Ennin, posthumously known as Master Jikaku, travelled to China in 838 and returned to Japan in 847 via Silla's coastline with the help of the Sillans he came to know while living in the Lotus Cloister of Mt. Chi (hereafter Mt. Chi-Cloister), a monastery built by Chang Pogo in Dengzhou, today's Shandong peninsula. Ennin often mentioned the presence of Sillans he met as interpreters, fellow monks, officials, and overseas residents in the Tang. His diary also sheds light on Sillans' advanced navigation skills, control of

the sea traffic, multi-lingual abilities, and advanced ship-building technology.

Ennin's successful journey in Tang China and his eventual return to Heian Japan with large amounts of purchases was much indebted to the Sillans.<sup>101</sup> His diary thus serves as a first-hand testimony to the golden maritime era of Silla.

Ennin found some Sillans to be multi-lingual, and they worked as translators for the Japanese missions to the Tang (*kentōshi* 遣唐使). According to the diary, in the three (out of the original four) ships that carried the last mission of Japanese envoys to the Tang in 838 via the southern route,<sup>102</sup> there was at least one Sillan called Kim Chōng'nam on board. After setting sail from Hakata port in Kyūshū in the fifth month of 838, on day 28 in the sixth month of the same year, when the ships approached the Yangzi River region, the Japanese wondered if they had reached China, as they saw the color of the sea had changed to white. At this time, "The Korean interpreter, Kim Chōngnam stated that he had heard it said that it was difficult to pass through the dug channel of Yang-chou [Yangzhou] and that, since we had already passed the whitish water, he suspected that we may have passed by the dug channel."<sup>103</sup> Kim's first appearance in the diary indicates that the ship that carried the Japanese envoys to the Tang had in their crew a Sillan interpreter. It is probable that he used Japanese to communicate with the people onboard, and that they spoke neither Korean nor Chinese and had to rely on a Sillan interpreter in

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<sup>101</sup> A consensus has been reached among modern Korean and Japanese scholars on Ennin's great obligation to the Sillan communities in the Tang for his successful journey in the Tang and his return to Heian.

<sup>102</sup> See Map 1. For a discussion of the *kentōshi* routes, please refer to Ishikawa, *Kanji no bunmei, kana no bunka*, 67.

<sup>103</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 5. In the note on the same page, Reischauer states that Korean interpreters, who apparently knew both Chinese and Japanese, were of great importance to the Japanese embassies. English translations used here are from Reischauer, unless otherwise specified. Reischauer used the Wade-Giles Romanization system for Chinese terms, and the *pinyin* is supplied in brackets wherever relevant.

Tang. His knowledge about the change of sea color shows that this Sillan interpreter was very informed about the local geography in the region of Yangzhou, perhaps had visited the region very often, and that was probably why he was employed by the Japanese, in addition to his command of three languages.

Later on, this same Sillan interpreter appeared again in the journal on day 18, twelfth month, 838, when the Japanese envoys planned for their return trip, “At 2 p.m. the Korean interpreter, Kim Chǒngnam, left for Ch’u-chou [Chuzhou, 楚州] to settle upon the ships for the embassy’s homeward voyage.”<sup>104</sup> A follow-up mention of ships is on day 17, the third month of the next year 839,

I moved my baggage to the second ship. I am to be on the same ship as the Administrative Officer Naga[mine]. The officials are divided among the nine vessels, each one as a Commander in charge. Besides the Japanese sailors under their command, they have also hired over sixty Koreans who are familiar with the sea routes. Each ship has either seven, six, or five of them. The Korean Interpreter, Kim Chǒngnam has been ordered to devise some scheme whereby I can stay [in China], but it is not yet certain whether or not anything can be done.<sup>105</sup>

Since Kim was entrusted with the task of reserving ships for the return trip of the Japanese envoys, we can presume that Kim helped locate the above nine ships for the Japanese. Moreover, he probably helped the Japanese recruit sixty or so Sillan sailors to sail the fleet back to Japan from Chuzhou. In contrast to the eventful and turbulent departure of the original four envoy ships, in which one ship was shattered by the wind and waves with the loss of about one hundred men, and another ship was damaged severely, thereby significantly delaying the departure for China, the party returned with nine ships sourced by a Sillan and manned by Sillans and reached Japan safely.

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<sup>104</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 64.

<sup>105</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 93.

According to the *Shoku Nihon kōki*, the nine ships reached Heian in three groups. The first arrival was made by the sixth ship in the eighth month of 839, which carried Ōmiwa no Muneo (大神宗雄), one of the six secretaries of the embassy. He reported to the court that the embassy came back by hiring nine Sillan ships in Chuzhou, because the three original ships (though they had made it to China) were not in any reasonable shape for the homeward voyage.<sup>106</sup> The next group arrived in seven ships in the same month with the ambassador and other major officials on board. They were hastily called to the capital after disembarkation.<sup>107</sup> The last ship to arrive was recorded much later, in the tenth month of 839.<sup>108</sup> When the last homebound ship landed, a celebration was held in the royal palace in the tenth month of 839. Meanwhile, a “palace market” was opened in front of the Kenreimon (建禮門) of the Heijōkyū (平城宮) palace to allow court officials to trade for Tang commodities.<sup>109</sup> This incident shows that part of the Sillan business in Chuzhou was to rent out ships for commercial usage on the high seas. Sillans may have also run large-scale businesses in ship-building and mechanical shops based in the Huainan (淮南) region, where Chuzhou is the hub and the starting point of the sea traffic routes to Silla and further on to the Japanese archipelago. (See Map 1)

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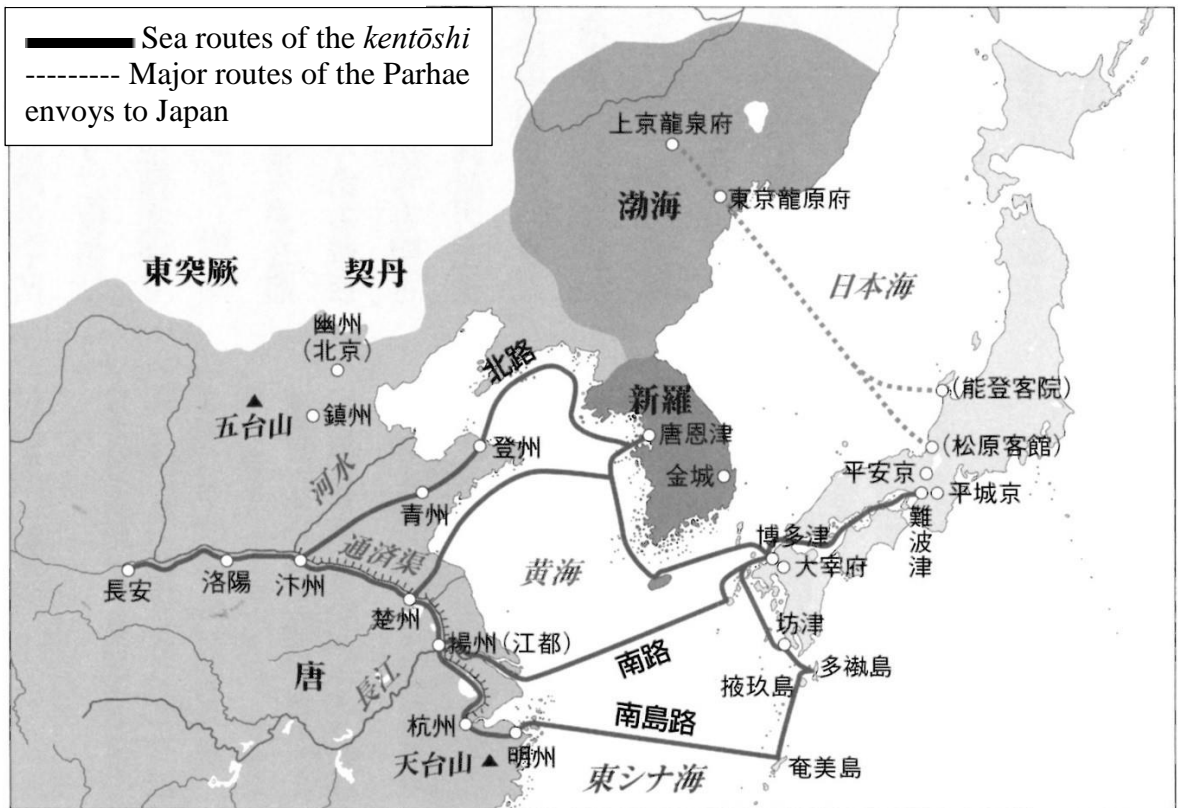
<sup>106</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 90, 遣唐録事大神宗雄送大宰府牒狀. 知入唐三箇船嫌本舶之不完. 倩駕楚州新羅船九隻. 傍新羅南以歸朝. 其第六船. 宗雄所駕是也. 20. 08. 839, Book 8.

<sup>107</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 90-91, 大宰府飛驒上奏. 入唐大使藤原朝臣常嗣等歸着之由. 兼使等奏狀... 得今月十九日奏狀. 知遣唐大使藤原常嗣朝臣等率七隻船. 廻着肥前國松浦郡生屬嶋. 與先到録事大神宗雄船. 總是八艘. 24, 25. 08. 839, Book 8.

<sup>108</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 93, 遣唐使録事正六位上山代宿禰氏益所駕新羅船一隻. 舩着筑前國博多津. 09. 10. 839, Book 8.

<sup>109</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 94, 建禮門前張立三幄. 雜置唐物. 內藏寮官人及內侍等交易. 名曰宮市. 25. 10. 839, Book 8.

Map 1: Major routes of *kentōshi*<sup>110</sup>



<sup>110</sup> Adapted from Ishikawa, *Kanji no bunmei, kana no bunka*, 67.

While Sillans were active on the sea with their superior navigation and ship building technology, they were also an entrusted “postal service,” and were “messengers” between Heian and Tang. There are two letters included in Ennin’s diary. One was addressed to Commissioner Chang Pogo, whose entire operation moved information, people, and cargo among the three states. One was addressed to Guard Officer Ch’oe, who was an official in the area of Mt. Chi in Dengzhou. The letter to Chang was written after Ennin dropped out of the returning group and stayed in Tang illegally. He was later accommodated by the Sillans in the Mt. Chi-Cloister in Dengzhou, which was built by Chang Pogo.<sup>111</sup> This particular location seems to have been a major base and port-of-call in China for Sillans frequenting Tang and for those who wished to travel to Silla, as can be seen from the following journal entry for day 28, sixth month in 839,

Wu Tzu-ch’en [Wu Zichen], the Commissioner of Troops of Ch’ing-chou [Qingzhou], who is the envoy being sent to Korea by the Emperor of China to inquire after the newly enthroned King, and the Vice-Ambassador Ts’ui [Cui], the Administrative Officer Wang, and others, over thirty men [in all], came up to the monastery, where we met them. In the evening the military official Ch’oe, who is an agent sent by Chang Pogo to China to sell things, came to the monastery and inquired after us.<sup>112</sup>

From entries like these about a Tang embassy about to embark on a trip to Silla, we can see that the Mt. Chi-Cloister functioned as more than just a monastery. It was a major destination for Sillans travelling across the Yellow Sea to reach China and a meeting place and point of departure when people were setting across the sea to Silla. This record also shows that Chang sent his personnel to the Mt. Chi-Cloister, probably quite often,

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<sup>111</sup> Such can be seen in the journal of Seventh day, Sixth month, 839. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 131, “7<sup>th</sup> Day ...In the mountains there is a monastery called the Fa-hua-yūan [Fa-hua-yuan] (“Lotus Cloister”) of Mt. Ch’ih [Mt. Chi]. It was originally built by Chang Pogo. Chang has an estate from which he provides it with food. This estate brings in five hundred bushels of rice a year.”

<sup>112</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 133.

but he seemed to be too busy to pay a visit himself, as there is no mention of Chang's personal visit to this mountain cloister in the eight-month interval between this mention of a Tang embassy to Silla (sixth month of 839) and Ennin's letter addressed to Chang (seventeenth day, the second month, 840).

In his letter addressed to Chang, Ennin expressed gratitude to Chang for the convenience he came to enjoy while waiting for the issuance of proper documents from the Tang authorities, despite the fact that he had never been able to meet Chang in person. On a different note, he mentioned that he had a letter for Chang from the governor of Chikuzen<sup>113</sup> (筑前太守), Onono Suetsugu (小野末嗣, dates unknown), but unfortunately the letter was lost at sea with the shipwreck on the way to Tang. Ennin's letter to Chang in full is,

Although I have never in my life had the honor of meeting you, I have for long heard of your great excellence, and I humbly respect you all the more. With mid-spring already turning warm, I humbly hope that a myriad good fortunes will bless the Commissioner's person and actions.

I, Ennin, have received your benevolence from afar and am overwhelmed with gratitude. In order to carry out long-cherished hopes, I remained in China. By great good fortune to my insignificant self, I have been sojourning in the area blessed by the vow of the Commissioner, and I find it difficult to express in words anything but my great happiness.

When I left home, I was entrusted by the Governor of Chikuzen with a letter for the Commissioner, but, since our ship unexpectedly sank in a shallow part of the sea and our things floated away, the letter with which I had been entrusted sank in the waves, which causes me greater sorrow every day. I humbly beseech you not to blame me.

I do not know when I shall have the honor of meeting you, but in my humble way I think of you all the more from afar. Respectfully I write to inquire after you. Respectfully written in brief.

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<sup>113</sup> A province in northern Kyūshū in Japan.

*Presented on the seventeenth day of the second moon of the fifth year of K'ai-ch'eng [Kaicheng] by the Japanese monk in search of the Law, of the Dentō-hosshi Rank, Ennin.*

*To Chang, the Commissioner of Ch'ōnghaejin  
His excellency, with humble respect.<sup>114</sup>*

In another letter to the Guard Officer Ch'oe on the same day, Ennin mentioned that he would like to come back to this monastery when he completed his pilgrimage. Then, he wished to go back to his country by Sillan ships and travel via Silla to reach Heian. The content is as follows,

Since the start of the new year, I have heard from you rarely, but have been thinking about you all the more. With the spring already warm, I humbly hope that the Guard Officer's person is at ease. I, Ennin, have received your kindness, but, distant from you like the clouds, I have not been able to meet you, though my admiration grows daily greater. To what can I compare my esteem for you?

I, Ennin, have stayed in the mountain cloister, passing the year with much good fortune. I have received the warm kindness of the monks, which has greatly consoled my worries as a traveler. This is all the Guard Officer's kind doing. Your protection has been extensive. How can I, insignificant man that I am, repay you. [Your kindness] is deeply engraved on my heart, and my gratitude grows ever greater.

I have received word from you that this spring you will especially donate a ship to take me by way of Lien-shui [Lianshui] to Huai-nan. Of late I have heard of the holy sites of Mt. [Wu]-t'ai [Mt. Wutai], and I yearn past all endurance [to go there]. My sole purpose is to search for the Buddhist teaching. When I have by good fortune heard of the holy land, how can I not go there? Since I have this wish, I am going there first, which means I am going back on my agreement with you, so my words and deeds do not match, for which I am deeply ashamed before you. I also fear that the men you sent will have expended their efforts for nought. Please do not blame me.

After my search for the Law, I shall return to Mt. Ch'ih [Mt. Chi] and shall then go back to my homeland by way of Ch'ōnghaejin. I humbly hope then to visit the Commissioner Chang and explain the whole situation to him. I shall be going back, I estimate, about the autumn of next year. If you should have men or ships operating in that area, please be so kind as to order them to keep a special lookout

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<sup>114</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 168-169.

for me. Our return home depends solely on your great assistance, and we shall be overwhelmed with gratitude to you.

With respect and deference. Sent through another. Respectfully written in brief.  
*K'ai-ch'eng [Kaicheng] fifth year, second moon, seventeenth day.*

*The Japanese Scholar [Monk] in search of the Law, of the Dentō-hosshi Rank, Ennin.  
To the Guard Officer Ch'oe Esquire.<sup>115</sup>*

In addition to information conveyed through the Sillan network on the sea, in an entry on day 13, tenth month in 842, Ennin mentioned that while he was at the capital Chang'an, he received items from Heian, and the parcel was delivered by the Sillans,

Ishō returned to the capital from Ch'u-chou [Chuzhou], and I received two letters from the national government, one letter from the Ryōgon'in, one letter from ....-kō Shōnin, and four knives. The twenty-four small ounces of gold which had been entrusted to T'ao Chung [Tao Zhong] had already been used by Yu Sinōn, the Interpreter of Ch'u-chou [Chuzhou], and [Ishō] did not get any at all and returned empty handed. I received a note from the Interpreter saying that he had already used [the gold] in accordance with Master Ensai's instructions. The letters, boxes, and envelopes had already been broken open.<sup>116</sup>

These instances show that constant contact between Heian and Tang was made possible through the Sillans, and there appeared to be close associations between Sillans and the Heian people in Tang China. If Japanese missions and their merchants travelling to the Tang were limited in number due to the danger involved on the sea and their relatively backward ship-building and navigation techniques, their more frequent contacts with the continent were largely enabled by the Sillans who were functioning as go-between for Heian and Tang. In other words, Chang and his fleet, and possibly later Sillans in the ninth century, were the medium of international communications across the ocean among the three states.

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<sup>115</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 166-167.

<sup>116</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 320-321.

It is also from the above examples that one can see that Japanese of the time heavily relied on the Sillans on the sea, which is not surprising, as Sillans had far closer ties with the Tang than the Japanese of the time. The closer tie is also reflected in the gap in numbers of diplomatic missions remitted from Silla and Heian. During the two hundred years of the Unified Silla dynasty, the Sillan court sent 134 missions to China in contrast to 20 Japanese missions.<sup>117</sup> The gap in numbers might reflect that Sillans were more committed to the Tang diplomatically than their Japanese counterparts, and it is certainly a strong indication of the intimate foreign relations between Silla and Tang.

About twenty years after the above Japanese mission that included Ennin, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn embarked on his trip to China. The many descriptions in Ennin's travelogue on his interactions with the Sillans and their active role on the sea and integration in the Chinese society would have still been true for the time when Ch'oe studied and worked in Tang China.

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<sup>117</sup> For a discussion of the total number of Silla's embassies to the Tang, see Hamada, "Shiragi no kentōshi to Sai Chien," 10-11.

### 2.1.2. Connection: Sillian merchants, monks, and slaves in the Tang

If Sillans were dynamic on the sea as sailors, commercial shippers, and guides, they were found equally active within the Tang, especially in Huainan-dao (淮南道), Henan-dao (河南道) (mostly today's Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, and Anhui provinces), and Tang's capital of Chang'an, all of which constantly appeared in Ennin's diary. Reading Ennin's travelogue today, one cannot help wondering if it is, in fact, unfolding the story of a successful Japanese pilgrimage by taking advantage of the Sillan network in the Tang. Sillans probably were one of the most systematically integrated groups of foreigners in the Tang.<sup>118</sup> Reischauer has noted the significant presence of Sillans in Tang,

It is not surprising that there were many Koreans among the foreigners thronging the streets of the Chinese capital. In fact, Ennin's diary and many other historical sources give the impression that Koreans were among the most numerous of the foreign peoples there and had worked their way into Chinese life more thoroughly than most.<sup>119</sup>

Sillans in Tang were active as merchants, monks, and surprisingly slaves, together with the many students studying in the Tang, which will be specifically dealt with in the next section.

Slave trading flourished on the seas between Silla and Tang, and there were large numbers of Sillan slaves traded to the Tang. Indeed, this was the impetus behind why Chang Pogo quit his career in the Tang army and decided to ban slave

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<sup>118</sup> For an example of the prevalence of peninsular people, see Johnson, Wallace, trans. *The T'ang Code: Vol. 1, General Principles*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, Article 48, which explains what to do when foreigners in Tang commit crimes against each other, with people from Ko[gu]ryō and Paekche used to illustrate "foreigners."

<sup>119</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 277.

trading on the high seas. According to his biography, which appears in a joint biography with Chǒng Nyǒn, written by the late Tang literatus, Du Mu (杜牧),

Chang Pogo and Chǒng Nyǒn were from Silla. They came to Xuzhou from their country (Silla). They were petty soldiers in the army. Chang was thirty years old, and Chǒng was ten years younger, so he called Pogo older brother. They both excelled in combat. They rode horses and tossed spears. In their country and Xuzhou, nobody can match their might. Chǒng was good at sea diving. He could run 50 *li* without being out of breath. In terms of bravery and might, Pogo was not as good as Nyǒn. Since Pogo was older than Nyǒn, but Nyǒn was better in martial skills, they often got into dispute. Later, Pogo went back to Silla and told the King, ‘All over Tang, people took Sillans as slaves. I plead to be the Commissioner of Ch’ǒnghaejin, so that nobody will be able to smuggle Sillans to be slaves in Tang anymore.’ The King, granting him ten thousand soldiers, acceded to his request. Ever since the reign period [Taihe, 827-835], there has been no trading of Sillan slaves on the seas.<sup>120</sup>

According to Du Mu, Chang’s initial purpose in becoming the Commissioner of Ch’ǒnghaejin was to prevent trading of Sillan slaves on the sea. Drawing evidence from Du Mu and others, Tamai has examined the tradition of Chinese using foreigners as slaves from the Han dynasty onwards, and he specially focuses on the case of Sillans captured by Chinese pirates and traded to buyers in the Shandong peninsula as slaves during the Tang dynasty. He notes that in late Tang, about the time of the reign of Emperor Muzong (r.820-823), a sudden increase in the number of Sillan slave-trading incidents can be detected in historical records. For example, in *Tang Huiyao* (唐會要), *Jiu Tangshu* (舊唐書), and *Xin Tangshu* (新唐書), we can see mention of slave-trading on the seas. Tamai does not offer reasons for why and

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<sup>120</sup> Chen, ed., *Fanchuan wenji*, 101-102, 張保臯鄭年傳 新羅人張保臯, 鄭年者, 自其國來徐州, 為軍中小將, 保臯年三十, 年少十歲, 兄呼保臯, 俱善鬪戰, 騎而揮槍, 其本國與徐州, 無有能敵者, 年復能沒海, 履其地五十里不噎, 角其勇健, 保臯差不及年, 保臯以齒, 年以藝, 常齟齬不相下, 后保臯歸新羅, 謁其王曰, 便中國以新羅人為奴婢, 願得鎮清海, 使賊不得掠人西去, 其王與萬人如其請, 自大和[太和?]後, 海上無鬻新羅人者.

how it happened. Further research by Hamada Kōsaku shows that the maritime merchants engaged in high profit slave trading were composed of merchants from both Tang and Silla, with the latter driven by natural disasters and hunger in Silla. Only later on, the Tang government started to pay attention to the presence of Sillan slaves smuggled into Tang, and ordered that these slaves be freed and be allowed to live in the Tang. Former slaves began to form Sillan-towns in the Henan and Huainan areas (mostly Shandong and Jiangsu provinces today). The large numbers of Sillan residents and their communities were the result of Tang's policy of freeing the smuggled Sillan slaves. They and their offspring became most of the overseas Sillans with whom Ennin came into contact.<sup>121</sup>

Dense populations of overseas Sillans came to live in the area of Huainan-dao and Henan-dao. Places such as Yangzhou, Chuzhou, Dengzhou, Laizhou and others, so often appearing in the historical records on the Sillans in Tang, were within these two provinces. Of the two provinces, Huainan was the region in which Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn obtained his first official appointment, and later worked for Gao Pian for six years (879-885) before returning to Silla. Therefore, these two provinces are of great significance in terms of understanding the spread of Sillan communities, their business in the region, and their impact on Tang society.

Ennin's diary mentions that the Sillan Interpreter Kim Chōngnam went to Chuzhou to place orders on nine ships for the Japanese envoys to return to Japan. Kim's activities indicate that there were traders and shipwrights in Chuzhou. Indeed, Sillan business was concentrated in the Chuzhou area, which was pivotal in the

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<sup>121</sup> Hamada, "Shiragi ōken to kajjō seiryoku," 452.

Sillan maritime trading and business networks both on the sea and in the dense assemblies of Sillan-towns. The importance of Chuzhou, according to Reischauer was,

The Korean trading communities seem to have been concentrated along the southern coast of the Shantung [Shandong] Peninsula and the lower stretches of the Huai River, which together formed the natural water route between Korea and the heart of the T'ang [Tang] Empire. The chief terminal port for the trade between China and its eastern neighbors apparently was the city of Ch'u-chou [Chuzhou], strategically located at the juncture of the Grand Canal and the Huai River, where ocean-going vessels could meet smaller boats from Yang-chou [Yangzhou] and the Yangtse [Yangzi] River system to the south and the river craft of the upper Huai and Pien [Bian] Rivers, leading westward toward the capital region.<sup>122</sup>

Reischauer also notes that in the Chuzhou region, the Korean community was so large that there was a Korean ward under its own General Manager (*Zong guan*).<sup>123</sup>

With the convenience of Chuzhou, Chang Pogo and later Sillans doing business between Tang, Silla, and Heian earned great fortunes. Ennin mentions that Chang sent his representative to call on Ennin, and his representative's title was *Datang maiwushi* (Deputy for Selling Commodities in Great Tang). The name suggests that Chang had appointed special personnel to trade certain commodities in the Tang.

According to the *Shoku Nihon kōki*, Chang and his men attempted to extend their trade to Kyūshū,

Dazaifu reports that an external tributary minister (藩外新羅臣), Chang Pogo, has sent his envoys with presents. They were chased off from Chinzei. He is a minister of others (Silla); thus no trade is permitted beyond state level.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 281.

<sup>123</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 281.

<sup>124</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 113, 大宰府言. 藩外新羅臣張寶高. 遣使獻方物. 即從鎮西追却焉. 爲人臣無境外之交也. 27. 12. 840, Book 9.

This record shows that Chang's subordinates were dismissed by the Dazaifu, and Japanese were not allowed to trade with Chang. However, Chang used strategems to penetrate the Heian market. The following record from the year 841 demonstrates this,

The Department of State heard from the Dazaifu that, Chang Pogo from Silla presented equine saddles to the Dazaifu. Pogo is a minister to others, [but] he dared to present gifts [albeit on a personal level, instead of a governmental level]. That ridicules the old custom, and is not a proper offering. [He] was advised that one should avoid [such gifts] in the name of rites, in order to prevent future problems. He acceded and left, but gave away his commodities to the people and let them trade freely. Warn the people that they should not misjudge the value of the commodities, so that they will not exhaust every penny of their family's wealth to purchase them. Comfort them. Give Chang a travel stipend like what was practiced before.<sup>125</sup>

This record is a strong hint that Tang commodities were popular and in high demand in Heian. Items that were sold to Heian by the Sillans typically were: mirrors (鏡), copper-nickel mirrors (白銅鏡), copper-nickel ladles (白銅匙), copper-nickel incense burners (白銅香爐), brass (銅黃), cinnabar (朱砂), sappanwood (蘇芳), burdock roots (子根), Frankincense (熏陸香), musk (麝香), cassia bark (桂心), ginseng (人參), candlesticks (燭臺), and screens (屏風).<sup>126</sup> Ritual utensils and Chinese medicine herbs were also among the things Heian people most sought after. In other words, the commodities in demand concurred with the flow of religion and medical technology.

Among the overseas Sillans, monks also occupied a large portion of the total residents. As a monk himself who lived in a Sillan monastery at the beginning and at

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<sup>125</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 117, 太政官仰大宰府云. 新羅人張寶高. 去年十二月進馬鞍等. 寶高是爲他臣. 敢輒致貢. 稽之舊章. 不合物宜. 宜以禮防閑. 早從返却. 其隨身物者. 任聽民間令得交關. 但莫令人民違失沽價. 競傾家資. 亦加優恤. 給程糧. 並依承前之例. 27. 02. 841, Book 10.

<sup>126</sup> Kito, "Shiragi to nihon to no bōeki," 113.

the end of his trip in China, Ennin seems to have mostly met monks. Ennin records in detail the monks he came into contact with, the Sillan practice of Buddhist rituals, and Sillan festivals in the Mt. Chi-cloister.

In an entry on day 16, eleventh month, 839, Ennin recorded the differences between Tang and Silla in their conduct of Buddhist lectures and services,

They commenced lecturing on the *Lotus Sutra* at the mountain cloister. The period for this will be until the fifteenth day of the first moon of next year. Monks and associated patrons from all over have come and are meeting together. Among them Sōngnim Hwasang is the scripture lecturer, and there are two debaters, the monks Tonjung and Sangjök. Men and women, monks and laymen, are gathered together in the cloister listening to lectures in the daytime and worshiping and repenting and listening to scriptures and the order [of worship] at night. The monks and others number about forty. The lecturing, worshiping, and repentances are all done in accordance with the customs of Korea. The worship and repentance at dusk and before dawn are in the Chinese manner [唐風], but all the rest are in the Korean language. Everyone in the assemblage, monks or layman, old or young, noble or humble alike, is Korean except for us Japanese, three monks and a servant.<sup>127</sup>

The presence of the teacher Sōngnim Hwasang, who “wandered for some twenty years, going to Mt. Wutai and to Chang’an, before coming to this mountain cloister,”<sup>128</sup> may account for Ennin’s change of plan from a pilgrimage to Mt. Tiantai in the south to Mt. Wutai in the north. After Ennin and his two disciples withdrew from the ships returning to Heian, they stayed in the Mt. Chi-Cloister in order to go to Mt. Tiantai. However, after hearing what this monk told him on day 23, seventh month, 839, Ennin changed his mind,

In the course of conversation, I continuously hear how wonderful are the holy sites of Mt. [Wu]-t’ai [Mt. Wutai]. I deeply rejoice that we are close to this holy region. For the time being I am giving up my plan of go to T’ien-t’ai [Tiantai] and have decided to go to Wu-t’ai [Wutai]. Thus, I have changed my previous plan and intend to spend the winter at the mountain cloister and

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<sup>127</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 150-151.

<sup>128</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 138.

when spring comes, to wander forth on a pilgrimage to Mt. [Wu]-t'ai [Mt. Wutai].<sup>129</sup>

Ennin and his two disciples were the only Japanese monks living in the cloister, but they fully participated in the Buddhist practices in the monastery with the Sillans. Ennin was keen to observe in what way and language the lectures and services were carried out. The monks there apparently influenced his decisions as can be seen by Ennin's pilgrimage itinerary. It resembled Sōngnim Hwasang in that Ennin made his way north to Mt. Wutai, then to Chang'an, and eventually returned to the Mt. Chi-Cloister on his back to Heian.

While staying in the cloister, Ennin's awareness of the Sillan customs is reflected in his observance of certain Sillan festivals. He even recorded what he heard about the war between Silla and Koguryō. In the journal for day 15, eighth month, 839, Ennin wrote,

The monastery prepared noodles, cakes, and so forth, and observed the festival of the fifteenth day of the eighth moon. Such a festival is not held in other countries, and Korea alone observes it. The old monks tell me that, when old Korea (Silla) was fighting with P'o-hai [Bohai], they won a victory on this day, so they have made it a festival and make music and gaily dance. This has gone on without interruption for many generations. They prepare all sorts of food and drink, and sing, dance, and play instrumental music for three days before stopping, continuing from the daylight hours into the night. Now in this mountain cloister, in memory of their homeland, they are today observing this festival. When P'o-hai [Bohai] was chastised by Korea (Silla), a mere one thousand men [managed to] flee to the north, and later they again formed a state, and this is what is now called the country of P'o-hai [Bohai].<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 138.

<sup>130</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 141-142. The country of Bohai which was having a war with Silla as mentioned by Ennin here refers to Koguryō.

From what we can gather from Ennin and elsewhere, it is clear that a good number of overseas Sillans lived in the Huainan and Henan regions. The majority of the Sillan populace was probably slaves at the beginning; later, being freed, they formed the clusters of Sillan towns in the region and were engaged in maritime trading activities among the three states. As part of their communities, Buddhist temples were established, and many Sillan monks were active as in-residence monks or visitors in Tang China.

### 2.1.3. Integration: Tang's educational system for foreigners

According to the *Jiu Tangshu*, Tang started to accept foreign students in the Zhengguan reign (627-649),

Tang Gaozu, in the fifth month, the third year of the Yining reign (619), ordered to place 72 scholars at the National Confucian Academy (Ch. *Guozixue*), and accept the sons and grandsons of the third rank and above officials. In the Premier Academy (Ch. *Taixue*), place 140 scholars and accept sons and grandsons of officials ranked the fifth rank or above. In the Four-Gate Academy (Ch. *Simenxue*), place 130 scholars and accept sons and grandsons of the seventh rank and above officials. Until the Zhengguan years, the number reached 3,260. As long as someone is good at the classics, he can take the exam. At the time, Confucian scholars of the four quarters under heaven, embracing the classics, gathered in the capital like clouds. Soon, Chiefs (Kings) of Koryŏ, Paekche, Silla, Gaochang (Karakhoja), and Tibet, all sent their sons and people to study at the national academy. When the drum was struck to commence the lectures, there were about eight thousand students.<sup>131</sup>

Records on the Korean side, as seen from the *Samguk sagi*, show that Koguryŏ, Silla, and Paekche started to officially send students to the Tang in 640.<sup>132</sup>

To answer the soaring requests from foreign states to send their students to China to study, the Tang government devised a system to manage these government-sponsored foreign students through the *Honglusi* (鴻臚寺, Bureau of Ceremonies for Foreigners). The system ranged from a scholarship program to a specially devised examination for foreigners. According to the *Tongsa kangmok* (dated 1778), students

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<sup>131</sup> Yang, ed., *Jiu Tangshu*, 4941, 高祖以義寧三年五月. 初令國子學置生七十二員. 取三品已上子孫. 太學置生一百四十員. 取五品已上子孫. 四門學制一百三十人取七品已上子孫. 貞觀年間凡三千二百六十員. 有能通經者. 聽之貢舉. 是時四方儒士. 多抱負典籍. 雲會京師. 俄而高麗及百濟新羅高昌吐蕃等諸國酋長. 亦遣子弟入於國學之內. 鼓篋而升講筵者. 八千餘人. The national academy as seen from this record was composed of the National Confucian Academy, the Premier Academy, and the Four-Gate Academy. Students are grouped into the three academies depending on their social background.

<sup>132</sup> According to Yan Gengwang, there seemed to be a competition among the three kingdoms in sending their students to the Tang, as based on the records in the *Samguk sagi*, they all began in the year 640. Yan, "Xinluo liutang xuesheng yu sengtu," 934.

who were sponsored by the Silla government had a monthly stipend called “book money.” At the same time, Tang disbursed seasonal clothes and a living stipend to defray the living costs of these students. However, all of them studying in the National Confucian Academy (國子監) were expected to pass the civil examination within ten years, otherwise they would be expelled from the academy.<sup>133</sup> Tang also officially designated accommodation in Suwei Yuan (宿衛院, Quarter of Imperial Service) for students from countries that maintained tributary status with the Tang. The number of the Sillan students is thought to have been large. Numbers can be estimated from the figures mentioned in various memorials (表) to the Emperor, presented when they reached the ten-year mark and asked to be sent back to their home country. One instance is in the *Samguk sagi*. There is one item that mentions, “Emperor Wenzong ordered the *Honglusi* to release the hostage prince [of Silla] and one hundred and five students who reached their [ten-year] term.”<sup>134</sup>

The Tang government was very open in terms of allowing foreign students to study and pursue a career in China, by which means to incorporate the elites of the peripheries into the center, and more importantly to establish friendly diplomatic

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<sup>133</sup> Chosŏn kosŏ kanhaenghoe, ed., *Tongsa kangmok*, 499, 新羅自事君以後。常遣王子宿衛。又遣學生入太學學業。十年限滿還國。又遣他學生入學者。多至百餘人。買書銀貨則本國支給。而書糧。唐自鴻臚寺供給。學生去來者相踵。

<sup>134</sup> *Samguk sagi*, 11:1a-b, 唐文宗敕鴻臚寺。放還質子。及年滿合歸國學生。共一百五人。Also refer to Shultz and Kang’s translation, “Tang Wenzong ordered the *Honglusi* to deport all the hostages as well as those whose [term] of stay had expired. [Those returned to Silla] numbered, all together, 105 people.” Shultz and Kang, *The Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, 355-356. In the footnote, they note that “The accuracy of the placement of this entry is in doubt as, according to the *Jiu Tangshu*, Wenzong died in the fifth year (840) of Kaisheng [Kaicheng]...” Their doubts about Emperor Wenzong’s death year are correct, but this same entry without “Tang Wenzong” appears in both *Xin Tangshu* and *Jiu Tangshu* with slight variations, as well as in the *Tongsa kangmok*. It means that in the *Samguk sagi* entry, “Tang Wenzong” was mistakenly inserted, but this order, likely issued by Tang Wuzong, is reliable. Finally, in Shultz and Kang’s translation the “hostage prince” (質子) is not translated.

relations with the surrounding states. Tang and later the Yuan were probably more open to foreign students than the Song. By examining the system current at the time of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn during the Tang, augmenting this with comments by a Koryŏ-period literatus, who was probably reporting on Song-period practice, and considering interpretations by modern scholars, we can glimpse the change in Chinese tolerance over time—Tang as liberal, followed by conservative Song, followed by a liberal Yuan—and better appreciate the challenges that the young Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn faced.

We can see how Koreans were treated by considering the nature of the *bingong* examination (賓貢 “courtesy tributary”), which is believed to be a civil service examination devised for foreigners launched in the Changqing reign (821-823). Modern Japanese and Chinese scholars tend to highlight the less demanding features of the *bingong* examination compared with the one that Chinese locals had to take. Its management, content, and career prospects are all depicted as different.

In an essay that compares Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn with Abe no Nakamaro<sup>135</sup> (阿倍仲麻呂, 698/701-770), the modern Japanese scholar Kawamoto Yoshiaki cites an essay, “Preface to sending Yi Chungbu [Yi Kok] back to Koryŏ” (送奉使李中父還朝序) by Ch'oe Hae, a late Koryŏ literatus and a descendant of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn. The essay is found in the *Cholgo ch'ŏnbaek* (拙藁千百) and describes what the *bingong* examination was like,

The so-called *bingong* examination is an extra examination held separately. The successful candidates were listed at the bottom of the golden banner. It is

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<sup>135</sup> A Japanese literatus living in the high Tang period, known in China by his Chinese name Chao Heng (晁衡). He held official posts in the Tang and befriended famous Chinese poets, such as Wang Wei and Li Bai.

not something worth talking about to others. [The candidates] origins are humble and tedious. From the time of the revered Yuan Dynasty, [the exam takers] were regarded equally without considering where they came from. So candidates from the Eastern land came to compete equally with the superior candidates of the Middle land. There have already been six on the golden banner [of the Yuan].<sup>136</sup>

Kawamoto cited Ch'oe Hae in order to show that though Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn passed the civil service examination, it was specially designed for foreigners in consideration that they were insufficiently prepared to compete with local Chinese candidates. The *bingong* examination was thus a favor granted by the Tang government in an attempt to conciliate countries that had maintained tributary relations with the Tang.

However, according to Kawamoto, Abe no Nakamaro passed the examination in years well before the *bingong* examination was established, which means that Abe no Nakamaro was taking the examination exactly like a local Chinese candidate. The challenge for Abe no Nakamaro must have been tremendous.<sup>137</sup>

Even before Kawamoto, the less demanding features of the *bingong* had been noted by Yan Gengwang. In an article on Sillan foreign students and monks in the Tang, he writes,

In terms of recruiting scholars through the civil examination in the Tang, those who passed the exam were greatly honored. Foreign students who were studying in the Tang were envious and would want to have a try, but their achievement in literacy was far behind those of the Chinese, so Tang devised a special examination, called *bingong*, to let them sit a civil service examination. The students from other countries who passed the examination were few, but Sillan students, from the reign of Changqing (821-823) to the

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<sup>136</sup> *Cholgo ch'ŏnbaek*, 2:5a, 然所謂賓貢者。每自別試。附名榜尾。不得與諸人齒。所除多卑冗。欽惟聖元一視同仁。立賢無方。東土故與中原俊秀並舉。列名金榜已有六人焉。

<sup>137</sup> See Kawamoto, "Sai Chien to Abe no Miyatamaro," 102-105.

five dynasties (907-960), numbered about one hundred successful candidates.<sup>138</sup>

Yan's argument is also based on Ch'oe Hae's account in the *Cholgo ch'ŏnbaek*.

The problematic aspect of both Kawamoto's argument and Yan's argument is that Ch'oe Hae was a literatus from the late Koryŏ dynasty, concurrent with the Yuan dynasty. Kawamoto and Yan both trust Ch'oe Hae's knowledge of the *bingong* examination held in the Tang dynasty, which was three hundred years before Ch'oe Hae's lifetime. There is a chance that Ch'oe Hae might not have known any better about the Tang *bingong* examination than we do nowadays. In short, Ch'oe Hae's comments may not carry the meaning that Kawamoto and Yan impute to them.

There is insufficient evidence to determine whether the Tang-period *bingong* examination was inferior to the ordinary examinations. What we can say is that the number of foreigners who held official positions in the Tang government probably outnumbered any other dynasty except the Yuan. That is to say, many foreigners passed *some kind of examination* and were given equal opportunities as the Chinese. The following dynasty of the Northern Song is widely considered to have been conservative by comparison in its recruitment of foreigners. Although foreigners were allowed to take the Song-period Chinese civil examination, we might assume that they were not regarded equally as the Chinese in terms of official appointments, probably because the examination was viewed as degraded, and this situation became familiar to contemporary Koryŏ literati. The basis of the assumption about the Song-

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<sup>138</sup> Yan, "Xinluo liutang xuesheng yu sengtu," 937, 唐代科舉取士. 登第者光寵殊異. 外國學生之留唐習業者. 亦自慕羨而願就試. 然其學藝程度究竟遠遜于華人. 故唐政府特設賓貢以待之. 其他諸國學子固有登賓貢科第者. 但究竟少數. 而新羅自長慶至五代登第者蓋進百人.

period *bingong* derives from what happened later. Inequality was abolished by the Yuan dynasty and Koryŏ literati came to be grouped with Han Chinese, instead of being grouped with others such as *semuren* (one of the four categories, along with Mongols, Han Chinese, and Southerners). With this change, Koryŏ literati were overjoyed that they had become equal with the Chinese, implying that the examinations they sat in the Yuan were viewed as on a par with those taken by ordinary Chinese literati.<sup>139</sup>

Thus, I would propose that instead of trusting Ch'oe Hae, a Koryŏ literatus living during the Yuan dynasty, further research is needed in order to pin down the management of the *bingong* examination in the Tang. It is highly possible that the *bingong* in the Tang resembled the examination in the Yuan in terms of relative equal opportunities for foreigners and was probably on a par with ordinary examinations. Ch'oe Hae was celebrating the end of Koreans being lumped with other foreigners and being limited to the inferior *bingong* examination inherited from the Song. He was praising Yi Chungbu [Yi Kok] for having bested Chinese candidates, and his praise would have carried weight as coming from a descendant of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn. But, he may not have been aware that Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn sat the Tang-period *bingong* examination. Otherwise, he would not have criticized the *bingong* examination, unless it was widely known at the time that the Tang-period *bingong* examination was different and on a par with the equal treatment displayed during the Yuan. Finally, we might note that the three Korean kingdoms all started to send students to the Tang in 639, but the *bingong* examination was devised sometime

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<sup>139</sup> Ch'oe Hae's initial purpose was to acclaim the achievement of Yi Kok, who passed the examination, like a Chinese, in the Yuan.

during 821-823. What happened to candidates who sat examinations between 639 and 821, a period of 182 years? Were they allowed to take the examinations like the Chinese? The prehistory of the *bingong*, again, makes the case of Abe no Nakamaro more impressive, but it does not necessarily diminish the achievements of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn.

In the end, through passing the *bingong* examination, many Sillan students gained recognition and fame in the Tang. Some stayed in Tang for officialdom and others went back to their homeland. Their success in the Tang was reflected in the many poems presented to Sillans that came to be collected in the eighteenth-century *Quan Tangshi* (全唐詩). There are a total of seven poems collected in the *Quan Tangshi* that were presented to Sillan students, monks, and others.<sup>140</sup> Among them, some mentioned *bingong* in the titles. For example, a poem by a late Tang literatus, Zhang Qiao (lifetime unknown, but a contemporary of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn), presented a poem to a Sillan successful candidate, Kim Yi'o, and it has been preserved in the *Quan Tangshi*,<sup>141</sup>

送賓貢金夷吾奉使歸本國	Sending <i>bingong</i> Kim Yi'o back to his country on a mission
渡海登仙籍, 還家備漢儀.	Crossing the water you passed the civil service exam. Homecoming you bear the Han culture.
孤舟無岸泊, 萬裏有星隨.	A single boat drifts without knowing the bank. A journey of ten thousand <i>li</i> with the accompaniment of stars.
積水浮魂夢, 流年半別離.	Accumulated water floats your soul and dreams. Nearly separated in flowing years.
東風未迴日, 音信杳難期.	The days when the east winds fail to return. Your news will be hard to expect.

<sup>140</sup> Please refer to a chart made by Kang Ch'angu. Kang, "Tangren zenggei xinluoren de shikao," 170.

<sup>141</sup> Wang, ed., *Quan Tangshi*, 7305.

Zhang Qiao seemed to maintain cordial friendships with many Sillans. Kim Yi'o was probably an acclaimed and highly accomplished Sillan student. Another poem was also presented to Kim Yi'o by Du Xunhe (杜荀鶴, 846-904) and was included in the *Quan Tangshi* as well.<sup>142</sup>

送賓貢登第后歸海東 <sup>143</sup>	Sending a successful <i>bingong</i> candidate back to the [land] east of the sea
歸捷中華第，登船鬢未絲。	Returning gloriously, having passed the exam in China. On your homeward boat, your temple is not yet threaded with silver.
直應天上桂，別有海東枝。	The Cassia tree in heaven has developed a branch in the East Sea.
國界波窮處，鄉心日出時。	The border of our countries lies in the distance where the waters are exhausted. Your homesick heart is awaiting the sunrise.
西風送君去，莫慮到家遲。	When the west wind sends you off; don't be concerned that you will arrive home late.

The success of Sillan students in the Tang was widely noticed, and it is highly likely that they were the most successful group of students in the Tang among foreigners. Many of them served in the Tang government or went back to take up important positions in Silla. Just like Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, they contributed to the close cultural and academic ties between the Middle Kingdom and the Eastern Kingdom.

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<sup>142</sup> Though in the title, it does not mention Kim Yi'o's name, Kang Ch'angu assumes that it was presented to Kim. See Kang, "Tangren zenggei xinluoren de shikao," 170. This poem is also included in the *Tangfengji*, Du Xunhe's literary collection. *Tangfengji*, 1:9a.

<sup>143</sup> Wang, ed., *Quan Tangshi*, 7933.

#### 2.1.4. Synthetic trinity: Ch'oe's careers in the Tang and Silla

From the time Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn left Silla behind in a commercial ship in the year 869, he spent the next eighteen years in the Tang, studying and working. His in-Tang years can be largely divided into four periods: pre-*bingong* examination (student years); leisure time in Luoyang; appointment as a minor official; and working for Gao Pian. Geographically, he moved from Chang'an in the west to the eastern capital of Luoyang, and ended in the Huainan area, where he held official positions.

His student years in Chang'an are largely unknown. He could actually have studied in the National Confucian Academy of Chang'an, or he might have studied in the Eastern capital of Luoyang, as Tang divided foreign students into two groups and placed them equally in the east and west capitals. Ch'oe was not a government-sponsored student (宿衛學生), so he might not have been allowed to study in the National Academy of Chang'an. No record shows where he studied and Ch'oe remained silent about his student years. Only from the preface of the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, his literary collection, can we gain glimpses of how hard he worked in order to fulfill his father's wish for him to pass the civil service examination within ten years. The six characters he used would resonate with the many foreign students of the time and even today: "For others, they do one hundred times, but for me, I do one thousand times (人以百, 吾以千)." Ch'oe passed the *bingong* examination at the age of eighteen, taking merely six years, and far exceeded his father's wish. Ch'oe lightly mentioned his success in the preface to the *Kyewŏn*

*p'ilgyǒng chip*, “In the sixth year of my touring in Tang, my name appeared at the bottom of the golden banner.”<sup>144</sup>

Ch'oe was not able to gain an official post immediately after he passed the palace examination and became a “presented scholar” (進士). He was “drifting in the east capital of Luoyang, making a living via writing”<sup>145</sup> until he received his first appointment as a minor official, the magistrate of Lishui (溧水),<sup>146</sup> in the city of Xuan Zhou (宣州). His magistrate's rank (縣尉) was close to the lowest rank of officials in the Tang hierarchy, but he was on the ladder. Appointments for successful candidates of the palace examination, the “presented scholars,” differ according to their ranking on the golden banner, so it was not surprising that Ch'oe was appointed to a post of the lowest rank. It seemed that Ch'oe enjoyed very much his first appointment as a minor official. Recalling these five years spent in Lishui, he wrote, “I was paid bountifully, and the workload was light. I was stuffed with food the whole day. [As it says in the *Analects*] ‘the officer, having discharged all his duties, should devote his leisure to learning,’ I cherished every second of my life to learn.”<sup>147</sup> The hard work paid off. At the end of his tenure in Lishui, Ch'oe was able to compile a collection of his writings entitled *Chungsan pokkwe chip* (中山覆篋集) that included five fascicles of poems and essays. Unfortunately, this collection was lost. We have no way of knowing what he wrote during this period of time. Yet, fortunately, Du Xunhe, a Tang literatus who befriended Ch'oe during his days

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<sup>144</sup> *Kyewǒn p'ilgyǒng chip*, sǒ (preface):1b, 觀光六年, 金名榜尾. The phrase “...bottom of the golden banner” was probably actual but also may have been an expression of humility.

<sup>145</sup> *Kyewǒn p'ilgyǒng chip*, sǒ (preface):1b, 浪跡東都, 筆作飯囊.

<sup>146</sup> A county of Nanjing city today.

<sup>147</sup> *Kyewǒn p'ilgyǒng chip*, sǒ (preface):1b, 祿厚官閑, 飽食終日, 仕優則學, 免擲寸陰.

working in Lishui, left us a poem that was probably presented to Ch'oe, with the title, "To Cui Shaofu of Lishui" (贈溧水崔少府).<sup>148</sup> Though it contains scant information, at least we are offered a hint of what Ch'oe's life was like in Lishui.

庭戶蕭條燕雀喧，日高窗下枕書眠。  
祇聞留客教沽酒，未省逢人說料錢。  
洞口禮星披鶴氅，溪頭吟月上漁船。  
九華山叟心相許，不計官卑贈一篇。

Deserted house and a group of chirping magpies; Sun is high, below the window, he sleeps on the books.  
I heard that to detain your guests you purchase wine, but I do not know why you talk about your salary.  
At the entrance to a cave you put on an overcoat trimmed with crane's down; at the head of a creek, you sing to the moon in a fishing boat.  
The old man of Mt. Jiuhua has his heart set on you; he doesn't mind your low rank and presents you with a poem.

At the end of his tenure as the magistrate of Lishui, Ch'oe sought to obtain higher positions by taking the exam called *boxue hongci* and retired to study in the mountains. Later, he worked under the army commander of Huainan Province (淮南節度使), Gao Pian, in Yangzhou as a secretary. He wrote in a letter to Gao Pian, "Note offered to the Great General for initial devotion," (初投獻太尉啓),

In the shrine of Confucius, there are sons of other countries, but within the gate of the Mencius school, how come there are no others coming from afar? Though tiny goodness it might be, the virtuous of the past will not let it go. In order to rule the great country, how can you neglect an insignificant guest like me from a small country? So I dare to present myself with loyalty, petty as I am. I plead to place this letter before your bright working desk.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>148</sup> Wang, ed., *Quan Tangshi*, 7966. Another version of the poem has Lianshui (漣水) in the title instead of Lishui (溧水), and this is the uncertainty over whether this poem was presented to Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn. This poem is also included in the *Tangfeng ji*, Du Xunhe's literary collection, where Lishui is used in the title. *Tangfeng ji*, 2:22a.

<sup>149</sup> *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 17:2a, 然則尼父堂中。亦有他鄉之子。孟嘗門下。寧無遠地之人。片善可稱。前賢不讓。永能執大邦之政。豈欲遺小國之賓。是以。敢寫微衷。輕投朗鑑。

Gao Pian employed him, and Ch'oe became the voice of Gao by drafting his official letters and documents, many of which came to be collected in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*.

While Ch'oe was working for Gao Pian, Huang Chao led a revolt in 878. His military power quickly expanded, and before long it was out of control. Gao Pian's army was at the forefront of quelling the revolt. In order to defeat Huang Chao on the propaganda battlefield, Ch'oe wrote the most famous piece of his career, "Proclamation of war on Huang Chao" (檄黃巢書), which marked the highest point of his literary achievement and brought him immediate fame in China. He returned to Silla at the age of thirty as a member of an imperial mission, after working for Gao Pian for six years. Tang did not recover from Huang Chao's revolt and came to an end in the year 907.

## 2.2. Reconfiguration of the Dao: A Sillan-cosmopolitan perspective

The literary practice of a literatus was closely related to their philosophical, religious, or even political preference or their preferred Dao. The content and style in their works are the best evidence to testify as to which ideological Dao they follow: Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism or others. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn went to the Tang when he was twelve, and he was exposed to all possible schools of the Dao while in China. His engagement with a philosophical view, even a lifestyle was, for him, a reconfiguration of the Dao. His Dao was an ideology he opted for and forged during his stay in the Tang and subsequently carried back to Silla. His engagement with the Dao as manifested in his remaining works becomes the subject of investigation to which I now turn. The following two sections will each focus on the content of his poems and the style used for his poetry and prose. Both sections lead to the conclusion that Ch'oe was closely associated with the “Classical Prose Movement” (古文運動) in China, and subsequently, the “Ancient Style learning” in Korea. This conclusion defies the commonly held assumption that Ch'oe came to study in the Tang when the “Classical Prose Movement” had faded into oblivion, and he thus was not a practitioner of this orthodox line of Confucianism and subsequently had no relation to the “Ancient Style learning” in Korea. What follow are detailed analyses that intend to restore Ch'oe to the classicist lines of both traditions. Because literary style and preferred Dao were closely related, I will now turn to analyse themes in Ch'oe's poetry and prose and the style of his writing.

### 2.2.1. A lonely cloud: A thematic overview of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's poems<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> The total extant poems by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn are few. The *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip* includes 27 poems, and there are 32 poems in the *Ko'un chip*, of which 26 are originally collected in the *Tongmunŏn*.

Names are important in the Sinitic cultural sphere but naming systems are complex. Other than a given name, a literatus would have at least a courtesy name and a penname. Since given names are dictated at birth and beyond one's control, when a man reached the moment when he would assume a cap and be recognised as a man, his relatively free choices of a courtesy name and a penname reveal a great deal about his will and inclinations. These names are astute indicators of the changing landscapes of a culture and touchstones of shifting fashions in literary practices. Courtesy names, given between friends, or procured from honorable persons, and pennames, usually composed by oneself, are not random at all. In most cases, they allude to authoritative texts and have registers in literary sources. Highly suggestive of the trend of the time and reflective of the motivations of the person, they compose an indispensable part of the identity of a literatus.

Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's courtesy name and pennames are not agreed by all. *Samguk sagi* records that his courtesy name was Ko'un (孤雲, lonely cloud) or Hae'un (海雲, sea cloud). Yi Illo maintains in his *P'ahan chip* (破閑集) that Ch'oe's courtesy name was Ko'un (lonely cloud). In a preface of the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip* by Sŏ Yu'gu (1764-1845), a Chosŏn literatus, Sŏ writes that Ch'oe's penname was Ko'un (lonely cloud), and Choe's courtesy name was Haebu (seaman). Despite the disagreements,

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Among the 26 poems in the *Tongmunsŏn*, 3 are found in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*. Later on, the Taedong munhwa yŏn'guwŏn of Sungkyunkwan University identified eight more poems by Ch'oe and included them in *Ko'un sok chip*, a component of the *Ch'oe munch'anghu chŏnjip* compiled under the direction of Yi Ki-baik and published in 1972. Additionally, there are nine poems apparently found in the *Senzai kaku* in Japan. Except for one found in the *Tongmunsŏn*, the rest are not seen in any other Korean sources. All the surviving poems over a millennium of emendation and exegesis represent only the tip of the iceberg with the majority of Ch'oe's poems having been lost, if we consider that poetry was the main form of literary production in the Tang dynasty. Many literary works mentioned by Ch'oe himself or by others failed to be passed on to us. Still, it is fortunate that there are 72 surviving poems.

they all agree that “lonely cloud” is used either as Ch’oe’s self-styled or procured name, which is very much a reliable suggestion of how Ch’oe related to or agreed to relate himself to an imagery. Naturally, what is signified by a “lonely cloud” came to compose distinctive themes in his poems.

The usage of the imagery of “a lonely cloud” appeared in different time periods and by different poets. What I am going to show is that “lonely cloud” as a poetic imagery, though played with in different scenarios, one of which is by Li Bai, Ch’oe is clearly moving along Tao Qian’s line of using such an imagery. Tao Yuanming (or Tao Qian, 365-427), a literatus living in the Jin dynasty, first utilized the imagery in the first stanza of his poem, “Ode to poor scholars (詠貧士).”<sup>151</sup> He wrote,

萬族各有托	Everyone in the world has someone to rely on,
孤雲獨無依	Except the “lonely cloud” that has no one to rely on.
噉噉空中滅	Regrettably, it perishes in the air;
何時見餘暉	When can the remaining glories be seen?

With the opening line, he introduces the natural object of a cloud drifting in a vast expanse of sky. The cloud has no attachment in contrast to other objects in the world that have tangible belongings: for example, trees root themselves in the earth and rivers rush to the open arms of the sea. Tao Yuanming sees the connection between a lonely cloud and the identity of a person who has no roots or belongs anywhere. In other words, a lonely cloud is used to expose, or illuminate, the homeless situation of a person who fails to fall into or escapes from any putative categories. The warm demise of the cloud is tragic in a sense, as there is a pity involved when the warmth

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<sup>151</sup> *Wen Xuan*, 30:4a.

within was not felt by anyone, and yet it perishes, without anyone noticing its glories radiating from the inside.

After the introduction of a lonely, rootless cloud that wanders and perishes alone, in the second stanza, Tao introduces a pair of contrasts through another natural phenomenon, flying birds.

朝霞開宿霧	The rosy clouds of morning dispel the fog of the previous night.
衆鳥相與飛	All birds fly towards the glorious sky.
遲遲出林翮	Later than the others, one flies out of the woods,
未夕復來歸	And returns before the dusk falls.

This time, it is one bird that does not behave the same as the rest of the flock. When the morning glories invoke the flustering of all the birds as they are cheering the rising sun and dancing to its tunes, one bird flew from the woods later than all the others as if it has left something behind and finds it hard to leave. This bird, before the other birds returned at dusk, flew back to the woods much earlier.

At first glance, the bird bears no similarity or connection to the lonely cloud Tao first introduces. Different from a lonely cloud that has no one to turn to in this world, the bird has a home that is hard to part with in the woods, so why did Tao group a “homeless cloud” and an “at-home bird” together in one poem and make the “lonely cloud” and the “returning bird” appear to be a thesis and an anti-thesis? Doubts arise in the mind of the reader when the flow of the initial loneliness of a “homeless cloud” is checked by its opposition to an “at-home bird.” This irony (or shall we call it the irony of a “poor scholar”?) is the puzzle and artistry that derives from no cosmological parallels that might be dictated by Chinese culture, but begs for further reading. The irony forces us to re-evaluate the origin of the “loneliness”

of the cloud. Is it from the lack of a physical “home”? Apparently, the lonely cloud lacks a physical home, and its physically homeless situation is complemented by the pity involved when its warmth is not felt by others and it perishes by itself. If the warmth and glories residing within were to be understood, the importance of a physical home would recede and give way to an emotional resting place or emotional “home.” Thus, its loneliness takes a turn from a physical and tangible lack or incomplete state to a longing for understanding, resonance, acknowledgment, or a resting place, which comes later in the poem—the longing for a soulmate friend. This longing echoes with the isolation of the bird. Though a physical home is detectable and difficult to part with, the idiosyncrasy of the bird, who sings and cheers the morning sky apart from the mass of birds, resembles the lonely cloud yearning for a belonging above a physical home. The physical home of the bird thus becomes a fetish object without real substance. The stanza about the bird, in the end, problematizes the concept of “home” by downplaying a physical home but elevating a mental home. Such a lack of physical home but “cultural belonging” in possessing an emotional home is Choe Ch’iwŏn’s recycling of the textuality we see in Tao Yuanming’s poem.

In the final stanza, Tao offers reasons for the dilemma of the bird and the lonely cloud,

量力守故轍	If you try your best to keep the old rules,
豈不寒與飢	Won't you be cold and hungry?
知音苟不存	If an intimate friend <sup>152</sup> does not exist,
已矣何所悲	What could be sadder?

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<sup>152</sup> Intimate friend or soul-mate is a deeply empathetic friend. Literal meaning is “knowing sound.” This word first appeared to describe the friendship between Bo Ya and Zhong Ziqi in the Warring States period. Ziqi was able to comprehend without a mistake the deeper meaning Bo Ya conveyed through playing zither. After Ziqi died, Bo Ya decided not to play zither any more.

What the bird finds hard to part with in the woods, and what it tries very hard to uphold, in the end, are the old rules symbolized by the fetish “home” in the woods. It becomes the reason that accounts for the poverty of a scholar. Without flying towards the red clouds of morning, but keeping to the old rules preserved in the past, a poor scholar will remain hungry and cold. The poverty and hunger of a scholar lie in his loyalty to the past and rejection of what is new. Two Confucian archetype figures come to mind: Bo Yi and Shu Qi who refused to eat the millet of the Zhou regime and died in the woods as devout loyalists to the previous Shang dynasty.

The poem continues. Tao offers us the thought that when the warmth of a lonely cloud is not known by a soulmate, the loneliness is beyond measure. Because the real cause of the loneliness of the cloud is the lack of a soulmate who understands the warmth residing within the lonely cloud, the loneliness of the cloud will not be cured, but it has no need of a physical home, because a “physical home” does not quench the thirst for “belonging.” The poor scholar’s qualities, as symbolized by the “lonely cloud” and the “late bird” point to a lack of “home” on a deeper level, in which the lonely cloud searches for a “knowing-self” and the late bird demonstrates loyalty to a fetish home that is not entirely satisfying. In other words, the hunger and coldness of a poor scholar tie his unbending loyalty to a fetish home and to a lack of understanding and acknowledgment.

The fabric of a poor scholar’s laments, by invoking the lonely cloud and the birds, is re-worked into many later poems. However, what the imageries came to signify have deviated from the original. Li Bai picked up the imageries of the “lonely

cloud” and the “birds,” and wrote a different poem, “Sitting alone facing Mt. Jingting.”<sup>153</sup>

衆鳥高飛盡  
孤雲獨去閑  
兩相看不厭  
祇有敬亭山

The multitude of birds soared aloft until there was  
emptiness;  
A lonely cloud drifts by in leisure.  
Watching each other face-to-face without tiring;  
There is only Mt. Jingting.

The imageries of the flock of birds and a lonely cloud appearing in Li Bai’s poem signify meanings that have almost nothing to do with Tao Yuanming’s poor scholars. If in Tao’s poem, the “flock of birds” is the anti-thesis of the “lonely cloud,” in this poem by Li Bai, they complement each other in their actions, that is, in their appearances and disappearances. When the birds disappear without a trace, also quenched is the sound associated with the birds. It creates a meditative context—silence. The “emptiness” (*jin* 盡) of the opening line matches well with the “leisure” (*xian*, 閑) in the second; the first two lines thus introduce a context that is ideal in a Taoist imaginary: non-action (*wuwei*, 無爲). The birds fly away without human interruption, and a lonely cloud drifts by in leisure. The cloud’s action is spontaneous and purposeless that calls to mind a key word of Taoist practice: wandering. The author achieves this state without doing anything. He watches the mountain and the mountain watches him, and neither become bored. The gaze is the only human action that is arbitrary, but the gaze from the mountain is non-existent and only imagined by the author. His gaze at the mountain reflects back to look into

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<sup>153</sup> Wang, ed., *Quan Tangshi*, 1858.

his inner self. The author is engaged in a tour of the self. Li Bai's poem suggests that the imagery of "lonely clouds" does not necessarily tie to a poor scholar as might be dictated by a cultural imperative or a cosmological hierarchy, but can be stretched and reworked to create a psychological cleansing.

The two poems by Tao and Li, though invoking the same imageries, present different associations. Li was born much later than Tao, so Li probably knew of Tao's "lonely clouds" and "flock of birds," but he chose to use them in a totally different context, and Li hardly alludes to the material insufficiency or yearning that originated from any lack of something. His "lonely clouds" reflect mental fulfillment. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, as a late-comer, should have been aware of the two poems, especially their usages of the imagery "lonely cloud." He could have followed either Tao or Li, or neither. So what was Ch'oe's choice?

Ch'oe's engagement with the imagery of a lonely cloud is almost subliminal. He did not mention it directly in any of his extant poems, but the lonely cloud is consistently lingering below the surface. Our discussion of Ch'oe will begin with a poem collected in the *Tongmunsŏn*,<sup>154</sup>

東飄西轉路歧塵

獨策羸驂幾苦辛

不是不知歸去好

只緣歸去又家貧

East drifting and west turning, the dusty road is  
full of twists and turns

Whipping the weak horse alone, hardship and  
suffering abound

Not because I don't know it's better to go home  
The only reason is that home is poor.

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<sup>154</sup> *Tongmunsŏn*, 19:12b. This poem is not included in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*.

The first line offers us an on-the-go context, but without mentioning a destination. The drifting and turning of a lonely traveler reveals no clear sense of where to go. His vision and sense of direction are barred by the dust, the twists, and the turns of the road. The word “drift” indicates forces to which he has to bow. For example, clouds in the sky have no control of themselves but drift in the direction the wind blows; a floating object in the water submissively follows the currents. Ch’oe’s drifting indicates his helplessness on a journey that is not from his own will but out of his control. The second line attempts a human interruption by directing a power source, but he is whipping a weak horse. A horse offers the engine and muscles that can alter the current state of “drifting” and is the only thing this lonely traveler can rely on in order to get to a destination, but the power is weak. Thus the first two lines show us a traveler is on the go but without knowing a destination—the vision and the power are checked. He is on an aimless trip like the lonely cloud drifting without belonging.

The next two lines problematize the concept of “home,” but Ch’oe’s engagement with “home” reveals a cosmopolitan layer. He knows well his physical home—in his case, Silla, but he cannot go back home. His homelessness thus originates from a self-exile, but not a forced exile, due to political impediment or purge. Ch’oe’s poorness alludes to a cultural poverty rather than material insufficiency, or at least a combination of the two.<sup>155</sup> It is precisely at the cultural

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<sup>155</sup> To further support the point that it is cultural poverty invoked here by Ch’oe, here is what he wrote in the letter to General Gao Pian, “Note offered to the Great General for initial devotion,” mentioned before: I, am from Silla. My origin is low and my temperament is stupid. I have no talent, nor my learning is sufficient... 某, 新羅人也, 身也賤性也愚, 才不雄學不贍. In a poem, “Sunflowers in the Shu region,” also mentioned before, he wrote in the ending couplet, “Deeply ashamed of his origin, how can he blame others for deserting him.” 自慙生地賤, 堪恨人棄遺.

poverty that Tao's poverty of the poor scholar is stretched by Ch'oe from material poorness to cultural deficiency, which is the reason why Ch'oe feels he is in exile and drifts without knowing whether to stay or return. Ch'oe, however, shows loyalty to this "physical home" like the bird that finds it hard to part from home. If the glorious morning symbolizes the more advanced culture of Tang, that humble home in the woods that the late bird hates to depart from and returns to early is very much like Ch'oe's home country of Silla.

Among the twenty-seven poems collected in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, Silla as Ch'oe's home takes the limelight. Nevertheless, Silla is projected through a series of metonymies such as the sea, the east wind, and azaleas, among others. The sea as the subject can be seen from the titles in at least six poems including "The tides," "The sand bank," "The seagulls," "Spring viewing at the beach," "Leisure stroll at the beach," "Spring viewing at a steep peak before going back to the East of the sea," not to mention simply "sea" as mentioned in the content of many other poems. It is no wonder that Ch'oe's penname sometimes is thought to be "seaman" (海夫) or "sea cloud" (海雲) instead of "lonely cloud." The sea reminds him of Silla and is the medium through which home can be reached, so it can be viewed as an extension of home in the foreign land where he was currently dwelling.

Not just the sea comes to him as home; the east wind too brings reminders of home. It is described by Ch'oe as,<sup>156</sup>

知爾新從海外來 曉窓吟坐思難裁 堪憐時復撼書幌	I knew you newly arrived from over the sea, But I cannot trim my thoughts while sitting at the window and murmuring at the daybreak. How pitiful that you are trying to shake my book cover
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<sup>156</sup> *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 20:11b.

似報故園花欲開	from time to time As if you are trying to convey the news that the flowers in my hometown are going to blossom.
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In other words, though dwelling in a different country, he was constantly connected to home by a number of objects that function as similes. He travelled far, but home was always nearby: watching the sea, watching the messengers of the sea—seagulls—and watching the azaleas quietly blossoming in the mountains, while falling under a shower brought by the east wind.

While Ch'oe was yearning after his home in Silla, his self-exile was voluntary in the sense that his physical home lacked the material that has staying power, but Ch'oe was subdued by cultural forces. How should his predicament be solved? When Tao suggests that in order to feel at home the best cure is a soulmate, the same is echoed by Ch'oe in a few poems. This poem, collected in the *Tongmunsŏn*, is an example,<sup>157</sup>

秋風唯苦吟 舉世少知音 窗外三更雨 燈前萬里心	Autumn wind only moans bitterly, In the world, soulmates are scarce, Outside the window, rains fall at the third beat of the night, Before the lamp, my heart is ten thousand <i>li</i> away.
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This poem summons all the elements to epitomize the sorrow of a lonely man without a soulmate and longing for his homeland.

From Ch'oe's yearning for home through a series of similes related to Silla to the yearning for a soulmate, Tao's "poor scholar" looms large behind the scenes in Ch'oe's many works. But Ch'oe's engagement with Tao deviated from the original

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<sup>157</sup> *Tongmunsŏn*, 19:1a.

and added a cosmopolitan layer through his stretching of Tao's imagery of the lonely cloud. The material poorness of the "lonely cloud" in Tao can be made up for by the presence of a "soulmate," but Ch'oe's poorness as a drifting "lonely cloud" springs more from a cultural lack than from the absence of an empathetic friend. The self-exile journey was imperative for him as it brought him the opportunity to address his curiosity and intellectual inadequacy. Thus, like Li Bai, Ch'oe's engagement with Tao's imagery of a "lonely cloud" has served to demonstrate that new layers of meanings can be woven into the original signifier, the "lonely cloud," which has been seen as non-fluid, static, and dictated by Chinese culture. Ch'oe identified a cultural lack or poverty that derived from being born in Silla, a cultural poverty that he sought to dispel by going to Tang, but he demonstrates unflagging loyalty to his poverty-invoking home through a likely self-appointed imagery of the "lonely cloud."

But, how should we evaluate this poverty to which Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn consistently relates? As we saw in Du Xunhe's poem mentioned above ("To Cui Shaofu of Lishui"), when Ch'oe was a petty official, he talked about his meager stipend with friends. In examples to follow, equally, Ch'oe talks about material poverty and never hesitates to mention penury wherever possible. Had he felt ashamed by such poverties, he would probably not have mentioned anything. What would be the possible motivation behind his obsession in touting his poverty? Here I would argue that poverty is celebrated as a blessing rather than a curse, and Ch'oe celebrates poverty along the same lines with the advocates of the "Classical Prose Movement." By invoking, approving, and reconciling himself with poverty, he

reaffirmed a key component of Confucian morality and wrote in the established orthodox Confucianism promoted by the “Classical Prose Movement.”

Writing on Han Yu, the famous Tang-period leader of the Classical Prose Movement, Chen Yu-Shih notes that,

The term *qiong* (poverty) occurred frequently in Han Yu’s writings immediately following the banishment, and the concept reoriented his theory of literature. As a result, he was able to accept *qiong* (poverty) and even resigned himself to it with a certain self-irony, as can be seen in his essay ‘Seeing off *Qiong*’ (811).<sup>158</sup>

This essay was written in the literary genre of *wen* (K. *mun*, 文, essay). Han Yu was engaged in an imaginary conversation with the five demons of poverty: poverty in intellect, learning, penmanship, fate, and friendship. His descriptions of the five demons are,

To name you individually, one is called Penury through Intellect: mightily sure of himself; hating the round and accommodating, liking the square and straight, scornful of lying and deceit, unwilling to sully others. The next is called Penury through Learning: scorning mechanical scholarship, delving into the minute and abstruse, drawing freely on any school of thought, grasping the motions of the divine. Next is Penury through Penmanship: not cultivating one skill, straying into the odd and absurd, ignoring relevance to current concerns, aiming only to amuse himself. Next is Penury of Fate: my outward appearance belies my real substance, my face is ugly though my heart fair; I am the last in the queue for benefits, first in the line for blame. Last is Penury through Friendship: one bruises and chastises oneself to speak with utter honesty and sincerity, and eagerly awaits the regard of others, only to succeed in making oneself an enemy.<sup>159</sup>

As lamented by Han Yu, these demons are like his nemeses, who keep him cold and hungry. They lie and slander, so he has no one to trust. There is no gap between him and the demons—though he repents his conduct in the morning, he repeats it in the

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<sup>158</sup> Chen, *Images and Ideas in Chinese Classical Prose*, 30.

<sup>159</sup> Translation by David Pollard. Pollard, *The Chinese Essay*, 52-53.

evening. There is no way you can escape from them: they come at you like circling flies and barking dogs. You send them away but they will be back.

It seems that Han is in great misery, as he rattles off the crimes of the five demons. However, the essay takes a sharp turn from lamentation to celebration when the demons defend themselves, and the conversation ends in the hilarious defeat of the narrator who offers the demons seats of honor in his house. The five demons retort,

You know our names and all our doings. But to drive us away would be to outsmart yourself. Consider how short a man's life on earth is. We are creating a name for you that will survive for a hundred generations. Petty men and noble men are different in mind. It is by being at variance with his time that one is attuned to the Eternal. You would take your precious jade and exchange it for a sheep's skin; you who feast upon the finest fare envy the coarse porridge of others. No one on earth knows you as we do: though you would expel us, we could not bear to abandon you. If you do not believe us, please consult your scriptures for their lessons.<sup>160</sup>

The punchline delivered by the demons is, "It is by being at variance with his time that one is attuned to the Eternal," or as translated by Chen, "Only when you are at odds with the world are you in touch with Heaven." The poverty Han Yu becomes associated with and has no way to dispel indeed is meant to forge the mind of a gentleman. Such a mind is distinguished from petty minds and will survive a hundred generations. Poverty then becomes a necessary condition to grow into a real gentleman.

However, Han Yu was not the first person to celebrate poverty. Praise of poverty can be traced to the ideological forebear of Yang Xiong, a classicist in the Han dynasty. Yang Xiong's classicism lies in his preference for the style and content of the Classics

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<sup>160</sup> Pollard, *The Chinese Essay*, 53.

over more contemporary poetic forms, mainly the most popular form of his time, the rhapsody (Ch. *fu*, K. *pu*). According to Michael Nylan,

Yang took considerable pains to challenge the supremacy of the literary genre that he excelled in, though it had dominated the literary scene at court for at least a century, since the time of Han Wudi (r. 141-87 BC). In his estimation, not even the best *fu* could ever hold a candle to the Classics, masterworks, and neoclassical works, in beauty or in the practical effects they encourage.<sup>161</sup>

It was Yang Xiong who, in his later years, deserted writing rhapsodies and poems, calling their composition nothing more than “carving insects.” Instead, he opted for prose and composed in the style resembling the language of *Analects* and *The Book of Changes*. Han Yu’s essay “sending off penury,” albeit using a different genre, *wen* (K. *mun*), bears almost the same title as Yang Xiong’s poem. Yang’s poem was a rhapsody called “goodbye to poverty,” and the idea was reused by Han Yu—the two pieces are both imaginary conversations between the author and poverty, but Han Yu writes in a prose style rather than composing a rhapsody. Han Yu uses a relatively free literary form to express the idea of a prominent classicist of the Han dynasty. By doing so, he claims intellectual affinity and lineage from the Confucian tradition that was established in the Han but was lost in the following centuries. Han’s implication is that, now it is time to reclaim the heritage. His rewriting of the same idea but in a different form is to convey the message that he succeeds to the Confucian tradition from Yang Xiong of the Han, and that the content of Confucian ideas should take priority over how the ideas are being expressed. If expression of the idea is restricted by the form, then the form should be abolished—this goes to the heart of the “Classical Prose Movement” advocated in the mid-Tang dynasty and is arguably an advancement from Yang Xiong of the Han dynasty.

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<sup>161</sup> Nylan, *Yang Xiong and the Pleasures of Reading and Classical Learning in China*, 101.

In Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, we see that Ch'oe embraces the Confucian ideas celebrated by classicists but he sticks to the form of a regulated-style poem. In the following poem entitled, “For my neighbor, Officer Yu Shenwei, in a hostel in Chang’an” (長安旅舍與于慎微長官接隣有寄),<sup>162</sup> we will see how poverty again is invoked and celebrated, and an intimate friend is again called forth to cure the regret of a “lonely cloud.”

上國羈棲久 多慚萬里人 那堪顏氏巷 得接孟家鄰 守道唯稽古 交情豈憚貧 他鄉少知己 莫厭訪君頻	Dwelling in the superior country for long, A man from ten thousand <i>li</i> away feels embarrassed. In a shabby lane like the one where Yan Hui once lived, I was able to become neighbor to a Mencian household. The only way to keep the Dao is to observe antiquity. How can poverty stand in the way of friendship? Intimate friends are scarce in a guest country. Don't detest me if I visit you frequently.
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In this poem, Ch'oe's poverty springs from three sources: Silla as a poor country in contrast to the great Tang, poverty in friendship as he yearns for a soulmate, and poverty of materiality as he lives in a shabby lane. Though Han Yu may have five demons, Ch'oe at least claimed two and added a cosmopolitan poverty that originated from his humble Sillan homeland, and this very poverty looms the largest among the three. Ch'oe endured what was born by the classicists of the past in terms of material insufficiency and penury of friendship, however, Ch'oe adds to what had been missing in the family of poverties. He added a cultural backwardness or feeling of inferiority, because he came from a peripheral country. For Ch'oe, however, his befriending of cultural poverty enabled his name to be passed on for the next hundred generations.

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<sup>162</sup> *Tongmunsŏn*, 9:1a.

In sum, the above survey of Ch'oe's poems for the themes of cosmopolitanism and poverty shows how much Ch'oe was writing in the orthodox style that he succeeded to from the classicists of the Han dynasty to Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan in the Tang. Starting with Ch'oe's engagement with Tao Yuanming's "lonely cloud," unlike Li Bai, Ch'oe enriched the signifier "lonely cloud" with a cosmopolitan layer of meaning. But a final concern in linking Tao and Ch'oe is to point out Ch'oe's link with Confucianism in Silla. The author of the *Wen Xuan* in the six dynasties, Crown Prince Zhaoming, was among the first who admired Tao and earnestly collected Tao's works. Although only a limited number of Tao's works are collected in the *Wen Xuan*, among these there is the "Ode to the poor scholars." When *Wen Xuan* was transmitted to Silla and became part of the curriculum in the national academy of Silla, it became a text linked specifically to Confucianism. That is to say, Ch'oe's imagery of a lonely cloud is a clear sign of his association with orthodox Confucianism in both China and Korea. Ch'oe quit his position in the Sillan government and retired to live a Tao Yuanming-lifestyle in a Buddhist temple, the Haein-sa. His choice echoed Tao's retirement to the countryside and reflects how much Ch'oe opted for Confucianism at the last stage of his life. To quit the government, especially when it was illegitimate, and live a reclusive life should be re-evaluated as an ideological act; it should be read as Confucianist rather than anything else.

The final objective of this discussion of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's poetry is to highlight his affiliation with the ideological tradition of the "Classical Prose Movement" of the Tang dynasty. His obsession with poverty in his many poems and

his loyalty towards his poverty-laden home, Silla, echoes what was a prominent theme in Han Yu's writings that can be traced further back to the Han ideologue Yang Xiong. Yang Xiong's, Han Yu's, and Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's celebration of poverty as a component of Confucian morality had political implications for implementing an orthodox Confucian line. As we shall see below, Ch'oe's commitment to orthodox Confucianism encompassed a concern with prose style as well.

In a Korean context, the "Classical Prose Movement" is referred to as "Ancient Style Learning." I separate the two in order to distinguish what happened in Korea from what happened in China. Ch'oe's intellectual affiliation with the "Classical Prose Movement" in China is often dismissed by modern Korean scholars, and he is not considered to be a forerunner of "Ancient Style Learning" in Korea. Modern Korean scholars generally hold that Ch'oe went to study in Tang during the period when the "Classical Prose Movement" had already concluded, and advocates of parallel prose style had fought back and regained their lost prominence. John Duncan also traces the beginning of "Ancient Style Learning" in Korea to early Koryŏ instead of to Silla:

Even as the Tang style flourished, however, a reaction set in among certain literati circles. This reaction manifested itself, as it had in late Tang China, in Ancient Style Learning, the first known Korean practitioner of which was Kim Hwang-wŏn (1054-1117). Little is known of his career except that he was once forced out of his academician post by high-ranking officials who feared that his rejection of parallel prose would corrupt students.<sup>163</sup>

John Duncan draws on a rough consensus in Korea academia that dismisses Ch'oe's connection with the "Classical Prose Movement" in China and with "Ancient Style

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<sup>163</sup> Duncan, *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty*. 242.

Learning” in Korea: Ch’oe is considered a practitioner of parallel prose. The problem is that these assertions are only hypotheses awaiting evidence. In his extant writings, it is true that Ch’oe did not express his position on style preference, that is, free style over parallel prose, but when we consider the evidence, when we consider how he wrote, it is clear that the consensus should be rejected. In the next section, I will elaborate on his *style* in order to discern his commitment to the Chinese “Classical Prose Movement.”

### 2.2.2. Generic concern: Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn and the Ancient Style

Having discerned the content of Ch'oe's poems with the conclusion that, ideologically, Ch'oe embraced themes common in the poetry of Tang-period orthodox Confucianists, now let us turn to the style he used when composing poetry and prose. The problem posed here is to discern whether Ch'oe opted for an ancient style or a modern style in composing poems and prose. If he preferred an ancient style, then he can be considered a stylistic affine of the "Classical Prose Movement" in the Tang, and a forerunner if not an advocate of "Ancient Style Learning" in Korea.

In both poetry and prose, the divisions between ancient style and modern style are clear. Here, we will begin with poetry first. Starting from the Liu Song and Southern Qi era (420-502) of the Six Dynasties, leading literati of the time including Shen Yue (沈約, 441-513), Xie Tiao (謝朓, 464-499), and Wang Rong (王融, 467-493), experimented, advocated, and dedicated themselves to a new way of composing poetry and prose. These men were at the core of a literary movement and were known as the creators of the "Yongming style" (永明體), named after the reign era in which they lived (483-493). Among them, Shen Yue is best known for initiating a theory of prosody—the "four tones and eight defects (四聲八病)." The original details of this theory were lost with Shen Yue's work, but survived in quotations and explanations in later documents, among which the collected works of the Japanese monk Kūkai (*Bunkyō hifuron*, 文鏡秘府論, Essays from the Secret Repository of the Literary Mirror)<sup>164</sup> are the closest to

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<sup>164</sup> Kūkai travelled to Tang China in the eight century, brought back esoteric Buddhism, and became the founder of Japanese Shingon Buddhism.

Shen's time. The four tones of the "four tones and eight defects" are not to be confused with the four tones in modern spoken Chinese or the *Putonghua* (standardized Mandarin Chinese), but they derived from middle Chinese and were based on tones in spoken Chinese at that time. The four tones were level (平), rising (上), departing (去), and entering (入). A level tone was called "even," and rising, departing, and entering tones were called *ze* (仄, oblique tones) or "uneven" tones. In the following analysis of Ch'oe's poems, I have used "○" for even and "●" for uneven tones in order to notate the prosodic value of each character in a given line.

When these prosodic regulations were established, with further developments in the Tang, the resultant, highly regulated verse was called "modern-style poetry" (近體詩) as opposed to the "ancient-style poetry" (古體詩), which was largely unregulated.

Modern-style poetry became one of the most important verse styles, and its influence extended forward over the following centuries of Chinese literary history, as well as spread into neighboring countries. In a regulated or modern-style poem, there are four couplets that are called the head, the chin, the neck, and the tail, and each of the two lines in the chin and neck couplets must parallel in both tones and grammatical syntax to be called parallel. Among the four couplets, chin and neck couplets are supposed to show a rigid rhyme scheme, tonal arrangement, or parallelism.

Parallelism means that all the prosodic values within each couplet should contrast to each other, that is, an even-toned character in the first line should match an uneven-toned character in the second line in a chin or neck couplet. Other than parallelism, strict regulations are applied to the rhyme. As a rule, a regulated poem has four rhyming characters at the end of each couplet, thus when reciting a regulated poem,

all couplets resonate with one another at the end of each couplet, with alteration of even and uneven tones, making it a pleasure to both the reciter and the audience. Because of this feature in modern-style poetry, rhyme dictionaries that classified characters by their rhyme group (“rhyme eye” 韻目) became essential for Tang literati who wished to excel in poetry composition. The most widely used rhyme dictionary during the Tang was the *Qieyun* (切韻), but it is lost. Its expanded version, called *Guangyun* (廣韻) and compiled in 1005 during the Northern Song dynasty, is extant and will be examined in more detail below.

By contrast, ancient-style poems do not have a rigid rhyme scheme, tonal arrangement, or parallelism. Ancient style was the poetic form used before the invention of modern style in the Six Dynasties Period. In the Chinese context, resurrecting the ancient-style in the Tang was the literary expression of an ideological campaign to restore the orthodox line of Confucianism, which was seen to have become corrupted by imported Buddhism, especially during the Six Dynasties Period. A free style was advocated by the “Classical Prose Movement” initiated by Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan. They argued that the orthodox line of Confucianism extending from Confucius to Yang Xiong of the Han dynasty had been severed by the rise of Buddhism and should be restored. In a literary sense, it meant to compose poems and prose in the unregulated, free, ancient style and not in the regulated modern style. Style, thus, becomes the key to understand Ch’oe’s ideological position. In short, the way one wrote (free or regulated) was a sign of an ideological stance. Writing poetry and prose in a free style in the mid-Tang meant that you were rejecting any presumed embellishments and accretions from

Buddhism. On the other hand, writing in a regulated style did not necessarily mean that you were pro-Buddhist, but it did mean that you followed the fashion and obeyed the preferred style of the examinations. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn had clearly mastered both styles, and my argument, as pursued below, is that he could write poetry and prose in the orthodox, regulated style with ease, but he seemed to prefer a regulated style for poetry and a free style for prose. In Ch'oe's time, the ideological confrontation in China was developing, but it was not yet sharp in Korea. By the end of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century in Korea, the confrontation became quite sharp.

Bearing in mind all the rules regarding modern-style poems, let us turn to examine the style of Ch'oe's poems first. The *Tongmunsŏn*, a major repository of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's works, collects 26 poems by Ch'oe and arranges them in different sub-genres of poetry. Among the 26 poems collected, only three are from the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*.<sup>165</sup> The remaining 23 poems are likely from the *Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn munjip* mentioned in the *Samguk sagi*, but the *munjip* is not extant today. When Ch'oe presented the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip* to the Silla King, along with it he also presented the following,

- five rhapsodies (賦) in one fascicle
- 100 five-syllable (五言) and seven-syllable (七言) modern-style poems in one fascicle
- 30 miscellaneous poems and rhapsodies in one fascicle
- *Chungsan pokkwe chip* (中山覆篋集) in five fascicles<sup>166</sup>

<sup>165</sup> The three poems are, 陳情上太尉詩, 酬楊瞻秀才, 野燒, all modern-style poems collected in Book 12, the *Tongmunsŏn*.

<sup>166</sup> *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, sŏ (preface):1a, 私試今體賦五首一卷, 五言七言今體詩共一百首一卷, 雜詩賦共三十首一卷, 中山覆篋集一部五卷, 桂苑筆耕集一部二十卷.

The above eight fascicles are lost, but they would have contained at least 135 poems. There are another 27 poems in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*.<sup>167</sup> We do not know if the 135 poems from the above eight fascicles were also included in the *Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn munjip*. Today, we have about 72 poems that have survived from all kind of sources, which include 27 poems from the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 23 poems from the *Tongmunsŏn*, 14 gathered from scattered literary collections and criticisms of other literati identified by either Ch'oe Kuksul or Yi Ki-baik, and finally eight couplets from the *Senzai kaku* in Japan.

Ch'oe's poems are composed predominately in the modern style rather than the ancient style, indicating that Ch'oe probably preferred the modern style for poetry. Given that Ch'oe was in China in the late Tang, it is not surprising that he would have preferred the modern style, and we can assume that Korean *hanshi* (漢詩) poetry from that period would have followed the form of modern-style poetry. This argument predominates among modern scholars in South Korea and constitutes the consensus. Some evidence exists for this position, but there are ambiguities. Among Ch'oe's poems that were selected for the *Tongmunsŏn*, four poems are clearly in the category of the ancient style, and the remaining 22 poems are clearly in a modern style, and they are labeled as such. However, Ch'oe's own collection is not so clear. Unlike Bai Juyi or Du Mu who clearly specified the style of their poems in their collections, Ch'oe did not mention style in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, except

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<sup>167</sup> Aside from the 27 poems in Book 20, there are 30 merit-praising poems to Gao Pian in Book 17, but Ch'oe did not group them with the 27 poems in Book 20.

that two poems do bear “*chelgu*” (絕句) in the titles, indicating they are modern style.<sup>168</sup> This can mean, the poems in the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip* are a mixed bag of modern and ancient styles, as in the *Tongmunsŏn*, where Ch’oe’s poems were judged and assigned to both categories.

The fact that Ch’oe did not indicate that he was interested in the ancient style or mention anywhere that he wrote poetry in the ancient style, the alleged four poems in the ancient style in the *Tongmunsŏn* deserve close scrutiny. For example, the following three poems by Ch’oe are included in the *Tongmunsŏn* under the category of “Five-syllable ancient-style” (五言古詩) poems. If we examine them closely in turn, we can see why these were categorized as “ancient style.” The first poem we might consider is entitled 寓興 (“An impulse”),<sup>169</sup>

Head:

願言肩利門  
不使損遺體

Chin:

爭奈探珠者 ○●○○●  
輕生入海底 ●●●●●

Neck:

身榮塵易染 ○○○●●  
心垢水難洗 ○●●●●

Tail:

澹泊與誰論  
世路嗜甘醴

<sup>168</sup> *Chelgu*, or *jueju* in Chinese is very much like an excerpt of the chin and neck couplets from a modern-style poem, making it a total of four lines. They should follow all requirements of what constitute chin and neck couplets in a modern-style poem.

<sup>169</sup> *Tongmunsŏn*, 4:1a-b.

An examination of the rhyming scheme as employed in “An impulse” indicates that all the highlighted characters (體, 底, 洗, and 醴) belong to the same rhyme eye of 齊 in the *Guangyun* table, which satisfies the rhyming requirement of a modern-style poem. However, the mapping of the chin and neck couplets shows that each line is not paralleled by the next in the couplet.<sup>170</sup> This is enough to indicate that “An impulse” is ancient-style and not modern-style. However, the rhyming scheme of this poem is flawless and that satisfies a key feature of modern-style poems. Though we (and the *Tongmunsŏn* compilers) can conclude that the lack of parallel structure between the even and uneven tones in “An impulse” makes the poem an ancient-style poem, the flawless rhyming scheme is a modern-style feature and something to bear in mind. The flawless rhyming scheme makes this type of ancient-style poem different from what ancient style poetry was prior to the Six Dynasties Period.

The second poem is from the same category of “Five syllable ancient-style” poems in the *Tongmunsŏn* and is entitled 江南女 (“Jiangnan girls”),<sup>171</sup>

Head:

江南蕩風俗  
養女嬌且憐

Body:

治性恥針線 ●●●●●  
粧成調管絃 ○○○●●

Body:

所學非雅音 ●●○○○  
多被春心牽 ○●○○●

Body:

<sup>170</sup> Again, the following notation scheme is used to indicate tones: “○” even; “●” uneven; “x” irrelevant or unknown.

<sup>171</sup> *Tongmunsŏn*, 4:1b-2a.

自謂芳華色 ●●○○●  
長占艷陽年 ●○○○○

Body:  
却笑隣舍女 ●●○○●  
終朝弄機杼 ○○○●●

Tail:  
機杼縱勞身  
羅衣不到汝

“Jiangnan girls” bears the structure of a modern-style, five-syllable, unlimited-line poem (排律) in that there are more than two couplets in the body part (“chin” and “neck”) of the poem. However, if it were a regulated poem, the rhyme characters at the end of each couplet should belong to the same rhyme eye, but the first four characters (隣, 杼, 牽, 年) belong to the rhyme eye 先 and the last two characters (杼, 汝) belong to the 語 rhyme eye. A further mapping of prosodic values of the body couplets (anything between “head” and “tail”) shows that none of the couplets follow the compositional rules of parallelism. All this proves that “Jiangnan girls” is in ancient style, rather than modern style.

The third in the same group is the poem 古意 (“Intent on antiquity”),<sup>172</sup>

Head:  
狐能化美女  
狸亦作書生

Chin:  
誰知異類物  
幻惑同人形

Neck:  
變化尚非艱

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<sup>172</sup> *Tongmunsŏn*, 4:2a.

操心良獨難

Tail:

欲辨真與僞  
願磨心鏡看

“Intent on antiquity” is the most obvious ancient-style poem among the three we observe here. The first rhyme-point character 生 belongs to the rhyme eye 庚, the second to the rhyme eye 青, and the last two belong to the rhyme eye 寒. Among the four characters that are supposed to be in the same rhyme eye, they in fact belong to three different rhyme eyes. “Intent on antiquity” is clearly composed in ancient style and that accords with what is suggested by the title of this poem. Thus, there is no need even to map the prosodic values of the couplet and no even and uneven dots have been indicated.

Besides the above three, the last ancient-style poem to be examined in the same category of “Five syllable ancient-style” poems in the *Tongmunsŏn* is the following 蜀葵花 (“Sunflowers in the Shu region”).<sup>173</sup>

Head:

寂寞荒田側  
繁花壓柔枝

Chin:

香經梅雨歇 ○○○●●  
影帶麥風歇 ●●●○○

Neck:

車馬誰見賞 ○●○○●  
蜂蝶徒相窺 ○●○○○

Tail:

自慙生地賤  
堪恨人棄遺

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<sup>173</sup> *Tongmunsŏn*, 4:1b.

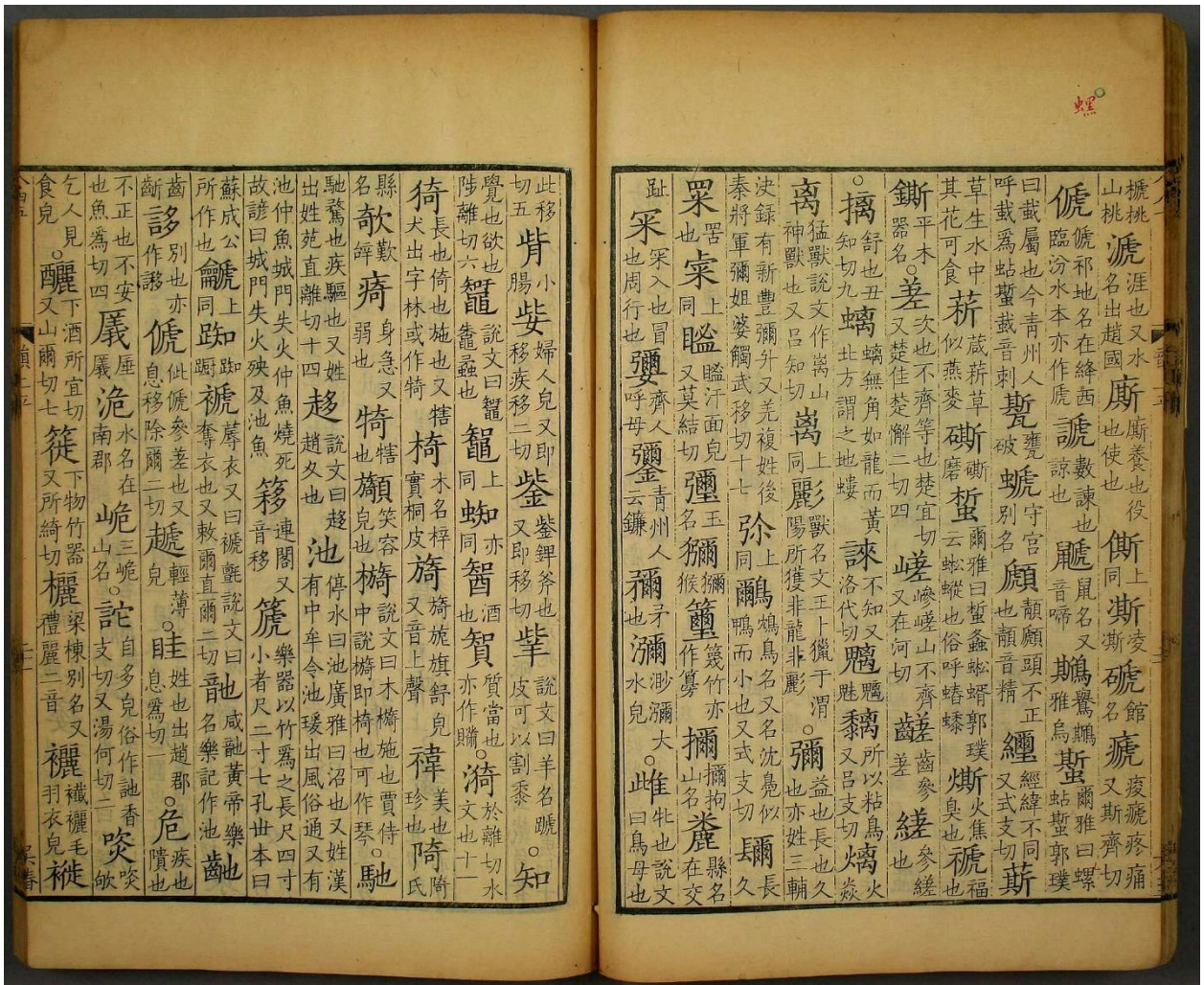
“Sunflowers in the Shu region” is the most complicated of the four poems and deserves closer scrutiny. It has the typical form of a regulated, modern-style poem, that is, eight lines or four couplets. The four highlighted characters in this poem should belong to the same rhyme group, if it is meant to be modern-style. The sample *Guangyun* page (see Figure 1) shows us that the first highlighted character (枝) is under the rhyme category “支.” Within this category, the *Guangyun* has listed other characters with a small circle above the characters, as seen, for example, above the character 移. The group of characters listed underneath a character that has a circle is called a sub-rhyme (小韻), and within each sub-rhyme are homophone characters. Two examples from the sub-rhyme of 移 are 秭 and 迤. No matter which sub-rhyme a character is in, they are all categorized under the “rhyme eye,” that is, in the above case, under the rhyme eye “支.” If “Sunflowers in the Shu region” is a regulated poem, the other rhyming or highlighted characters should all be from the rhyme eye “支.” We can see that, according to the rhyme table in *Guangyun*, the characters 欵 (sub-rhyme 漪, see Figure 2) and 窺 (sub-rhyme 關, see Figure 3) in the “chin” and “neck” belong to the 支 rhyme too, but only the last character 遺 (sub-rhyme 惟, see Figure 4) does not, which belongs to the 脂 rhyme eye. This is generally how the other poems above have been analyzed, but “Sunflowers in the Shu region” has one further complication in its rhyme scheme. According to the rhyme book that was popularly used in the Chosŏn dynasty, the *Tongguk chŏng’un* (東國正韻), published in 1448, which is mainly based on the rhyme

table of the *Hongwu zhengyun* (洪武正韻), promulgated in 1375, the last character 遺 does belong to the rhyme group 支.

In summation, according to the rhyming scheme that probably presented a standard for Ch'oe or the Tang standard, "Sunflowers in the Shu region" is a flawed modern-style poem, because of the mistaken last rhyming character. However, according to the standard reference in the Chosŏn dynasty, Ch'oe's rhyming scheme was acceptable as modern style, but the compilers in the Chosŏn dynasty respected the standard of Ch'oe's time, and that is why they have classified it according to his time ("Five syllable, ancient-style") and not theirs ("Five syllable, modern-style"). In short, rhyme schemes depended on the standard reference of the time. "Sunflowers in the Shu region" shows that one scheme may be ancient style in one historical moment but modern style in another. It appears that the Chosŏn-period editors of the *Tongmunsŏn* set aside their understanding of rhyme schemes from *Tongguk chŏng'un* and consulted the Tang period standard to recognize the poem as "ancient style." But, rhyming scheme does not decide whether a poem is ancient or modern style. We must also consider whether it possesses parallelism.

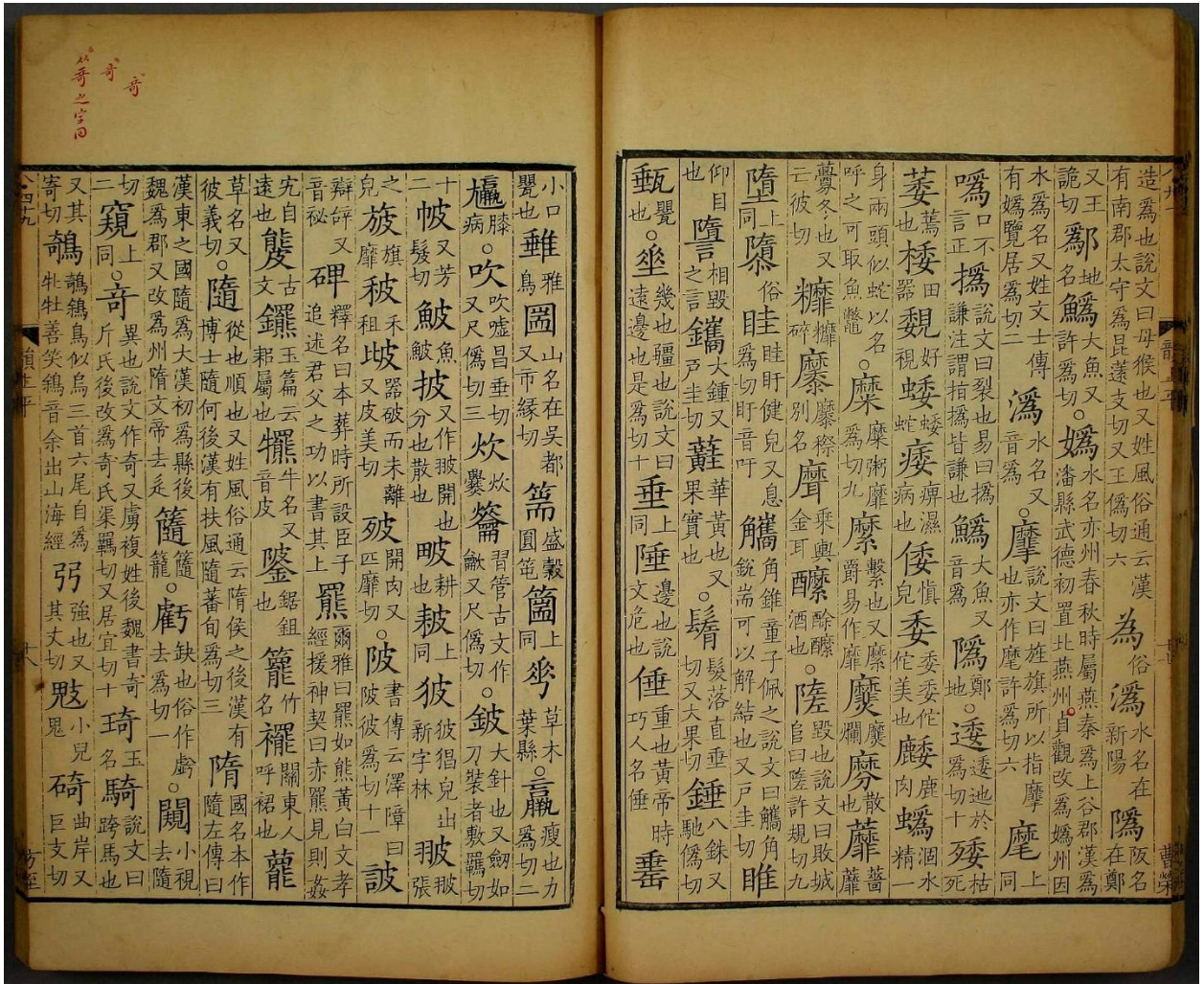


Figure 2: *Guangyun*, from the eleventh century, showing 敬 in the sub-rhyme 漪.<sup>175</sup>



<sup>175</sup> Image source: Kotenseki sogo database, Waseda University.

Figure 3: *Guangyun*, from the eleventh century, showing 窺 in the sub-rhyme 關.<sup>176</sup>



<sup>176</sup> Image source: Kotenseki sogo database, Waseda University.



To further discern whether “Sunflowers in the Shu region” is an ancient-style poem, tonal arrangement and parallelism of the chin couplet and the neck couplet should be examined. It is clear that the chin couplet and the neck couplet satisfy parallelism in sentence structure and grammatical function with each word in the two lines of the two couplets. As to tonal arrangement, the chin couplet displays a flawless tonal arrangement: the tone of each character of the two lines opposes each other in even and uneven tones. The fact that the neck couplet has three even-toned characters at the end, though, indicates this is a typical ending of an ancient poem instead of a modern one. This variation from parallelism in the neck, together with the mixed rhyming scheme may account for why this poem was assigned to the category of “Five syllable, ancient-style” poems by the *Tongmunsŏn* compilers.

In contrast to the above, so-called ancient-style poems, the following is a regulated, modern-style poem by Ch’oe in the *Tongmunsŏn* under the category of “Five-syllable, modern-style” poems. Its title is 長安旅舍與于慎微長官接隣有寄 (“For my neighbor, Officer Yu Shenwei, in a hostel in Chang’an”),<sup>178</sup>

Head:

上國羈棲久  
多慙萬里人

Chin:

那堪顏氏巷      ○○○●●  
得接孟家隣      ●●●○○

Neck:

守道惟稽古      ●●○○●  
交情豈憚貧      ○○●●○

<sup>178</sup> *Tongmunsŏn*, 9:1a. And see page 127 for a translation.

Tail:

他鄉少知己  
莫厭訪君頻

According to *Guangyun*, the four highlighted characters all belong to the 眞 rhyme eye, which is typical of the rhyming scheme of a regulated poem. The parallelism of the two lines in the chin and neck couplets are without fault. Tone-wise, as can be seen from the above, even and uneven tones alternate and the two lines of the chin and neck couplets match each other with an even toned character corresponding to an uneven tone character. Satisfying all the criteria of a regulated poem, this poem is clearly a “Five-syllable, modern-style poem.”

Because only four of Ch’oe’s poems within the 26 poems in the *Tongmunsŏn*, are in the category of ancient-style poems, it is rather safe to argue that Ch’oe prefers modern style over ancient style in composing poetry. It is also true that the overlapping three poems in both the *Tongmunsŏn* and the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip* are in modern style, so it is highly probable that the rest of the poems included in the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip* are generally in the modern style.<sup>179</sup> Nevertheless, the high proportion of modern-style poetry in his extant poems is not sufficient to deny any connection with the “Classical Prose Movement” in China, which has been called the “Ancient style learning” in Korea. In terms of content, as we have seen above, Ch’oe imbued his writing with orthodox Confucianism. Most importantly, though, the majority of Ch’oe’s collected works are in prose rather than poetry, and I would argue that his connection with the “Classical Prose Movement” should be evaluated

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<sup>179</sup> I sampled randomly from these poems for the style they employed. It turned out that all of the poems (about 10) I closely checked are modern-style.

through his prose work rather than his poetry. The reason is that the “Classical Prose Movement” focused on *prose* and not poetry.

Though poetry occupied the limelight of the literary collections of his time, Ch’oe’s *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip* has a very limited number of poems (27), which make up a small portion of the last fascicle of the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip*. All the other fascicles contain prose-work. Since *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip* is a self-compiled literary collection, the preference for prose-work shows that Ch’oe was disposed to showcase his prose over his poetry. Setting aside the 27 poems collected in the last fascicle, there are about 15 genres of prose in the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip*, of which a considerable portion are official documents. Table 1 lists both prose and poetry genres of the twenty fascicles in the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip*.

Table 1. Genres in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*

Genre	Fascicle	No. of works	% of works
表 memorials	1, 2	20	6
狀 biographies	3, 17, 18, 19,20	40	12
奏狀 presentations	4, 5	20	6
堂狀 court presentations	6	10	3
別紙 personal correspondences	7, 8, 9, 10, 19, 20	94	28
檄書 proclamations	11	4	1
書 letters	11, 16	8	2.4
委曲 classified correspondences	12	20	6
舉牒 official communications	13, 14	50	15
齋詞 Buddhist/Daoist prayers	15	15	4.5
祭文 eulogies	16, 20	5	1.5
記 records	16	2	0.5
疏 Buddhist vows	16	2	0.5
啓 notes	17, 18, 20	7	2
雜書 miscellaneous writings	19	10	3
詩 poetry	20	27	8

Percentage calculated based on the total number of works in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 334.

In order to discern in what style Ch'oe composed (ancient) free or (modern) parallel prose style—we will look closely at three essays in different genres. Our

analysis will start with “Proclamation of war to Huang Chao,”<sup>180</sup> which created his fame in the Tang, collected in fascicle 11. The opening section is as follows, but no pattern is apparent.<sup>181</sup>

夫	
守正修常曰道	●○○○x●
臨危制變曰權	●○●●x○
智者成之於順時	●x○xx●○
愚者敗之於逆理	○x●xx●●
然則雖	
百年繫命	●○●●
生死難期	●●●○
而	
萬事主心	●●●○
是非可辨	●○●●
今我以	
王師則有征無戰	●○x●○○●
軍政則先惠後誅	○●x●●●○
將期剋復上京	●○●●●○
固且敷陳大信	●○○●●●
敬承嘉論	●○○○
用戢奸謀	●●○○
且汝	
素是遐眈	●●○○
驟為勍敵	●○○●
偶因乘勢	●○●●
輒敢亂常	●●●○

Here, I have identified the prosodic value of each character in the opening passage from the “Proclamation.” Like parallelism in poetry, the general idea of parallel

<sup>180</sup> *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 11:1a-b.

<sup>181</sup> Again, the following notation scheme is used to indicate tones: “○” even; “●” uneven; “x” irrelevant or unknown.

prose is that the two lines of each couplet should contrast to each other in terms of prosodic value, that is, an even-toned character is matched by an uneven-toned character in the pair, or *vice versa*, but this rule works slightly differently in parallel prose. Therefore, the lack of a consistent pattern above does not mean it is not composed in parallel prose.

To judge whether a work is in parallel prose, David Branner suggests two sources on prosody of parallel prose: the first is an epigrammatic model or the Hightower-Farquhar model; the second is the caesural model or the Chang model.<sup>182</sup> Branner's study on the tonal prosody in Chinese parallel prose has shown that the caesural model or the Chang model is preferable. According to the Chang model, "the tones of most syllables in any given line are irrelevant to prosodic order. Those that are important prosodically are the ones immediately preceding the caesura and the end of the line. That is, in four-syllable lines, syllables 2 and 4 are prosodically important."<sup>183</sup>

If we go back to Ch'oe's "Proclamation of war to Huang Chao" essay with the Chang or caesural method, we can see that all his four-syllable couplets obey this rule, and a pattern emerges. The mark "○" indicates an even tone; the mark "●" indicates an uneven tone; and the "x" indicates an unknown, or rather here, an irrelevant tone, because only syllables 2 and 4 are prosodically important.

- |         |      |
|---------|------|
| 1) 百年繫命 | x○x● |
| 2) 生死難期 | x●x○ |

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<sup>182</sup> Seven or eight-syllable lines often involve one or two key words, normally a particle, 而, 之, 於. They are the so-called "caesura" characters.

<sup>183</sup> Branner, "Tonal Prosody in Chinese Parallel Prose," 96.

- |         |      |
|---------|------|
| 3) 萬事主心 | X●X○ |
| 4) 是非可辨 | X○X● |
| 5) 素是遐眈 | X●X○ |
| 6) 驟為勍敵 | X○X● |
| 7) 偶因乘勢 | X○X● |
| 8) 輒敢亂常 | X●X○ |

Except this pair,

- |          |      |
|----------|------|
| 9) 敬承嘉論  | X○X○ |
| 10) 用戢奸謀 | X●X○ |

In the final couplet above (lines 9 and 10), the second character in each line follows the even versus uneven rule, but not the fourth characters. Since among all the four-syllable lines we examined, only this pair is an exception, it is still reasonable to argue that, when it comes to four-syllable lines in Ch'oe's composition, he adopts rather rigid prosodic rules and wrote in parallel prose.

Branner also points out that in the Chang model, regarding six, or seven, or eight - syllable lines, the characters right before the caesura words and the ones at the end of the line follow the prosodic rules of parallelism. In Ch'oe's "Proclamation of war to Huang Chao" essay, to notate the prosodic values of the pairs in six or seven-syllable lines would render the following.

- |                  |                  |                            |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 智者成 <u>之</u> 於順時 | XX○ <u>XXX</u> ○ |                            |
| 愚者敗 <u>之</u> 於逆理 | XX● <u>XXX</u> ● |                            |
| 王師則有征無戰          | X○ <u>XXXX</u> ● |                            |
| 軍政則先惠後誅          | X● <u>XXXX</u> ○ |                            |
| 將期剋復上京           | XX●XX○           |                            |
| 固且敷陳大信           | XX○XX●           | (key words are underlined) |

It is apparent that all six or seven-syllable lines examined in Ch'oe's "The proclamation of war to Huang Chao" demonstrate strict parallelism: he wrote the "Proclamation" in parallel prose. The six or seven-syllable line section in the "Proclamation" indicates that no matter if it is a four-syllable line, or a six or seven-syllable line, ample attention has been paid to its composition in following the prosodic rules of parallel prose. It showcases that Ch'oe was an adept writer of parallel prose, and his fame gained from this essay in ninth-century Tang China is no surprise.

However, this begs the question: did Ch'oe compose in ancient or free style as well? The Tang "Classical Prose Movement" advocates opted for certain genres in their campaign for abolishing parallel prose. In the case of Han Yu, these genres are collected in the "miscellaneous works (雜著)" in the four fascicles of Han Yu's *Changli xiansheng ji*. Among them, treatises (Ch. *lun*, K. *non*, 論) and discourses (Ch. *shuo*, K. *sŏl*, 說) are known to be the avant-garde genres for testing the "Classical Prose Movement." The free-style prose promoted by the Tang classicists against the parallel prose style was, as described by Liu Kai (947-1000), a northern Song classicist,

... terse and dry, and people cannot comprehend or recite it. [The 'classical' character] lies in its principles and loftiness of meaning. According to the length of speech, long or short, [the style] alternates the form freely, just as the ancients dealt with matters [flexibly]. This is called 'ancient-style prose.'<sup>184</sup>

An example from Han Yu's "Discourse on a teacher"<sup>185</sup> is as follows,

古之學者必有師  
師者所以傳道受業解惑也  
人非生而知之者  
孰能無惑

<sup>184</sup> *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 1:11a, 古文者. 非在辭澀言苦. 使人難讀誦之. 在於古其理. 高其志. 隨言短長. 應變作制. 同古人之行事. 是謂古文也.

<sup>185</sup> Yang, ed., *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu*, 24.

惑而不從師  
 其為惑也  
 終不解矣

This section shows that the length of a line can have any number of syllables, four, five, seven, or more, however, none of the lines can form a pair or a couplet with the next line, not to mention that there is no attempt at parallelism by grammatical syntax and tonal values.

In the twenty fascicles of the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, genres of treatises (K. *non*) and discourses (K. *sŏl*) do not appear. However, fascicle 19 (雜書 miscellaneous writings), like the four fascicles of Han Yu's "miscellaneous works," contains free-style prose. Here is a sample entitled 答裴拙庶子書 ("Reply to Pei Zhuo's secondary son [son of a concubine])."<sup>186</sup>

某	
1) 遠離海島	x●x●
旅宦江臯	x●x○
比者	
2) 暫願退居	x●x●
稍期隸案	x○x●
3) 來投樂國	x○x●
冀濟窮塗	x●x○
本望	
4) 少瞻山資	x●x○
便諧谷隱	x○x●
伏蒙太尉念以	
5) 雀有多病	x●x●
鶴自遠來	x●x○

<sup>186</sup> *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 19:8b.

6) 特署職名	X●X○
俾趨恩化	X○X●

At first sight, there are significant numbers of four-syllable lines, but the notation of tones shows that there are only three couplets (3, 4, and 6) that follow prosodic parallelism; the others do not. Compared with the rigid prosodic parallelism in Ch'oe's "Proclamation of war to Huang Chao," we can conclude that this essay is not composed in parallel prose; rather it is in free style. This also suggests that the seeming "parallel prose," which is claimed to be the style Ch'oe employed for his essays that were collected in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, is, indeed, not in parallel prose. In order to examine this question further, we need to carefully discern another genre, "records" (Ch. *Ji*, K. *ki* 記), in Ch'oe's literary collection, which was favored by the Tang-Song classicists. Fascicle 16 collects two records. The start of the first record 西州羅城圖記 ("Record on the map of the Luo Castle in Xizhou")<sup>187</sup> is as follows,

西川羅城	
四仞高三尋濶	
周三十三里	
乃今淮海太尉燕公築也	
粵若	
<u>梁州別壤</u>	X○X●
<u>蜀國雄都</u>	X●X○
內跨犍犇	X●X●
外聯蠻蠻	X○X●
左臨百濮	X●X●
右挾六戎	X●X○

<sup>187</sup> *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 16:4b-5a.

咽喉之控引寔繁	X○XXXX○
唇齒之輔依難保	X●XXXX●

The opening section is clearly not in parallel prose, as each line has syllables between 4, 5, 6, or more. The following section apparently is in the form of parallel prose, but a mapping of prosodic values show that they are not in strict parallelism, only two couplets (underlined) are parallel in prosodic values.

So far, we have presented analyses of three essays from three different genres. As we can see, Ch'oe uses parallel prose for only certain genres, such as proclamations. The other genres are not in parallel prose, but in free style and combined with elements of parallelism, and this is apparent from at least the two genres we examined: miscellaneous writings and records.

In order to discern whether parallel prose or free style is the style employed by the majority of the essays collected in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, we will turn to two major genres that are collected in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*. From Table 1, we know that the top two genres included are “personal correspondences” (別紙) and “official communications” (舉牒). They compose 43 percent of the total works. Between the two genres, “personal correspondences” encompasses six fascicles out of the total 20 fascicles, and makes up 28 percent of the total number of works collected in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*. This is the opening section of the first personal correspondence in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 滑州都統王令公 (“To Governor Wang of Huazhou”),<sup>188</sup>

伏見制書

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<sup>188</sup> *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, 7:1a-b.

伏承	
榮加內史之任	X○XXX○
暫執元戎之權	X●XXX○
往鎮雄藩	X○X○
誓殲窮寇	X○X●
<u>佇復宮闕</u>	X●X●
<u>則歸廟堂</u>	X○X○
九重之倚賴如山	X●XXXX○
八表之歡呼動地	X●XXXX●
而況令公	
<u>志勤捧日</u>	X○X●
<u>力贍補天</u>	X●X○
<u>三秉台衡</u>	X●X○
<u>兩分戎律</u>	X○X●

We can see from the prosodic values mapped in the above section that only three out of six couplets show strict parallelism (underlined). Others, though bearing the feature of parallelism at face value, are not really in parallel prose. In other words, the most extensive genre, “personal correspondences,” included in the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip* is not in parallel prose.

Now let us turn to the next most extensive genre of “official communications.” The following section is from the first piece of “official communications” included in the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip*, 行墨勅授散騎常侍 (“Essay to a Royally-appointed Censor”),<sup>189</sup> which, at first glance, bears significant pairs of four or six-syllable sentences as well.

大君降命	X○X●
元帥從權	X●X○

<sup>189</sup> *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip*, 13:1b-2a.

但云能立勤勞	X○XXX○
特許先申獎勸	X● <u>X</u> XX●
漢祖則手無剗印. 不阻論功	X●XXXX● XXX○
武侯則心若懸衡. 必能舉職	X○ <u>X</u> XXX○ XXX●
用示軍中之賞	X●XXXX●
式資闕下之恩	X○XXX○
前件官	
夙蘊壯圖	X●X○
久從戎事	X○X●
將救焚沈之患	X●XXXX●
固憑擒縱之能	X○XXX●

After mapping out the prosodic values of each of the key characters, a parallel pattern emerges. This passage shows that except for the last character (能) not being the correct value, the rest of the passage demonstrates rigid parallelism in terms of prosody. In contrast to the “personal correspondences,” “official communications” as a genre has been written in parallel prose.

In summation, Ch’oe was a writer of modern-style poetry. Even among his four “Ancient Style” poems, only two lack parallel construction and are clearly in the ancient style. His prose work is different. It was sensitive to official expectations for parallelism but displays a free style preference. For official documents, such as “proclamations” and “official communications,” Ch’oe was a devoted writer of parallel prose. However, for other prose genres, his commitment to free style seems more apparent. Among the five genres discussed here, three of them have shown that they are not composed in parallel prose.

Finally, how should we re-evaluate Choe's connection with the Chinese "Classical Prose Movement" and the Korean "Ancient Style Movement"? First, I would argue that he clearly prioritizes prose over poetry, pushing him towards the Chinese "Classical Prose Movement" and the Korean "Ancient Style Movement." His extant prose work is of significant length and greatly overshadows his poetry in keeping with Han Yu and other representative writers of the Classical Prose Movement. There are about 300 essays collected in the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, compared with only 27 poems. This same priority of prose over poetry was common among the Tang classicists who were committed to the Classical Prose Movement. Though Ch'oe earned his fame by composing a piece of parallel prose ("Proclamation of war to Huang Chao)," he was not necessarily a belletrist but rather a classicist. The style employed in the majority of his essays is free rather than parallel. He demonstrated adept skills in composing parallel prose, but at the same time, embraced different prose genres to compose free-style works. His writings often contain elements of both parallel prose and free style in the same piece. Ch'oe's lifetime was caught in-between the initial campaign of free prose and before it became firmly established in the Northern Song, and he can be considered a transmitter, given his literary stature, who brought a free-style prose style to Silla. Along with the classicist theme discovered in his poems, it is probably safer to argue that Ch'oe was more associated with the Ancient Style Learning in Korea than we had thought him to be, and therefore, we cannot categorize him with the simple conclusion that he wrote in parallel prose. In fact, the seeds of ancient-style learning in Korea should be traced to Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn rather than to writers in early Koryŏ.

### 2.2.3. Circulation of Ch'oe's works in Heian Japan

While compiling *Samguk sagi*, Kim Pusik (1075-1151) made an effort to list Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's legacies in his biography, and cited *Xin Tangshu*. *Xin Tangshu*, states that Ch'oe left twelve fascicles of *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip* and one fascicle of four-six parallel prose works. Kim then turned to mention that there were thirty fascicles of Ch'oe's collected works (*Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn munjip* 崔致遠文集) in circulation.<sup>190</sup> This entry shows that, in the twelfth century, when Kim was editing *Samguk sagi*, or about two hundred and thirty years after Ch'oe's Ch'iwŏn's death, Ch'oe's collected works were clearly extant and circulating in Korea. Although *Samguk sagi* is an official resource on Ch'oe's legacies on the Korean side, for the two centuries after his death, no references are available in Korea except an anthology called *Myŏnghyŏn sipch'osi* 明賢十抄詩 that collected ten poems by Ch'oe. Kim Pusik's mention of the existence of an anthology, *Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn munjip*, shows that Ch'oe's works were copied and widely read in early Koryŏ-dynasty Korea, which comes as no surprise. However, about the same time, across the straits in Japan, an anthology entitled *Senzai kaku* 千載佳句, compiled between 947 and 957 also collected Ch'oe's works. Ch'oe retired to Haein temple at the turn of the tenth century in his forties, and if he was alive at the time of the compilation of *Senzai kaku*, he would have been 90 to 100 years old. This means that only about thirty to forty years after his death, his works made their way into an important Heian anthology. This is to say that Ch'oe's works had reached out to a much

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<sup>190</sup> *Samguk sagi*, 46:6a, 新唐書藝文志云, 崔致遠四六集一卷, 桂苑筆耕十二卷, 注云, 崔致遠高麗人, 賓貢及第, 爲高駢從事, 其名聞上國如此, 又有文集三十卷行於世初. It seems that the *Xin Tangshu* or Kim or a scribe mistook the number of fascicles for the *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*. The surviving edition has 20 fascicles, not 12.

wider audience than just Tang and Silla where he had been active. Considering the world in which Ch'oe lived, the fact that his poems were read and circulated in Japan attests to his international reputation as a famed writer of the era.

*Senzai kaku* was compiled by Ōe no Koretoki 大江維時 (888-963). Not much is known about this man, except that he was a scholar-official and a poet living through the reigns of Emperors Daigo, Suzaku, and Murakami in the middle Heian period. He obtained a series of positions in the court, the highest of which was a third-rank official post. He was not particularly talented in composing poetry, but he worked diligently and is said to have had a superior memory.<sup>191</sup> Among all his contributions, the greatest is the compilation of *Senzai kaku*. This two-fascicle anthology collects 1,813 couplets of seven-syllable poems by Tang and Sillan literati and arranges them into fifteen categories. These major categories are further divided into a total of 258 sub-categories. For instance, in the first fascicle, the five major categories are the four seasons 四時, seasonal festivals 時節, heavenly signs 天象, geographical features 地理, and human affairs 人事.<sup>192</sup> Among all authors who have a foothold in the anthology, Bai Juyi has 535 couplets and that makes him the author with the largest number of works selected, which may have contributed to his popularity in Heian Japan. Yuan Zhen is the next with 68 couplets.<sup>193</sup> There are five Sillans who had works collected in the anthology: Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, Kim Ipchi, Kim Ungyŏng, Kim Kagi, and Pak Ang.

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<sup>191</sup> JapanKnowledge, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=30010zz067980>, accessed 20 July 2017.

<sup>192</sup> JapanKnowledge, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=30010zz278020>, accessed 20 July 2017.

<sup>193</sup> For a chart listing all authors and numbers of their couplets, see Kaneko, *Heian jidai bungaku to Haku-shi monjū*, 483-496.

As an anthology aiming to target fine couplets of “Tang” poetry, *Senzai kaku* might have initiated a literary movement in Heian Japan as the first anthology of excerpted verses. These couplets later became the topics of so-called Japanese Topic Poems (句題詩 *kudaishi*). Wiebke Denecke, based on her case studies of Michizane and his grandson’s Topic Poems, argues that poetry arranged by topic was a unique Japanese literary genre that developed when the appreciation of poetry underwent transformation from inter-textual engagement with Tang poetry in early Heian to inter-topical innovations in late Heian.<sup>194</sup> *Senzai kaku* clearly exerts influence on the later compilations such as *Wa-kan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 of 1018 and *Shinsen rōeishū* 新撰朗詠集 of 1135. Many couplets in the *Senzai kaku* are re-collected in these anthologies. The difference is that, in these two later anthologies, fine verses in both Chinese (*kanshi*) and Japanese (*waka*) are gathered, and both *Wa-kan rōeishū* and *Shinsen rōeishū* are major sources of topics for the genre of Topic Poems. Especially, among the Chinese poetry, are also included poems by Japanese authors as well as by Chinese and Koreans. In other words, unlike *Wa-kan rōeishū* and *Shinsen rōeishū*, *Senzai kaku* only collected verses of Tang poems or verses from Chinese poetry by Tang literati, though, when examined closely, “Tang poetry” has numerous variations.

Despite the fact that *Senzai kaku* collects Ch’oe’s works, compared with the Tang literati such as Bai Juyi and Yuan Zhen, Ch’oe has significantly fewer works included. Nine couplets of Ch’oe’s seven-syllable poems made their way into the anthology. As they are fragments of certain poems that are not found anywhere else,

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<sup>194</sup> Denecke, “‘Topic Poetry Is All Ours’: Poetic Composition on Chinese Lines in Early Heian Japan,” 1-49.

except for one that does exist in the fifteenth-century *Tongmunsŏn*, they are like puzzle pieces that failed to fall into place. For convenience, Table 2 shows the nine couplets numbered and listed in the order of inclusion in the anthology,

Table 2: The nine couplets by Ch'oe collected in *Senzai kaku*.

1	長安春	煙低紫陌千行柳, 日暮朱樓一曲歌
2	交州獻留李員外	芙蓉零落秋池雨, 楊柳蕭疏曉岸風
3	哀州留獻李員外	神思只勞書卷上, 年光任過酒盃中
4	留贈洛中友人	洛水波聲新草樹, 嵩山雲影舊樓臺
5	登慈和山	畫角聲中朝暮浪, 青山影裡古今人
6	送舍弟嚴府	雲布長天龍勢逸, 風高秋月雁行齊
7	春日	風遞鶯聲喧座上, 日移花影倒林中
8	成名后酬進士田仁義見贈	芳園醉散花盈袖, 幽徑吟歸月在帷
9	江上書懷	極目遠山煙外暮, 傷心歸棹日邊遲

Among the nine couplets, only number 5 appears in fascicle 12 of *Tongmunsŏn*. The title of the poem is not the same as in *Senzai kaku*, but is “*Tŭng Yunju Chahwa sangbang*” 登潤州慈和寺上房.

The fact that Ch'oe and other Sillans' works are found in the *Senzai kaku* might not have perplexed the Heian Japanese but it does perplex us moderns. Japanese scholars so far have not offered concrete reasons why Sillans appear in *Senzai kaku*. They have merely expressed puzzlement by the fact that verses not by Tang literati are there. In an initial attempt to solve the why of it, Shizunaga Takeshi 静永健 writes that,

Most of the nine couplets by Ch'oe discovered in *Senzai kaku* have not been found in any extant records in either Korea or China;<sup>195</sup> thus they are precious in complementing Ch'oe's surviving works. From the anecdotal notes on the topics of the poems, it is estimated that these poems were written when Ch'oe was living in Tang. Such seems true even without the notes and when considering the content of the couplets.... However, the question really is, why were Ch'oe's works collected, through what route [did they reach Japan,] and for what reason did these works come to be collected in *Senzai kaku*?...<sup>196</sup>

Shizunaga is not the first person to notice these poems. Encyclopedia entries on *Senzai kaku* in Japan all state that verses by Silla and Koryō literati appear in *Senzai kaku*. In Korea, Ch'oe Yōngsōng, in his annotated study of Ch'oe Ch'iwōn's collected works, lists *Senzai kaku* poems in an appendix. However, Shizunaga appears to have made the first move to elevate the problem to a critical focus.

Undoubtedly, these poems arrived in Japan either directly from Silla or via Tang. Before a balanced conclusion can be drawn, the two possibilities should be fully explored. First, could these poems have crossed the straights directly from Silla to Heian? This hypothesis looks immediately plausible when we consider that, at the suggestion of Sugawara no Michizane, Japan ceased sending envoys to the Tang court in 894, which means official ties between Tang and Heian were cut off half a century before the compilation of *Senzai kaku*. Silla, as the closest country geographically to Heian but culturally to the Tang, would have been a convenient source of literary commodities. The Heian period separation from the Tang mirrors the Edo period when the Tokugawa *bakufu* maintained diplomatic relations with only Chosōn, and indirect relations with the continent. The transmission of *Kyewōn p'ilgyōng chip* to Japan in the Edo period can offer us a clue on this route of

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<sup>195</sup> As mentioned earlier there is one in the *Tongmunsōn*, which Shizunaga turned to later in his essay.

<sup>196</sup> Shizunaga, "*Senzai kaku shoshū Sai chien itsushiku hatsutan*," 149.

transmission. In total, only five copies of Ch'oe Chiwŏn's *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip* are preserved anywhere in the world: one in Korea and four in Japan. Among all the extant editions of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip* in Japan, the second oldest edition and a very rare edition extant today is the edition preserved in the collection of the Tsushima lord Sō. This second oldest edition appears in the book catalog for the Tsushima collection for the third year of Tenna (天和三年目錄), which is the year 1683. A modern annotation states that,<sup>197</sup>

In the Tokugawa era, the business of dealing with Chosŏn was entrusted to the lord of Tsushima for generations. During 1673-1680, the Tokugawa [*shōgun*] asked the Tsushima lord to obtain from Chosŏn illustrated books on rites, Confucian classics, and histories, and the collected works of Yi T'oegye (李退溪). In Tsushima, at the *Iteian* (以酌庵) lived Gozan (五山) monks learned in *kanbun*. They [had been dispatched by the *bakufu* from 1636 and] oversaw the diplomatic correspondence between Chosŏn and Tokugawa. In 1711-1715, the [*shōgun*] asked the monks at the *Iteian* to procure seven books related to the legal codes of Ming. The Tsushima high officials, Hirata Naoemon (平田直右衛門) and Amenomori Hōshū (雨森芳洲) undertook the search on behalf of the *bakufu*.

These instances show that Tsushima officials were often called on to obtain books and other cultural materials from Korea. The Tsushima edition of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip* probably came to Japan at this time and was among the books the Tsushima high officials obtained from Chosŏn through trade at the Waegwan in Pusan. If, in the Edo period, Japanese were well aware of the importance of Ch'oe's works and purchased his works along with other works, then it is entirely possible that Heian Japanese obtained his writings directly from Silla.

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<sup>197</sup> This is a modern catalog note that annotates the edition in the Tsushima Sōke collection.

This case reminds us that Edo-period Japanese obtained Chinese and Korean works via Korea and Tsushima, and that was not new. The peninsula and the route through Tsushima had always functioned as a conduit of “Chinese knowledge,” conveyed by Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese. Both *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* record that a man called Wani from Paekche presented *Analects* and the thousand character essay<sup>198</sup> 千字文 to the Yamato court, and this is considered the start of “Chinese learning” in Japan. So-called “Chinese learning” usually came through the Koreans instead of directly from the Chinese from the earliest time, and we can imagine that the Japanese at early periods in their history had difficulties in discerning “Chinese knowledge” produced in China and that produced in Korea, because it all came in the form of “Chinese characters.” The Japanese at an initial stage of receiving “Chinese learning” would naturally have considered Chinese and Koreans to be roughly the same. More importantly Japanese may not have distinguished between “Chinese knowledge” produced by “Chinese” or by “Koreans” or been too concerned with the distinction. Such a perception would have been abetted by peninsular literati, who perceived themselves to have been a part of “Chinese civilization.” Thus, the nine couplets by Ch’oe in *Senzai kaku*, works by other Sillans, and the poetry by Tang literati, could easily have entered the archipelago from Silla.

Another possibility is that the literature arrived from Tang directly. To further explore this possibility, let us turn to *Myōnghyōn sipch’osi* compiled in early Koryō, which is considered a contemporary work of *Senzai kaku*. The *Myōnghyōn sipch’osi* anthology collects 10 poems each from 30 poets of both Tang and Silla. The Sillan poets

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<sup>198</sup> As pointed out by Ivo Smits at my final defense, *Senjimon* 千字文 was not yet compiled when Wani supposedly visited Japan. The whole passage cannot be taken at face value, even if at meta-level it is “true:” writing came to Japan by way of the Korean peninsula.

included are Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, Pak Inbŏm, Ch'oe Sung'u, and Ch'oe Kwangyu. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn and Ch'oe Sung'u were two of the “three Ch'oe (三崔)” famous in the Tang for their literary achievements. The third was Ch'oe Ŏnwi. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn was the only literatus among the three who had poems collected in *Senzai kaku*, with the others having no works selected by Ōe no Koretoki. The preference for Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn in both collections, while others varied, may bespeak the fact that Silla and Heian displayed different preferences for excellent Sillan poets but joined opinion on the fine quality of Ch'oe's works. Moreover, among all the poems by Sillans collected in the two anthologies, only one overlaps, which is Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's “*Tŭng Yunju Chahwa sangbang*” 登潤州慈和上房. In the Sillan compilation, the *Myŏnghyŏn Sipch'osi*, this poem is entitled, “*Tŭng Yunju Chahwa sangbang*” 登潤州慈和上房. In *Senzai kaku*, it is entitled “*Tŭng Chahwasan*” 登慈和山. Given the low rate of overlapping poems by Sillans, and the fact that the titles of the same poem are not the same, the compiler of *Senzai kaku* may not have seen the version of the same poem that circulated in Silla, but obtained this poem along with others from the Tang directly. That possibility can be further supplemented by the evidence that Ch'oe's other poems collected in *Senzai kaku* cannot be found in any extant records or anthologies in Korea. These facts indicate that these Sillan couplets may have come to Heian directly through trading and other exchange channels between Tang and Heian.

Having considered the two possibilities for transmission, a balanced view on how the poems of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn made their way into an anthology in Heian Japan is that no matter whether these poems came directly from Silla or from the Tang, their appearances bear heavily the imprint of the Sillans. To the Japanese of the Nara

and early Heian periods, their access to civilization as conveyed through Chinese characters had been more or less mediated by the people on the peninsula. They brought to Japan the Confucian and Buddhist canons, and they functioned as traders braving the waves between the Chinese mainland, the Korean peninsula, and the Japanese archipelago. The Chinese merchants, of course, were there, too, but they were probably not as many or as frequent as the Koreans.

One final point is perhaps crucial as an indicator of the character of the Chinese literary cosmopolis. The Sillan literati recognized in Heian were all accomplished poets in the eyes of Tang-era Chinese. All these Sillans had gone to Tang, succeeded in the examinations, and had been recognized by Tang critics as good poets. No local Sillan poet from the Silla *Kukhak* made it into *Senzai kaku* without first gaining recognition from Tang government and society. In other words, the Sillans adopted into *Senzai kaku* were considered to be the best poets of the Tang world no matter where their origins lay; they were appealing to Heian literati because they had been successful in the literary Chinese cosmopolis. There was no need to discuss whether these works paralleled the best poetry produced on the continent. Of course, they did, and that is why they circulated into Heian.

### 2.3. Conclusion

In an attempt to grasp Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's intellectual position and evaluate his association with the restoration of Confucian orthodoxy in the Tang, this chapter first situated Ch'oe in his historical era, the ninth century. Centering on three keywords: mobility, connection, and integration, part one described the historical context in which Ch'oe lived and how Ch'oe experienced mobility, connection, and integration. As we learn from the diarist Ennin, Sillans had built up an exhaustive maritime network connecting Heian, Silla, and Tang that enabled the flow of goods, information, scholars, and monks thanks to Sillan superior ship-building and navigation technology. Sillans' active participation in Tang society seemingly outstripped other foreigners living in the Tang. They are seen as merchants, monks, students, and slaves in the Tang. On the streets of Chang'an could be found Sillans, and there were Silla-towns in the Huinan and Henan regions. Within them, Sillan customs and traditions were able to be retained to a large extent. However, living in the Tang did not grant them automatic integration. Probably due to requests for greater integration on the part of the foreigners, the Tang government devised an examination for foreigners in the 820s that allowed foreigners to enter officialdom like local Chinese. Ch'oe was one of the most successful cases. He not only passed the *bingong* examination, but also achieved his fame in the Tang and returned to Silla. Although he bequeathed literary treasures to his fellow Sillans and subsequent generations of Korean literati, his political and social ambitions met with frustration. He finally lived a hermit's life in a Buddhist temple and died wandering around the mountains and rivers of his home country.

An analysis of his collected works in part two demonstrated his connection with the “Classical Prose Movement” in China and his position as a forerunner of “Ancient Style Learning” in Korea. First, judging from the content, Ch’oe invoked poverty, a thematic word reiterated from the Han to the Tang by the classicists, such as Yang Xiong and Han Yu. Yet, Ch’oe’s engagement with poverty also revealed a cosmopolitan layer in his laments about the cultural poverty of his origin, Silla. It is important to note, however, that he never denounced his origins.

From an analysis of his poetry and prose, it is clear that he filled a transitional role from parallel prose to free style in Korean literary history. First, the four ancient-style poems collected in the *Tongmunsŏn* were closely examined in turn. They either demonstrate rhyming flaws or violations of rigid tonal arrangement or parallelism. They were judged by the *Tongmunsŏn* editors and rightly assigned to their category of ancient-style poems, but their number is very few, given that the total number of his extant poems is 72. Curiously, Ch’oe, unlike Bai Juyi or Du Mu who clearly specified the style of their poems in their collections, did not mention the style in *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip*. This implies that he considered his poetry to be a mixed bag of modern and ancient styles with no clear preference, but that might be speculative. In any event, the volume of his extant prose work far eclipses his extant poetry.

Stronger evidence to enable us to determine if he preferred ancient, free style writing to modern, regulated style writing comes from his extant prose work. A mapping of his prose genres in the *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip* was carried out above, which shows that the majority of Ch’oe’s collected prose works were official documents that he composed in the Tang. Within the prose genres, the first sample

taken was the “Proclamation of war to Huang Chao,” which is in the genre category of “Proclamation” and made Ch’oe’s fame in the Tang. Analysis shows that this piece is composed in parallel prose and satisfies all the rigid tonal arrangements that makes parallel prose. However, we also discovered in the genre categories of “Miscellaneous writings” and “Records” that Ch’oe wrote not in parallel prose, but in free style. In order to push further Ch’oe’s commitment to free style, we sampled the top most populated genres, “Personal correspondences” (別紙) and “Official communications” (舉牒). They each comprise 28 and 15 percent of his total extant works included in his own collection, *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip*. The result is that the pieces in “Personal correspondences” are in free style and the pieces in “Official communications” are in parallel prose. The conclusion we can draw is that, for official documents, such as “Proclamations” and “Official communications,” Ch’oe was a devoted writer of parallel prose for official purposes. The majority of the pieces in *Kyewŏn p’ilgyŏng chip* are official documents of some sort, although the single most populated genre is “personal correspondences.” Given Ch’oe’s circumstances in ninth-century China, official documents had to be composed in parallel prose to conform to the requirements of composition at the Tang court. However, when he had the option to write as he pleased in unofficial documents, his commitment to free style is far more apparent. Among the five genres discussed, three contain unofficial documents and these were composed in free style. When later Korean writers from the Koryŏ and Chosŏn began to dabble with ancient-style learning and a free style, they could look back to the Silla dynasty and to Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn. Considering his stature in Korean letters, Ch’oe’s use of the free style offered precedent and license.

## **Chapter 3: Sugawara no Michizane: The Banished God of Scholarship**

This chapter turns to a case study of Sugawara no Michizane (845-903) from Heian Japan, the other literary figure in my comparative paradigm. To mirror Chapter 2, this chapter starts with Japan's connections with the continent and a survey of the historical background in which our protagonist lived. I describe the love-hate relationship between Silla and Heian; Japan's ally on the continent, Parhae or Bohai; and how much Heian's access to Tang was mediated by the peninsular people. Next, by examining Sugawara no Michizane's poems and prose, I intend to investigate two matters: whether chrysanthemums as a signifier served the same or a similar function as seen in Tao Yuanming's poems or in the Chinese poetic tradition in general. Secondly, did Michizane compose ancient-style poetry like Ch'oe did? If the Music Bureau poetry, an ancient-style poetry, had been localized in Japan, what are the specifics about this localized poetic form?

### **3.1. Japan's continental connections in the ninth century**

Although it was Sugawara no Michizane's proposal that Japan cut off its diplomatic relations with China, he could not have known that relations would become so attenuated for the next five hundred or so years. For a long time, Japan was isolated from the mainstream of continental culture and the Japanese developed and maintained a distinctive culture. Michizane's lifetime became the dividing line between a Japan connected and a Japan disconnected—thus, ninth-century Japan begs for a close

examination of its diplomatic policies, contacts with neighbors, as well as major figures on the literary stage. This chapter will first outline the cosmopolitan world for ninth-century Japan by assessing its connections to the peninsula and the continent. In part 2, I will go on to discuss Michizane as a cosmopolitan writer of his age.

### 3.1.1. Heian and Silla: a love-and-hate relationship?

#### a. The intriguing case of Funya no Miyatamaro (文室宮田麻呂)

In the year 843, a subordinate (or a guest) of a junior fifth rank official, Funya no Miyatamaro, secretly reported to the court that his master was brewing a coup against the Heian government. Funya no Miyatamaro was quickly brought to custody and his residences in Heian-kyō and Nanba (today's Osaka) searched. Weapons were found at both residences—his Kyoto mansion yielded about 15 bows, 160 arrows, three quivers, and six swords, along with two helmets, two sets of armor, 12 bows, eight swords, 10 quivers, and three long-handled Chinese spears found in his Nanba mansion. Two officials further interrogated Miyatamaro, and he admitted to the crime of treason. Upon conviction for treason, Miyatamaro was degraded by one rank and banished to Izuno Province 伊豆国 in today's Shizuoka prefecture.<sup>199</sup>

It seems that the story ends here, but what attracted public attention was not how long or how well this man had dreamed of his plot against the government, but the unbelievably large wealth he possessed for being a junior-fifth rank official, that is, a minor official at the court. When his property was confiscated, the government

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<sup>199</sup> The narrative of this incident is based on the historical records in the *Shoku Nihon kōki*. Please refer to Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 127-128; 163-164. 10. 01. 842, Book 11. 22, 24, 26, 29. 12. 843, Book 13.

discovered that he owned lands, houses, and rice-paddies in eight prefectures in Ōmi Province 近江国, and he probably possessed properties in other provinces as well. These at least included ten residences, lands of 15 *machi* 町, and rice-paddies of 35 *machi*. His wealth was enormous, and it might have been the underlying cause for his dreaming of political power through a rebellion. Where did he manage to accumulate his fortune?

The story goes back to his days as the governor of Chikuzen 筑前 in modern-day Fukuoka-ken in Kyūshū. In the fourth month of 840, Miyatamaro was appointed to be the governor of Chikuzen.<sup>200</sup> He worked there for eight months before he was removed from the post for reasons unknown. While as a governor at the frontier, he met either Chang Pogo in person or Chang's fleet when they called at the port of Hakata. As noted before, Chang presented horse harnesses and other presents to the Dazaifu in the twelfth month of 840 and asked for permission to trade, but his request was rejected. The harnesses were returned, but Chang gave away his commodities to the locals and let them trade freely. Though this entry in the *Shoku Nihon kōki* appears at the end of Miyatamaro's tenure, as a government official of the time when Chang or his fleets frequented the waters between Tang, Silla, and Heian, Miyatamaro probably saw his road to prosperity through Chang Pogo. After release from the post of Chikuzen governor in the twelfth month of 840, he openly built personal trading relations with Chang. He paid Chang coarse silk (*ashiginu* 絁) for Tang commodities that Chang promised to bring when next he called at Hakata. It is not clear whether Miyatamaro, as a government official, was engaged in trade with Chang, and that accounted for his being removed from post, or whether Miyatamaro resigned for the sake of making money. Either way, his connection

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<sup>200</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 100. 06. 04. 840, Book 9.

with Chang soon brought him great fortune. His residence in Nanba was a commercial base in the capital area that sold luxurious and exotic Tang commodities to Heian society.

Because Miyatamaro was reluctant to let go of his access to wealth after his removal as Governor, he stayed in Kyūshū and waited for more visits from Chang and the pouring in of wealth from the continent. Bad news came, though. Chang Pogo died. Upon the news of Chang's death in the eleventh month of 841,<sup>201</sup> Miyatamaro flew into rage and led his followers to attack the ships captained by the two Sillans: Yi Sojōng and Yi Ch'ung, when these two men with forty or so Sillan sailors called on Hakata bearing Tang commodities. Chang's death probably resulted in Miyatamaro's financial loss, hence the robbery, and he demanded that the two ships under Chang's subordinates compensate for his losses due to Chang's death. His unruly behavior was deeply troublesome in the Chikuzen area. Miyatamaro not only gained huge profits through trading with the Sillans, but he was purchasing lands and expanding his economic control in the area. At this time a Fujiwara official proposed four regulations regarding frontier contacts and other issues that were approved by the court, "First, all Sillans are not allowed to disembark on the land of Heian, but they are allowed to call on the port and trade with local residents." The second article seems to target Miyatamaro personally. It reads, "Those who have ended their tenure as the governor linger in the area to engage in trading and agriculture, harm the benefits of fisherman and peasants, and gain illegal profits; they should be called back to the capital immediately."<sup>202</sup> There was no clearer

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<sup>201</sup> Please refer to Note 81 above regarding discrepancies for the year of Chang's death in Korean and Japanese historical records.

<sup>202</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 143. 15. 08. 842, Book 12.

message to Miyatamaro. He probably was forced to leave Chikuzen and move back to Heian-kyō.

As mentioned at the beginning, in the twelfth month in 843, he was convicted of the crime of treason and banished. However, weapons found in his homes did not pose an actual threat to the government. The evidence for his crime thus remains ambiguous. Indeed, this was a wrongful case on the part of the government, and years later, on the twentieth day of the fifth month, in 863, the Heian government conducted a ceremony to console wronged souls from the Reign of Emperor Sudō. Miyatamaro was listed among them.<sup>203</sup> Nevertheless, his case shows that the legal or institutional system of Heian did not tolerate officials getting fabulously rich through their posts and letting economic power conflate with political power. Chang Pogo had challenged the bone rank caste system of Silla through political power buttressed by wealth, but that ended in disaster. Miyatamaro's downfall echoes Chang Pogo's demise, but he clearly represents the kind of person in Heian who profited from the international trade with the Sillans.

We do not know if Miyatamaro was the only official who had trading relations with Chang Pogo, the only person who completed a rags to riches transformation, but the position *Funya no Miyatamaro* held recalls the letter Ennin bore when he was on his trip to Tang China. Ennin mentioned in the letter to Chang that the governor of Chikuzen asked him to pass on a letter to Chang, but unfortunately the letter was lost with the shipwreck on his trip to Tang. Though Ennin did not specify who it was, in the ninth month of 837, when Ennin departed Hakata to Tang, the governor of Chikuzen was Ono Suetsugu 小野末嗣. Whether Suetsugu was also a governmental official in the frontier

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<sup>203</sup> Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri sedoshi no kenkyū*, 50.

who built up private trading relations with Chang is unclear, but such people were at the forefront of trade and commerce across borders at the time, and they must have had a clear idea how and where to find resources. To a large extent, Sillan ships functioned as a main channel for Tang commodities coming into Heian, and this we can deduce from the Miyatamaro case. This channel of wealth was another aspect of Heian society's connection with the peninsula and the continent. The diplomatic connection is well known, but the economic opportunities lubricated the cultural exchanges. Not all was peaceful, though.

b. The plot against Tsushima and the attack on Hakata

In contrast to the valuable commodities that were brought in by the Sillans, the Sillans also created incidents on the borders. There seems to be a concentration of events related to Sillans on the borders in the 860s. For instance, in 866 a farmer reported to Dazaifu that a fellow villager named Yamano Harunaga went with a Sillan named Chin Binchō to Silla. He learned weaponry techniques such as making bows and arrows and returned in an attempt to attack Tsushima.<sup>204</sup> Three years later, in 869, Hakata was hit by Sillan pirates, and they robbed the tax silk and cotton of Buzen province. Such incidents invoked espionage and conspiracy theories and instilled insecurity in the frontier. Since these two incidents happened quite close to each other, what follows will be a close examination of the 869 incident and of what was at stake on the borders.

While Sillans were highly suspicious and maybe dangerous, and Dazaifu never let go of its anxieties, the fear became real one night in the fifth month of 869. Two ships of

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<sup>204</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, 192. 15. 07. 866, Book 13.

Sillan pirates attacked the port of Hakata and robbed the yearly tax silk and cotton of Buzen 豊前 province. They rowed away in a flash leaving the soldiers of Heian confused and staring out to the sea. The robbery happened right in front of the eyes of Dazaifu and its many border guards in the area, especially at a location within the outmost frontier of Tsushima and even in the inner sea around Hakata.<sup>205</sup> This proved to be an insult and a shame, not only to the Dazaifu but to the central government, for which the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* devotes laborious accounts of the consequences,

On the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, the Heian court sent a messenger to the Ise shrine, and reported to heaven, ‘...words offered to the great Sun Goddess. I courteously bring forward the following. Since the sixth month last year, Dazaifu frequently passed on [the following] information to the court. The bandits of Silla, in two ships, looted the yearly taxes of Buzen province that had just arrived at the Naka county’s port in Chikuzen province. They quickly escaped. I also heard that the *Takadono no hyōgo* 樓兵庫 offered words that a big bird descended [at Dazaifu]. The divination of the sign indicates that there will be an invasion from a neighboring country. In addition, Buzen province had an earthquake recently; many houses collapsed and people dispersed...’<sup>206</sup>

It seems that the central government was more interested in situating the attack on Hakata within a series of natural disasters and omens from heaven. They may have overlooked the fact that the region of Buzen had a large concentration of immigrants from the Korean peninsula. Kōrai prefecture 高來 in Buzen province could have been a euphemism referring to Ko[gu]ryō 高麗, given the two have the same pronunciation, and the residents of this region were probably immigrants from the Korean peninsula. If this hypothesis is true, that means the successful attack on the silk and cotton of Buzen

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<sup>205</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, 248. 15. 06. 869, Book 16.

<sup>206</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, 254-255. 14. 12. 869. Book 16.

province could have gained information and aid from insiders living within the borders of Heian.

c. Last diplomatic mission to Silla: The *kenshiragi-shi* 遣新羅使

Missions sent to Silla for various purposes proved to be a crucial part of Heian foreign diplomatic campaigns, almost as important as its relationship with the Tang or Parhae/Bohai, perhaps even more so. After all, Tang and Parhae/Bohai were not in the immediate picture, but geographically Silla was just across the straits and the alliance with Paekche and their defeat by the Silla-Tang forces in 663 was still fresh in the historical memory. In general, the diplomatic relationship between Silla and Japan had almost always been a troubled one. Early Japanese histories condescend to Silla, their immediate neighbor across the straits, in which Silla features as nothing more than a tributary state since Empress Jingū's invasion and subjugation of Silla. Despite the condescension, Silla attracts a lot of attention in these earlier documents. For example, in *Nihon shoki* (720) the kingdoms on the Korean peninsula bulk by far the largest among the foreign lands known to the ancient Japanese, and references to them far outnumber those to China. Among them, Silla is the first Korean kingdom, in fact, the first foreign country, mentioned in *Nihon shoki*.<sup>207</sup> H. Mack Horton and others have also noted that Japan's finest hour in its relations with the Three Kingdoms arrived with the advent of the regency of Empress-Consort Jingū, dated to the beginning of the third century by *Nihon shoki*.<sup>208</sup> As described by Horton, Empress Jingū invaded Silla in the year 200 by

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<sup>207</sup> Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 123.

<sup>208</sup> Horton also notes that this incident appears to have moved back in time events that occurred in Korea's early Three Kingdoms period, in the interest of extending the span of Japanese history. Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 124.

the traditional chronology, reputedly bringing the peninsula under her sway. *Kojiki* asserts that she herself was descended from a Silla prince, which perhaps was meant to emphasize the legitimacy of her mission. She was directed by three seafaring divine protectors who would later be worshipped along with Jingū herself as the deities of Sumiyoshi. The first conquest of Silla is described in detail in *Nihon shoki*. This conquest is also considered the origin of Silla's sending eight ships of tribute to Japan. *Nihon shoki* then depicts Yamato's second defeat of Silla by allying with Paekche in 249 and a third attack from Silla in 262.<sup>209</sup>

Although the Empress-Consort Jingū accounts in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* are detailed, both texts are renowned for their awkward dating schemes and generally questionable reliability as historical sources. Until any archeological evidence surfaces, Empress Jingū will remain a legendary figure rather than becoming historical. Such skepticism is well expressed by a modern Japanese scholar, Sakamoto Tarō. Regarding the account of Empress Jingū in *Nihon shoki*, he remarks that,

The account of Jingū is very full. It moves from the expedition to Tsukushi, inherited from her predecessor, to an expedition against Silla, and on her return she put down the rebellion of Prince Kagosaka and Prince Oshiuma. The action is splendid. The expedition against Silla is also recorded in *Kojiki*, although most of it is like a fairy tale, divorced from reality. It may indeed be what people handed down for a long time, but it is far from historical fact. People of later ages, who tried to subjugate a stubborn Silla, deliberately placed such an imaginary tale into the past.<sup>210</sup>

Sakamoto's understanding of the Empress Jingū accounts in *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* is that they might be the wish of the island people to conquer a hostile and stubborn continental neighbor, and they expressed their wishes in a fairytale fashion. Moreover, he

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<sup>209</sup> Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 125.

<sup>210</sup> Sakamoto, *The Six National Histories of Japan*, 62.

also questions the sources of the account of Empress Jingū, when he notes that Chinese classics were frequently used as authorities for historical composition,

...Chinese history books were used also as materials for the content of history. An example is found in the record of Empress Regent Jingū. Events in the thirty-ninth, fortieth, and forty-third year of her reign are taken from three places in *Wei Zhi* (History of Wei), and one event from the sixty-sixth year is taken from the Jin-dynasty *Diary of Activity and Repose*. They all refer to a woman ruler of Wa; the compilers of *Nihon Shoki*, seeing that these accounts about a woman ruler corresponded to Empress Regent Jingū, assigned the record of her activities to the appropriate place in the chronology. These straight quotations, without any assimilation into the historical context, report the facts as contained in Chinese books of history. However, this was a singular case, and not the general practice.<sup>211</sup>

Sakamoto singled out only *Wei Zhi* and *Diary of Activity and Repose* for the account of Empress Jingū, but ruled out other Chinese histories, such as *Song Shu* and *Sui Shu*, which were probably available at the time when *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* were compiled. Clearly, *Wei Zhi* was transmitted to Japan at this point and was consulted by the compilers of *Nihon shoki*.

On the Korean side, there is almost no mention of Japanese missions to Korea in *Samguk sagi*, except two occasions in which one delegation of two hundred men from the “Wa” was received by the Sillan King. The lack of information on the Japanese missions in *Samguk sagi* suggests that the compiler, Kim Pusik, might have been simply neglectful, or his compilation team lacked information. Dearth of information is a big issue when it comes to historical records on the Korean peninsula, nevertheless, the general neglect of the “Wa” might indicate a reciprocal Sillan condescension that echoed the views held by their Japanese neighbor. Horton succinctly describes the islanders’ views,

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<sup>211</sup> Sakamoto, *The Six National Histories of Japan*, 49.

Japanese aristocrats of the eighth century would have viewed their neighbor to the north with a mixture of condescension toward an ostensibly tributary state only lately unified, nostalgia for ostensible past supremacy, apprehension in the face of Silla's current military might, and respect for Korean cultural expertise.<sup>212</sup>

Suffice it to say that the interest held by the Japanese was not held by the Koreans or we would probably see more mention of the Japanese in Korean histories. Missions sent to Silla from Japan are well recorded in Japanese histories and even in Japanese literature. For example, in *Shoku nihongi* there are records of 25 missions sent to Silla from 692 to 779.<sup>213</sup> Among them, a mission in 736-737 yielded the content of one out of the twenty books of *Manyōshū*. This is by far the most laborious account of any foreign mission that appears in *Manyōshū*. In short, Silla and Heian adopted different perceptions about their relative importance of each other as neighbors, but shared the same feeling of supremacy and condescension towards each other.

In records on the ninth century, *Shoku Nihon kōki* records three missions sent to Silla each in the years 803, 804, and 836. The three missions sent in the ninth century to Silla coincide with the last two missions Heian sent to Tang (804 and 838). Since the Tang and Silla missions overlap, it is not difficult to imagine that the major task of these missions to Silla was also to gain information on Japanese envoys to Tang: did they lose their way and drift to the territory of Silla? Did they successfully anchor in Tang China? Are they on their way back? Everything and anything related to the envoys sent to Tang, no matter how trivial the news could be, was precious. It seems clear that Silla functioned as an indispensable intelligence source for Heian. That dependence was somewhat offset by Parhae/Bohai, but still it must have been more practical and convenient to gain

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<sup>212</sup> Horton, *Traversing the Frontier*, 122.

<sup>213</sup> Han, *Parhae ūi tae'oe kwangye sa*, 199.

information directly from Silla than from Parhae/Bohai due to geographical immediacy and Silla's intimate relations with Tang through their maritime network. Moreover, if the ships had been blown off course, it is more likely they would have landed in Silla rather than in Parhae/Bohai.

However, diplomatic relations between Heian and Silla came to an end in 836. The ambassador to Silla in 836 was a minor official called Ki no Mitsu. Heian sent its last embassy to Tang in 836, but that embassy arrived in 838. Ki no Mitsu's mission to Silla was to inform the Sillan government that Heian had dispatched an embassy to the Tang and requested their help if the ships were to be accidentally blown to Silla.<sup>214</sup> When Ki no Mitsu returned to the Heian court in the twelfth month of 836, it became clear that his mission had ended in disaster. The Sillans sent a letter addressed to the Heian Council of State that made several accusations of Ki no Mitsu. According to the document quoted in full in *Shoku Nihon kōki*, Ki no Mitsu told the Sillans that the purpose of his mission was to convey good will between neighbors. When observing the diplomatic letter Mitsu carried, the Sillans discovered that the real purpose of his mission was to seek help with the embassy ships to Tang if they land in Silla by accident. The discrepancy between Mitsu's statement and the letter he carried created ire at the Sillan court. They questioned Ki no Mitsu, but Mitsu was not able to give a definite answer about the discrepancy. They further suspected that Mitsu forged the diplomatic letter. This was stated in a casual comment that the island people were driven by profit and willing to forge documents in order to avoid inquisition. Not being able to understand the real purpose of Mitsu's visit

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<sup>214</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 54-55. 13. 05. 836, Book 5. The original letter in full is, 不渝舊好。鄰穆彌新。迺發皇華。朝章自遠。仍今遣使修聘巨唐。海晏當時。雖知利涉。風濤或變。猶慮非常。脫有使船漂着彼境。則扶之送過。不俾滯闕。

or the genuineness of his document, the Sillans entertained the idea of him being a member of the embassy to Tang, but quickly dismissed the idea, because they thought the ambassador's ship had already gone on to Tang. Without figuring out why Mitsu came to Silla, the Sillans wrote the following, which is believed to have irritated the Heian court and is the real reason why Heian ceased sending envoys to Silla. The letter says, "...[We] forgive the faults of rude behavior by a petty man, and show the broadness of mind and generosity befitting a big country..."<sup>215</sup> The claim of being a big country on the part of Silla certainly goes against the perception Heian held for Silla that it was a tributary state. The condescending tone adopted by the Sillans probably reminded them of the attitude they had towards Silla. The Heian government realized at this point that the hostility, demonstrated by suspicion, doubts, and untrustworthiness, could not be rectified or even eased with diplomatic missions.

### Summation

The stories above are fragments of information that offer specific picture of the personal as well as governmental contacts between Silla Korea and Heian Japan during the ninth century. When these are brought together in a collage, the first impression is that they disliked each other, but further consideration reveals a deeper and more complex relationship. Silla was one of the ways for many Japanese to complete a rags-to-riches transformation, because Sillan contacts were steadfast suppliers of Tang goods, expensive and much desired. Moreover, Silla maintained a higher technology prowess in weaponry

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<sup>215</sup> Kuroita, ed., *Shoku Nihon kōki*, 59-60. 03. 12. 836, Book 5. 主司務存大體。舍過責功。恕小人荒迫之罪。申大國寬弘之理。

and ship-building. The ships that fared better in rough waters were called “Silla-ships” by Heian people and apparently the technology was studied by people in Heian. Silla was much more informed about and connected with Tang, thus it was an important source for Heian, and Heian dispatched envoys to its neighbor just for information. Most importantly Sillan ships, merchants, and sailors brought Heian people back home. The connection’s significance is clear when we recall the homecoming of, for example, Ennin, who made significant contributions to the religious history of Japan.

### 3.1.2. Parhae/Bohai: Heian's erstwhile continental ally?

Parhae/Bohai was a state that developed out of roughly the old territory of Koguryō, after Silla and Tang succeeded in defeating Paekche and Koguryō. But Parhae/Bohai had an ambiguous relationship with its inheritance from Koguryō. When Koguryō was defeated in 668 by Tang and Silla's united forces, Tang occupied the old territory of Koguryō (northwards from the northern shore of the Taedong River). Tang did not withdraw from the territory until 676 when it shifted its forces to Liaodong. This created a vacuum in the old territory of Koguryō between 676 to 698 that lasted for twenty-two years and is considered by Han Kyuch'öl as a historical period of a "real" Unified Silla.<sup>216</sup> Nevertheless, within this territory, what was to become Parhae/Bohai established itself from 698 with a revolt that began in Liaodong and eventually incorporated largely the people of the old Koguryō territory, both its governing elites and much of the larger population. During its existence as a kingdom for roughly two hundred years, Parhae/Bohai maintained amicable relations with Heian. As Heian-Silla diplomatic relations became estranged with the last Heian mission to Silla of 836 ending in dismay on both sides, Parhae/Bohai reinforced its position as an important continental ally to Heian after establishing diplomatic relations in the eighth century.

In a previous chapter, I discussed a scene in which a Parhae/Bohai mission was received by Sugawara no Michizane and his former tutor. Robert Borgen, in his study of Sugawara no Michizane, has written in detail about Parhae/Bohai missions received in Heian, especially the one received by Michizane in 882. Borgen explains why Heian ceased sending missions to the Tang: "Following the return of the last mission to China

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<sup>216</sup> Han, *Parhae ūi tae'oe kwangye sa*, 21.

in 839, Japanese enthusiasm for further overseas adventures diminished because the frequent arrival of private traders from China and official envoys from Parhae/Bohai rendered the Japanese embassies largely superfluous.”<sup>217</sup> Borgen does not, however, offer information regarding the frequency of Parhae/Bohai missions to Heian at that time. The fact is that those sent to Heian in the ninth century were not significantly more frequent or diplomatically and economically more significant than those in the eighth century. There were more Parhae/Bohai embassies, but there was no dramatic or sudden increase in the number of Parhae/Bohai embassies to Heian in the ninth century. The frequency of embassies from Parhae/Bohai was steady from the eighth century, and that stability contradicts the possibility of rising embassy numbers being a significant reason for Heian’s decision to stop sending embassies to Tang in the ninth century.

Here I would rather focus on Parhae/Bohai’s strategic importance to Heian over its two hundred or so years of existence, and how Parhae/Bohai fared in Heian’s diplomatic relations in the eighth and ninth centuries. Among a total of 34 Parhae/Bohai missions sent to Heian from 727 to 919, there were 14 missions in the eighth century, 18 missions in the ninth century, and two in the tenth century.<sup>218</sup> On average, the number of missions sent in the eighth and ninth centuries was about the same, and there were no big fluctuations in embassy numbers in the ninth century. In short, there were steady and frequent diplomatic missions to Heian over the two centuries and Parhae/Bohai demonstrated some degree of loyalty and commitment to its relations with Heian,

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<sup>217</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 252.

<sup>218</sup> I use the data provided by Ueda Takeshi and Son Eiken. Ueda and Son, *Nihon Bokkai kōshōshi*, 160-163. Within the 18 missions in the ninth century, there were 10 missions sent after 836, dating from 842 to 895: 842, 849, 859, 861, 872, 873, 877, 882, 892, 895.

considering the dangers involved in crossing what is our modern-day Sea of Japan (or East Sea according to Koreans).

What then were the changes if there were any in Parhae/Bohai embassies to Heian over two centuries? If we look at the scale of the embassies, it is not difficult to discover that the two largest Parhae/Bohai embassies came to Japan in the eighth century instead of the ninth. On both occasions, over three hundred men made it to Heian by crossing the Sea of Japan. One, headed by Yil Manbok (壹萬福) with 325 men in 17 ships, arrived on the shore of Dewa province in 771. Within this large group, only 40 persons who were selected to form a delegation, were allowed to enter the capital and were received by the Emperor and attended the ceremonies of the New Year celebrations. When the letter from the King of Parhae/Bohai was presented, an unexpected incident happened. In the letter, the King of Parhae/Bohai, Dae Hūmmu (大欽茂, r.737-793), described their relation with Japan as that of “uncle and nephew” instead of what Heian considered Parhae/Bohai to be: a brother state, or even a vassal state. Moreover, the letter did not end with the usual name and official title of the sender, but a self-styled name of the king, Chōnsōn (天孫) or “Grandson of Heaven.” The letter was rejected by the Japanese Emperor for poor diplomatic etiquette and the Yil Manbok delegation was in deep trouble. He had apparently not known the content or expected such statements in the letter and was at a loss and left weeping in embarrassment. The courtiers felt sympathy and helped him alter the content of his king’s letter to eliminate offense. Then the delegation was received again by the Emperor with courtesy, and a banquet was held in their honor where gifts were bestowed on them.<sup>219</sup> From this incident, we can see that Parhae/Bohai had

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<sup>219</sup> Ueda and Son, *Nihon Bokkai kōshōshi*, 91-93.

ambitions to become a powerful state in the region, and its large-scale embassy to Japan was intended to impress on the Japanese the Parhae/Bohai self-conception as a more advanced country in the Chinese mode, though the Japanese had their doubts.

A few years later, a similarly large Parhae/Bohai delegation came in 779 with a total of 359 members, again dispatched by the king of Parhae/Bohai, Dae Hūmmu. They landed on the shore of Dewa province just as the previous one. This one, however, was not received by the Emperor, nor was it allowed to enter the capital, due to a similar reason. The letter from Dae Hūmmu was again inappropriately written. There is no extant information regarding the content of the letter borne by the 779 embassy. The delegation was ordered to repatriate from where they had landed, but it was winter and crossing the sea in the bitterest season of the year involved great danger. Considering the situation, the Heian court allowed the delegation to spend the winter in Dewa and ordered winter clothes and other living staples to be sent to the envoys. The Ambassador, Ko Yangp'il, requested nine ships from the court be granted for their return voyage, because the ships they came in were severely damaged. The court agreed to his request, and the delegation left for Parhae/Bohai, possibly in the following summer.<sup>220</sup>

These two largest missions sent to Heian both happened in the reign of King Dae Hūmmu and there were only about eight years between them. Dae Hūmmu's reign in Parhae/Bohai overlaps with a turning point of the Tang empire, that is, the An Lushan rebellion (755-763). During the high tide of the chaos created by An Lushan, Heian once proposed to attack Silla in 759 with the aid of Parhae/Bohai. Heian's enlistment of Parhae/Bohai was abortive due to the changing climate on the mainland and also due to

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<sup>220</sup> Ueda and Son, *Nihon Bokkai kōshōshi*, 101-102.

the fact that Parhae/Bohai changed its policies towards Silla.<sup>221</sup> It is unknown if King Dae Hūmmu was seeking to build on Heian's earlier overtures or was thinking of using Heian against Silla or had some other geopolitical purpose in mind. The similarities of the two missions, however, may indicate the same underlying diplomatic message that Parhae/Bohai was trying to convey, that is, Parhae/Bohai should be perceived as a major power that was more developed than Heian and certainly more than Heian thought it to be.

If the above missions in the eighth century accentuated military might and political collaboration, those in the ninth century indicated something else. A significant change that can be detected is the shift from political collaboration to intellectual and commercial exchange. In the eighth century, ambassadors from Parhae/Bohai were often military officials. However, in the ninth century, they were almost all scholar-officials, some of whom were renowned for their literary skills in Chinese letters. For example, an Ambassador named Wang Hyoryōm (王孝廉) came to Heian in 814. He met and befriended Kūkai when both of them were studying in Tang. When he came as the ambassador of the Parhae/Bohai mission to Heian, he did not forget to send a letter of greeting along with his poems to his old friend then based on Koyasan. Kūkai immediately replied to express his joy and regret at not being able to go to the capital to greet him in person. Due to Wang's fame as an accomplished poet, exchanging poems became a routine at the receptions and banquets. In order to showcase Heian's literary achievement, the best scholars of the time were summoned to these occasions to compete with those from afar. Some poems by these Parhae/Bohai men were collected in one of

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<sup>221</sup> Ueda and Son, *Nihon Bokkai kōshōshi*, 223.

the three imperial anthologies of Heian, the *Bunka shūrei shū* (文華秀麗集) compiled in 818.

The friendly relationship between the two countries contrasted with their respective relations with Silla. Parhae/Bohai and Silla clashes can be glimpsed in their disputes over who should occupy a superior seat in the Tang court. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn wrote a memorial thanking the Chinese Emperor for following the old convention of granting Silla a superior seat above Parhae/Bohai in the seating order of the imperial banquet for the New Year celebration. The tension was also obvious among students from Parhae/Bohai and Silla who were both studying in Tang.<sup>222</sup>

To sum up, the state of Parhae/Bohai, since its founding, had been a strategic partner for Japan in the region. The emphasis in their diplomatic relations appears to be military at the beginning, but shifted to intellectual and commercial concerns in the ninth century. However, Parhae/Bohai's importance to Heian, no matter whether it was military, intellectual, or commercial, did not change too much over the two hundred or so years of relations. The position of Parhae/Bohai in the Japanese diplomatic scheme was always that of a military ally and a source of intelligence. After Silla and Heian ceased diplomatic relations, Parhae/Bohai's continuous sending of missions must have been a reassurance to the Heian government that the peninsular powers were not uniting against the islands. Although commercial connections in either century were far fewer than those with Silla, they were an indispensable part of almost all missions. It is to trade and commerce that we must now briefly turn so as to better situate "Chinese learning" in Heian and contextualize Michizane's contributions in the remainder of this chapter.

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<sup>222</sup> See Hamada, *Shiragi kokushi no kenkyū*, 396-417.

### 3.1.3. Heian and Tang: divorce or relations by other means?

Embassies were sent from the Japanese archipelago to Tang China starting in 630 during the reign of Emperor Jomei. They continued over the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, but at the proposal by Sugawara no Michizane, the *kentōshi* mission in 894 was officially called off. Up until that point, about 19 embassies were dispatched from Japan, some successful and some ending in disaster. However, if we look closely at the ninth century, the mission with Ennin on board in 838 was effectively the last mission to Tang, or the last official contact between the Heian and Tang courts. Despite these developments, no official contact does not mean no contact at all. Official missions aside, the connections actually hinged on the unofficial commercial ships traveling between Tang and Heian. Robert Borgen points to these ships, or “the private traders from China,” as one reason why Heian did not feel it necessary to send embassies to Tang. We also know from the previous chapter and the description of Chang Pogo’s maritime empire that there existed an extensive network built up by the Sillans, a network from which Ennin benefited in order to complete his pilgrimage to Tang. It is very likely that “the private traders from China” were more often Sillans, rather than Tang merchants. In order to clarify the picture and discern the origins of these private traders from China, we will turn to a consideration of these ships in the historical records. That will give us a better grip on Heian’s connection to Tang through trade after 838, and indicate who were “the private traders from China,” and what sort of cosmopolitan world Michizane inhabited.

To begin, we need to know something about the Heian government’s legal codes regarding trade conducted with ships from foreign countries. In the *Yōrō ritsuryō* 養老律令, the legal codes promulgated in 757, there is one relevant article,

Before official trade is conducted by government officials, private trade is prohibited. If violators are reported to the authority, the commodities concerned are divided into two halves: one is rewarded to the reporter; the other is confiscated by the government. If government officials discover [violators] and confiscate [items] in their own jurisdictions, all commodities will go to the government.<sup>223</sup>

This code explains that it was against the law to trade with foreign vessels privately before government business had been concluded and that trading with foreign ships involved the government at every step. Routinely, when a ship from Tang called in the port, Dazaifu sent a message to the court, and the court dispatched a specially appointed official with the title of *Kōeki Tōbutsushi* 交易唐物使 to purchase the commodities on behalf of the government. Meanwhile, the merchants were escorted to lodge at the *Kōrokan* 鴻臚館.<sup>224</sup> However, between the arrival of the ship and the arrival of the trading official from the capital, there was a time gap. It was during this period that violations of the trading law took place as locally rich and powerful personages dispatched their own personnel to purchase from these ships secretly.

We also know that Dazaifu issued a ban on Sillans disembarking on land but allowed Sillan ships to call in the port. This order was issued in 842 as mentioned above in the description of Miyatamaro's trading activities. Whether this ban also applied to the Sillans living in Tang is unclear. If they were excluded from this ban and allowed to disembark, what can we say about Heian's policy towards Sillans living in Tang? Were they treated the same as the "real" Tang merchants? Who were the foreign traders calling into Hakata?

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<sup>223</sup> Inoue Mitsusa, Seki Akira, Tsuchida Naoshige, and Aoki Kazuo eds, *Ritsuryō*, 443.

<sup>224</sup> This was an official lodge for foreign envoys and guests in Heian. The name alludes to the Bureau of Foreign Affairs in the Tang government, the Honglusi (鴻臚寺). It was located near the site of the Tokugawa-period Fukuoka castle in the city of Fukuoka

Kimiya Yasuhiko has constructed a chart that lists all ships commuting between Tang and Heian as recorded in different historical sources from 839 to 907.<sup>225</sup> Among them, 24 voyages out of a total of 37 came to Heian from Tang or from unknown origins (possibly from Tang via Silla). As to the identity of these merchants, some are clearly marked as Sillan, for example, Kim Chin (金珍). His ship was the ship mentioned in Ennin's diary that carried Ennin back to Heian in 847. The nationality of the majority of these merchants (or "ship owners" as named by Kimiya) is not specified. Among the 37 trips, only three ship owners are given an origin, Silla or Japan; otherwise, they are unspecified. Kimiya charts the voyages and gives detailed information about each voyage. When we look at the ship owners, we can see that some ship owners or merchants made several trips between Tang and Heian. In more recent research, Watanabe tries to identify the origin or nationality of the merchants commuting between Tang and Heian from 820 to 856 by their recorded origins in historical sources.<sup>226</sup> He lists five major merchants who made several trips between the two countries during this time and notes that they all have dubious identities. Three of the five merchants possessed the identities of a Sillan (新羅人), a *tōjin* (唐人), and a *daitō shōnin* (大唐商人). One merchant had two origins: Parhae/Bohai and Tang; another is also curious—from both Heian and Parhae/Bohai. Identities and origins brings us the question of whether *tōjin* was a special category reserved for "Sillans but from Tang." This particular term, as we know, has gathered different meanings over Japanese history to refer to different people. Here we see the term being used in the ninth century, with an ambiguous meaning. *Tōjin*

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<sup>225</sup> Kimiya, *Nikka bunka kōryūshi*, 123.

<sup>226</sup> Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri sedoshi no kenkyū*, 26-31.

is clearly a term that invites confusion. Nevertheless, the five merchants mentioned here indeed have actual or potential transnational identities, and it is difficult to categorize them as being from only Tang, Silla, Heian, or Parhae/Bohai. They participated in the multi-national trade network of the time and were truly international people of their age.

### 3.2. Sugawara no Michizane: The banished God of scholarship

In part 1 above, I outlined Heian Japan's connections to the peninsula and the continent. In the eighth and ninth centuries, Sillan trade seems to have dominated the shipping coming into Hakata, sometimes to the point of becoming a corrupting influence. Although official relations with Silla ceased in 836 over a minor diplomatic insult, the trade continued. Relations with Parhae/Bohai remained conveniently geopolitical or intellectually flattering and never rivalled the commercial riches to be had in Hakata. Relations with Tang faded in political and cultural importance to the point where Michizane simply chose not to make the trip. Trade with the continent continued, but I have tried to argue that "continental" trade may well have been extensions of trade with the peninsula. Having set a simple stage, in Part 2, I turn to the main dramatis personae.

#### 3.2.1. The rise and fall of "Chinese learning"<sup>227</sup> in Heian Japan

In order to understand how Michizane emerged from the ninth century as Japan's symbol of Chinese learning, we need to turn to the institutional and political historical moments in the early Heian period that contributed to the emergence of Michizane. Before we delve into his poems and prose to assess any cosmopolitan flavor, the immediate discussion below will center on a few institutional matters. First, I will comment on the state of so-called "Chinese learning" in the ninth century, which represents a high point, if not the highest point in Heian history, of cultural borrowings from the continent. Second, we should consider the State Academy or the *Daigakuryō* 大

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<sup>227</sup> I borrow this concept from Marian Ury's chapter 5 in the *Cambridge history of Japan*: "Chinese learning and Intellectual life," in *Volume 2: Heian Japan*, edited by Donald H. Shively and William H. McCullough, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 341-389.

学寮 in the ninth century, its curricula and social functions, namely, the institution created by the *ritsuryō* 律令 that produced Michizane. The *Daigakuryō* will be described in comparison with the Silla *Kukhak* 國學, or the National Academy of Silla, and special attention paid to the rise of the *kidendō* 紀伝道 curriculum in ninth-century Japan. Finally, the Sugawara patriarchs were closely associated with the rise and fall of “Chinese learning” in Japan; thus, we can benefit from looking at their careers at the court, from Michizane’s grandfather to Michizane’s father to Michizane in the ninth century. These are a few specific registers that offer historical texture and a testimony to how “Chinese learning” fared in the Heian period.

#### a. Chinese learning in the ninth century

The Heian period (794 - 1185) roughly lasts four hundred years, largely spanning the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. It is generally believed that the whole Heian period was when Chinese influence was at its highest peak. This over-generalized view, leaving the impression that each century may be equivalent, is flawed and ignores the rise and fall of Chinese learning over a vast span of time, not to mention mapping out the dynamics and fortunes of reception. The agenda here is to contextualize and project the ninth century as the highest point of Chinese learning in the Nara-Heian period (710-794-1185). I will offer evidence to show why it has to be the ninth century rather than the following three centuries with which we should concern ourselves, if we want to see how the Japanese were inspired to become accomplished in Chinese learning.

As many have noted, the ninth century was indeed a high point of Chinese learning. Marian Ury, in the *Cambridge History of Japan*, describes the ninth century as follows,

The ninth century in particular was a time when Chinese learning thrived in Japan, and books in Chinese by Japanese authors included histories, legal compendia and commentaries, manuals of court procedure, dictionaries, encyclopedia, religious tracts, travel diaries, treatises on a variety of subjects, and poetic anthologies.<sup>228</sup>

The point is easily accepted if we take cognizance of the fact that Japanese started to write in a Chinese style from the seventh century, and they flexed their intellects in the eighth century by producing important historical and literary texts, such as *Kojiki* (711-12), *Nihon shoki* (or *Nihongi*, 720), *Man'yōshū* (759), and *Shoku Nihongi* (797).<sup>229</sup> The *Nihon shoki* and *Shoku Nihongi* were explicitly intended to be Chinese-style historical compositions. Thus, it is not surprising to see that writing in a more intelligible Chinese style or Chinese learning would thrive in the ninth century when the culture and society had grown more deft and comfortable with appropriating continental culture. Of course, it could have gone the opposite way, that is, maintain the same level or even grow worse. I hope that the following will show that they excelled in Chinese learning in the ninth century, and that any decline in Chinese learning started in the tenth century when the balance tipped in favor of vernacular literature, harbingered by the first court-sponsored *waka* anthology, *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905). Further to the vernacular trend, the epic literary texts, such as *The Pillow Book* (1002) and *Tale of Genji* (1008?) were produced in the eleventh century. This is to say, if we accept that texts from *Kojiki* to

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<sup>228</sup> Ury, “Chinese learning and intellectual life,” 343.

<sup>229</sup> Without entering into a discussion of diglossia or hyperglossia in ninth-century Japan, I have listed texts written in a “Chinese style” simply because they used Chinese characters, sometimes to render Japanese and sometimes to render Chinese.

*Tale of Genji* compose the mainstream of Japanese literature in the Heian period in either *kanbun* or the vernacular, a tangible rise and fall of Chinese learning as seen in the output of *kanbun* literature can be mapped, and on that trajectory, the highest point falls in the ninth century.

Before we turn to the accomplishments of Chinese learning in the ninth century, one has to be forewarned that the “Chinese influence” came in largely two ways: one was through Buddhism and the other was through Confucian ideology with literature being its handmaiden; our focus is on Confucian ideology with literature rather than Buddhism. However, because the worlds of Buddhism and Confucian ideology are dichotomous largely in our minds and were co-inhabited by ninth-century writers, it would be foolish not to mention the contemporary development of Buddhism in Heian. It was at the beginning of the ninth century that two of the most influential Buddhist schools, Tendai and Shingon, established themselves. Saichō and Kūkai, fellow travellers on the same mission to Tang in 804, returned to Japan, and established the Tendai sect on Mount Hiei in 806 and the Shingon sect on Mount Kōya in 819. Those who read Buddhist texts also read Confucian texts, and the best example of the omnivorous intellectual curiosity of the age may be Kūkai. He was a monk but also a graduate of the *Daigakuryō*, if we consider the State Academy of Heian was meant to follow the Confucian school system in Tang. A monk and an enthusiastic educator himself, Kūkai was steeped in Chinese learning and renowned for his mastery of Chinese poetry and prose. He established the Shugei Shuchiin 綜芸種智院 in 828 to make education accessible to the general masses by

recruiting the children of commoners.<sup>230</sup> The curricula, differing from the State Academy where Buddhist texts were officially excluded, are very much a combination of Buddhist and Confucian canons. Among his many contributions to the *kanbun* literary culture of Heian are works such as, *Bunkyō hifuron* 文鏡秘府論, *Tenrei banshō meigi* 篆隸万象名義, and others. He was a constant companion of Emperor Saga at the many banquets and social circles where competitions of *kanshi* took place.<sup>231</sup>

Other than Kūkai, a more relevant example would be the friendship between Buddhists and the Sugawara family. If we return to the passengers list above for Japan's last official mission to Tang China in 838 via the southern route, please recall that we found the monk Ennin on his pilgrimage in search of the law. On board the same ships was Sugawara no Michizane's uncle, Sugawara no Yoshinushi 菅原善主. He was appointed to be an "Administrative Officer" 判官 (*J. hangan*)<sup>232</sup> on the mission. Ennin mentioned him in his diary as present when a delegation of officials formed in Yangzhou and set off to the Tang capital for an imperial audience.<sup>233</sup> The connection between the Japanese Buddhist Tendai school and the Sugawara family had a close kinship that can be traced to a previous mission, when Ennin's master, Saichō, went with Sugawara no Michizane's grandfather, Sugawara no Kiyotomo 菅原清公 to Tang in the year 804. Due to the friendships that were consolidated through the years, the young Michizane was entrusted with the task of writing the preface for Ennin's precept, *Ken'yō daikai ron* 顯揚

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<sup>230</sup> Japan Knowledge, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=30010zz238960>, accessed 5 October 2017.

<sup>231</sup> For a discussion of Kūkai, please refer to Ury, "Chinese learning and intellectual life," 374-376.

<sup>232</sup> Translation of the title follows Reischauer. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 42. 04. 10. 838.

<sup>233</sup> Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 42. 04. 10. 838.

大戒論, in 866, at the age of twenty-one upon the request of his father, Sugawara no Koreyoshi 菅原是善. This preface, on the one hand, testifies to Michizane's connection with an influential Buddhist school in Heian, but at the same time we must bear in mind that was probably a chore from his father that fell outside of his own intellectual interests or academic pursuits. The Sugawara family tradition of producing Confucian scholars had pushed Michizane's intellectual orientation towards Confucian learning, even though the young scholar demonstrated a very sound knowledge of the Tendai school doctrine and praised Ennin lavishly for his courage and sincerity in pursuit of the Buddhist dharma in China. Michizane's Buddhist connection was perhaps rekindled in harsh years much later when he was exiled to Kyūshū. Buddhism apparently offered him an emotional shelter during his last years spent in the Dazaifu, when he found comfort and consolation from a "long lasting"<sup>234</sup> religion. Continental connections, especially direct exposure, were celebrated and carried prestige, no matter whether they were Buddhist or Confucian, but we will leave Buddhism aside and turn to pay particular attention to the Confucian aspect of "Chinese learning."

The cultural outcome of Chinese learning in early Heian manifests in the history writing and court-sponsored *kanshi* anthologies. Four out of the *Six National Histories*, known as the *Rikkokushi* 六国史, were produced in the ninth century with the last one, *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三代実録 completed in 901, which also marks the end of Chinese-style official history writing in Japan. The other three in chronological order are *Nihon kōki* 日本後記 (840), *Shoku Nihon kōki* 続日本後記 (869), and *Nihon Montoku*

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<sup>234</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 540, 夫菩薩戒者, 流傳不滅之教也.

*jitsuroku* 日本文徳実録 (879). History writing is directly associated with the scholar-officials produced by the State Academy, the *Daigakuryō*. Its curricula and social functions will be dealt with later, but the emphasis on or the priority given in the curricula to, *belle lettres* in the State Academy at this time prompted the emergence of the three court-sponsored *kanshi* anthologies of the ninth century. These three imperial anthologies are *Ryōunshū* 凌雲集 (814), *Bunka Shūreishū* 文華秀麗集 (818), and *Keikokushū* 經国集 (827), all commissioned in the reign of Emperor Saga, who himself was an accomplished *kanshi* poet. Preceding the three imperial anthologies, the first extant *kanshi* anthology appearing in Japan is *Kaifūsō* 懷風藻 (751) compiled by an unknown author in the Nara period. These anthologies exhibit the highest caliber of *kanshi* written by Japanese emperors, aristocrats, foreign diplomats, women, and literati of their times, albeit understudied in comparison to their vernacular counterparts. We can also see that these *kanshi* were composed at the same time when these men or women were composing in the vernacular. Such can be seen from the overlapping authors included both in the *Kaifūsō* and the *Man'yōshū*.<sup>235</sup> While the poet was the same, their poetry was distinguished and categorized according to whether the writing was *kanshi* or *waka* and assigned to different anthologies. Later anthology compilations gradually erased the boundaries between *kanshi* and *waka*. The beginning of mixed anthologies seems to be an anthology compiled at the end of the ninth century and the start of the tenth century called *Shinsen Man'yōshū*, 新撰万葉集 (893 and 913), authorship subject to question, though normally it is attributed to Michizane. It appeared at about the time of

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<sup>235</sup> Twenty-one authors of the *Kaifūsō* are known also as poets of the *Man'yōshū*. Japanknowledge, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=10800LT002509>, accessed 20 July 2017.

the first court-sponsored *waka* anthology, the *Kokinshū* (905). A good example from the eleventh century is *Wakan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 (1013), in which *kanshi* and *waka* verses are arranged in lists under certain themes, without discriminating the language used. It was also in the eleventh century that another important compilation, *Honchō monzui* 本朝文粹 (approximately 1058-1064), appeared. It contains both Chinese-style poetry and prose as well as Japanese poetry and prose. The title alludes to the *Tang wen cui* 唐文粹 of the Northern Song dynasty, though category-wise, it seems to be modelled after the *Wen Xuan* 文選 from sixth-century China.<sup>236</sup> Although the *Shinsen Man'yōshū* was the earliest known attempt to erase boundaries, the two compilations, *Wakan rōeishū* and *Honchō monzui*, show that it was probably from the eleventh century that boundaries between Chinese-style and Japanese-style writing ceased to have significant meaning.

In a nutshell, it is in the ninth century that we see four official histories written in a more intelligible Chinese-style being drafted and completed and three imperial *kanshi* anthologies commissioned. These cultural products in the ninth century differ from later anthology compilations in that there was a strict distinction between the languages employed in order to produce either *kanshi* or *kanbun* or *waka* or *wabun*. If we consider those landmark texts (*Nihon shoki*, *Shoku Nihongi*, and *Kaifūsō*) in the eighth century as a dining starter, the ninth century was certainly the main course, and that was followed by the confectionary dessert-like Chinese learning of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries.

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<sup>236</sup> JapanKnowledge, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=30010zz442210>, accessed on 20 July 2017.

b. Heian's *Daigakuryō* 大学寮 and Silla' *kukhak* 國學

Since developments of history writing and *kanbun* literature, essential to Chinese learning, are closely related to a *ritsuryō* institution, the State Academy, let us now turn to this specific educational institution in the capital of Heian. As a main apparatus for implementing Confucian ideology and legal matters, a state Academy was built in the reign of Emperor Tenji (r. 662-671) and is presumed modelled after the Confucian Academy of Tang China. The title *Daigakuryō* had not yet appeared and *funya no tsukasa* 学職 and *fumi no tsukasa* 文職 were used to refer to some sort of Confucian school at the time.<sup>237</sup> An entry in the *Nihon shoki* of the fourth year of the reign of Emperor Tenmu (675) first mentioned the *Daigakuryō*, and this is normally considered the beginning of the *Daigakuryō*, though it is likely that by this time it had already been in existence.<sup>238</sup> In the seventh century, the Confucian school or the State Academy had shown strong influence from Paekche immigrants fleeing the destruction of the Paekche capital Puyō in 660. The Academy probably was established with the aid of Paekche immigrants and based on the model of Confucian schools on the peninsula, which followed the Tang example. The head and the professors at this stage all had Korean names. Detailed information about the *Daigakuryō* can be found only from the eighth century onwards.<sup>239</sup> Especially, in the Taihō Code 大宝律令 (703) and a later revised Yōrō Code 養老律令

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<sup>237</sup> In an entry in the *Nihon shoki* in 671, there appears this term, 天智天皇一〇年 正月是月...以小錦下授鬼室集斯 (学職頭). Kuroita, ed, *Nihon shoki*, 298.

<sup>238</sup> As appears in an entry in 675 in the *Nihon shoki*, 天武天皇四年 春正月丙午朔. 大学寮諸学生. 陰陽寮. 外菓寮. 及舍衛女. 隄羅女. 百濟王善光. 新羅仕丁等. 捧菓及珍異等物進. Kuroita, ed, *Nihon shoki*, 335-336.

<sup>239</sup> JapanKnowledge, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=30010zz289710>, accessed 20 July 2017. Also, for discussions of the *Daigakuryō*, see Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 71-80. And Ury, "Chinese learning and intellectual life," 367-375.

(757), specifications regarding the management and functions of the *Daigakuryō* are laid out. Primarily, the *Daigakuryō* was the main educational institution and in charge of conducting the *sekiten* 稷奠 (a ceremony in honor of Confucius).<sup>240</sup> It was administered under the Ministry of Ceremonial 式部省. Discussion hereafter will highlight the curricula and the texts used in the State Academy.

The *Daigakuryō* underwent changes in the ninth century when a curriculum called *kidendō* 紀伝道<sup>241</sup> rose to prominence, but here we will begin with the eighth century. There were mainly four curricula that were taught in the *Daigakuryō*. The primary subject or the central curriculum at this time was *myōgyōdō* (Illuminating Classics, 明經道), which normally enrolled four hundred students with its professor holding the highest rank among other instructors. The second was the Mathematics (*san* 算) curriculum, which recruited an additional thirty students. The other two subjects taught in the *Daigakuryō* were Chinese Pronunciation (*on* 音) and Calligraphy (*fumi* 書). In 728, a curriculum called *myōbōdō* (Illuminating Law, 明法道) was added with the demand to cultivate legal officials.

It was not likely that students enrolled in the Law or Mathematics curricula were supposed to take Classics or vice versa, but all students, upon entry, had to study both Chinese Pronunciation and Calligraphy in order to receive rudimentary training in reading and writing. For the curriculum of Illuminating Classics, the following nine

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<sup>240</sup> For a detailed study, please refer to McMullen, “The worship of Confucius in ancient Japan,” 39-77.

<sup>241</sup> JapanKnowledge, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=1001000062846>, accessed 20 July 2017.

classics, both texts and their commentaries, were taught: *Book of Changes*, *Book of Documents*, *Mao's Books of Songs*, *Rites of The Zhou*, *Rituals*, *Book of Rites*, *Zuo Zhuan*, *Book of Filial Piety*, and *Analects*.<sup>242</sup> Among them, *Book of Filial Piety* and *Analects* were compulsory texts, with the other seven being compulsory electives—they were optional but one had to choose among them. Here, two additional texts are worth mentioning, they are *Wen Xuan* 文選 and *Erya* 爾雅. These two texts became all the more important in the ninth century, but in the eighth century, the Taihō Code mentions only that they were optional to the nine classics taught. There is no mention of them in the Yōrō Code.

Lecture hours varied depending on the number of chapters in each text. Depending on the hours required, texts fell into three categories: the great classics 大經, the middle classics 中經, and the small classics 小經.<sup>243</sup> *Book of Rites* and *Zuo Zhuan* were great classics; *Mao's Book of Songs*, *Rites of the Zhou*, and *Rituals* were middle classics; *Book of Changes* and *Book of Documents* were small classics. A student could choose one from the great classics and one from the small classics, or alternatively two from the middle classics in order to qualify for “mastery of two classics” 通二經. Those with a qualification of “mastery of three classics” 通三經 chose one each from the great, middle, and small classics. The highest achievement of a student seems to have been “mastery of five classics” 通五經 in which case, they learnt the two great classics, together with the two compulsory texts. Though in terms of number, four texts instead of

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<sup>242</sup> These titles in Chinese are, 周易, 尚書, 毛詩, 周禮, 儀禮, 禮記, 春秋左氏傳, 孝經, 論語.

<sup>243</sup> JapanKnowledge, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:6598/lib/display/?lid=30010zz289710>, accessed 20 July 2017.

five, the two great classics were considered equivalent to three texts. Since the minimum requirement for obtaining a low rank was “mastery of two classics,” it is not surprising that some students would leave the school after fulfilling this qualification.

In order to better understand this Heian institution, let us turn to Silla’s *Kukhak* for a comparative perspective, as both the *Daigakuryō* and the *Kukhak* appeared in the late seventh century and both boasted of a Tang model. Silla *Kukhak* or the National Academy was established in 682, the second year in the reign of King Sinmun, a few years later than the *Daigakuryō* in 675. It was administered under the Ministry of Rites 禮部, which was the counterpart of the Ministry of Ceremonial in Heian. During the reign of King Kyōngdök 景德 (r.742-764), the name of the *Kukhak* was changed to *Taehakgam* 大學監, but reverted to *Kukhak* under King Hyeogong 惠恭 (r.765-779). The Moch’o entry in the *Samguk sagi* in 789 mentions a term, *munjōk* 文籍, which, according to the context, very likely referred to the National Academy by a different name than *Kukhak*.<sup>244</sup> From these records, one can estimate that in Silla, the following terms may have been used for the National Academy: *munjōk* 文籍, *Taehakkam* 大學監, and *Kukhak* 國學, and they finally decided on *Kukhak* 國學. Compared with the names used in Nara-Heian, similarities can be detected: *fumi no tsukasa* 文職 versus *munjōk* 文籍, and *Daigakuryō* 大学寮 versus *Taehakkam* 大學監. In Heian, *Kokugaku* 國學 (K. *Kukhak*) was used for “provincial Academy” as opposed to the “State Academy” in the capital, but in Silla *Kukhak* was the title for the “National Academy.”

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<sup>244</sup> Yan Gengwang and Hamada both interpret this term as Silla *Kukhak*.

As to the curricula taught in the Silla *Kukhak*, surviving information on the Korean side is not as detailed as in Japan. *Samguk sagi* mentions the curricula in the eighth century, probably around 788,

There are a few professors and one assistant professor at the *Kukhak*. They taught clusters of texts. These can be *Book of Rites*, *Book of Changes*, *Analects*, and *Book of Filial Piety*; or they can be *Zuo Zhuan*, *Mao's Book of Songs*, *Analects*, and *Book of Filial Piety*; or the cluster can be *Book of Documents*, *Analects*, *Book of Filial Piety*, and *Wen Xuan*.

These three text groups are all within the curriculum of Illuminating Classics in the *Daigakuryō*. In each group, two texts, *Book of Filial Piety* and *Analects*, were taught, which means these two were compulsory texts just as in the curriculum for Illuminating Classics in the Heian *Daigakuryō*. In Heian, students could choose among the great, middle, and small classics and attend different lectures, but in Silla, the text groups were predetermined by the school, and only three choices were given to a student. Another difference is that Silla *Kukhak* used seven out of the nine classics used in the Heian. *Rites of the Zhou* and *Rituals* were not taught in the curriculum in Silla. Instead, *Wen Xuan* was taught as a Confucian classic in Silla already in the eighth century, but *Wen Xuan* was not one of the nine classics in the Heian *Daigakuryō*, as specified by the Yōrō Code (757).

We know that in Silla, an examination called *Toksō samp'um kwa* 讀書三品科 (Three Ranks of Study) was established in 788. In the *Samguk sagi*, it is described as,

According to one's origin, those who read *Zuo Zhuan*, the *Book of Rites*, and *Wen Xuan*, comprehend their meaning thoroughly, and demonstrate good knowledge of the *Analects* and the *Book of Filial Piety*, were ranked superior (上); those who read *Quli* (曲禮),<sup>245</sup> the *Analects*, and the *Book of Filial Piety* were ranked middle (中); those who read *Quli* (曲禮) and the *Book of Filial Piety* were ranked inferior (下). If one can master all five classics and the three official histories, together with

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<sup>245</sup> A section within the *Book of Rites*.

the classics of the one hundred schools, he will be exceptionally employed. Recruitment of officials up to now based on archery skills is abolished.<sup>246</sup>

Differences in classical texts aside, the qualification system in the Silla *Kukhak* bears very many similarities with the Heian *Daigakuryō* in that the Inferior Rank required mastery of two classics as in Heian; the Middle Rank required three classics as in Heian, and the Superior Rank required five classics as in Heian. Remarkably, *Wen Xuan* is listed among the five classics required for a Superior Rank. This reinforced the status of *Wen Xuan* in Silla not only as one of the eight classics taught in the Silla *Kukhak*, but as a required text for a Superior Rank. Another important text was the *Book of Rites*, as either the whole text or part of it was required for all the three ranks. In Heian's *Daigakuryō*, one could have avoided the *Book of Rites*.

The developments of the Heian *Daigakuryō* and the Silla *Kukhak* in the eighth century show striking similarities, but they are complemented by startling differences as well. Given the fact that there is much more extant information on the *Daigakuryō* than the Silla *Kukhak*, we can only draw a tentative conclusion here. Surviving records show that the Heian *Daigakuryō* was closer to the Tang institution than the Silla *Kukhak*. Among the texts being used, the nine classics taught at the *Daigakuryō* were the same as those used in the Tang Confucian Academy. In Heian, there was a civil service examination that was administered by the Ministry of Ceremonial, but in Silla, the *Toksō samp'um kwa* was not normally considered a civil service examination. The reasons for why Silla's *Kukhak* seems not as developed as in Heian are at least twofold. First, due to the bone rank system in Silla, the appointment of officials was almost completely

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<sup>246</sup> *Samguk sagi*, 10:3a.

dependant on one's birth into a particular bone-rank. The children of aristocrats attended the National Academy and their futures were not directly related to the grade they received from the school, that is, superior, middle, or inferior. Thus, there was no impetus for one to study hard to achieve the superior rank. Second, in order to avoid the bone rank dominated officialdom system in Silla, the only choice was going to study in Tang and this study-abroad experience itself carried prestige. Many Sillan youth of the time embraced this path as seen in the case of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn. Silla constantly sent large number of students to study in the Tang due to the close ties built between the two countries. It is not surprising that Silla's education system would demonstrate dependence on the Tang, and that accounts for the lack of attention to and investment in its own school system. Heian, on the other hand, relied largely on its own school to produce officials to staff its bureaucracy. Students did travel to study in the Tang, too, but the numbers were never as large as Sillans.

c. The rise of the History and Letters (*kidendō* 紀伝道) curriculum in the ninth century

The Sugawara family held the position "Professor of Letters" in the State Academy as a family tradition for three generations from Sugawara no Kiyotomo 菅原清公 (770-842) to Sugawara no Koreyoshi 菅原是善 (812-880) to Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903). Their biographies all show that they were *Monjō tokugyōsei* 文章得業生 before rising to be the Professor of Letters (*monjō hakase* 文章博士). If we recall the four curricula in the eighth century (Classics, Mathematics, Chinese Pronunciation, and Calligraphy), there is no mention of Letters (*monjōdō* 文章道) as a subject. What then was this curriculum? When did it begin, and what was its relationship with the

Illuminating Classics (*myōgyōdō* 明經道) and the History (*kidendō* 紀伝道) curricula? Though Illuminating Classics (*myōgyōdō*) was the central curriculum in the State Academy, in 728, a Professor of Letters was established, and in 730, students for this curriculum were recruited. At first, the newly established curriculum was auxiliary to the existing Illuminating Classics (*myōgyōdō* 明經道) curriculum and did not carry much weight. A Professor of Letters was appointed from low-rank officials, and the post did not carry the prestige it later acquired. Students recruited to this curriculum could even include commoners. Despite its humble start, the Professor of Letters was the precursor to the Professor of History or *kidendō* that was to rise to prominence in the ninth century. *Kiden* 紀伝 means annals and biographies, which was how official Chinese histories were composed. When Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 came back from China in 735 and suggested to the court that three official Chinese histories should be taught in the State Academy, this term began to refer to history education in Heian. In 808, a Professor of History (*kidendō*) was first appointed to replace the Professor of Letters in the State Academy, and this was the beginning of the most prestigious curriculum in the ninth century, the *kidendō*. In 834, this position was replaced by a Professor of Letters and one more Professor of Letters was appointed, making a total of two Professors of Letters (*monjō hakase* 文章博士).<sup>247</sup> Since only the title of the professorship changed from *kiden hakase* to *monjō hakase*, *kidendō* and *monjōdō* started to be used interchangeably to refer to the same curriculum that taught belle lettres and histories with *Wen Xuan* and *Erya*, together with three official Chinese histories, forming its main texts.

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<sup>247</sup> Borgen, Robert. "The politics of classical Chinese in the Japanese court." 215.

This curriculum became highly selective in the ninth century. Enrolment in the History and Letters curriculum was fixed at twenty students and students were selected through the State Academy examination. When they passed, they were called candidates of the *kidendō* curriculum. They could only confirm their status to become a *kidendō* student by passing the examination administered by the Ministry of Ceremonial. Only a total of twenty students in the end enjoyed the title, *monjōshō* 文章生, and it carried a stipend. The best two among them were called *monjō tokugōshō* 文章得業生. Earning the title *monjōshō* already guaranteed a bright future on the road of officialdom. As the icing on the cake, a *monjō tokugōshō* award led to either an official position or the Professor of Letters in the State Academy. The latter was the position held by the Sugawara family for three generations.

Up to this point, although it is clear what path was taken by the Sugawaras to become the Professors of Letters in the State Academy, it is still necessary to give a brief survey of their careers in order to highlight the particular circumstances of their respective times. Michizane's grandfather, Kiyotomo became a *monjōshō* in 789 at the age of twenty. He was appointed to be an Executive Secretary and went as a member of the embassy to Tang in 804. Upon return, he was promoted to the rank Junior Fifth Lower Grade 從五位下, which indicates an aristocratic status. In 819 he became the Professor of Letters at the state Academy and exerted great influence at the court of Emperor Saga and others. He lectured on the *Wen Xuan* to Emperor Saga and participated in the compilation of the *Ryō no gige* 令義解, which interprets the legal codes of Heian Japan. He finally reached the Junior Third Rank, becoming the first in the Sugawara clan to obtain aristocracy from a dubious origin. His son, who was also Michizane's father,

Koreyoshi, became a *monjō tokugōshō* 文章得業生 at the age of 24 and became the Professor of Letters ten years later in 845. He lectured on the *Wen Xuan* and the *History of Han* to Emperors Montoku and Sewa and participated in the compilation of *Nihon Montoku jitsuroku*. He reached the same final rank as his father. With both a brilliant grandfather and an awe-inspiring father, Michizane must have been under great pressure to excel. He not only shone from a young age, but also became a legend and an icon in Japan. Michizane first became a *monjōshō* at the age of 18, then a *monjō tokugōshō* at 23 in 867. Exactly like his father, he secured the title Professor of Letters in the State Academy after a decade of service. In 899, he was promoted to be the Minister of the Right, one of the highest possible positions in the Heian government, before his downfall only two years later in 901. From 901 to his death in 903, Michizane lived in exile in Dazaifu in northern Kyūshū.

### 3.2.2. Untimely blossoms: Plums and chrysanthemums in Sugawara no Michizane's poems

After Michizane's death, he was enshrined as Tenjin. Worship of Tenjin is one of the three largest Shinto beliefs in modern Japan.<sup>248</sup> For nearly a thousand years, Michizane's undeserved death in exile has been regretted and revived in dramas and literary works, with the many Tenmangu shrines all over Japan dedicated to pacifying and consoling his unsatisfied soul. The pacification and consolation celebrate his life through at least two regular festivals with the largest one, *Tenjin matsuri*, held in Osaka every July. In the Dazaifu Tenmangu there are two annual festivals attracting tourists from all over the country and beyond, namely the plum blossom festival in February and the chrysanthemum festival in November. Because Michizane died on the twenty-fifth day, the second month of 903 in the lunar calendar, February<sup>249</sup> is set for such a festival in honor of his death, when plums are blossoming in full. The plum is often praised in literature for, among other reasons, blossoming fearlessly at the coldest time of the year and has been linked to condolence for Michizane's undeserved death, both a chill celebration and an exacting portrayal of Michizane's life. On the other hand, the chrysanthemum festival in November, big event as it is, is due to Michizane's fondness of the chrysanthemum. The two flowers, plum and chrysanthemum, symbolic of his life and memory in the Shinto belief of Tenjin, indeed are two eye-catching imageries in Michizane's poetic and offer useful clues to our understanding of his poetics.

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<sup>248</sup> Abe, *Sugawara no Michizane*, 12.

<sup>249</sup> February or the second month on in the solar calendar replaces the second month in the lunar calendar. This is the normal way of converting lunar festivals in the past to modern festivals in today's Japan.

Robert Borgen, commenting on the imageries of the two flowers along with others, in Michizane's poems, observes that it is open to question as to what degree Michizane admired the plum blossoms, though such admiration is apparent and commonly voiced,

...[Michizane] composed more on the chrysanthemum and many on other trees, plants, and flowers, among them the willow, bamboo, cherry, and pine. A count of the natural images in the titles of Michizane's poems reveals only twelve poems on the plum versus twenty-two on the chrysanthemum.<sup>250</sup>

Borgen points out that among all the flowers and plants in Michizane's poetry, those often seen in Japanese poetry, such as cherry blossoms and autumn leaves, are far fewer, numbering five and four respectively. Borgen concludes that,

These figures do not necessarily represent Michizane's own poetic tastes, for many of his *kanshi* were written at imperial command on set themes. They do, however, cast doubt on the legend of his special affinity for the plum blossom. If anything, the chrysanthemum would seem to have been his favorite poetic subject. Michizane did choose to write more often of the plum and chrysanthemum rather than the cherry blossoms and autumn leaves usually favored by poets who wrote in Japanese. This preference reflects his training in Chinese literary traditions, in which poets wrote more often of those flowers than of cherry. Michizane's choice of imagery was less the product of personal taste than of literary convention.<sup>251</sup>

Besides providing a brief and useful overview of the natural imageries appearing in Michizane's poems, Borgen suggests that the choices of these imageries are confined by the occasions and circumstances, and thus they are more reflective of literary conventions and training than personal tastes. Between the choices of plum blossoms and chrysanthemum, Michizane preferred chrysanthemum as a poetic topic as shown in the numerical count. While useful as an overview, we are left pondering the details of how

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<sup>250</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian court*, 89.

<sup>251</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian court*, 89.

the two imageries really worked in his poems. In order to have a better grip on these issues, we need a more detailed and contextualized study of the two imageries in Michizane's poems so as to re-evaluate and complement these conclusions.

Michizane's poetry and prose are relatively well-preserved. In his self-compiled literary collection presented to Emperor Daigo in 900, the *Kanke bunsō* 菅家文章, poetry and prose make up even proportions with the first six books collecting about 468 poems and the second six books containing about 159 prose works. The additional *Kanke kōshū* 菅家後集 (or *Kanke kōsō* 菅家後草) has only one book containing 48 poems and prose works composed during his exile in Dazaifu from 901 to 903, which was entrusted to Ki no Haseo 紀長谷雄 before Michizane's death in 903.

Michizane's connection with plums seems to be early on, as the opening poem of the *Kanke bunsō* is on plum blossoms, "Viewing the Plum Blossoms on a Moonlit night,"

月耀如晴雪	The moon glitters like pure snow.
梅花似照星	The plum blossoms resemble twinkling stars.
可憐金鏡轉	How charming! The golden orb crosses the heavens
庭上玉房馨	And the jewel petals perfume the garden. <sup>252</sup>

The *Kanke bunsō* lists works in a chronological order. As the first poem of the literary collection, this poem was composed when Michizane was only eleven, and is literally his first poem. His literary career seems to take off with plum blossoms and ends with a *waka* on plum blossoms towards the end of his life,

東風(こち)吹かば	When the east wind blows
匂(にほ)ひおこせよ	fragrance of your blossoms prevails
梅の花主(あるじ)なしとて	Although your master is not by your side
春な忘れそ	please don't forget the spring (will come)

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<sup>252</sup> Translation by Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian court*, 89.

Michizane, while in exile, is said to have remembered the plum blossoms in his home garden in the capital. When the plums heard his call they flew to Dazaifu and took root in the garden of his residence. Later, they were transplanted to the yard in front of the main hall where they are today. This “flying plum” (*tobi ume* 飛び梅), a famed tourist attraction at the Dazaifu Tenmangu, is something not to be missed, though legendary as it is. Plum flowers are also seen in Michizane’s hands in a genre painting “Tenjin goes to China,” developed in later times and associated with the Tenjin belief. These all show his close affinity with plum blossoms and the growth of legends that associate him with plums.

Although his literary career was bracketed by plum blossoms, the symbolic and the signified meanings or Michizane’s utilization of this imagery in his poems are yet to be fully explored. The following study of plum blossoms will focus on illuminating the allusive twists and turns of this imagery within his literary *mise-en-scène* and set a contrasting context for later discussion of the chrysanthemum.

The twelve poems on plum blossoms were composed at Michizane’s different life stages. The first one at eleven, mentioned above as his first attempt, was experimental and naïve but refreshing as the plums are compared to twinkling stars and the moon to snow. It is full of a child’s amazement at the natural world. Twinkling stars are his revelation, but the bond between the plum blossoms and the snow seems conventional. However, the snow in this poem is, in fact, absent. The moonlight, as imaginary snow, is summoned to denote the association between the two and offers a confirmation of Michizane’s academic training in Chinese poetry: plum blossoms in the snow is an all too familiar theme.

The third line introduces the drama, where the moon crosses the sky and eventually signs off the scene. The moon is the source of light and the reason why the plum flowers are glittering. The charm acclaimed by the young boy is that the blossoms shed light from different angles when the moon travels across the sky. Eventually, only the fragrance remains in the yard when the light is gone. The poem pairs the moon with the stars to match the plum blossoms' association with the snow as naturally occurring, but the snow is not really there. It has been introduced by Michizane. More noteworthy is that this poem presents us with a *mise-en-scène* where the plum blossoms take the center and the moon casts the limelight. In this situation, the moonlight can eclipse the glittering stars—just like the snow gives grace and shine to the plum blossoms but can also engulf and destroy them. The virtue of the plum blossoms is that, even if they are not illuminated or even noticed, the fragrance would still prevail where they take root—this is the charm that the young boy appreciated. The sentiment is peaceful and charming and his utilization of natural images is conventional, but clearly he was on his way to validating his poetic talent.

After passing the Examination of the Ministry of Ceremonial in 862 at the age of eighteen, Michizane composed the following poem on plum blossoms, “Playing with plum blossoms,” 翫梅華,<sup>253</sup>

梅樹花開剪白繪  
春情勾引得相仍  
狂風第一吹狼藉  
叱叱忿忿意不勝

The plum tree blossoms are like shearing a white canvas  
Seduction of the spring sentiment is without end  
The first wild wind blows the petals all askew  
Roaring and singing their feelings abundant

<sup>253</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 116.

Just when the beauty of the plum blossoms is at its prime, they are suddenly caught in a storm. Although they are ravaged by the wind and are scattered far and wide, their spirit prevails. In contrast to the peaceful and quiet childhood depiction of the plum blossoms in the moonlight, this poem presents a scene where the blossoms encounter sudden destruction at the height of their glory. Their scattering reminds us that life is not at all picturesque and tranquil—the hardship and challenges are bountiful for the pioneering flower to blossom in the spring. Though they meet with a life-shattering event, the integrity of the blossom remains intact and cannot be shattered because the spirit prevails. At the age of eighteen, the young poet senses fragility in his own life.

On a different note, the second line (春情勾引得相仍) by Michizane shows a trace of similarity with a line (勾引春風無限情) by Bai Juyi when Bai wrote about willow branches in the Luoyang spring. They both wrote about the flowers or the branches swooning in the spring. The difference is that Michizane's plum blossoms are seducing the sentiment of spring 春情 with no end in sight, or to put it differently, they are invoking the sentiment of spring, but Bai Juyi's willow branches are seducing the spring breezes 春風, unabashedly or without limitation on sentiment. The structure of Michizane's line is slightly curious, as it follows the object-verb syntax as in vernacular Japanese, but in Bai's line, he clearly puts the verb before the spring breezes. This does not necessarily mean that Michizane was composing in an odd way in literary Chinese, if we consider that the verb "seduce" is used here in a noun form. The sentence then becomes "the seduction or invocation of spring sentiment." Michizane echoes Bai but offers up a difference.

From both poems above, we obtain a glimpse of how Michizane used the imagery of plums. Plums blossom in early spring when they are vulnerable to the snowstorms, and their beauty is accentuated by the snow—they “dance with the devil” or play with danger. If this “beauty of danger” is appreciated by Michizane in his poems on the plum blossoms, let us turn to see if this is also a theme of his other poems, such as those on the chrysanthemum.

Michizane adored the chrysanthemum and preferred it as a poetic topic more than the plum blossoms. Aside from the numbers devoted to each, there is no indication in his poems or prose works that this was so, except that he indicates in one poem that he loves autumn more than spring,<sup>254</sup>

自古人言春可樂  
何因我意凜於秋

From olden times people say spring is enjoyable  
Why do I prefer the chill of autumn?

If he prefers autumn over spring, then we might assume that the flower of autumn, the chrysanthemum, was preferable to plum blossoms and other spring flowers. Previous research all notices the chrysanthemum as an eye-catching imagery in his poems. As Gao Bingbing 高兵兵 has noticed, at least two terms associated with chrysanthemum, “lonely shrub” 孤叢 and “overdue chrysanthemums” 殘菊 appear repeatedly in his many poems either in the title or in the body.<sup>255</sup> While identifying the “lonely shrub” as an original creation by Michizane, she discusses the “overdue mum” in comparison to those in the Chinese poetic tradition. Gao observes that previous discussion on “overdue mums” in the Japanese secondary literature has thrown up a controversy. Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲

<sup>254</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 332. Poem 282, composed when Michizane was 45 years old.

<sup>255</sup> Gao, “Sugawara no Michizane shibun ni okeru zangiku o megutte,” 83-98.

之 argues that the character “殘” as in the 殘菊 means withered, damaged, or the relics or remains of the blossom, because they had reached their fullness and we see the aftermath. Though a spent blossom, the relics are still in place and that is the meaning of “overdue” 殘. Thus, he argues that singing praise to the not-so-beautiful, the damaged, or the withered is unique to Michizane and tied to Japanese aesthetics; it is absent in continental culture to pay attention to the withered or to the remains of a blossom. Another scholar, Honma Yoichi 本間洋一, has a different opinion. He points out that blossoms of the chrysanthemum after the Chōyō (Ch. Chongyang) Festival 重陽節<sup>256</sup> are “overdue,” according to a preface for one poem in the *Kanke bunsō*, which is quoted below. The blossoms are simply late, and in this sense 殘 means “remains of the season,” but still they are in blossom and not withered or damaged,

黃華之過重陽, 世俗謂之殘菊, 今之可惜, 非有意乎...<sup>257</sup>

The yellow blossoms past the Chōyō Festival are customarily called “overdue mums.” I have come to feel pity for them. Is there no meaning in this?

Gao’s view combines Kojima and Honma, that is, the “overdue mums” are withered or damaged relics as well as out of season after the Chōyō Festival. Gao’s interest is on the attention paid to “remains” in Japanese poetics and that echoes Kojima Noriyuki’s view.

The question I want to address is how the consistent imagery of “overdue mums,” as emphasized by Michizane, has confirmed or deviated from the mainstream literature of the continent, as it appears in the *Wen Xuan* and Bai Juyi’s literary collection, which were both widely circulated in Heian Japan. I will first elaborate how the imagery of “overdue

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<sup>256</sup> The Chōyō Festival was a lunar festival on the ninth day of the ninth month, normally falling in November on a solar calendar. It is the origin of the “Chrysanthemum Festival” on the ninth day of September, one of the five annual festivals or *gosekku* 五節句 in Japan.

<sup>257</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō*; *kanke kōshū*, 385.

mums” is used in Michizane’s poems with relation to the two Chinese anthologies, before drawing a conclusion about his thematic utilization of this imagery. I believe his imagery was *not* as an “appreciation of damaged flowers or relics” but an appreciation of an “untimely situation” that consistently juxtaposes the object against its potential threat, which ironically adds to the beauty of the object. This was an aesthetic value that started to gain currency from Michizane’s time. Untimeliness often involved the danger of death and that made fleeting beauty precious and compelling. His use of this imagery may speak of Michizane’s poetic genius as an island poet who never had direct exposure to continental poetic activities, except from books. When fleeting beauty made precious by the constant threat of death became widely appealing and acclaimed as an aesthetic ideal in Japanese literary circles, we can begin to see what, in later times, came to be dubbed *yūgen* 幽玄. For that reason, Michizane’s utilization of the “overdue mums” deserves further investigation.

Michizane’s first poem on plum blossoms was composed at age eleven and is the first poem to be collected in the *Kanke bunsō*. The third poem in the collection is “overdue mums” 殘菊詩,<sup>258</sup> with ten rhymes composed at the age of sixteen. The ten rhyming characters mean that it contains ten couplets or twenty lines in total, making the poem significantly long. Considering the first poem he composed at the age of eleven has only two couplets or four lines, this is significant progress towards proliferation in terms of length and the ability to mobilize more rhyming characters in one poem. As for the topic of the chrysanthemum, he must have already known that this was a much-loved image by Tao Yuanming. In fact, chrysanthemums almost became a synonym for recluse

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<sup>258</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō*; *kanke kōshū*, 106-107.

in the Chinese literary tradition due to Tao's popularity in China. The young Michizane was well aware of this image's connection with Tao when Michizane wrote on chrysanthemums. In couplet 9 Michizane mentions Tao,

已謝陶家酒	Having declined Tao's household wine
將隨酈水流	I will go with the flow of the River Li

According to Kawaguchi's annotation, in this couplet Michizane refers to the chrysanthemum wine in Tao's household that was for the celebration of the Chōyō Festival.<sup>259</sup> A main component of the celebration involved drinking chrysanthemum wine to achieve longevity and good health. Other activities are climbing up high and thinking of your family. Since this poem was composed at the age of sixteen, it means Michizane started to write on "overdue mums" from a very early stage in his poetic career, fully aware of Tao Yuanming's connection with the chrysanthemum in the continental poetic tradition.

Circulation of the imagery of the chrysanthemum and its relation to Tao in Heian Japan was directly tied to two anthologies that were widely read and studied in Heian, namely, *Wen Xuan* 文選 and *Baishi Wenji* 白氏文集 or Bai Juyi's literary collection. The *Wen Xuan* collected a total of eight works from Tao Yuanming, three of which mention chrysanthemums. Two poems of the three are from a series of twenty poems composed by Tao on drinking. This sequence of twenty poems is entitled "Drinking wine" and are collected in the *Tao Yuanming ji*. One poem mentions that, "Picking chrysanthemums at the east fence, leisurely I gaze at South Peak."<sup>260</sup> The other one mentions

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<sup>259</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 107.

<sup>260</sup> *Wen Xuan*, 30:3a, 采菊東籬下, 悠然望南山.

chrysanthemums as, “Autumn chrysanthemums display a fine color, soaked with dew, and I pluck them.”<sup>261</sup> There is no mention of “overdue mums” in either poem, but the two poems were both composed on the occasion of Tao getting drunk and forgetting about the world. Chrysanthemum thus becomes part of the setting when he was living as a recluse and drinking large amounts of wine. Although a limited number of Tao’s poems related to chrysanthemums are collected in the *Wen Xuan*, that was perhaps the source of Tao’s reputation in Heian for being fond of wine and chrysanthemums.

Given Tao’s initial reputation through the *Wen Xuan*, however, it is more likely through Bai Juyi’s advocacy that Tao and his chrysanthemums gained wide appreciation in Heian. Bai Juyi was an earnest imitator of Tao Yuanming. In a series of sixteen poems dedicated to imitating Tao Yuanming’s style, as indicated by the title 效陶潛體詩十六首,<sup>262</sup> he mentions “overdue mums” in the eighth.<sup>263</sup> This poem starts with an awkward moment when Bai was running out of home-brewed wine and worried about the long, hard night ahead in that autumn season. Suddenly somebody knocked on the door, and an old man of the southern village turned up with wine bottle.<sup>264</sup> The rest of the poem goes,

且喜樽不燥	delighted that my wine cup remains moist
安問少與多	How can I ask for more?
重陽雖已過	Though Chongyang Festival has passed

<sup>261</sup> *Wen Xuan*, 30:3b, 秋菊有佳色, 裛露掇其英.

<sup>262</sup> The preface explains why he tries to imitate Tao. He wrote that when he retired to live next to the River Wei, it was the rainy season and there was no entertainment, but his home-brewed wine was ready. He drank in the rain and often got drunk. Sleeping all day and laying around, he had his enlightenment. This is exactly what one can gain from wine and forget about the rest of the world. He empathized with Tao and imitated his style to compose a total of sixteen poems. 余退居渭上, 杜門不出, 時屬多雨, 無以自娛, 會家醞新熟, 雨中獨飲, 往往酣醉, 終日不醒, 懶放之心, 彌覺自得, 故得於此而有以忘於彼者。因詠陶淵明詩, 適與意會, 遂徇其體, 成十六篇, 醉中狂言, 醒輒自哂, 然知我者, 亦無隱焉。 Bai, *Baishi changqing ji*, 129.

<sup>263</sup> All sixteen poems are collected in Fascicle 5, *Baishi wenji*. Bai, *Baishi changqing ji*, 129-136.

<sup>264</sup> *Baishi wenji*. Bai, *Baishi changqing ji*, 132. A rough summation of the first eight lines, 家醞飲已盡, 村中無酒沽。坐愁今夜醒, 其奈秋懷何。有客忽叩門, 言語一何佳。云是南村叟, 挈榼來相過。

籬菊有殘花  
歡來苦晝短  
不覺夕陽斜

remains of the chrysanthemums are still at the fence  
with happiness comes the pain of passing time  
without realizing it I am bathed in the oblique rays of the setting  
sun

老人忽遽起  
且待新月華  
客去有餘趣  
竟夕獨酣歌

suddenly the old man rises (to take his leave)  
I stay his departure to await the splendor of the new moon  
though off went the guest, pleasure lingers still  
I sing to my drunken self a whole night

In Tao Yuanming's drinking poems, there is no mention of when chrysanthemums blossom, but rather Tao indicates that it is the time of the Chongyang Festival, and the time to drink wine. In Bai Juyi's imitative composition on drinking wine, it is clear that the Chongyang Festival has passed and the remains of the chrysanthemums are still at the fence. This is beyond Tao's timely drinking wine at the right season to Bai's excessive enjoyment of wine when the season has passed. It seems that drinking wine for Bai Juyi was the real enjoyment he took from Tao: if the accompaniment of chrysanthemums was good, their remains were even better—the most important part yet was to have fun and not have to endure the long autumn night. Bai, in fact, admits that it is in Tao's excessive drinking that he finds comfort and inspiration. His admiration and impetus for imitating Tao was largely due to wine drinking. In one of the above-mentioned sixteen sequential poems, he writes,<sup>265</sup>

...  
先生去已久  
紙墨有遺文  
篇篇勸我飲  
此外無所云  
我從老大來  
竊慕其為人  
其他不可及  
且效醉昏昏

long gone is this venerable sir  
his inked pieces remain  
with each piece he urges me to drink  
there is no other message  
since getting old  
secretly I cherish admiration for him  
I cannot match him in any other aspect  
I only try to imitate his drunkenness

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<sup>265</sup> Bai, *Baishi changqing ji*, 134.

Bai thinks that getting drunk is the only way to match Tao. “Overdue mums” in Bai’s poem thus testifies to his excessive commitment to drinking, even after the Chongyang Festival and only the remains of the chrysanthemum are to be had. As long as the chrysanthemum is still blossoming, his drinking season will never end. Having understood why Bai is imitating Tao and how the “overdue mum” is used by Bai, we also notice that in the eighth poem, the term “overdue mums” does not appear. Rather a sentence in the fourth line describes it: “fence chrysanthemum has remaining flowers 籬菊有殘花.” Bai does use the term “overdue mums 殘菊” in the following poem, “Late autumn night 晚秋夜,”<sup>266</sup> also included in the *Baishi wenji*.

碧空溶溶月華靜	Blue sky overflowing and quiet moonlight
月裏愁人弔孤影	Worried man in the moon with his lonely shadow
花開殘菊傍疎籬	Overdue mums in blossom next to the neglected fence
葉下衰桐落寒井	Leaves drop from a faltering tree to a cold well
塞鴻飛急覺秋盡	Garrison geese fly hurriedly knowing autumn is ending
鄰雞鳴遲知夜永	Neighbourhood rooster delayed singing aware of the perpetual night
凝情不語空所思	Frozen feeling without words and vain thoughts aplenty
風吹白露衣裳冷	Wind blows silver frost; my clothes are cold

In this poem, the “overdue mums” image joins the other images such as blue sky, quiet moonlight, lonely shadow, neglected hedge, faltering tree, freezing well, garrison geese, and others to form a picture of an end-of-autumn night. The author is deep in his thoughts without a word. Wind blows and the white dew dampens his clothes. In this poem, “overdue mums” becomes a seasonal indicator; they are in blossom. The loneliness of the overdue mums is set against a scene in which all other plants are in decay, and animal

<sup>266</sup> In Fascicle 14, *Baishi wenji*. Bai, *Baishi changqing ji*, 333.

activity and temperature are both decreasing. The man has only chrysanthemums to acknowledge a warmer time. Since this term “overdue mums” was used by Bai Juyi in his *Baishi wenji*, which was widely circulated in Heian Japan, let us turn to see how it is used in Michizane’s poems in order to discern any traces of influence from Bai.

Above, we mentioned Michizane’s first poem on “overdue mums” composed at the age of sixteen. As the title indicates, this is a poem dedicated to “overdue mums,” so the chrysanthemum takes the center stage.

十月玄英至	Winter arrives in the tenth month
三分歲候休	Gradually comes the withering time
暮陰芳草歇	dusk throws a shadow over the fragrant, resting grass
殘色菊花周	the fading colors surround the chrysanthemum

From this stanza, this chrysanthemum blossoms not in the ninth month, but in the tenth, which is the first month of winter. It is surrounded by other withering grasses and plants.

爲是開時晚	the reason why it blossoms late in the season
當因發處稠	is because where it springs is dense
染紅霜葉病	frosted leaves are sick with red dye
辭紫老莖惆	old stems are distressed shedding purple

露洗香難盡	the fragrance is hard to exhaust though washed by the dew
霜濃艷尚幽	though thick with frost beauty still lingers
低迷馮砌脚	hanging low it meets the foot stone
倒亞映欄頭	bending over it collapses at the top of the fence

The above two stanzas describe how the overdue mums look in late autumn season.

Though it is in blossom, it has been plagued by frost, dew, and all the unfavourable natural conditions in early winter—it forebodes anything but good fortune. However, the poem takes a turn at this very moment,

霧掩紗燈點	Mist covers over the muslin lamp to a point of light
風披匣麝浮	Wind stirs up the musk fragrance of the chest

蝶栖猶得夜  
蜂採不知秋

Butterflies rest upon it for a night's stand  
Bees gather above it knowing no autumn

已謝陶家酒  
將隨灩水流  
愛看寒暑急  
秉燭豈春游

Having declined Tao's household wine  
I will go with the flow of the River Li  
I enjoy looking at the fleeing cold days  
How come you only enjoy playing in the spring nights holding a candle

When the night comes, the overdue mums suddenly come to life and are patronized by bees and butterflies. The lamp casts a soft light on the mums and the fragrance dominates the garden. The scene becomes so enjoyable to Michizane that he exclaims: why only hold a candle to enjoy the spring nights? In other words, the autumn nights with the overdue mums are probably as enjoyable if not more enjoyable than spring nights. Up to the final comparison, we are given the impression that Michizane thinks that autumn can be enjoyed through things that are not so beautiful—old stems, frosted leaves, and listless flowers. At the very end, Michizane puts his autumn night in competition with a spring night and champions the attraction of a chill setting slowly over chrysanthemums.

However, his preference for autumn has to be balanced by how he really feels about these overdue mums. In the following poem “Pity on overdue mums” 惜殘菊,<sup>267</sup> composed when Michizane had already become an accomplished poet in his forties, he writes,

寒鞭打後菊叢孤  
相惜相憐意萬殊

Whipped by coldness the late chrysanthemum stands alone  
Feeling pity towards one another their feelings are very special

籬腳參差吹火立  
曉頭再拜戴星趨  
奪情祇有批沙練  
平價其如合浦珠  
此是殘花何恰似  
行年六八早霜鬢

Unaligned standing at the foot of the fence as if blown, like fire  
At dawn their heads again bow in respect to departing stars  
My heart is captured only by the silk being refined  
Otherwise, cheap silk is like the pearls of Port He  
How exactly like overdue mums I am  
At forty-eight my temples are frost white

<sup>267</sup> Poem 356 in *Kanke bunsō*. Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 385-386.

The overdue mums have been ravaged by the coldness of late autumn or early winter. They do not have a favorable position at the fence but they endure the long nights with the stars; they survive and presumably blossom. The aged blossoms capture the heart of the author as he witnesses how they triumph over adversity but still maintain dignity. Michizane feels at this point that he is exactly like these overdue mums at the age of forty-eight with his silver beard. Michizane is comparing himself to overdue mums, who have survived challenges and still retain a blossom. Just as he writes in the preface to this poem,<sup>268</sup>

What is hard to meet and easy to lose is time; what is hard to blossom but easy to wither are things. All plants have withered; only one is still in blossom. If not singing from its blossom at the foot of the fence and reaching for my brush and ink from its side, how can I rightly tie flowing years to lightening and greedily guard integrity from the early frost...

From this preface, what is appreciated by Michizane in overdue mums becomes clear. It resembles his love for plum blossoms. Early or late blossoms that are not timely are subject to great danger. Plums blossom too early in the spring. They are subject to the attack from snowstorms in the early spring. Chrysanthemums blossom in autumn when almost all other plants are decaying or withering. Michizane not only liked autumn chrysanthemums as late comers, he also appreciated the chrysanthemum blossom that is beyond its season, like those blossoming after the Chōyō Festival or in early winter. In this sense, his utilization of the imagery of overdue mums differed from both Tao Yuanming and Bai Juyi. For Tao, the chrysanthemum becomes an indispensable

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<sup>268</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 385, ...夫難遇易失者時也, 難榮易衰者物也, 三秋已暮, 一草獨芳, 自非就籬下而引炫歌, 繞叢邊而尋筆硯, 何以繫流年於飛電, 貪晚節於早霜, 故燈燭和光, 貂蟬交頰, 襲香可同含麝, 偷色不異受金, 酒之忘憂, 人之取樂, 九仙府, 奈此時何, 五天竺, 奈此夕何.

participant in a recluse's life, when he is "plucking a chrysanthemum at the foot of the east fence, I gaze upon the south peak." To Bai Juyi, the chrysanthemum is a reminder that the Chongyang Festival was the time to drink wine. He pushed this moment further to a time when overdue mums are still in blossom. Bai admits that all he got from Tao Yuanming's reclusive lifestyle was to drink excessively and forget about the world we live in. By the time Michizane was trained in Chinese letters, the imagery of overdue mums was already in use, at least through *Baishi wenji* and other sources. Michizane's appreciation of overdue mums shows a profound connection to "time." The overdue mums have survived the ravages of nature and endured many long nights in late autumn, and they still display beauty and integrity. This beauty is contrasted to and accentuated by the danger of destruction, and their celebration takes on the form of prolonged full blossoms. Irony is at work in nature as exemplified in both the plum blossoms and the chrysanthemums. Unknown death still lingers in the background when lives thrive at their peak. This seems to be an aesthetic value that started to bloom from Michizane in Heian Japan.

### 3.2.3. Rhymes and prosody: Sugawara no Michizane and the new Music Bureau 新樂府

The *Kanke bunsō* has an even distribution of verse and prose with six fascicles for each. The distribution is probably a fair indication of Michizane's genre propensity in general, that is, prose does not take priority over verse or vice versa. Our discussion of the style employed in the *Kanke bunsō* will evaluate Michizane's connection to the poetry and prose styles of an influential source, the *Baishi wenji* 白氏文集 (J. *Hakushi monjū*) within the framework of the literary culture of ninth-century Heian. This section will first start with a discussion of the "new Music Bureau" style, which was an ancient style poetry form that was resurrected in the Tang and subsequently gained currency in Heian Japan, possibly through the influence of the *Baishi wenji*. Certain questions will then guide the discussion towards Michizane. For example, did he embrace this form? If so, what would be the significance of Michizane's engagement with this new style of poetry? Are there any ancient style poems that are not in the new Music Bureau style in the *Kanke bunsō*? How do rhyme scheme and parallelism work in Michizane's modern style poetry, namely, the regulated style poetry? In terms of prose, genre categories will be gleaned from his literary collection, *Kanke bunsō* and *Kanke kōshū*, and be compared with Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*.

Then, the discussion will move on to other questions: did Michizane write in a parallel prose style in the same fashion as did Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn? Is free-prose, as advocated by the mid-Tang intellectuals in their "Classical Prose Movement," visible at all in the *Kanke bunsō*? Why were Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan, both alive in the same mid-Tang period as Bai Juyi, not received in Heian with the same enthusiasm as Bai Juyi? Was this due to literati in Heian shunning the Confucian ideology that came in a package with

free-prose, or was it because *Baishi wenji* happened to reach Heian at a time coinciding with the rise of the belle lettres curriculum (*kidendō* or History and Letters) in the first half of the ninth century?

Parallel to the “Classical Prose Movement” in mid-Tang was the emergence of an ancient genre that resurrected and gained popularity through the advocacy of Bai Juyi and his friend Yuan Zhen, the new Music Bureau or new *yuefu* 新樂府 from an ancient style of poetry called *yuefu* 樂府 in the Han dynasty. Stephen Owen, regarding the revival of the ancient genre from the Han dynasty, emphasizes the role Bai Juyi played. He writes,

Gu [Kuang] was a Suzhou native, where the nineteen-year-old Bai Juyi met him in 789. Of interest in this context and in the context of the poetry seeking to ‘restore antiquity’ is a set of poems imaginatively re-creating lyrics of high antiquity, provided with prefaces in the style of the Mao prefaces to individual poems of the *Classics of Poetry*, being explicit about their message. A more mature Bai Juyi was to make his reputation with his ‘new *yuefu*,’ imaginatively re-creating what Bai saw as the original role of Han *yuefu*, also provided with prefaces explaining their purport.<sup>269</sup>

In mid-Tang “restore antiquity” seems the hashtag of the era under which there are different types of endeavors. While Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan were advocating the Confucian charged “Classical Prose Movement,” their contemporary Bai Juyi busied himself in advocating another ancient style poetry, that is, the new ballad poems (or new *yuefu* 新樂府), reclaimed from the Han tradition of ballad poems. This style of ancient poems, appearing in 50 poems in Fascicles 3 and 4 in the *Baishi wenji*, was to fashion a trend in Heian literary circles. The *Baishi wenji* that went to Heian particularly documented the new ballad poems in the collection. For example, one of the three famous calligraphers (*sanseki* 三蹟) of Heian, Fujiwara no Yukinari 藤原行成 hand copied the

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<sup>269</sup> Owen, “The cultural Tang,” 327.

new ballad section of the *Baishi wenji* and presented them to Emperor Ichijō.<sup>270</sup> In recent years, Jennifer Guest, in her research on the primers of the Heian dynasty, took note of Shingyū's *Condensed Meaning of the New Ballads* and comments on the importance of Bai Juyi's new ballads,

...the latter [Bai's new ballads] did hold a particular kind of status. When Murasaki Shikibu (author of the *Tale of Genji*) tutored Empress Shōshi, the text chosen was specifically the 'New Ballads.' The earliest known reading marks for Bai Juyi's poetry are found in the Kanda manuscript Complete Works (Kanda-bon Hakushi bunshū 神田本白氏文集, early 12th century), which covers volumes three and four, precisely those containing the 'New Ballads.' The first full commentary on any of Bai Juyi's poems, the late Heian monk Shingyū's *Condensed Meaning of the New Ballads*, takes these poems as its subject. And in the early thirteenth century, when Minamoto no Mitsuyuki created a set of three waka adaptations based on important *kanbun* primers, he chose the 'New Ballads' as a subject along with two standard primers, the *Child's Treasury* and Li Jiao's *Hundred-Twenty Compositions*. These examples suggest that the 'New Ballads,' with its dramatic situations and memorable characters, was often used as an introduction to Bai Juyi's poetry.<sup>271</sup>

Before we turn to the matter of Michizane's engagement with the new ballad genre, we need to first clarify what Bai's new ballad poems were in the light of their relation to the original ballad in the Han dynasty. According to the *Indiana Companion*, the *yuefu* as a term originally refers to the Music Bureau of the Han government, which was in existence from 114 B.C. to 7 B.C. Before its dissolution in 7 B.C. the Music Bureau of the Han government had reached out to each corner of the empire to collect and compile the songs they were able to access. The song corpus is reflective of the cosmopolitan nature of the empire itself and even beyond with considerable input of foreign music and poetic themes. These songs were geared towards performances at court events and were carefully orchestrated in the form of tunes matching to song-texts with

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<sup>270</sup> This is preserved in the Tokyo National Museum 東京国立博物館 as a designated national treasure.

<sup>271</sup> Guest, "Primers, Commentaries, and *Kanbun* Literacy in Japanese Literary Culture, 950-1250CE," 134.

the song-texts sometimes composed by very famous poets of the time.<sup>272</sup> These so-called song-texts are the initial Han ballads (or Han Music Bureau; Han *yuefu*), albeit few survived. Today, the major source for Music Bureau in the Chinese tradition is from the Northern Song dynasty and is an anthology compiled by Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (1041-1099) in one hundred fascicles, entitled *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集.

In the Tang dynasty, the Han ballad made a comeback as a poetic genre called “new Music Bureau,” “new ballad,” or “new *yuefu*” 新樂府. As mentioned above, Bai Juyi and his friend Yuan Zhen are the major advocates of the “new Music Bureau.” This poetic form is a different type of ancient poetry to the ones previously discussed in association with Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn. In addition to its origin in the Han dynasty, it does not follow the rhyme scheme of regulated poems, or their parallelism either tonally and syntactically, though these poems are generally either in five-syllable or seven-syllable lines. Famous pieces of this genre from the Han dynasty suggest that this form is lengthy and narrative. The narrative feature is especially true if we consider that the two most famous pieces from the Han dynasty each tells a story. The first story is a tragic love affair in the “Peacocks flying to the southeast.” The second is the legendary cross-dressing warrior Mulan, conscripted instead of her father to go to the battlefield to fight the Xiongnu 匈奴, in the “Song of Mulan.” In the Tang dynasty, through the advocacy of Bai and Yuan, the new ballad genre became the banner for a literary reform under the guiding ideology of literature serving social criticism.

Bai had a different idea regarding the function of *wen* as touted in the “Classical Prose Movement” of his contemporaries, Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan, wherein *wen* was

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<sup>272</sup> Nienhauser, ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, 63.

regarded as the vehicle to carry the Dao. In Bai's view of the function of *wen*, more precisely that of the new ballad, *wen* was for wide circulation and the venting of social illness and vices that had failed to come to the attention of authorities. Thus, *wen* should be reflective of the social problems that needed to be voiced to gain the attention of the emperor in order to assist him to be a wise monarch—the more people know and the more widely it circulates, the better—that was *wen*'s function. Its creation and dissemination were the mission of scholar-officials. Bai made it specifically clear in his letter to Yuan Zhen,

...It was then that I reached this conclusion: the duty of literature is to be of service to the writer's generation; that of poetry to influence public affairs. A new Emperor had recently come to the Throne; there were upright men in the Ministry. Again and again his Majesty sent personal letters to his Ministers asking to be informed about the difficulties and sufferings of the people. I was a member of the Han-lin Academy; I was in a censorial post. Month by month I asked for and used in petitions and memorials the minute-papers to which I was entitled. But sometimes in cases where I believed I could bring alleviation to the sufferings of the people or remedy some defect of policy it was impossible to broach the matter directly, and instead I wrote a *ballad*, hoping that it would be passed on from person to person till it finally reached the Emperor's ear. The Emperor would thus get information useful to him in his efforts to relieve distress, I myself would be doing something in return for his majesty's kindness and encouragement, and at the same time doing my duty as censor. In this way I should fulfil what had now become the whole aim of my existence.<sup>273</sup> (emphasis added)

This letter was sent to Yuan Zhen in the twelfth month of 815. The ballads mentioned in the letter, a total of 50, as collected in the *Baishi wenji*, were all composed between 808 and 810, when he was immersed in public affairs in the capacity of Omissioner.<sup>274</sup> The contents of these Music Bureau serve the purpose of widely distributing social criticism. More precisely, they lent voice to politically and economically deprived people, normally

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<sup>273</sup> Waley, *The life and times of Po Chü-i*, 110.

<sup>274</sup> Waley, *The life and times of Po Chü-i*, 50.

living at the bottom of the society—the peasants, singing girls, and street peddlers—and spoke to the social injustice they faced in their daily lives. To quote a poem by Bai in the new Music Bureau corpus about the suffering of a charcoal-seller in Chang'an can serve as illustration,

An old charcoal-seller  
Cutting wood and burning charcoal in the forest of the Southern Mountain.  
His face, stained with dust and ashes, has turned to the colour of smoke.  
The hair on his temples is streaked with gray: his ten fingers are black.  
The money he gets by selling charcoal, how far does it go?  
It is just enough to clothe his limbs and put food in his mouth.  
Although, alas, the coat on his back is a coat without lining,  
He hopes for the coming of cold weather, to send up the price of coal!  
Last night, outside the city,—a whole foot of snow;  
At dawn he drives the charcoal wagon along the frozen ruts.  
Oxen,—weary; man,—hungry: the sun, already high;  
Outside the Gate, to the south of the Market, at last they stop in the mud.  
Suddenly, a pair of prancing horseman. Who can it be coming?  
A public official in a yellow coat and a boy in a white shirt.  
In their hands they hold a written warrant: on their tongues—the words of an order;  
They turn back the wagon and curse the oxen, leading them off to the north.  
A whole wagon of charcoal,  
More than a thousand pieces!  
If officials choose to take it away, the woodman may not complain.  
Half a piece of red silk and a single yard of damask,  
The courtiers have tied to the oxen's collar, as the price of a wagon of coal!<sup>275</sup>

According to Waley and the subtitle, “The suffering from the palace market” 苦宫市也, Bai at this time was waging a war against the eunuchs in the palace. The requisitioning of commodities was for the use of palace ladies, but not for the Palace Armies. The “requisitioning” was conducted by the Commissioner for Palace Marketing, an official title held by the eunuchs. The above Music Bureau presented a protest against the Marketing Commissioner whose agents literally robbed a poor charcoal-seller of his

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<sup>275</sup> Translation by Arthur Waley. Waley, trans, *A hundred and seventy Chinese poems*, 137.

charcoal and jeopardized his survival in the cold winter.<sup>276</sup> Likewise, in other Music Bureau, Bai satirized or mocked powerful but wicked people, and empathized with the underprivileged. These Music Bureau are highly charged with politics and for Bai they serve as publicity for social justice campaigns. This is what he upheld as the purpose of literature.

How successful was Bai Juyi in his endeavor of utilizing literature to give voice to the wronged and the deprived, and for the wide circulation of social injustice, hoping to see social wrongs addressed and solved? Indeed, Bai was extremely successful in that, even when he was still alive, his poems were widely circulated and sung by singing-girls and cowherds not just in Chang'an but in other parts of the country. Not only were his Music Bureau well-known, but his poems in all styles were welcomed and embraced by the common people with unflagging popularity. He and Yuan Zhen were poetic celebrities of the time to the extent that they could draw a crowd of people bearing witness to their appeal.

Even Bai gained fame in the Tang, *Baishi wenji* was transmitted to Heian during his lifetime or in Emperor Ninmyō's reign, Showa 承和 (834-848). When Bai died in 846, Michizane had been alive merely one year. It is apt to say that Michizane literally lived in the era of Bai's influence in both Tang and Heian. To examine Michizane's engagement with Bai, especially his idea about literature and his new ballad style, we need to first understand how Bai's "new Music Bureau" were received in Japan by the time Michizane was born.

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<sup>276</sup> Waley, *The Life and Times of Po Chū-i*, 58-59.

Kōzen Hiroshi 興膳宏's pioneering research touches on the reception of Bai's new Music Bureau in Heian and starts with the assumption that Bai's influence can be detected as early as in the reign of Emperor Saga (r. 809-823), as shown in one of the three imperial anthologies. Kōzen points out that three poems in the *Bunka shūrei shū* indicate Bai's influence and his reception in early Heian. One example is a poem by Emperor Saga, "Pines under the mountain stream" 澗底松. Kōzen points out that Bai also has a poem bearing the same title written in the genre of the new Music Bureau. Moreover, the two poems share one common word,

Emperor Saga: 澗底松 Pines under the mountain stream  
高聲寂寂塞炎節, 古色蒼蒼暗夕陽.<sup>277</sup>  
Lonely sounds high above block the heat of the season;  
Antique color in a dark-bluish hue shades the setting sun.

Bai Juyi: 澗底松 Pines under the mountain stream  
誰喻蒼蒼造物意, 但與之材不與地.<sup>278</sup>  
Who understands the creative intention of the heaven?  
The pine tree is bestowed with supreme quality, but not a worthy position.

Bai's Music Bureau laments those talented people who are not used in the government, and this poem is collected in the "new Music Bureau" category in the *Baishi wenji*. The emperor's poem shows that during Emperor Saga's reign, Bai's influence was already detectable and, in this particular case, is visible in the works of the emperor himself.<sup>279</sup> Nevertheless, another scholar, Gotō Akio 後藤昭雄, points out that, although we see the same word in the two poems it has different meanings. In Emperor Saga's line, it is to describe the color of the pine trees being blue with a deep and dark hue, but in Bai's line

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<sup>277</sup> Kojima, ed, *Bunka shūrei shū*, 294.

<sup>278</sup> In Fascicle 4, *Baishi wenji*. Bai, *Baishi changqing ji*, 100.

<sup>279</sup> See Gotō, "Sagachō ni okeru shingafu juyō wo megutte," 1-2.

it means heaven; thus, it is not clear that Emperor Saga was alluding to Bai's poem, albeit, the emperor's poem bore the same title.<sup>280</sup> Gotō's take on the meaning of the word is plausible, and further to his point, it is also worth pointing out that the poem by Emperor Saga is a seven-syllable regulated poem 七言律詩, which is rarely the poetic form adopted for a Music Bureau. In this sense, Emperor Saga's poem merely used the title of a Music Bureau, but in fact is not a Music Bureau. Kōzen and Gotō's disagreement brings up the question of rhyme scheme and prosody, which I will turn to later.

Further to Kōzen's research, Shinma Kazuyoshi 新聞一美 proposes that, just like "Pines under the mountain stream" 澗底松, which title contains three characters, the three-character titles seen in the anthology *Bunka shūrei shū* indicate the influence of Bai's new Music Bureau in early Heian poetic circles. He takes as an example a group of poems called "Ten odes to Kayō" 河陽十詠<sup>281</sup> collected in the *Bunka shūrei shū*, which were composed by Emperor Saga and his ministers in a *sing-echo* context. A majority of them bear titles with three characters, such as, "Blossoms of Kayō" 河陽花, "Boats on the river" 江上船, "Grasses by the river" 江邊草, and so on. Shinma's argument is that the popularity of the three-character titles was due to the influence of Bai's new Music Bureau, a total of 50 poems, in Fascicles 3 and 4 of the *Baishi wenji*, and it is important that we take notice of this congruence as indicating influence. Gotō concedes that, among the 50 poems, 41 bear three-character titles, but the three character titles are generally noun-phrases, such as "Blossoms of Kayō," in a noun modifying a noun type of phrase,

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<sup>280</sup> Gotō, "Sagachō ni okeru shingafu juyō wo megutte," 1-2.

<sup>281</sup> In Emperor Saga's reign, Heyang 河陽, a place in China, was re-created in Heian.

which is not common among Bai's 41 three-character title Music Bureau. Instead, Gotō points to early Tang sources and a tradition since the Six Dynasties of using three-character titles and there lies the influence.<sup>282</sup> In support of Gotō's doubts, I would point out that *Baishi wenji* was reputedly transmitted to Japan around 838 but *Bunka shūrei shū* was compiled around 818. Claiming to find Bai's influence before significant numbers of his works reached Japan seems implausible. It is unlikely that Bai's influence would already have become significant in Heian.<sup>283</sup>

Having discussed the rather questionable influence of Bai's new Music Bureau in Heian before Michizane's generation, let us turn to Michizane's engagement with Bai's new Music Bureau. Michizane is commonly credited for Bai's wide popularity as a poetic icon in Heian and the canonization of Bai's 50 new Music Bureau in later periods. Gotō Akio, Kojima Noriyuki, Fujiwara Katsumi, and others all have pointed out that the Showa reign was a tremendous turning point, and the foremost underlying reason is the transmission of *Baishi wenji* to Heian during the Showa reign. Gotō extends his line of argument to the case of Music Bureau and argues that "The era [the Showa reign] was heading towards an escape from simply imitating Tang's style. Under the influence of such a trend, Music Bureau as Chinese poetry itself, had finished its role in [Japanese] literary history."<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Gotō, "Sagachō ni okeru shingafu juyō wo megutte," 5-11.

<sup>283</sup> I am aware that the point Bai's influence in Heian prior to his collected works reaching Heian in 838 is welcomed by many, but there are no specific documented quotations from Bai in extant works of Heian literati and the point remains speculative. The first anthology collecting significant numbers of Bai's couplets is the *Senzai kaku* 千載佳句, produced in the latter half of the tenth century. My opinion on this is that Bai's influence is at least very limited by the arrival of *Baishi wenji*.

<sup>284</sup> Gotō, *Heianchō kanbungakushi ronkō*, 159. Quote in full, 時代は唐風模倣から、それからの脱却へと向かっていた。こうした趨勢のもとで、中国詩そのものともいってよい楽府詩は文学史的役割を終えたのである。

In order to illustrate the demise of Music Bureau as a Tang-style poetic form and as a new creation of Heian poetry, Gotō studies Michizane's innovative engagement with Bai, arguing that Michizane deviated from the initial imitation stage of his predecessors. The imitation stage can be seen in the Music Bureau produced in the reign of Emperor Saga. Michizane localized the Music Bureau to Japan by embedding Heian sentiment and sensitivities in the Music Bureau he wrote.<sup>285</sup> An example provided by Gotō is the poem, “Difficulties of the *hakase*” 博士難.<sup>286</sup> The poem recounts that, when Michizane became a Professor of Letters, all came to congratulate him, but his father only worried. He warned Michizane that, though the job was not a bad one and rewarded handsomely, he should be cautious about interpersonal relations 人情. After Michizane assumed the post, he started to hear slander almost immediately. After encountering difficult situations with people, he recalled his father's warning and understood what worried him at the beginning. The title itself is an innovation based on and alluding to a Music Bureau title, “Difficulties of advancement on the road” 行路難. According to Gotō, Music Bureau titles often dictate the content as composed with set themes in the Chinese tradition. In the case of “Difficulties of advancement on the road,” the title indicates that the poem will describe the difficulties involved in all life's trajectories as well as the sadness of parting. In other words, the poem notes all sorts of adversities one encounters in life and the sadness and sentimentality invoked in such situations. In this sense, Michizane's

<sup>285</sup> Gotō, *Heianchō kanbungakushi ronkō*, 159.

<sup>286</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 175-177. The poem in full, 吾家非左將, 儒學代歸耕. 皇考位三品, 慈父職公卿. 已知稽古力, 當施子孫榮. 我舉秀才日, 箕裘欲勤成. 我爲博士歲, 堂構幸經營. 萬人皆競賀, 慈父獨相驚. 相驚何以故, 曰悲汝孤惻. 博士官非賤, 博士祿非輕. 吾先經此職, 慎之畏人情. 始自聞慈誨, 履冰不安行. 四年有朝議, 令我授諸生. 南面纔三日, 耳聞誹謗聲. 今年修舉牒, 取捨甚分明. 無才先捨者, 讒口訴虛名. 教授我無失, 選舉我有平. 誠哉慈父令, 誠我于未萌.

lament regarding the difficulties of being a *hakase* accords to the general theme of the Music Bureau. However, Gotō argues that Michizane’s lament was not set in a Chinese cultural context as imagined by a Heian literatus, but describes the specific dilemma and bafflement of a Heian literatus and his frustrations springing from his job as a Professor of Letters in the *Daigakuryō*. Gotō continues to point out that, after the reign of Emperor Saga when the three imperial anthologies were compiled within which Music Bureau was listed as a genre category, the Music Bureau disappears as a genre category in later compilations of anthologies based on genre. What happened instead was that Music Bureau underwent a local mutation and became what is seen in Michizane’s poems like “Difficulties of the *hakase*.” This type of poetry, which has strong Heian elements but allude to Music Bureau titles in the Chinese tradition, is what Gotō calls “*shingafu*” 新樂府. These by no means are the new Music Bureau composed by Bai Juyi, but a localized Music Bureau type composed by Heian literati. Gotō, representative of the “escape” 脱却 school of scholarship that emphasizes escape from Chinese forms and the creation of “Japanese” literature, has shown how, indeed, by the time of Michizane, the new Music Bureau had become a Heian literary genre, *shingafu*.

While agreeing with Gotō on the difference between Michizane’s *shingafu* and the Music Bureau composed in the Chinese tradition, what I propose here is to shift the attention to analyse formal or generic features that mark a new Music Bureau specifically by Bai—an ancient style poetry as it was supposed to be in the Chinese poetic context—before we can discern Bai’s influence, if there was any, on Michizane’s *shingafu*. Gotō does not mention Bai’s new Music Bureau as a source of influence on Michizane’s *shingafu*. Gotō’s argument can mean that Bai had no impact on Michizane’s generation in

terms of his new Music Bureau. The canonization of the fifty new Music Bureau by Bai was in fact a much later Heian phenomenon. Nevertheless, for a complete picture of whether Michizane owed anything to Bai for his *shingafu*, we need a detailed study of their prosody and rhyming schemes.

The purpose of the following section is to detect Michizane's stylistic choices. Starting from his *shingafu*, I move to a discussion of ancient style and regulated poems as seen in Michizane's collected works. Then I will examine closely the four-six parallel prose composed by Michizane with a comparison to Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, in order to draw a balanced conclusion on Michizane's poetry and prose styles within his cosmopolitan world.

To show a sample of Bai Juyi's rhyming scheme and prosody in his new ballads, his "Pines under the mountain stream" is quoted in full here,

有松百尺大十圍	
生在澗底寒且卑	(rhyme: 支)
澗深山險人路絕	
老死不逢工度之	(rhyme: 之)
天子明堂欠梁木	
此求彼有兩不知	(rhyme: 支)
誰喻蒼蒼造物意	
但與之材不與地	(rhyme: 至)
金張世祿原憲貧	
牛衣寒賤貂蟬貴	(rhyme: 未)
貂蟬與牛衣	
高下雖有殊	
高者未必賢	
下者未必愚	
君不見	
沉沉海底生珊瑚	
歷歷天上種白榆	

At first sight, this poem has a distinctive formal feature, that is, it contains mixed three, five, and seven-syllable lines. The first ten lines resemble a seven-syllable poem, but they are followed by four five-syllable lines. After a three-syllable line interpolation, the poem ends in two more seven-syllable lines. This style of mixed lines is certainly different from the prevalent seven or five-syllable regulated poems, rather it was a common practice in the ancient *yuefu* poems.<sup>287</sup> This means that Bai made an effort to emulate the ancient *yuefu* style and that he deviated intentionally from the poetic convention of the time, which was regulated poems. Because the intended style is in ancient *yuefu*, we should expect that the ending character of each couplet would not obey rhyming rules. It turns out that the highlighted five characters belong to at least four different rhyme groups. This poem exemplifies composition in a *yuefu* style: the lines are unaligned; there is no rhyming scheme; there is no prosodic parallelism.

Having understood Bai's strategy in composing a new Music Bureau, now let us look at Michizane's *shingafu* in order to discern what style he adopted. Due to the length of the poem concerned, only an excerpted section will be subject to examination, which is from the "Difficulties of the *hakase*" mentioned above,

我爲博士歲  
 堂構幸經營 (rhyme 清)  
 萬人皆競賀  
 慈父獨相驚 (rhyme 庚)  
 相驚何以故  
 曰悲汝孤榮 (rhyme 清)  
 博士官非賤  
 博士祿非輕 (rhyme 清)  
 吾先經此職  
 慎之畏人情 (rhyme 清)

<sup>287</sup> I use "ancient *yuefu*" to mean *yuefu* produced before Tang, especially in the Han and Six Dynasties.

First, the whole poem shows no alternation of line-length, that is, all lines are five syllables. The poem itself is significantly lengthy containing a total of 32 lines. Michizane mentions in an anecdotal note that this poem is in ancient style or *kochō* (Ch. *gudiao*) 古調. From this note, we would expect that there is perhaps no rhyming scheme. However, a close examination of the ending characters which should rhyme in a regulated poem and which are highlighted in the text, reveals that, except for the character 驚, which belongs to a different rhyme group (庚), the other four characters all fall under the same rhyme group (清). This shows that Michizane, although claiming to have adopted an ancient style in composing this poem, composed a poem that bears the telling features of a regulated poem; it contains a rhyming scheme.

Nevertheless, though the above poem resembles a regulated poem in length and rhyme scheme, the narrative feature of this poem is similar to that of an ancient Music Bureau. The narrative section of the poem is a conversation between Michizane and his father. Pronouns, such as you and I or me (吾, 汝) appear often in the text to indicate that they are in a conversation. These pronouns rarely appear in a regulated poem. There is even a quotation indicator 曰 in the text, as in “my father says ‘I am saddened at your [soon-to-be] loneliness. The job is not a bad one, and it rewards handsomely...’” This all indicates that Michizane is composing in an ancient Music Bureau style. Especially, the narrative section bears similarity with one of the most famous Music Bureau of the Han dynasty, the “Song of Mulan.” The “Song of Mulan” starts with a conversation in which Mulan is being asked why she is sighing and not weaving. Mulan responds that she saw the name of her father on the list of conscripts and expresses her concern for his old age. Gotō calls the type of Music Bureau composed after the Showa reign and by the

Michizane generation, *shingafu*. My analysis allows us to go beyond content and draw the following conclusions about the characteristics of the *shingafu*. First, they resemble regulated poems in remarkable ways in terms of rhyming scheme, which is hardly seen in Bai's new Music Bureau. Second, they are highly narrative in the sense that they resemble story-telling in personal circumstances, rather than poetic invocation with a general and dictated theme.

From all the evidence we have, it is difficult to argue for Bai's new ballads having any traces of impact on Michizane, but Bai's influence on Michizane shows in other aspects, such as regulated poems, or prose-work. One cannot deny that Michizane resembles Bai in many ways. Just to mention a few, Michizane's literary collection has the same structure of *Baishi wenji*, that is, poems are listed before prose-work (先詩后文). There are also anecdotes in most cases explaining the circumstance of the composition that is to follow. Michizane composed significant numbers of regulated poems as Bai did and we can see these in *Kanke bunsō* and *Baishi wenji*. When Michizane was in charge of receiving envoys from Parhae/Bohai, he was praised by a Parhae/Bohai envoy who said that his poems resemble those of Bai Juyi. Some poems by Bai and Michizane bear the same title or have similar contents, for example, "Murmurs of looking into the mirror" 對鏡吟 is a poem collected in *Baishi wenji*. A similar poem by Michizane called "Looking into the mirror" 對鏡 is seen in *Kanke bunsō*.<sup>288</sup> They are both meditations on their passing youth with observations about life. In a sense, the later deification of Michizane

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<sup>288</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō*; *kanke kōshū*, 303.

as the God of Scholarship was partially due to his resemblance to Bai in scholarship and poetry.

Now let us turn to the majority of Michizane's poems collected in his literary collections, that is, the regulated poems. According to Kawaguchi Hisao's research, there are a total of 514 poems in Michizane's literary collections. In Kawaguchi's chart, mapping out the poetic genres in the collections, there are two main categories: five-syllable poems and seven-syllable poems. Under each category, the sub-categories are, "[standard] regulated poem," "quatrain (J. *zetsuku*, Ch. *jueju* 絕句)," "six-rhyme regulated poem," "eight-rhyme regulated poem," "ten-rhyme regulated poem," and "other number-rhyme regulated poem."<sup>289</sup> It is noteworthy that Kawaguchi's chart has no category for ancient-style poems. All Michizane's poems are considered "regulated poems" either in five or seven-syllables and a sampling shows this to be true. In other words, the ancient-style poetry of the Tang dynasty, either in a Han Music Bureau style (like Bai's new Music Bureau) or a non-regulated style (like Ch'oe's ancient-style poems), makes no appearance in Michizane's collected poems. Even the ancient-style claimed by Michizane in the anecdote of the "Difficulties of the *hakase*" is a regulated poem. This is to say, by Michizane's time, the poetic circles of Heian paid no heed to what makes the ancient-style "ancient" in a Chinese sense, that is, to break up the regulated poetic form by employing no rhyming scheme or parallelism. Instead, Michizane's ancient-style resembles the narrative feature of the Han Music Bureau but written in a regulated poetic form with rhymes. Apparently, rhymes were the primary

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<sup>289</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 46.

concern for Heian literati in their poetic compositions, no matter whether they wrote in a variation of an ancient-style or in regulated-style.

Let us now turn to Michizane's prose-work and assess the stylistic features.

*Kanke bunsō* collects six fascicles of prose-work along with a few from the *Kanke kōshū*.

The following table shows the composition of Michizane's literary collections with prose genres specified.

Table 3: Genre compositions of Michizane's *Kanke bunsō*

	Genre	Fascicle	No. of works
詩	Poetry	1-6	514
賦	Rhapsody	7	4
銘	Inscription	7	3
贊	Encomium	7	12
祭文	Offering	7	2
記	Record	7	3
序	Preface	7	27
議	Discussion	7	2
策問	Examination questions	8	8
對策	Responses to questions	8	2
詔敕	Edicts	8	9
狀	Biographies	8	6
奏狀	Presentations	9	27
表狀	Memorials	10	23
碟狀	Official communications	10	3
願文	Prayers	11, 12	38

Michizane composed far more poems (514) than Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn (29) in *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip*, or at least far more survive, and Michizane's poems are all in a modern (regulated) style, different to Ch'oe who wrote in both ancient and modern styles. The twenty-fascicle collection of Ch'oe's work, however, had the clear intention to collect his prose-work (about 300), which outnumber prose works in Michizane's collections (169). From the previous chapter, we understand that Ch'oe excelled in four-six parallel prose, and that made his fame in China, but he also wrote in free-prose, which aligns him to the "Classical Prose Movement" advocated by Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan. What are Michizane's prose style choices?

Among Michizane's prose genres, the category of prayers has the largest number of pieces. These are generally Buddhist prayers, and our discussion will focus on whether

these are written in four-six parallel prose. A section from a piece written in 882 is as follows,<sup>290</sup>

歸命頂禮	三千世界之諸尊	X●X●	XXX●XX○
恭敬供養	八萬法藏之妙理	X●X●	XXX●XX●
共尋弘誓		X○X●	
當應至心		X●X○	
善根上分		X○X○	
摠歸國王		X○X●	
連珠合璧	與寶祚而永明	X○X●	XX●XX○
五稼三農	逐辰居而無缺	X●X○	XX○XX●

與寶祚而永明 逐辰居而無缺

This section contains significant numbers of four or six-character prose lines. A mapping of the prosodic values shows that they do not parallel.

Above, we examined Ch'oe's genre of official communications and concluded that these were written in parallel prose. Michizane composed only three official pieces and the last two are too short to be called essays. The first one included in this genre is an official communication to a Japanese monk who was then in Tang. Michizane wrote it in the capacity of Minister of the Left. The following is one section,<sup>291</sup>

...

儀制有限	X●X●
言申志屈	X○X●
迎送之中	X●X●
披陳旨趣	X●X●
又	
頃年頻災	X○X○
資具難備	X●X●
而	
朝議已定	X●X●
預發使者	X●X●
辨整之間	X●X●

<sup>290</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 602.

<sup>291</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 586.

或延年月      x●x●

Except for one pair that shows prosodic parallelism, the rest do not follow parallelism.

This is to say that Michizane's genre of official communication is not in four-six parallel prose, though again the structure is in four or six-character prose lines. To further discern whether Michizane does or does not follow parallelism in his official document composition, let us examine another official document type, the memorials. The following is an example,<sup>292</sup>

況乎	
桑榆景暮	x○x●
蒲柳氣衰	x●x○
僅可陪縉紳之臣	xxxx○x○
何堪預陸載之列	xxxx●x●
...	
遂無聞天之聲	x○x○x○
逾益伏地之恐	x●x●x●

Here we can see that Michizane composed in four-six parallel prose in a very strict way.

All pairs in this section parallel each other. Apparently, Michizane composed in strict four-six parallel prose for very limited genres. Other examples from other prose work, although resembling the four-six parallel prose style, are indeed not following the rules of parallelism. In sum, Michizane's prose work does not maintain a division between parallel prose and free prose. Instead, all the prose pieces are in the style of parallel prose, but only a very limited number actually follow a strict parallel-prose style and can be called parallel prose.

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<sup>292</sup> Kawaguchi, ed, *Kanke bunsō; kanke kōshū*, 575.

### 3.3. Conclusion

From the above, we can conclude that, although Bai's new Music Bureau are believed to have influenced the Music Bureau composed during Emperor Saga's reign, which was before the Showa reign when *Baishi wenji* was transmitted to Heian, Bai's influence was highly unlikely. Michizane, living after the Showa reign expresses commitment to Bai's new Music Bureau, but a study of the rhyme scheme and prosody shows that Michizane composed Music Bureau in a regulated poetic form, which was different from Bai Juyi and that makes Michizane's engagement with the new Music Bureau genre be innovative if not "escaping" from it. His type of Music Bureau have been called *shingafu* by modern scholars, and this is apt. Yet, Michizane's engagement with Bai's new Music Bureau is still questionable. If there is any engagement with Bai, it lies in Michizane's large number of regulated poems collected in *Kanke bunsō* and *Kanke kōshū*. All are in a modern style to the extent that there is no example of the "ancient-style" at all, no matter whether they are in a non-rhyming, non-regulated poetic form or in a new Music Bureau poetic style similar to Bai Juyi. Michizane's prose contains both official document and non-official document genres. He does not show fidelity to the idea that official documents should be composed in a strict parallel prose style, as exemplified by his genre of "official communications." He was, on the other hand, quite capable of composing in a rigid parallel prose style as shown in the case of his "memorials." Unlike Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn who composed in a parallel prose style for official documents and a free-style for unofficial documents, Michizane did not maintain such a division. All his prose looks like four-six parallel style, but the majority do not follow prosodic rules.

## Chapter 4: Looking back to the cosmopolitan core:

### Tang Literary scenes

The previous two chapters celebrate the ninth century, especially the second half, as a high point, if not the highest point, in Korean and Japanese literary cultures as expressed in literary Chinese. On the continent, by contrast, the literary scenes of the Late Tang dynasty are normally characterized as “decadent” or at best, a low point.<sup>293</sup> It has been natural to apply the rise and fall of a dynastic narrative pattern derived from Confucian historiography to literary activities and cultural production, as if the wax and wane of the political dynasty also entailed the same pattern in the literary sphere. The characterization of decadence is thus largely by default rather than de facto. Therefore, the late Tang period is considered “low” in that Chinese literature of the period, when compared with the greatest eras of the high-Tang and the mid-Tang, often loses any glamor or candidacy for excellence in literature. The effort in this chapter is to steer away from the commonly accepted notions and misnomers as informed by Confucian historiography and attempt a sober and fair evaluation of literary activities in the late Tang period. Jonathan Chaves has provided us with a general survey of late Tang literature and Stephen Owen offers a more detailed study of the individuals. The following is a summary of the two scholars to identify what is at stake in discussions on late Tang-period literature, before turning to a close analysis of Pi Rixiu, a contemporary of Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn and Sugawara no Michizane.

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<sup>293</sup> Jonathan Chaves writes about decadence in Rimer and Chaves, trans, *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing*, 21.

In Jonathan Chaves's view, there were generally three schools of late Tang poetry. The first school started with Bai Juyi (772-846) in mid-Tang and extended to the late Tang period. Among Bai's followers, Du Xunhe 杜荀鶴 (846-904) demonstrated the purest form of the Bai school in his angrier tones. The other two representatives are Nie Yizhong 聶夷中 (837-889) and Luo Yin 羅隱 (833-909), who wrote with simple diction and expressed deep social concerns. They both carried on Bai's New Music Bureau tradition in an attempt to publicize social concerns to the extent that they eventually can be heard by the court. The second school, with the prominent figure Li Shangyin (813-858), represents the aesthetics of a baroque style that was reflected in their attitudes toward retreat and ritual. While quoting Chaves, William Nienhauser adds that "this school must be a natural development from the frustrations of those who despaired of poetry's role to reach and to move the large audience" that Bai Juyi had hoped for. They despaired of the outreach function of poetry and they wrote for their close friends and colleagues. The third school is bifurcated, in that they were all intermediates who neither embraced Bai's idea on the social function of poetry nor Li Shangyin's despair about that function. Representatives of this school are Jia Dao (779-849) and Zhang Ji (766-829).<sup>294</sup>

The three-school theory is reiterated when Chaves talks about early Song literature. In his introduction to the English translation of the *Wakan rōei shū*, he writes,

The contemporaneous poetic scene in China was quite complex, and at least three major schools of poetry were discerned by the late Song-early Yuan dynasty critic Fang Hui (1227-1306). In an important essay on early Sung poetry, Fang identifies the three schools as (1) the Bai (Ju-yi) school, (2) the [Xi]-kun school, and (3) the "Late Tang" school. The style of the second of these schools, based on emulation of the late Tang poet Li Shang-yin (813?-858), is the virtual opposite of

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<sup>294</sup> Nienhauser, *P'i Jih-hsiu*, 20-21. Nienhauser summarizes Jonathan Chaves' research on late Tang literature.

Bai Ju-yi's style, as it is characterized by some of the densest, most impenetrable diction and obliquity of expression in all of Chinese literature, coupled with a rich, even decadent atmosphere and frequently obscure or hermetic allusiveness. No poetry of this precise type is found in either the *Wakan rōei shū* or any other Japanese book.<sup>295</sup>

Chaves's introduction, while mostly based on Fang Hui's theory of three schools, also points out that the decadent name late Tang literature earned is largely due to Li Shangyin's poetry, or the Xikun school. It seems that Chaves's scheme, although derived from Fang Hui, has a clear Bai-oriented agenda. The schools he identified, to put it simply, are, first, Bai's loyal successors; second, Bai's opposites; and third, anything in between. This scheme bears a heavy prejudice in viewing post-Bai literature through the lens of Bai's influence, thus significantly simplifying the complex picture of the late Tang literary scene, not to mention that none of the representatives from each of the three schools were contemporaries. Representatives of the third school (Jia Dao and Zhang Ji) were contemporaries of Bai, so it is odd to say they fall in between Bai and his opposite, Li Shangyin, whilst Li was active only after Bai's death. Chronologically inconsistent, the scheme is not very appealing.

Elsewhere, Stephen Owen devotes a book to the poetry of late Tang, entitled, *The late Tang: Chinese poetry of the mid-ninth century (827-860)*. The book is intended to be a literary history of the late Tang, albeit only 33 years are addressed and essentially these are the years of Li Shangyin's lifetime. Nevertheless, Owen shuns away from a Bai-oriented view of the time and offers a survey of late Tang or of the 33 years with as much detail as possible. In the introduction, he states that the study foregrounds the "Tang

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<sup>295</sup> Rimer and Chaves, trans, *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing*, 21. I modified the quotation by converting Wade-Giles to Pinyin.

poetic legacy that was textually preserved,” and downplays the conventional way of describing associations of poets by “schools.” He mentions,

... We see a variety of quite distinct cultural phenomena: groups of friends of roughly the same age (such as the circle around Bai Juyi); young poets seeking and finding the approbation of established older poets (such as the circle around Yao He and Jia Dao); a dead poet’s works entering circulation and exerting an influence (Li He); and the reevaluation and resurgent influence of a poet largely rejected by the previous generation (as in Pi Rixiu’s admiration for Bai Juyi).<sup>296</sup>

In Owen’s scheme, the poets are revived according to their “contemporarity” and “activities,” rather than their affiliations with certain “schools,” which were largely later designations. For example, the “school of Xikun,” as a school name, did not appear until the Song dynasty. Owen’s stance is more plausible considering how much Tang’s heritage is perceived through layers of later scholarship built up from the Song dynasty. It is also helpful in clarifying that the decadent reputation for which late Tang literature is unfairly known was due to the Xikun school of the Song that considers Li Shangyin of the Tang their forebear. If, as Owen points out, Li Shangyi had no significant influence during his lifetime,<sup>297</sup> the decadence of late Tang literature appears to be a misnomer. Moreover, “decadence” does not apply to the Bai Juyi and Han Yu generation, or the generation living largely in the second half of the ninth century.

Having discerned approaches to late Tang literature by Jonathan Chaves and Stephen Owen, each with their own focus on the Bai-school or on Li Shangyin, I have yet to touch upon literati living in the second half of the ninth century. My agenda here is to move along the vein of “contemporarity” and clarify the scene in the second half of the ninth century on the continent to better place our peninsular and archipelago writers.

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<sup>296</sup> Owen, *The late Tang*, 11-12.

<sup>297</sup> Owen, *The late Tang*, 7.

First, who composed the generation active in the second half of the ninth century?

According to the commonly agreed periodization of the Tang (early Tang, high Tang, mid Tang, and late Tang), the late-Tang period is generally regarded as the era after the reign of Yuanhe (806-820) or the final eighty or so years of the Tang. It is the era when Bai Juyi (772-846) and Han Yu (768-824), primarily regarded as mid-Tang literati, reached their old age and died; Du Mu (803-852), Li Shangyin (813-858), and Wen Tingyun (812-870), born into the ninth century, spent their lives mainly in the first half of the century; and a later generation, such as Pi Rixiu 皮日休 (834-883), Du Xunhe 杜荀鶴 (846-904), and Luo Yin 羅隱 (833-910), either lived through Huang Chao's rebellion (881-884) and the final years of the Tang or lost their lives in the rebellion. These three generations of literati generally compose the main scene in the late Tang literary sphere, among whom, the third generation was very close to Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn and Sugawara no Michizane's lifetimes, especially the case of Du Xunhe.

Of the three generations mentioned above, the first two generations have been given ample attention, and there exists a handsome sum of research on these men, such as on Han Yu and Bai Juyi of the first generation. Within the framework of this study, Han Yu and Bai Juyi have been dealt with to a certain extent in the previous two chapters, when I tried to pin down the influence of the two on Ch'oe and Michizane. We have known that though they both were active advocates of an "ancient style," they each embraced a different dimension of Confucianism with regards to the function of *wen* (or letters). In Han Yu's view, *wen* is the carrier of the Dao: in order to restore *wen*'s ancient function before the transmission of Buddhism into China, one should compose in the way ancients did, that is, to abolish parallel prose and write in a free style. Bai Juyi, on the

other hand, rejected *wen*'s intrinsic relation with the Dao and promoted the political function of *wen*, especial poetry, which should be widely circulated in order to reach the ears of the emperor. Bai Juyi was an advocate of the genre "new Music Bureau," which had its origins from the Han and was a type of ancient-style poetry. In the previous two chapters, we have evaluated their wider impact in Silla and Heian.

The second generation is represented by Du Mu, Li Shangyin, and Wen Tingyun, who generally lived in the first half of the ninth century and did not experience Huang Chao's rebellion in the 880s. Among the three, Li Shangyin is, by consensus, the most prominent. Owen, in his study of Li's poetry, presented four major types of poetry that compose the major corpus of Li's poetry: the hermetic poems, the history poems, poems on things, and the poems on occasion. In an overview of Li's poems, Owen writes,

Although some of Li Shangyin's poetry is as straightforward as that of any of his contemporaries, much of his poetry is difficult, and some of it is impenetrably obscure. A smaller yet significant portion of his poetry suggests passionate attachments between men and women. The penumbra of eroticism surrounding his poetry, while never dissipating, has inspired a long series of interpretive countermotions: critics have stressed his stylistic debt to Du Fu; attention has been drawn to his poems of political engagement; and most important, figurative interpretations have been given to poems that might on the surface seem erotic.<sup>298</sup>

This echoes well with what Chaves has written about the oblique and obscure tone of Li's poems and Chaves's conclusion that this type of poetry, virtually an antithesis to that of Bai, never gained any currency in Heian Japan. It is due to the impenetrable and intimate nature of the poems of Li that late Tang-period literature started to gain a reputation for "decadence." This also dovetails well with the political decline of the Tang dynasty from the first half of the ninth century. Moreover, Li Shangyin studies has produced an amount

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<sup>298</sup> Owen, *The late Tang*, 338.

of secondary literature totaling that devoted to all other literati from late Tang combined. Therefore, the “decadence” that late Tang enjoys may derive from the sheer amount of modern work devoted to him. On the other hand, since the preserved corpus of his literature is available from late Tang, Li was specially singled out in early Song from all other late Tang literati to be the most representative of the political decline of Tang. In short, the second generation of literati has occupied the limelight of studies on late Tang-period literature and their production normally is characterized as decadent and intimate, if not erotic.

The third generation of literati, who are of particular concern in this chapter, is relatively underrepresented, though a lot of their literary collections are extant. I propose to examine closely three literati from this generation, Pi Rixiu (834-883), Du Xunhe (846-904), and Luo Yin (833-910) by centering on two sets of questions: first, what are the dominant themes of their writings? Do they demonstrate “decadence” in their poems and prose? Second, what genres do they embrace in poetry and prose compositions? Did parallel prose prevail again in their generation after the interruption of the “Classical Prose Movement” in mid-Tang? What happened to the ancient-style poetic genre “Music Bureau?” Did the three literati compose “new ballads” (“new Music Bureau”) like Bai did? What were their guiding ideologies regarding the function of *wen*?

Pi Rixiu was from Xiangyang (in today’s Hubei province), a region that has enjoyed high prestige in literature, as well as being commercially important in the Tang dynasty. One of the two iconic poets from the high-Tang period, Du Fu, is also a native of this area. Pi failed the civil service exam in 866 for the first time but retook it and passed in 867. After a series of provincial appointments, he became a professor at the

national Confucian academy in 877. In 880, Pi was made deputy Commissioner of Piling of Changzhou (today's Jiangsu province) where he encountered Huang Chao's army and joined the rebellion. When Huang Chao took over Chang'an and made himself emperor in 881, Pi was appointed to be a Hanlin scholar under Huang's regime. Regarding Pi's death, possibly in 883, there are different stories, but he was likely executed by Huang Chao.<sup>299</sup> From Pi's life chronology, we can see that his life was largely affected by the Huang Chao rebellion just like Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn. However, unlike Ch'oe, who made his fame by writing a proclamation of war against Huang during the rebellion and subsequently returned to Silla in 886 after the demise of Huang, Pi was not able to avoid a tragic death and left later generations a mystery regarding his motivation in joining the rebellion as well as his undocumented death.

Pi has left at least two literary collections: one is his self-compiled collection called *Pizi wensou* 皮子文藪 produced in 866 after he first failed the civil service exam; the other is a collection of his *sing-echo* poems with a friend, Lu Guimeng 陸龜蒙 (?-881), composed in his later years spent in Suzhou. Of the two literary collections, *Pizi wensou* contains ten fascicles: the first nine fascicles are prose-work; the last fascicle is poetry (see Table 4).

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<sup>299</sup> For Pi's life chronology see, Neinhauser, *P'i Jih-hsiu*, 13.

Table 4: Genre composition of the *Pizi wensou*

Genre		Number	Fascicle
賦	Rhapsody	4	1
諷悼	satire and condolence	11	2
雜著	Miscellaneous writings	30, 12, 11	3, 7, 8
碑	Stele inscription	5	4
銘	Epitaphs	3	4
讚	Tributes	2	4
文	Essay	2	5
論	Treatise	5	5
頌	Odes	1?	5
序	Preface	1	5
箴	Admonition	10	6
書	Letters	3	9
詩	Poetry	36	10

The imbalance between prose and poetry as collected in the *Pizi wensou* is obvious. Within the prose collected in the first nine fascicles, a striking feature is that they contain a large amount of prose in free-style; in fact, the majority of the prose works collected in this literary collection is in free-style. This is especially true in the genre category of “miscellaneous writings” 雜著, which is a genre category for which Han Yu became well-known with his free-style prose. By using free-style prose, Pi shows his intention of following Han Yu by advocating free-style prose over parallel prose. He not only followed Han Yu’s style choice in prose, he even produced an essay recommending that Han Yu be worshipped in the Confucian shrine along with Confucius and his disciples.<sup>300</sup> Moreover, Pi also carried on Han Yu and Li Ao’s mission of restoring the orthodox line of Confucianism by claiming Mencius as the legitimate successor of

<sup>300</sup> 請韓文公配饗太學書 in Pi, *Pizi wensou*, 87.

Confucius, thus expelling other schools of Confucianism, as well as Daoism.<sup>301</sup> The above two stances put Pi at a critical point of transition for orthodox Confucianism from Han Yu and Li Ao of the mid-Tang to the Neo-Confucianism that was to come in the following Song dynasty.

As if this is not enough to show his earnest effort in restoring and advocating orthodox Confucianism, in the last fascicle, Pi included ancient-style poems and Music Bureau as the poetic genres showcased in his poetry. Regarding the last fascicle of poetry, Pi wrote in the preface of *Pizi wensou*,

He [Pi] has brought together old-style poems [ancient-style poems] at the end of this collection, so that in looking through them one may obtain a somewhat delicious taste in the mouth, just as when eating fish one may chance upon a delicacy, or in taking meat one may discover a specially tender piece.<sup>302</sup>

Pi's ancient-style poems included, whether an ordinary ancient-style poem or a Music Bureau, were tied to the ancient-style campaigns that were at their highest point in mid-Tang. Pi specially gathered this type of poetry in the last fascicle in his literary collection, and his collection clearly shows he sided with those who were advocating an ancient-style over a regulated style in poetry composition, especially in his preference for the genre Music Bureau. These preferences obviously put him in a poetic connection to Bai Juyi. In fact, Bai was beloved by Pi. Among his ancient-style poems, there is a group of seven called "Poems on the Seven Beloved" 七愛詩. Here, Pi expresses his admiration for seven figures, be they generals, literati, or ministers. Among poets, Li Bai and Bai Juyi are the only beloved persons he chose. In the poem dedicated to Bai Juyi, Pi wrote,

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<sup>301</sup> 請孟子爲學科書 Pi, *Pizi wensou*, 89.

<sup>302</sup> Translated by Nienhauser, *P'i Jih-hsiu*, 44.

I love Bai Juyi

Extraordinary talent born of spontaneity  
Who could call him a utensil of verbiage and pen?  
He's rather a sage who discourses on the classics.  
Suddenly from a poem of superficial beauty,  
He shapes a piece like a canon or announcement.  
In his actions the one hundred (virtuous) behaviors are fulfilled,  
In his writings the six modes are completed.  
A pure model outstanding among the court,  
With upright tones he shot the censorate's walls.  
What he offered as criticism was well thought out,  
What he imitated must have been worthy of transmission.  
Forgetting his body, he gave himself to poetry and wine,  
Giving reign to his lofty ideas, he was partial to mountain and glade.  
He had hoped to top the literary scene;  
He wished to hold the power of producing reform.  
How could he expect that he would have encountered slander?  
By holding to the middle road he was often sent to the left [i.e., demoted].  
When all under heaven were striving hard,  
Le-tian [i.e., Bai] alone was content [not to strive].  
When all under heaven were troubled,  
Le-tian was the only one to "put it aside."  
Chanting loudly, he withdrew from the three rivers.  
As a retired scholar he resembled a lone crane,  
He abandoned honors as a cicada sheds skins.  
In service he didn't obtain his heart's desire,  
But he could serve as turtle or mirror for it.<sup>303</sup>

From the above poem, one can see that Pi's admiration of Bai lay in that Bai was able to offer straightforward criticism and fulfill his official duty of being a censor. Bai had wished to top the literary scene, and hold power for reform, but it was foiled by slander, which led to his demotion. However, Bai gracefully retired and gave himself over to live a hermit's life with poetry and wine as company. In Pi's view, Bai epitomized the value and attitude of a Confucian scholar, either when he was holding office or in the face of adversity.

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<sup>303</sup> Translated by Nienhauser, *P'i Jih-hsiu*, 41. Wade-Giles has been converted to Pinyin.

Also within this last fascicle, Pi included his Music Bureau. Unlike Bai who named his ballads the “new Music Bureau,” Pi named his ballads the “orthodox Music Bureau” 正樂府. He clarified his point in the preface to a total of ten Music Bureau included in the last fascicle,

The so-called Music Bureau today are merely imitating the extravagance of those from the Wei and the Jin dynasties, and the unsubstantial vanity of those from the Chen and the Liang dynasties. To call them Music Bureau is not worthwhile. Therefore, when I came upon situations for which I felt pity or fear, I vented these feelings in the form of odes and songs, and they made a total of ten. I call them ‘orthodox Music Bureau.’<sup>304</sup>

From this preface, we know that Pi was against the production of Music Bureau from the Six Dynasties period when extravagance and unsubstantiality were the trademarks of poetry. The Six Dynasties is generally considered a period when the orthodox Confucianism from the previous Han dynasty was severed. The effort in reclaiming that orthodox line in the Tang dynasty was the purpose of the ancient-style movements in both prose and poetry, especially in mid-Tang. Here, Pi is very critical of the prevalence in his time of Music Bureau in the style of the Six Dynasties period. He intended to compose Music Bureau in a way that he considered orthodox, that is, in imitation of Han-style. It is also in Pi’s Music Bureau that we see unconventional titles. The following are the titles of the ten Orthodox Music Bureau that Pi composed,

卒妻怨	Laments of a soldier’s wife
橡嫗嘆	Sighs of an old chestnut lady
貪官怨	Complaints about a corrupt official
農父謠	Songs of a farmer
路臣恨	Regret of a road minister
賤貢士	Contempt of foreign scholars

<sup>304</sup> 今之所謂樂府者，唯以魏晉之侈麗，陳梁之浮艷，謂之樂府詩，真不然矣。故嘗有可悲可懼者，時宣與詠歌，總十篇，故命曰正樂府詩。Pi, *Pizi wensou*, 107.

頌夷臣	Ode to barbarian ministers
惜義鳥	Pity on the righteous bird
訕虛器	Ridiculing empty vessels
哀隴民	Sorrow for the people of Long

As the titles suggest, these poems offer pity and sorrow for the common people, such as a soldier's wife and farmers, who suffered severely due to the social and political chaos in late Tang. Otherwise, the criticism is targeted at corrupt officials and blame turned towards ministers of barbaric origins. Since one Music Bureau, "Ode to barbarian ministers," expresses the attitude at the time towards official positions held by people who were *yi* 夷, this poem is useful for us to understand what a person like Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn faced from his "Chinese" colleagues.<sup>305</sup>

夷師本學外	The barbarians were originally removed from learning
仍善唐文字	however, they are good at Tang letters
吾人本尚捨	I am an official in the Tang bureaucracy
何況夷臣事	how can I work with these barbarian ministers
所以不學者	Those of you who do not study
反爲夷臣戲	will end up being the object of ridicule by the barbarian ministers
所以尸祿人	Those of you hold a sinecure
反爲夷臣忌	will end up being the object of jealousy by the barbarian ministers
吁嗟華風衰	Alas, civilization is in decline
何嘗不由是	Isn't it because of this?

This poem expresses the frustration of local "Chinese" ministers who felt superior to ministers of barbaric origins but had to compete for positions and ranks with these people. Shangshe 尚捨, mentioned by the author as his official title, refers to one of the six bureaux 六尚, central to the Tang administration. It seemed common to hire people of barbaric origins in the central Tang bureaucracy, because they were equally good at

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<sup>305</sup> Pi, *Pizi wensou*, 110.

letters. The predicament of the local Chinese officials is very much depicted in the lines that state, if they are not good enough, they will be ridiculed by ministers of barbaric origins. If local officials are paid a big salary, the barbarians will feel jealousy towards them, too.

None of these titles of Music Bureau are from the Han dynasty or elsewhere, but were specifically tailored to topics according to who or what they were about and the titles are all in a three-character phrase. Moreover, these poems are all composed in an ancient style as opposed to regulated modern style. As we have discussed before, Bai composed his Music Bureau in ancient-style, not modern style. In this sense, both Bai and Pi adopted ancient-style for their Music Bureau. However, the titles of Pi's Music Bureau remind us of Michizane's Music Bureau, such as "Difficulties of the *hakase*," which has an unconventional title and was also tailored to a specific topic. The difference, though, is that Michizane composed his poem following regulated, modern-style poems but not the ancient-style. Given the contemporarity of Pi and Michizane, the difference in composition illustrates the difference between the continent in the late Tang period and the archipelago in the early Heian period. Both show deviations from Bai Juyi's Music Bureau.

Above we have mentioned how Pi admired Bai for being a talented poet and a competent official and for showing a detached attitude towards adversities. How should we explain his deviation from Bai's Music Bureau. This question is largely tied to what Pi really took from Bai. In an essay in which Pi discusses why Bai recommended Xu Ning but disparaged Zhang Hu, he wrote,

I have stated that the difficulty in composition is the difficulty in one's source of inspiration. Yuan (Zhen) and Bai Juyi's hearts were rooted in establishing the

proper teachings, and thus they allegorized in the harmonious and obliging diction of Music Bureau verses, saying that they were satirical or were expressing their own feelings. After they advocated this and achieved a great reputation, contemporary scholars have all united to follow them, imitating their diction, but losing their intent.<sup>306</sup>

Pi's statement shows that he was more interested in Bai's intent in composing the Music Bureau, an intent that sprang from his deep-rooted commitment to the proper teachings. Nevertheless, Pi lacked an interest in Bai's simple diction that gained popularity. This explains why he composed orthodox Music Bureau to show his ideological debt to Mencius, Yang Xiong, and Han Yu. To Pi, the proper teaching or ideological affiliation with orthodox Confucianism as the guiding principle or source of inspiration of one's literary works was most important, even to the extent that he disregarded diction or genres of composition.

From Pi's prose and poetry style, we can conclude that, if in mid-Tang Han Yu and Bai Juyi each embraced a different dimension of Confucianism in prose and poetry styles, they joined in Pi, as we see in him a combination of the two: prose in free-style and poetry in Music Bureau. Nevertheless, Pi's literary collection clearly shows that prose had priority over poetry. In order to express opinions on political matters, free-style prose was far more practical and straightforward without being ornate, oblique, and allusive. This position was a continuation of the campaign that advocated ancient-style over modern-style, and it was in fact a campaign targeting the content of the civil service examination that prioritized prosody and regulated poems.

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<sup>306</sup> Translation by Nienhauser, *P'i Jih-hsiu*, 42. Wade-Giles converted to Pinyin.

Above we considered Pi's self-compiled literary collection, *Pizi wensou*, but now let us turn to the other significant source of Pi's literary production, the *Songling ji* 松陵集, in a total of ten fascicles. Different from the *Pizi wensou*, this is a poetry collection containing about six hundred poems in a *sing-echo* 唱和 fashion by both Pi and his friend Lu Guimeng. The majority of these poems are in regulated modern style, as seen from the chart made by Nienhauser.<sup>307</sup> *Songling ji* is a detailed testimony to the friendship of the two from an early stage to its augmentation through reciprocal poetic exchange on prescribed topics by set rules. The most famous friendship of this kind was between Bai Juyi and Yuan Zhen, who left a large number of *sing-echo* poems from mid-Tang. Clearly, Bai was a big influence on Pi's poetry in every sense. Pi even resembled Bai in forming a friendship with a contemporary and leaving behind a significant *sing-echo* poetic collection. On the other hand, Pi showed his ability in composing a large quantity of regulated poems, and they far outnumber the ancient-style poems collected in the last fascicle of *Pizi wensou*. We have observed before how much Pi was defiant of modern-style poems and four-six parallel prose; therefore, how should we explain his large corpus of regulated poems? We know that Bai advocated Music Bureau as a means for wide circulation of social criticism, but his literary collection also collects far more regulated poems than ancient-style poems. Perhaps the reason is very prosaic: composing regulated poems was essential to the training of Tang literati and prepared them to pass the civil service examination—they grew up with this education, and they excelled in composing regulated poetry. However, their education did not prevent them from initiating or joining the ancient-style campaign, which they deemed ideologically orthodox. Pi shows the

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<sup>307</sup> Nienhauser, *P'i Jih-hsiu*, 73.

same tendency. His regulated poems appear to be game-like poetic exchanges rather than ideologically charged broadsides, like those in the *Pizi wensou*. The *Songling ji* poems show us how well Pi was able to fit into the Tang poetic establishment, but we have to turn to *Pizi wensou* to see the charged atmosphere that produced Tang poetic politics.

Pi Rixiu joined Huang Chao's rebellion and was killed. Pi's life represents a rather dramatic ending for an intellectual of his time, or any time, for that matter. By contrast, it is useful to mention his friend Lu Guimeng as Lu's fate in late Tang was more representative of the majority. Lu was from a socially well-established family that produced high officials for generations. Lu failed the civil service examination at least once and decided not to take it any more. He in the end retired to a farm to cultivate rice and tea in the lower Yangzi river region of today's Suzhou. He devoted his time to drinking wine, tea, and farming, and lived a hermit's life. He left a comprehensive study of the ploughs used in the rice paddies in the lower Yangzi River region, *Leisi jing* 耒耜經 (Canon of Ploughs), which is a landmark contribution to the history of farming technology.<sup>308</sup> A hermit of the time, he clearly devoted his energy to the world beyond poetry and prose.

There are two other poets who led more ordinary lives—Du Xunhe and Luo Yin—who deserve attention. In a previous chapter, I mentioned a poem by Du Xunhe, which was presented to Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, when Ch'oe was a minor official in Lishui. Du was of humble origin and successively failed the civil service examination until age forty-six. He retired to the countryside in his hometown when the Huang Chao rebellion started to create chaos in the regions of modern Shandong and Jiangsu. After the demise

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<sup>308</sup> For a modern study of Lu, please refer to Li, *Pilu yanjiu*.

of Huang, due to Du's connection to Zhu Wen 朱溫, a powerful warlord of the time,<sup>309</sup> Du was able to obtain an official position in the Tang government. Du befriended Gu Yun 顧雲, who was a colleague and a friend of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn. Gu Yun wrote the preface for Du Xunhe's poetry collection, *Tangfeng ji* 唐風集. Since we see connections among these people, the literary activities of Du may offer us more information on the literary production of the third generation of late Tang literati. The *Tangfeng ji* has only three fascicles: the first one collects 126 poems in modern, regulated, five-syllable style; the second fascicle collects 140 poems in modern, regulated, seven-syllable style; the third fascicle collects 52 poems in modern, regulated style as well, but they are in a mixture of five-syllable and seven-syllable lines or quatrains. In other words, the *Tangfeng ji* is a literary collection of about 300 poems in modern, regulated style and is very typical of late Tang poets.

Contemporary to Pi and Du, Luo Yin was a literatus from the lower Yangzi river region. He failed the civil service examination a total of ten times. Through his connection with Qian Mu, he was able to work as a minor official. When Zhu Wen dethroned the last Tang emperor and established the Later Liang dynasty, Luo Yin worked in the Later Liang government before he died only a few years later. He left both prose-work and poetry collections. One of his surviving prose-work collections is the *Chan shu* 讒書 (Book of slanders) in five fascicles. This is a collection of satirical essays composed in different prose genres. The prose style employed in this book is largely free-

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<sup>309</sup> Zhu Wen dethroned the last Tang emperor and that marks the political end of the Tang dynasty. Zhu originally was a general under Huang Chao, but turned against him and joined General Gao Pian (for whom Ch'oe worked).

style. Luo has also left a poetry collection containing ten fascicles of poems with styles unspecified as either ancient or modern.

These few cases of Tang literati living in the second half of the ninth century who experienced Huang Chao's rebellion show some commonalities. Almost all these Chinese literati had a difficult time in passing the imperial examination: some never passed; some did not pass until an advanced age; and some failed multiple times and gave up. This makes Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's case extraordinary. He passed the imperial examination at the age of eighteen and after only one attempt. If we look at the prose and poetry by these Chinese literati, generally, two themes: reclusion and poverty, and one genre: satire, feature prominently.

Reclusion has been identified by Owen as one of the four major types of Li Shangyin's poetry. It is clear that the theme of reclusion continues into the generation that lived in the second half of the ninth century, as it is prevalent in all the three literati mentioned here (Pi, Du, and Luo). They all had the experience of living as a hermit. Pi Rixiu, in the above-mentioned poem singing high praise for Bai Juyi, expressed admiration for Bai's detachment from the adversity of demotion by living a hermit's life, accompanied by wine and poetry. While in Suzhou, Pi befriended Lu Guimeng who was a hermit. Pi also had two other hermit friends whom he visited often. Based on the frequent trips, he wrote a group of poems called, "Two journeys." In one poem, Pi describes a hermit's life as,

...  
Leisurely drinking, not handing each other 'fines.'  
Leisurely playing at chess, without trying too hard.  
A leisure day, one need not set his hat straight,  
Leisurely breeze, why bother with a fan?  
With such a place to contemplate,

How could I tire of following the Way?  
In robes of high officials one competes to outshine the other,  
Midst drums and pipes one struggles to drown the other out.  
Those who have desires understand how to push to the front,  
Those who slander are good at whispering in one's ear.  
Power and influence can be lost in an instant,  
And punishment and misfortune pile one upon the other.  
At this time I'll not admit this little hole  
To be inferior to the rich Gate of Heaven.  
Here there is a home where one can rest,  
Books in which one can fish and hunt.  
I want to stay with Mr. Jen  
And be content with this until my dying day.<sup>310</sup>

Judging from this poem that contrasts the life of an official and that of a hermit, Pi himself seems to have really enjoyed a hermit lifestyle, wherein he found satisfaction and peace of mind. It is rather curious, then, why he would join in the Huang Chao rebellion. Pi must have been caught by the currents of his time and probably decided to go with the flow of public affairs, no matter where they led. Other than Pi, Du Xunhe experienced living a hermit's life during Huang Chao's rebellion and left poems describing his life as a hermit, such as "Living in the mountains after the disturbance" 亂后山居. In a different poem, he mentions that he lived a hermit's life for fifteen years before the situation cooled down and he came out of reclusion.<sup>311</sup> Luo Yin's relation to reclusion is even more obvious. He changed his name to Yin 隱, meaning recluse or hermit. Given the chaotic time for all of them, being a hermit was probably a wise choice. It was also a belief among Chinese intellectuals of the day that retiring to the countryside when the Dao is declining—witness all the social disturbances and chaos—was a way to preserve the Dao.

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<sup>310</sup> Nienhauser, *P'i Jih-hsiu*, 101.

<sup>311</sup> 亂后山居 in *Tangfeng ji*, 2:6a. 亂后出山逢高員外 in *Tangfeng ji*, 2:11a.

The second prominent theme is poverty. In this regard, Du Xunhe is unparalleled. He claimed in one poem that he was “the poorest under heaven.”<sup>312</sup> In his *Tangfeng ji*, either *pin* 貧 or *qiong* 窮 appears with great frequency. In many a poem, he mentioned his poverty, but at the same time he made it clear that his Dao was not impoverished. A typical poem describing his poverty is,<sup>313</sup>

君貧我亦貧	You are poor so am I
為善喜為鄰	For goodness sake we are delighted to be neighbors
到老如今日	To old ages like today
無心愧古人	I cherish no shame to the ancients
...	

In a different poem describing his departure from Chang’an, he wrote, “Turning back I couldn’t bear looking at my lean servant boy, among all on the road I am the poorest.”<sup>314</sup>

Du Xunhe entered Chang’an for the imperial examination multiple times but failed unexceptionally. He was advised by a subordinate of Zhu Wen, “Curtail your ancient-style, then you will take off.” Du then composed thirty merit-praising poems to curry favor from Zhu Wen, and Zhu named him to the Ministry of Rites 禮部. He then passed the examination in 891 at the age of forty-six.<sup>315</sup> From this record, though unofficial, it is clear that ancient-style poetry posed a threat to the Tang administration, which was nourished through a recruitment system based on the composition of regulated poems and four-six parallel prose for its official communications. However, to the intellectuals of the day, ancient-style was an indicator of their ideological affiliation to orthodox Confucianism and that stance conflicted with their progress on the road to officialdom. In

<sup>312</sup> 郊居即事投李給事 in *Tangfeng ji*, 1:5a.

<sup>313</sup> 山中貽同志 in *Tangfeng ji*, 1:17a.

<sup>314</sup> 回頭不忍看羸僮，一路行人我最窮。This couplet is from the poem, 長安道中有作, in *Tangfeng ji*, 2:23b.

<sup>315</sup> *Jianjie lu*, 9:3a.

the case of Du Xunhe, we see that the contradiction between the two reached a sharp point.

Satire is seen as a common genre employed by this generation of literati but they composed it in different literary forms. The popularity of satire was due to the two fascicles of new Music Bureau included in the *Baishi wenji*. Next to the title of his new Music Bureau, Bai made it clear that they are satire 諷喻. Satire, as a genre category, is also seen in the *Pizi wensou*, but Pi Rixiu composed it in a poetic genre resembling the *sao* 騷 of Qu Yuan (roughly fourth to third century BCE). Nine poems in this style of poem compose one fascicle and are included in the *Pizi wensou*. In this regard, Luo Yin's *Chan shu*, as a collection of essays in the genre of satire, is also particularly noteworthy. Luo's whole literary collection in five fascicles is devoted solely to the genre of satire, and thus this is a significant commitment to the establishment of satire as a prominent genre in late Tang dynasty.

Satire as a genre puts more emphasis on the content than the literary forms of composition. But, now I would like to turn from content to literary form. The question posed here is about the appearance of a type of prose-work resembling four-six parallel prose in appearance but disregarding prosodic regulations—let us call it “relaxed parallel prose.” How should we account for its appearance and prevalence in Ch'oe's works, especially? What does the appearance of this form tell us about the literary practice of the time?

In a previous chapter, I concluded that Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn used free-style for unofficial documents, though there are significant amounts of syntactically parallel prose without prosody agreement existing in this group of writing, or what I refer to here as

“relaxed four-six parallel prose.” This indeed brings up the question: should “relaxed parallel prose” and “free-style” be considered the same? To further the discussion, we need to see if “relaxed parallel prose” was a common practice of Ch’oe’s Chinese contemporaries or was idiosyncratic to Ch’oe. Since some prose genres in Ch’oe’s and Pi’s literary collections overlap, we will compare their writings in the same genre category to discern if Pi writes in the same style as Ch’oe. The genre for letters 書 neatly overlapped in the two literary collections. The following is the beginning section of Pi’s letter entitled, “*Mencius* should be taught as a subject at the Confucian Academy,”

臣聞

1.

聖人之道  
不過乎經

2.

經之降者  
不過乎史

3.

史之降者  
不過乎子

4.

子不異乎道者  
孟子也

5.

捨是子者  
必戾乎經史

6.

又率於自者  
則聖人之盜也

In this section, only the first three pairs seem to be written in four-six parallel prose. Each line contains four characters and seems to form a pair with the next line. The remaining three groups of sentences are clearly in free-style prose—they do not parallel within each group, which is obvious from the number of characters each line contains. Despite appearances, however, a close look at each pair of the first three groups reveals that the two lines in each group are not syntactically parallel, but the three groups parallel with one another in structure as seen below.

1. 聖人之道, 不過乎經
2. 經之降者, 不過乎史
3. 史之降者, 不過乎子

Strictly speaking, only the statements in Group 2 and Group 3 parallel each other syntactically. This certainly is not the way of composing parallel prose, which emphasizes two lines or groups forming a pair. Clearly, Pi has the intention to compose his essay in free-style but not in parallel prose. It seems that Ch'oe's contemporaries, or at least Pi and Luo, are not writing in parallel prose in the same genre, and the relaxed parallel prose as seen in Ch'oe's works is non-existent in Pi or Luo's prose work. It could be that Pi and Luo simply did not write in parallel prose at all.

In terms of writing in parallel prose, a good candidate for comparison with Ch'oe's four-six parallel prose is Li Shangyin. Li, a generation immediately before Ch'oe, is often credited with single-handedly reviving four-six parallel prose after the mid-Tang campaign against it. In fact, the name “four-six parallel prose” comes from Li naming his prose work collection, *Fannan siliu*, 樊南四六. Before him, though parallel prose was in use for prose writing, no one really had formulated a term as straightforward

as “four-six prose” other than calling it “parallel prose” (*pianli wen* 駢驪文 or *pianwen* 駢文). Li is often celebrated as one of the most prominent parallel prose writers in late Tang. According to his biography in the *Jiu Tangshu*, he was good at ancient-style and disliked parallelism. When working under Linghu Chu 令狐楚, Linghu taught him his techniques of composing official documents in parallel prose. After that, Li rose to be an excellent writer in parallel prose. He has left a total of forty fascicles of prose-work.<sup>316</sup> The forty fascicles refer to the *Fannan siliu jiaji* 樊南四六甲集 in twenty fascicles and *Fannan siliu yiji* 樊南四六乙集 in twenty fascicles, both of which are not extant today.<sup>317</sup> The scattered, remaining pieces were nevertheless collected and compiled by later literati. Here we are going to sample one surviving piece, “A letter presented to Mr. Cui of Huazhou” 上崔華州書,<sup>318</sup> in the genre of letters 書,

1. 中丞閣下
2. 愚生二十五年矣
3. 五年讀經書
4. 七年弄筆硯
5. 始聞長老言
6. 學道必求古
7. 為文必有師法
8. 常悒悒不快

There is detectable syntactical parallelism in this section, such as lines 3 and 4, and each line contains five characters. The other lines do not form a parallel pair with the next line.

Thus, it is clear that this essay was not written in parallel prose, but in free-style.

However, Li’s reputation gained from his parallel prose is not empty talk, if we consider

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<sup>316</sup> Li, *Fannan wenji*, 932.

<sup>317</sup> We know the content of the two literary collections from the prefaces Li composed, which survived. Li, *Fannan wenji*, 426-427.

<sup>318</sup> Li, *Fannan wenji*, 440-441.

his official documents written in parallel prose. The following is a section from a memorial, “Congratulations on the full recovery of your majesty on behalf of the Duke of Anping” 代安平公華州賀聖躬痊復表,<sup>319</sup>

臣聞

1.  
 天普覆也, 應運而健若龍行      ○xx● x●Cxxx●  
 日至明焉, 有時而氣如虹貫      ●xx○ x○Cxxx○

伏惟皇帝陛下

2.  
 道超普覆      x○x●  
 跡邁至明      x●x○

3.  
 思社稷之靈, 惟德是輔      xx●x○, x●x●  
 念蒸黎之廣, 以位為憂      xx○x●, x●x○

4.  
 求衣未明      x●x○  
 觀書乙夜      x○x●

The prosodic correspondences in this section shows that Li composed his memorial in very strict parallel prose, paying attention to prosodic rules as well as syntactical parallelism, which stands in strong contrast to the letter to Mr. Cui above. We can also deduce that Li Shangyin, though a well-regarded writer of parallel prose, only employed parallel prose for official documents.

## Conclusion

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<sup>319</sup> Li, *Fannan wenji*, 7-10.

Having observed Chinese literati living in the second half of the ninth century, we may conclude that, due to the extreme social turbulence brought by the Huang Chao rebellion and constant wars among regional powerful warlords of the time, Chinese literati generally showed an inclination to retire. Their poems carry reclusion as a prevalent and obvious theme. The literati also turned to poetry to express their deep concern about the suffering of commoners and their own suffering as clearly shown in their engagement with the theme of poverty. Though most of their poems are composed in a modern regulated style, they also produced ancient-style poems specially collected to show their ideological affiliation with orthodox Confucianism. Among their ancient-style poems, we see their succession to Bai's belief in the function of poetry serving as social criticism.

In terms of prose, we see a transition from producing poetry in mid-Tang to producing prose in late Tang. Li Shangyin produced at least forty fascicles of prose-work. Pi included nine fascicles of prose out of ten fascicles in *Pizi wensou*. Ch'oe collected nineteen fascicles of his prose-work with one fascicle of poetry in the *Kyewon p'ilgyŏng chip*. Luo Yin's *Chan shu* has five fascicles of prose-work only. Poetry production was at the highest point during the high-Tang and mid-Tang periods when a poet may have typically composed thousands of poems. Late Tang, however, was rather a "prose period." Turning to four-six parallel prose in late Tang, we see that Li Shangyin, from the first half of the ninth century, pushed parallel prose to a new level. In the second half of the ninth century, however, Chinese literati were not busying themselves writing in parallel prose. Their prose style was largely free. Different from his contemporaries, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, in this regard, resembles Li Shangyin, in that Ch'oe and Li wrote parallel

prose for official documents. Ch'oe not only wrote in parallel prose, but he may represent the highest achievement in the literary Chinese cosmopolis in parallel prose in the second half of the ninth century. Though his unofficial documents are not in strict parallel prose, they show that Ch'oe was willing to incorporate syntactical parallelism to compose unofficial documents. To compose official documents, Ch'oe was willing to employ established and preferred Tang styles and showcase his abilities at parallel prose. In other words, Ch'oe outshone his Chinese contemporaries with the Tang official style in the "Declaration of war to Huang Chao."

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

### 5.1. The irony of the literary Chinese cosmopolis: a high water-mark and a meltdown

This thesis looks back to the second half of the ninth century to delineate the literary Chinese cosmopolis in full expression. The ninth-century high point was marked by the emergence of the two most influential writers in literary Chinese in Silla Korea and Heian Japan: Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn and Sugawara no Michizane. Ch'oe was among the best parallel prose writers of his time and Michizane pushed on the boundaries of regulated, modern-style poetry. Both parallel prose and regulated modern style poems were at the core of the Tang educational establishment and the Tang bureaucracy, which was increasingly reliant on recruitment based on the civil service examinations. Poetry and prose constituted the backbone of Tang recruitment, because officials had to be able to communicate clearly and persuasively. Nevertheless, from mid-Tang Chinese intellectuals realized how the two: parallel prose and regulated poems, had deviated from orthodox Confucianism. In an endeavor to retrieve orthodox Confucianism, Han Yu initiated the “Classical Prose Movement 古文運動,” and Bai Juyi actively advocated an ancient-style poetry, the “Music Bureau 樂府.” Han Yu and Bai Juyi each in prose and poetry, tried to restore a tradition that was still in practice in the Han dynasty but was subsequently severed in the Six Dynasties period. Their stances of using some form of an “ancient-style” as opposed to a “modern style” were indeed an attack on Tang administration. Both writers were successful during their lifetimes. After their deaths, in the first half of the ninth century, Li Shangyin, representative of the generation living in

the first half of the ninth century, brought parallel prose writing to a new level and redefined excellence in prose writing. Though, in the later Song dynasty, Li was made the forebear of the Xikun 西昆 school, his reputation and fame during his lifetime is still a matter of debate.

However, I argue that, in the second half of the ninth century, it was Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn from Silla who exemplified the best of parallel prose writing in the literary Chinese cosmopolis. At the time of the crisis of the Huang Chao rebellion, Ch'oe was entrusted with the task of writing a proclamation in parallel prose, although he was not a native "Chinese." This meant to the Tang Chinese that the barbarians had mastered Sinitic civilization and had bettered the Chinese in the civil service examination to take up important official positions in the Tang government. Chinese frustration at least partially originated from the fact that they fared no better than the barbarians, as vented in a Music Bureau composed by Pi Rixiu. In Pi, we see defiance not only through his activism in joining Huang's rebellion to bring down the Tang dynasty, but also in his prose and poetry, both cast in ancient-styles, that is, prose in free style and poetry in the genre of Music Bureau. To the Chinese intellectuals of the day, Tang, as a dynasty, must have deviated from what they thought a Confucian state should be, and they either retired to "preserve the Dao" or joined the rebellion. They were equally distressed by the social chaos and warfare. They wrote about poverty and the sufferings of the common people in satire, agreeing with Bai's idea about the function of poetry as social criticism.

Ch'oe returned to Silla in 886 after Huang Chao's demise. The general he worked for, Gao Pian, was killed only one year later in the large-scale warfare that broke out among regional warlords. Ch'oe's prompt departure before further complications and the

onset of total chaos was a rather wise choice, though he was not able to avoid retiring to a Buddhist temple and living a hermit life in the latter days of Silla. Ch'oe presents a successful and ideal case of a Chinese intellectual of his time: he completed his formal education in the capital of Tang, and he was able to pass the civil service examination only once and obtained official positions in the Tang bureaucracy. Compared to his Chinese contemporaries, Ch'oe was much more successful on the road of officialdom. Moreover, his excellence in parallel prose writing of his time was displayed by this Sillan through his piece, "Proclamation of war to Huang Chao." Ch'oe clearly shows that it did not take a native "Chinese" to master the job of writing parallel prose. His clear affiliation with what marked Tang education and bureaucracy in the styles of parallel prose and regulated poems stood side by side with his ideological orientation to orthodox Confucianism. Like his contemporaries, Ch'oe wrote ancient-style poems and some of them survived. He wrote about poverty, and in his case, a lot about the cultural poverty of Silla. He also wrote in free-style, though his free style embodies the element of syntactical parallelism. In all, he strove very hard to engage with the core of the literary Chinese cosmopolis, and he showed loyalty to the ideal of merit superceding locality.

Across the water, Michizane called off what was to prove to be the last *kentōshi* trip to the Tang. The reason was most likely because Tang had sunk into systemic disorder, and Tang central administration had become a myth. This news reached Japan as evidenced by a letter included in Michizane's collection that was in response to a Japanese monk living in China towards the end of the ninth century. The disintegration of the Tang and the growth of conflicted allegiances on the continent must have played a decisive role in Michizane's proposal to cease sending envoys to the Tang. The end of the

ninth century in Japan was also a dividing line between a literary culture that was more directly connected to the Chinese literary tradition and a literary culture that was more indigenized. Ivo Smits' research on the mid-Heian period has shown how much *kanbun* literary practices became localized when Japanese authors looked to Japanese models and sources for producing *kanshi*.<sup>320</sup> However, if we compare the early Heian period with mid and late Heian periods, one thing is very clear: almost all the poet-scholars active in the eighth and ninth centuries had been to China in contrast to those poets active in the tenth and eleventh centuries for whom China was merely an imagined place. I have argued elsewhere that early Koryō was a period when Korea was relatively free of influence from Song literary culture.<sup>321</sup> Likewise, the mid-Heian period shows the same trend. Song was not a powerful empire like its predecessor Tang. It was rather a regional power constantly under threat from northern peoples, like the Khitans, the Jurchens, and the Mongols. When the Koreans were again fully integrated into the continental system during the Yuan dynasty, Japan further drifted away as one of the only areas of East Asia that was not under Mongol domination if not direct administration. The eighth and ninth centuries were a period when Japan's participation in the literary Chinese cosmopolis was the most intensive and active, and that expression was epitomized in Michizane.

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<sup>320</sup> Smits, "The way of the literati: Chinese learning and literary practice in mid-Heian Japan," 105-128.

<sup>321</sup> Wei, "Song China's role in shaping late Koryō literature," 37-68.

## 5.2. Coming back to terms by way of an Epilogue

In this study, I have tried to flesh out the literary Chinese cosmopolis when it reached a high-water mark in the second half of the ninth century with the appearance of two superlative literary Chinese writers, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn from Silla Korea and Sugawara no Michizane from Heian Japan. As Sheldon Pollock has already noted, the challenge of the cosmopolitan in theory and in practice, among other things, is to risk “provoking specialists of the particular regions where such study has always been parceled out; the almost immediate discovery of counter cases to any tendency one believes to have discerned—all these obstacles have combined to induce a powerful resistance to generalization and large-scale interpretation.”<sup>322</sup> On the closing pages of this thesis, these words ring all the more pertinent, especially as this is an intellectual journey setting out to dispel the divisions imposed through modern, nation-based history writing and its corollary, national literature. Despite the odds, this thesis has tried to describe the existence of a literary Chinese cosmopolis in East Asian history. I have defined the literary Chinese cosmopolis as a community where literary Chinese (*wenyan*) functioned as a cosmopolitan, written language that was universally comprehensible and used as a means of communication as well as for literature. The thesis emphasizes the engagement by Korean and Japanese writers not in their localized literary Chinese spheres but in cosmopolitan society when they wrote in a language that was intelligible to native Chinese writers, as well as to one another.

In chapter one, I argued that the history of literary Chinese in East Asia provides a *third* cosmo-political model for the history of interactions among language, literature, and

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<sup>322</sup> Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 11.

cultural and military power. The literary Chinese cosmopolis can be characterized not as coercive or voluntaristic but as hegemonic. Under this hegemony, local players used a cosmopolitan, written language for communication and for literature, but they understood that they lived in different cultural polities and not in a community without boundaries to free movement. To illustrate the limitations, I showed where the boundaries lay between Silla and Heian in the eighth to ninth centuries and how those boundaries were surveyed by the watchful eyes of, among others, the *sakimori* on Tsushima Island. In sum, the literary Chinese cosmopolis juxtaposed a center with a semi-periphery and a periphery so as to compose a pre-modern world system of cultural power relations. This was particularly the case in ninth-century Tang, Silla, and Heian. Specific to this time frame, I attempted to show that cosmopolitanism centered on literary Chinese reached a height in the ninth century and from that time onwards, it declined.<sup>323</sup>

The next two chapters each start with a historical background that connects Silla or Heian to its historical context: how much were the three countries connected or disconnected with one another? Who was able to traverse the waters among the three, or even the four territories? People did cross borders and found success in foreign countries. In this connection, I examined the functioning of Tang's examination system for foreigners. How successful could the foreigners studying in the Tang be in the end? Taking the success of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, for example, the point of my discussion was to support the representativeness of Ch'oe as a Sillan youth who chased a dream of success in Tang, not an uncommon ambition of his times. Chapter two explains the reasons why

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<sup>323</sup> Although I raised the hypothesis of continuity into later periods, continuity is not a concern of the thesis but rather a matter of debate. All conclusions drawn from the literary Chinese cosmopolis are based on a study of the second half of the ninth century. The thesis speculates about later times, as suggested by the severance of diplomatic and cultural contact.

Ch'oe went to study and pursue a career in Tang China. His sojourn in Tang was, in many ways, decided by the historical milieu in Silla and Tang, and Ch'oe's travel experience, although not directly recorded, can be taken from the descriptions we find in Ennin's dairy of the ninth century.

The same can be argued for Michizane, which I attempted in chapter three. He lived in a time when the curriculum of *kidendō* rose to prominence in the *Daigakuryō* and the Sugawara family successively held the position of "Professor of Letters" in the *Daigakuryō*. He was appointed to receive Parhae/Bohai envoys, which was a sign of widespread confidence about his excellence in Chinese learning. We can safely rely on the fact that Ch'oe's fame and Michizane's fame were already earned during their lifetimes. They were regarded as the best among men of letters by their peers in their respective countries. In that sense, their representativeness is not just of the intellectuals in Silla and Heian, but also indeed how far the Sillan and Heian literati were able to go in utilizing literary Chinese.

How does the close examination of the two inform us about the intrinsic relationship between language and power, that is, how does cultural power emerge from language? How does writing in a "foreign" script articulate ethnic, local identities? What are the effects on identity of writing in a "foreign" language? And, if Ch'oe and Michizane did not consider the Chinese written script to be "foreign," then how can we describe the structure of their social and linguistic relations? What effects did those relations have on the literature written in Chinese by Korean and Japanese authors, and how did those relations shape their articulation of local sentiments and cultural identities? All these questions were explored above.

Generations of scholars have offered approaches to examine the world system of cultural power relations that I describe, albeit within the confines of national foci. In Chinese studies, literature written in literary Chinese outside of geographical China had not been a concern until very recently. The *Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature*, for the first time in its 2017 edition, devoted a section to early and medieval China and the world, which includes articles on Sino-Korean, Sino-Japanese, and Sino-Vietnamese literatures.

Thus, we have a growing consensus of authorities weighing in, and that is why I began my thesis with Sinophone studies. I suggested that this term should be pushed into the pre-modern period to include interactions of China, as a cultural marker, with its neighbors, Korea and Japan, establishing Sinophone studies beside similar fields such as Anglophone or Francophone studies. *Sinophone studies: A critical reader*, published in 2013, includes all the contributors I mentioned in my introduction. They try to correct the diaspora agenda and address “open-ended” types of Chineseness that have been forged outside mainland China. Sinophone studies in practice, though, seems to bear down heavily on Asian American studies, and its fusion with queer theory and film studies places it in an exclusive temporal period fixed on the modern. That is to say, there is clearly not yet much hope of including literature written in literary Chinese by Koreans, Japanese, and others in pre-modern times, and that is why I began this study. But, I am certainly not alone.

It is in Japanese studies that the critical questions noted above have already been addressed by a generation of scholars. For example, David Pollack, in his book, *The Fracture of Meaning: Japan's Synthesis of China from the Eighth through the Eighteenth*

*Centuries*, derives a methodology inspired by post-structuralist theories, mainly those of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, by using the term “fracture” to describe the dissonances that resulted from harnessing together two powerful, antagonistic forces: native Japanese content and alien Chinese written form. The form-content split shaped Japanese aesthetics and especially the written and literary culture throughout the millennium covered by his book. To further tackle the *wa-kan* 和-漢 dualism, Atsuko Sasaki proposed an outlook informed by post-colonial theories in her book, *Obsessions with the Sino-Japanese polarity in Japanese literature* (2006). She tries to nail down “China” in four dimensions: China as a territory on the continent; Chinese language as the intellectual, metaphysical, and written medium of millennia; writing and reading in Chinese as associated with masculinity; and a timeless ideal of Chinese civilization with temporal eternity. She does this by introducing an important term: contingency. Sure enough, it is “by chance” that Japan lies geographically next to China. Robert Borgen describes this unfortunate contingency in some detail, “if only the Japanese islands had been located off the coast of Europe or South Asia, the argument goes, the Japanese would have first come into contact with alphabetic scripts easily adapted for writing the Japanese language. Life would have been easier, both for Japanese elementary school pupils and for foreign students of Japanese.”<sup>324</sup> Though this is not what Sasaki meant by using the term contingency, this word invokes the pain palpable in Japanese scholarly work on Chinese influence in Japanese literature. However, we are still left struggling with a bi-polar disorder in this field with “China” placed either too high or too low, and it seems the time to re-evaluate whether there was an antagonism between *wa* and *kan* in

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<sup>324</sup> Borgen, “The Politics of Classical Chinese in the Early Japanese Court,” 200.

the first place: were they in a dialectical duel? Thomas LaMarre did a fair job of uncovering Heian Japan through a study of the material culture of Heian scripts, wherein he endeavored to rescue Heian culture from the modern imagination of Japan by connecting Heian to a broader, “classical” East Asia. This is a step towards viewing Heian as an integral part of a larger community in a frame that is not antagonistic. Though LaMarre certainly is not the first to discover that connection, he alerts us to how much there is to be done. Elsewhere, Wiebke Denecke in her book, *Classical World Literatures: Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman Comparisons* (2013), also steers away from polarity and proposes to view Chinese culture as “referential” to the younger culture of Japan, akin to Greco-Roman relations. Her view largely eases the tension between *wa* and *kan* and refreshes the power relations between the two.

If, in “parceled-out” Japanese studies, *wa-kan* has been an obsession, such is not true in Korean studies. There has never been fashioned such a dichotomy as *han-han* (漢-韓) polarity, dialectics, or dyad. Rather the thorny issue is the idea of *sohwa* (小華, “little civilization” or “little China”). The difference between Koreans and Japanese is that Koreans identified themselves as part of the greater “Chinese civilization.” This holds true even when China was conquered by barbarians and Korea felt all the more urgent that it should maintain that civilization as a hold-out, as a “little China.” This difference is also reflected in their respective literary productions in *hanmun* and *kanbun*. Unlike Japanese *kanbun*, which is sometimes comprehensible and sometimes not, the quality of *hanmun* throughout Korean pre-modern history has been rather stable and far closer to what was produced in China than the Japanese *kanbun*. That stability was a product of Korean knowledge of and confidence with literary Chinese. The proximity to China and

the potency of Korea's civilization based on literary Chinese is another aspect that makes it risky to speculate about *hanmun* from the perspective of *kanbun*. It was also in this particular sense that Korea felt keenly its *mission civilisatrice*. Koreans exported mainland "civilization" to Japanese with a confidence based on their high qualifications and competence, and that export, which was welcomed and respected in the islands, offered a steady source of pride to Koreans. It is only in modern times that *sohwa* has come to be viewed negatively in the light of nationalism. Mastery of civilization was distorted by Japanese colonial scholars and characterized as "toadyism," just as was an old and successful foreign policy of handling the hegemon, traditionally referred to as *sadae* 事大.

After surveying how power-relations have been examined in Sinophone studies, Japanese studies, and Korean studies, it appears to me that, for the first time, scholars have started to direct their attention to the point where these three meet—a common ground is emerging on this shared writing heritage in literary Chinese. My attempt in this thesis was to pay homage to that emerging gesture, and propose a holistic approach to understand the power-relations among the three. With Korea's mediating role between China and Japan, and its, more often than not, function as the *kan* to the Japanese *wa*, the *wa-kan* dualism cannot hold itself upright much longer and collapses into a threesome. On the peninsula and in the archipelago, Ch'oe Ch'wŏn's and Sugawara no Michizane's engagement with the cosmopolis show no resistance; rather being able to write in literary Chinese was a sign of social status and prestige in their world. They knew where the language was coming from, and they clung to it and excelled in it, as they lived fully in the cosmopolitan currents of their era.

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