Fujiwara no Akihira and *Shin Sarugakuki*: *Kanbun*, Heian Scholars, and Social Criticism

Liwen Tu



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Abstract

Kanbun 漢文 (literally, Chinese-style writing) is a Japanese writing system that grew out of the adoption and adaptation of Classical Chinese and flourished in the Nara period (710–794). Prior to the advent of modern Japanese writing, *kanbun* was used to compose many original texts of Japanese literature, as well as being used for reference books and official documents. This dissertation explores a particular work of *kanbun* of the Heian period — *Shin Sarugakuki* 新猿楽記 (*The Account of New Monkey Music*), written by Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡 (989–1066). In terms of both content and writing style, this text has some unconventional, even risqué, aspects that challenge traditional understandings of Heian *kanbun*, which were more typically focused on government, scholarship, and the public sphere. *Shin Sarugakuki* offers a different lens through which to view Heian literati and their approach to self-expression, social criticism, and the relationship between commoners and elites.

A look at the elements that shaped the creation of *Shin Sarugakuki* starts with an introduction to *kanbun* and its significance in the overall development of Heian literature. This is followed by an appraisal of the State Academy, where *kika* 起家 (outsider) scholars such as Fujiwara no Akihira were side-lined and neglected as the institution evolved gradually into a hereditary bureaucracy. The content of *Shin Sarugakuki*, which describes a raucous *sarugaku* performance in Kyoto and profiles diverse individuals, is analysed in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque together with the contemporary social

and literary environment, Heian Buddhist values, and Fujiwara no Akihira's idiosyncratic personality. The text is then contextualised in relation to contemporary developments, including the shrinking public sphere of writing, the emergence of popular entertainment as a literary topic and social trends of anxiety and uncertainty in both *setsuwa* collections and *kanbun*, and the exploration of the new spaces in *kanbun* writing.

This dissertation aims to bring together two seemingly disparate perspectives embodied in *Shin Sarugakuki*. On the one hand, it is presented in an anti-hierarchical and subversive setting and includes grotesque and exaggerated physical descriptions of its characters while transgressing various social norms and stereotypes. All of this interconnects with aspects of identity, power, and authority, opening up a carnivalesque space in the sense defined by Bakhtin. On the other hand, *Shin Sarugakuki* also reflects an encyclopaedic and inherently hierarchical ordering of information by Fujiwara no Akihira that bears resemblance to reference works of the time, including Fujiwara no Akihira's own textbook for letter-writing, *Unshū Ōrai* 雲州往来. This suggests that *Shin Sarugakuki* may have been written with educational value in mind or designed to attract a high-ranking patron. Finally, the satirical and erotic elements in *Shin Sarugakuki* are examined in the context of the *monjō keikoku*[1] model, with a view to understanding how Heian scholars expressed their concern over matters of governance and engaged in social criticism in their *kanbun* writings. This

[1] '文章経國' in Japanese; literally, 'writing can order the state' from a saying by Emperor Wen of Wei 魏文帝 (187–226), also known as Cao Pi 曹丕 in China.

thesis suggests that *Shin Sarugakuki* could be read as merely unconventional but is more properly viewed as a kind of social criticism that deserves a significant place in Heian literature.

Prologue

Hitherto, research on Heian *kanbun* has focused primarily on the 'public sphere' of *kanbun* composition, while controversial writings such as *Shin Sarugakuki* were deemed eccentric and personal and received relatively little attention. I was struck by *Shin Sarugakuki*'s suggestion of the potential of *kanbun* writing, notwithstanding the decline of the genre and the rigid hierarchy that many Heian literati confronted at the academy. This unconventional and, at times, indecent *kanbun* written by a controversial *kika* scholar touched upon important discourses of *kanbun* — including writing and state authority, popular entertainment and social criticism, and the lives of commoners and elites, pointing to both educational and satirical functions.

Fascinated by the representation of the sociology of power through *kanbun* writing and the potential power of literature as a social practice in the Heian period, I have explored the social function of *kanbun* by examining the way Heian scholars engaged their writing with social criticism and satirical subjects. The relationship between literature and politics in Japan was clearly different to that which prevailed in China, and the way in which *kanbun* texts draw upon Chinese models is nuanced and complex, but there are common themes in *kanshi* and *kanbun*, such as the scholars' exclusion from public office. However they may have differed from their Chinese counterparts, Heian scholars borrowed from well-known Chinese authors and incorporated elements from Chinese models in their writing. Thus, it is

reasonable to infer that the Chinese writers' concept of social responsibility may have found its way into their consciousness.

In addition, when the Emperor and his governmental apparatus 'subordinated the academy to the control of Fujiwara Regents',[2] many scholars felt themselves to be unfairly treated; even the renowned Ōe no Masafusa complained. Dissatisfied scholars rallied around the crown Prince (who later became Emperor Go-Sanjō 後三条天皇, 1032–1073).[3] Meanwhile, Joshua Mostow has suggested that Fujiwara no Michinaga recognized the political dimension of literature: in Mostow's view, the statesman's encouragement of women's writing in *kana* may have been strategic — positioning it in competition with the *kanbun* by which antiquated Chinese-learning scholars at the academy sought to enhance imperial authority while undermining the regency.[4]

Lacking exalted positions at either the academy or the court, scholars had limited opportunities to engage directly in politics. Nevertheless, in their *kanbun* writing, they persisted in engaging with social criticism and satirical subjects. In this sense, I see *kanbun* as a brave literary rebellion against regent politics, a *monjō keikoku* model that illustrates

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[2] McCullough, Helen C., and William H. McCullough, trans. *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period*, vol.1 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1980), 9.
[3] Fukazawa Tōru 深沢徹. *Toshi kūkan no bungaku: Fujiwara no Akihira to Sugawara no Takasue no Musume* 都市空間の文学:藤原明衡と菅原孝標女(Shintensha Shinsho 23 新典社新書) (Tokyo: Shintensha, 2008), 49–54.
[4] Joshua Mostow, 'Mother Tongue and Father Script — The Relationship of Sei Shōnagon and Murasaki Shikibu to Their Fathers and Chinese Letters', in *The Father-Daughter Plot: Japanese literary Women and the Law of the Father*, eds., Rebecca L. Copeland and Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 137.

different ways in which Heian scholars engaged in politics in spite of a lack of formal political power.

In my studies, I have felt drawn to satirical *kanbun* writing, which ran counter to the mainstream of *kanbun* in the Heian period, because it suggested that satire and criticism held the potential to suggest an alternative social order that could benefit the nation and improve governance. That is to say, seemingly eccentric *kanbun* writing that focuses primarily on minor and unconventional subjects might also have public intentions or political implications.

In that context, *Shin sarugakuki* is a rich work that may be approached from many angles. It is an encyclopaedic description of city dwellers as well as an exposé that includes elements of social criticism. It need not be one or the other, as is true of the different dimensions and possibilities of *kanbun* writing. Fujiwara no Akihira's satire is particularly interesting in that he rebels against the prevailing literary conventions for depicting commoners; that is, he neither ignores them nor portrays them as 'exotic' curiosities without dimension. *Shin sarugakuki*'s extensive depiction of commoners, even as it strays into caricature, can be seen as a brave literary experiment that went against the courtly fashion of the time.

The exaggerated and even demonised characters of commoners resist the tendency towards romanticised or stereotypical depiction. No longer quiet or invisible, they are rendered by Fujiwara no Akihira as subjects worth noticing. Never mind that those depicted cannot themselves read or write *kanbun*; there is something egalitarian about their portrayal.

Akihira's detailed documentation of each one speaks to their civil rights ('市民権'), implying that they deserve to be recognised and uplifted.[5] In that context, *Shin sarugakuki* could be seen to resonate with modern pluralistic social values that embrace freedom and equality,[6] and also be regarded as a satire of hierarchical and hereditary politics.

For me, this relates to Pierre Bourdieu's questions as to how, as individuals and as members of society, we know what to do — how we make decisions, especially those we make unconsciously, and how we know how to speak and what to say.[7] All of this originates from an individual's view of the world and is shaped through his or her position in society and the structure of that society. That has implications for the way commoners were depicted, or not, in Heian literature, because the elites would not have the vocabulary to describe them or might rely on biased and imagined conventions. Fujiwara no Akihira's willingness to depart from that discourse and rely on his own observation of people from different social classes and backgrounds, creating vivid and extensive depictions that broke with stereotypes, makes him a noteworthy figure in the late Heian period.

In closing, I would like to see future research look at Michel Foucault's work on the role of knowledge and the exercise of power and explore how it could be related back to *Shin Sarugakuki*.

—Liwen Tu, February 2022

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[5] Fukazawa Tōru, *Toshi kūkan no bungaku*, 49.
[6] Fukazawa Tōru, *Toshi kūkan no bungaku*, 54.
[7] *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science: Exploring the Social from Across the Disciplines*, eds., Gloria J. Leckie, Lisa M. Given and John E. Buschman (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited 2010), 65.

Chapter One

In the early eleventh century a Heian scholar, Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡 (989–1066), described a comical and circus-like performance of 'monkey music', or *sarugaku* 猿楽,[1] in *Shin Sarugakuki* (*The Account of New Monkey Music*, 新猿楽記), a Heian *kanbun* 漢文 (Chinese-style writing) text. In 'twenty-some years of walking about and observing both the east and west capital districts', he said, he had never seen anything like what he saw that night. Both commoners and elites were drawn to this astonishing performance, and all of them were hard put to avoid splitting their sides and dislocating their jaws with laughter.

> Everybody — clerical and lay folk, males and females, the noble and the base, the high and the low — bombarded the players with clothing and other tokens which streamed down like rain. Having given away their clothes, some walked home naked, while others were embarrassed and crawled away like dogs. As morning came, when the sky grew cloudy and rain began to fall, people bundled straw for rainwear and tore off sedge leaves for umbrellas. Some hitched up their pants and walked like monkeys, while others ran like storks, hiking up their under-robes. Others, covering themselves with tatami, fell face-first in the mud; still others wrapped themselves in straw mats only to tumble into the canal.[2]

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[1] A type of performing art that originated in Chinese *sanyue* 散樂, 'a genre of early medieval theatre which included music, dance, and other types of entertainment. As *sarugaku* developed, it absorbed elements of another performing art known as *dengaku* and became increasingly standardised. The tradition emerging from this process formed the basis on which *noh* was created in the fourteenth century.' See *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 3: Medieval Japan, ed. Yamamura Kozo (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 697.

[2] Here I used Joan Piggott's translation cited by Haruo Shirane in *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2007), 483. The original text is '以茲、或道俗男女、或貴賤上下、被物祿物、如雨如雲。仍百之九裸而歸、萬之八犬而去。其明朝、天陰雨降、結藁為蓑、割薦為笠。或褰袴猿踵、或被袖鶴脛。有戴疊斃臥深泥、有著筵落入堀河。見之嘲哢之人、敢不可勝計。' Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡, *Shin Sarugakuki* 新猿楽記, trans. Kawaguchi Hisao 川口久雄 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2008), 22.

The nobles behaving stupidly, coupled with the comic exaggeration of the *sarugaku* scene, suggests an atypical blurring of social lines that is worthy of further exploration. In *Shin Sarugakuki*, Fujiwara no Akihira offers an account of a night-time carnival in the city of Kyoto. On the one hand, it vividly evokes the *sarugaku* performers: mimes, magicians, acrobats, female shamans made-up as prostitutes, and so forth. It conveys the fanatical devotion of the raucous audiences of the performance, implying a potentially anti-hierarchical dimension of popular entertainment such as *sarugaku*. On the other hand, after the carnival, Fujiwara no Akihira's focus moves to the family of one Lieutenant of the Right Outer Palace Guards, a mid-ranking official with a family of three wives, sixteen daughters, nine sons, and thirteen sons-in-law. Fujiwara no Akihira attributes various occupations and characteristics to these family members: they are identified as the gambler, the warrior, the *kanbun* scholar, the doctor, the charcoal seller, the court official, the thief with an extremely huge penis, the ugly and promiscuous woman, the monk, the merchant, and so forth. By profiling and categorising all of them by social class and occupation, and providing an exhaustive list of salient details, Fujiwara no Akihira devises in *Shin Sarugakuki* a comprehensive social structure that purports to embrace Heian people from all walks of life.

Shin Sarugakuki is a striking and creative *kanbun* piece that merits scholarly attention because, in depicting the *sarugaku* performances and their diverse audiences, it offers interesting ways to understand important discourses surrounding Heian *kanbun*. It also opens up spaces for discussing broader issues of writing and authority, popular entertainment and

statecraft, presentation of elites and commoners, social criticism, and opportunities for self-expression beyond the shrinking public sphere for personal advancement available to Heian scholars. Fujiwara no Akihira recognised new social and cultural trends, the interclass contact brought by the spread of the performing arts, and the spiritual crisis that Heian people were encountering due to political instability and natural disasters. He touched upon different topics of *kanbun* writing and pushed the boundaries of what contemporary scholars could understand from *kanbun* literature, inviting a broader study of the diversity of *kanbun* — a topic with the potential to make important contributions to debates about literature and written style in premodern East Asia.

1. *Kanbun* tradition as backdrop to *Shin Sarugakuki*

To begin with, it is helpful to take a general look at the assumptions and traditions of *kanbun* that surrounded and shaped the creation of *Shin Sarugakuki*. Any discussion of *kanbun* entails an examination of the written tradition of classical Japanese literature. The adaptation of Chinese elements was prolific in premodern Japan. Lacking its own indigenous script, Japan's first contact with writing and texts was through the Chinese books that were

imported from Korea and China,[3] and these gave rise to the establishment of a central administration and state academy in early Japan.[4]

Although some of the traditions and systems adopted from China, such as the *ritsuryō* codes (律令制)[5] and the land tenure and taxation system, which gradually lost their original functions and waned in significance in Japan, others took root in Japanese soil and sprouted new leaves. *Kanbun*, for instance, was used as a formal written language in Japan up until the nineteenth century and played an important role in the development of Japanese language and

[3] As explained by David B. Lurie, 'the Japanese encounter with Chinese writing was a complex meeting of different languages and different degrees of social organization that included several polities on the Korean peninsula.' The spread of Chinese customs, political philosophies, writing systems and beliefs were mostly through intermediaries from Korea. It is believed that the method of Chinese reading/writing was introduced to Korea in the early sixth century and further transmitted to Japan, but interactions between the Korean peninsula and Japanese archipelago occurred as early as the fourth century, and the former played an important role in the development of Japanese writing. As Lurie further remarks, 'writing was significant not only in interactions between the "central kingdom" of China and the states whose rulers it invested, but also among those peripheral states themselves'. An entry that Lurie cites from in *Nihon shoki* sheds some light on the Korean influence in Japanese history.
高麗王遣使朝貢、因以上表。其表曰、高麗王教日本國也。時太子菟道稚郎子讀其表、怒之責高麗之使、以表無禮、則破其表 (NS I:377;Ōjin 28/9).
The King of Koguryŏ sent envoys to pay tribute at court and had them submit a manifest, which said: 'The King of Koguryŏ offers guidance to the country of Japan. . .' At that time the Prince, Uji no Waki-iratsuko, read this manifest, became enraged at it, and summarised the Koguryŏ envoys. Because of the rudeness of the manifest's format, he immediately tore it up.
Although the Prince was angry at the rudeness of the manifest, but it is obvious that Korea played a vital role in the formation of Japanese political, social, and cultural history. Cited and summarised from David B. Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 83–110.

[4] Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 278. Those books, including Buddhist texts, Chinese classics, and secular Chinese works, had a profound influence in early Japan. For one thing, they introduced the concept of imperial rule and centralised government, which helped the Japanese imperial court to create a bureaucracy based on Tang's model. However, instead of faithfully copying that model, the Japanese court made some modifications to suit their own needs. For another, the grasp of classical Chinese contributed to Japan's image as a more civilised country and stimulated the growth of *kanbun* writings in Japan. The books also provided the theoretical basis for setting up educational institutions, such as the State Academy. The use of *kanbun* as a formal writing system also endowed Japan with written language and the capacity for literature, helping to legitimise its status as a civilised country.

[5] 'Penal (*ritsu*, 律) and administrative legal codes (*ryō*, 令), patterned after those of China and first adopted by the Japanese government at the turn of the eighth century. The codes were fleshed out and amended by supplementary laws (*kyaku*, 格) and protocols (*shiki*, 式) from later Nara times onward'. Janet Goodwin and Joan Piggott eds., *Land, Power, and the Sacred: the Estate System in Medieval Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2018).

literature and the shaping of Japan's multi-literate cultural history.[6] *Kanbun* also gave rise to the formation of the academy, the education system, and the political system in early Japan, all of which were modelled on China, although the Japanese court retained its indigenous aristocratic elements. As Robert Borgen puts it, the early Japanese court recognised that, in China, to 'become civilised meant to become literate',[7] and quickly accepted and adopted *kanbun* as their formal writing system in order to partake of a more civilised cultural realm. *Kanbun* was particularly popular in the ninth century; histories, travel diaries, dictionaries, poetic anthologies, commentaries, and manuals of court procedures all thrived during this period.[8] In premodern Japan, *kanbun* had both an aesthetic and practical value. During the ninth century, its pragmatic aspect was emphasised, and it was used to support and revive the

[6] Scholarly definitions of *kanbun* vary. For instance, Ivo Smits categorises it exclusively 'in the sense of poems and prose in Chinese, or Sino-Japanese, composed by Japanese' and points out that 'especially in the composition of *kanshi*, Japanese authors produced a text that also functioned according to rules outside the Japanese language (rhyme, tone, etc.)' Whereas Bjarke Frellesvig regards it as denoting classical Chinese texts, whether written by Chinese or Japanese. If one takes a look at Japanese *kanbun* writings, one finds that some appear identical to classical Chinese, while others were written with Japanese grammar and vocabulary. In addition, there were two ways of reading *kanbun* in early Japan. The practice that associated the Chinese logographs with Japanese words and grammar was known as *kundoku* 訓讀 (literally 'reading by the gloss'). The other way of reading *kanbun* is called *ondoku* 音讀 ('reading by sound'); it associates the characters with 'the sounds of the Chinese words with which they are originally associated'. These two reading practices were used for both the texts written by Chinese and those by Japanese authors. The origin of the writer became less important in this context and, for convenience's sake, texts written by both Chinese and Japanese authors are considered in this paper to be *kanbun* texts. See David Barnett Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2011), 175–183. Kurozumi Makoto argues that 'rather than rejecting Chinese, the Japanese achieved a delicate balance between the imported language of Chinese and native language' by using the *kundoku* system as well as different *kanbun* styles. In this sense, Chinese and Japanese 'harmoniously syncretised', and this process characterised the entire Heian culture. See Kurozumi Makoto, '*Kangaku*: Writing and Institutional Authority', in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, eds., Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 109. See Ivo Smits, 'Minding the Gaps: An Early Edo History of Sino-Japanese Poetry.' In *Uncharted Waters: Intellectual Life in the Edo Period,* eds., Anna Beerens and Mark Teeuwen (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2012), 93–107.

[7] Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1986), 40.

[8] Marian Ury, 'Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life', in *The Cambridge History of Japan* vol. 2: Heian Japan, edited by John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 343.

ritsuryō system; as Emperor Saga 嵯峨天皇 (786–842) adopted the term *wen zhang jing guo* 文章經國 (*monjō keikoku,* 文章経國 in Japanese) — literally, 'writing can order the state' from a saying by Emperor Wen of Wei 魏文帝 (187–226), or Cao Pi 曹丕.[9] The phrase *monjō keikoku* was itself quite ambiguous, but when Emperor Saga borrowed it and elaborated upon it in concrete terms, he sought to reinforce the relationship between writing and political authority. *Monjō keikoku* was also quoted in the preface of *Ryōunshū* 凌雲集 and figures in the title of *Keikokushū* 経国集 — literally, 'the anthology for governing the state'.[10]

Both of these anthologies were compiled by imperial order, seemingly to demonstrate that *kanbun* could support and contribute to state-building under the *ritsuryō* system. However, this system in Japan never fully realised the original Chinese administrative ideals, as the Japanese state did not completely centralised control of the nation, with counties and other regions remaining relatively autonomous. After carefully analysing the establishment of the *ritsuryō* system, Joan Piggott concludes that, in the early period of codification, the code had to 'represent the interests of the powerful both at the centre and in the periphery'[11] in order to gain acceptance, and it essentially decreased social mobility by guaranteeing the rank

[9] '文章經國之大業, 不朽之盛事. ' In Cao Pi's *Lun Wen* 論文 (*A Discourse on Literature*), Cao asserts that 'literature is a vital force in the ordering of the state, an imperishable glory'. See Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the early Heian court*, 40, and Webb, 'The Big Business of Writing: Monjō keikoku in the Early Heian Court of Saga Tennō', *Sino-Japanese Studies*, 21 (2014): article 2, for a further discussion on *monjō keikoku.* See also Chapter Two of this dissertation.
[10] Ury, 'Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life', 357.
[11] Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, 167.

and offices of all politically important players in perpetuity.[12] That is to say, the *ritsuryō* system in early Japan incorporated the interests of all elites in the realm while maintaining the Heavenly Sovereign — the emperor — at its apex. Additionally, the academy that was designed to support the *ritsuryō* system, as its counterpart did in China, was rendered hereditary and ceremonial in Japan, as is discussed below in later chapters.

Although the *ritsuryō* system was never fully implemented, *kanbun* writings in the Nara and Heian periods were closely related to the imperial order and served both formal and practical functions. This can also be seen in *Kojiki* 古事記[13] and *Nihon Shoki* 日本書記[14] — chronicles known, respectively, as the oldest and the second-oldest books of classical Japanese history. Compiled under the strong influence of Chinese history, they serve to trace the origins of Japan and the creation of its deities and to bolster the legitimacy of the imperial family and the court government.[15] As Peter Kornicki suggests, Japan's profound knowledge

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[12] Piggott, *Emergence*, 167.

[13] *Kojiki* is the oldest chronicle in Japan and was written in a classical Chinese style with a strong infusion of Japanese elements. It is a collection of myths and tales concerning the origin of the Japanese people. *Kojiki* was composed first at the request of Emperor Tenmu (631–686) but was not finalised until the Empress Gemmei period (660–721). It divides Japanese history into the Age of the Gods and the Age of Human Emperors, and all the materials are presented in a way to explain and justify the origins of the Japanese people and the imperial household and provide ideological support for the emperor's status. See John Brownlee, *Political Thought in Japanese Historical Writing: From Kojiki* (712) *to Tokushi Yoron* (1712) (Waterloo, Ont: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991), 8.

[14] *Nihon Shoki* was also compiled at the command of Emperor Tenmu, but it was all written in polished *kanbun.* What is more, *Nihon Shoki* references and adopts its format and narrative style from such Chinese resources as *Yiwen Leiju, Wen Xuan*, and some Buddhist works. See Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late Sixteenth Century* (New York: Holt, 1993), 65.

[15] Even though the two chronicles cover exactly the same period of history, their styles, language, methods, and emphases were different. Donald Keene believes that the *Kojiki* was for domestic consumption while *Nihon Shoki* was for Chinese and Koreans. See Keene, *Seeds in the Heart*, 65. *Nihon Shoki* described Japan's diplomatic contacts with other countries. In addition, judging by the content, written in polished *kanbun*, it is possible that *Nihon Shoki* was written to legitimise the imperial family and the recently established court government, which contributed to Japan's image as a powerful and civilised country in East Asia.

of *kanbun* contributed to its image as 'an autonomous and powerful empire' in East Asia.[16] Thus, nation-building through literature was highly emphasised and valued. As a result, in the Nara and early Heian periods, scholars' *kanbun* skills were highly prized, and the State Academy was where talented young aristocratic scholars were cultivated and selected to become court officials. Also, the 'state-building character' of *kanbun* meant that scholars who mastered it could demonstrate their worthiness to hold significant political influence over the state.

At the same time, however, Heian Japan bore witness to the rise of the regency system, in which the regents took effective control of the court by marrying their daughters to the emperors, thus becoming the grandfathers of the young emperors and dominating the succession. With the rise of the Fujiwara regency, rather than being Chinese-style sovereigns, Japanese emperors continued to occupy a place at the nation's spiritual core while gradually ceding their actual power over the state. In addition, some of the symbolic apparatus devised to support the *ritsuryō* system gradually lost its original functions. For example, the Yin-Yang Bureau, which was set up to enhance the authority of the emperor by the practice of 'geomancy, calendrical calculations, and the prognostication of signs',[17] ceased to function in its original capacity and took on ritual activities centred around the application of pollution taboos and the expulsion of malign spirits.

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[16] Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill,1998), 22.
[17] David T. Bialock, *Eccentric Spaces, Hidden Histories: Narrative, Ritual, and Royal Authority from The Chronicles of Japan to The Tale of the Heike* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press), 5.

The State Academy itself likewise became an instrument of the Fujiwara hierarchy system. As a result, the ability to excel in *kanbun* was no longer necessarily linked to the ability to advance in government, as was true of its Chinese counterpart. The political importance of men of letters declined, and so did the standing of their writing. Over time, many scholars became dependents of the Fujiwara aristocracy rather than independent court officials whose literary abilities (mainly *kanbun*) were valued and rewarded at court. Unlike its counterpart in China, the civil service examination in Japan was heavily controlled by the *sekkan* 摂関 (regents) and *juka* 儒家 (hereditary scholars) families.[18] Many scholars encountered these conceptual differences between the ideal of *ritsuryō* and the contemporary regency system. While it may be that *kanbun* writing declined in importance as the *ritsuryō* system was superseded by the regency system, this does not necessarily mean that the use of *kanbun* had been discontinued or marginalised as suggested by Kawaguchi.[19] One may still discover extensive use of *kanbun* writing during the Heian period.

With the rise of regency politics, the popularity of *kana* literature began to increase in the late ninth century, particularly in the form of *waka* poetry, which 'gave birth to a variety of vernacular literature in the tenth century'.[20] While male aristocrats continued to use *kanbun* as their formal writing system in government, religion, and scholarship, aristocratic

[18] Control by regents and hereditary scholar families refers to the scholars from the Ōe and Sugawara families, whose domination of the academy made posts there hereditary for all intents and purposes. In contrast, those scholars who were not affiliated with the academy were called *kika* 起家 (outsider or upstart).
[19] See Kawaguchi Hisao 川口久雄, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū* 平安朝日本漢文學史の研究 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1964), 3. This is discussed further in Chapter Three.
[20] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 113.

women quickly embraced *hiragana* as their main writing system, which came to be known as *onnade* ('women's writing').[21] The rise of women's writing, especially the literary salon at the court, also contributed to the flourishing of *kana* literature; meanwhile, the popularity of the literary salon was closely linked to the patronage of the regents, the Fujiwara family.

The relationship between *kanbun* and *kana* literature was a profound one during the Heian period. Edward Kamens has argued that relatively recent historical conditions which 'have placed Japanese writings, especially those by women, at the centre of most conventional perceptions of Heian literary cultures, with Chinese writings at the periphery'[22] run contrary to historical reality. Rather, he maintains, it was the other way around. Ivo Smits makes the same argument, suggesting that 'despite the prominence of these now famous (*kana*) works, they counted for little on the surface of the largely male-oriented world of Heian Japan.'[23] Smits further adopts Haruo Shirane's analysis of the genre hierarchy in a Buddhist text in the late Heian period,[24] namely, that 'Buddhist and Confucian texts and Chinese histories and poetry collections ranked above *waka*, and at the bottom are narrative

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[21] As suggested by Robert Borgen, although the *kana* literature was regarded as 'women's writing', apparently men were the forerunners in the development of this genre. See Robert Borgen, 'The Politics of Classical Chinese in the Early Japanese Court', in *Rhetoric and the Discourses of Power in Court Culture: China, Europe, and Japan*, eds., David R. Knechtges and Eugene Vance (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 2005), 225. There was apparently no absolute boundary between women's writing and men's writing (*kanbun*); some Heian aristocratic women would still have access to *kanbun* or *kanbun* knowledge and could also write *kanbun.*

[22] Edward Kamens, 'Terrains of Text in Mid-Heian Court Culture,' in *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries*, ed. Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 130.

[23] Smits, 'The Way of the Literati,'106.

[24] *Genji ippon kyō* (A Genji Offering with sutra Chapters) written by the monk Chōken (1126–1203), see Smits, 'The Way of the Literati,'106.

texts in *kana*.'[25] This account of the literary hierarchy in the Heian period places the Chinese texts at the top of the hierarchy.

Kamens is not the only scholar who takes exception to placing *kana* literature at the literary centre in the Heian period. Kurozumi Makoto and Tomi Suzuki share the same point of view.[26] Makoto claims that the importance of *kana* literature has been exaggerated and states that 'on the whole, Chinese and Japanese elements coexisted harmoniously. The image of the Heian period as effeminate and devoid of *kangaku* 漢學 (Chinese learning) culture is thus highly misleading.'[27] That is to say, both Western and Japanese scholars have rejected and subsequently sought to rectify the convention of putting *kana* literature as the centre of Heian literature.

Ivo Smits uses the term 'China within Japan' or 'multiple Chinas within Japan' to refer to the situation whereby Japan, rather than borrow the Chinese literary forms and functions as a whole, selectively adopted what seemed useful,[28] with the result that 'soon "China" became a construct that was only tangentially related to the state across the East China Sea.'[29] He adds, 'China was indeed the model for many facets of Japanese cultural life, but this archetypal China within Japan was one of Japanese making.'[30] This creative

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[25] Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 106.
[26] Edward Kamens summarises these two scholars' idea in his work, see Kamens, 'Terrains of Text in Mid-Heian Court Culture', 135.
[27] Kurozumi Makoto, '*Kangaku*: Writing and Institutional Authority,' in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literatur*e, eds., Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 109.
[28] Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 109.
[29] Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 109.
[30] Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 109.

construction of ‘China within Japan,’ not only existed in *kanbun*, but also extended to *kana* literature.

Wiebke Denecke complicates this argument further by examining early thematic poetry in Heian Japan. She argues that the distinction between the ‘intertextual’ and the ‘intertopical’ deserves greater attention,[31] and that early Heian thematic poetry should be studied together with *waka* poetry and viewed as ‘developing independently from the Chinese tradition.’[32] She finds that many Japanese poets communicate creatively with the Chinese tradition and some even tend to rewrite, overwrite, and transpose Chinese themes.[33] She also makes argument for influential studies between Japanese *kanshibun* and its Chinese references by suggesting that one must learn to distinguish ‘between shared vocabulary, random poetic convergences and specific allusions.’[34] What is more, she reminds us that ‘even when phenomena are based on Chinese precedent, one should focus not so much on the Chinese origins or inflections of practices, genres, and texts, but rather on the transmutations in their Japanese habitat,’[35] which again, provides a useful perspective for comparative studies of Japanese *kanshibun* and its Chinese precedents.

In addition, if we think about the theory of ‘China within Japan’ illustrated above, the coexistence of Chinese and Japanese, the creativity and gradual independence of Chinese

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[31] Denecke, ‘“Topic Poetry Is Ours”: Poetic Composition on Chinese Lines in Early Heian Japan,’ 2.

[32] Denecke, ‘Topic Poetry Is All Ours’, 2.

[33] Denecke, ‘Topic Poetry Is All Ours’, 46.

[34] Denecke, ‘Topic Poetry Is All Ours’, 3.

[35] Denecke, ‘Topic Poetry Is All Ours’, 48.

writing and learning in Japan, as well as adopting a foreign language and writing in it, are indeed intellectually stimulating. More importantly, this is what shaped the Heian period's literary culture and Japanese multi-literate environment.

On the other hand, the growing appreciation of *kana* might have something to do with Japan's 'central kingdom sense',[36] that is, Japan's sense of itself as a centralised and independent kingdom, as evidenced in *Xin Tang Shu* in China: 'The Japanese who had studied Chinese came to dislike the name [that China used to call them], Wo 倭, and [began referring to it instead as] Nippon (close to where the Sun rises)'.[37] Thus, as they absorbed new knowledge from China, a feeling of independence gradually grew.[38] Although the importance of *kanbun* did not decline, as it continued to be the language of government and religious learning, the literary fashion changed at the court. For example, Emperor Daigō 醍醐天皇 (885–930) revived the Chinese poetry banquets; however, they were less popular than the *kana* ones and, subsequently, were 'allowed to lapse in favour of cockfights'.[39]

That is to say, *kana* and *kanbun* did co-exist in the Heian period as Chinese learning was assimilated and appropriated into Japanese culture and itself became a Japanese

[36] Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, 40.
[37] Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, 40. Also see the original text in '列傳第一百四十五東夷' in *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書, no. 44, https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=272608#p45 (accessed 01 May 2020). '後稍習夏音，惡倭名，更號日本。使者自言，國近日所出，以為名。' Japan used to pay tribute to China and was normally relegated to an inferior and insignificant position in Chinese histories.
[38] Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, 130.
[39] Ury, 'Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life', 358.

tradition.[40] What is more, there was a growing appreciation of poetry and literature in *kana* from the early Heian period. However, *kana* literature only accounts for a small part of Heian literary production, as much of the latter was still centred on *kanbun* texts, including histories, diaries, government documents, and collections of prose and poetry. In comparison, a writing such as *Shin Sarugakuki* would be seen as running counter to the *kanbun* tradition and would inevitably attract criticism and controversy due to its eccentric and at times lewd content.

2. *Kika* scholars and the academy

The State Academy (*Daigakuryō*, 大学寮) was believed to have been established around 670 by the command of Emperor Tenji 天智天皇 (626–672) and codified in the 701 Taiho Code.[41] Originally, the State Academy was designed to provide an education in the Confucian classics, taught initially by Korean immigrants who were sophisticated in classical Chinese. The Japanese academy was modelled on China's; however, in the middle and late Heian period, it gradually declined into a ceremonial and hereditary institution, with its scholars trained for nominal positions in the offices of the central government.[42]

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[40] Marian Ury shares the perspective of Ivo Smits, stating: 'As a separate cultural tradition or gathering of traditions, Chinese learning became itself a Japanese tradition. Originally brought in from abroad, it still received supplements from abroad, though in reduced number, but during the Heian era it can also be seen replenishing itself from its own resources.' Ury, 'Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life', 346. Chino Kaori points out that the culture of the Heian period was 'based on a double-layered structure of "*Kara*" (Tang, China) and "*Yamato*" (Japan)'. Chino Kaori, 'Gender in Japanese Art', 23.

[41] Brian Steininger, 'The Heian Academy: literati culture from Minamoto no Shitagō to Ōe no Masafusa' in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, eds., Shirane Haruo, Suzuki Tomi and Lurie, David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 178–179.

[42] Ury, 'Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life', 376.

By the late ninth century, there were 'Four Paths' at the academy: the *Myōgyōdō* 明経道 (the original, classics-centred curriculum), the *Kidendō* 紀伝道 (the literature curriculum, which had a maximum class of 20 students), the *Myōbōdō* 明法道 (a curriculum derived from the earlier *myōbō* examination, focusing on the legal codes), and the *Sandō* 算道 (the arithmetic curriculum, which had existed as a separate body of 30 students since the early Nara period).[43] In the Heian period, the *Kidendō* was the most prestigious curriculum. The establishment of familial scholarly lineages, the growth of private tutoring colleges, and the decline of the importance of the civil service exam brought with them changes in the State Academy.[44] Power came to rest in the hands of the Sugawara and Ōe families — the *juka* families.[45] In addition, several Fujiwara lines established their family lineages (these were the *sekkan* families) in the State Academy and increasingly gained influence over it, slowly transforming it from a vehicle of social mobility to a hereditary bureaucracy. Even the scholars from the *juka* families felt powerless because the *sekkan* families were exerting more overt control over the State Academy as well as obtaining more book resources from China. Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房 (1041–1111), born into a *juka* family and a leading poet and scholar in the mid-Heian period, wrote an anecdote about *sekkan* families' successes at the academy ('藤氏献策の始め事') in *Gōdanshō* 江談抄. He observed that, with more and

[43] Brian Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers: Literacy and Bureaucracy in the Tenth-Century State Academy' (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010), 143.

[44] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 23.

[45] Steininger points out that one should recognise the distinction between 'the broad mass of Academy graduates who worked as clerks in the bureaucracy, and those specialist "Confucians" (*jusha*) who derived from established scholarly lineages and monopolised instructor posts in the Academy'. Steininger, 'The Heian Academy: literati culture from Minamoto no Shitagō to Ōe no Masafusa', 178–179.

more members of the Fujiwara family succeeding at the entrance examination at the academy and expanding their influence all over the court, there were fewer chances for scholars from the *juka* families to get promoted.[46]

Because of this, many *juka* scholars came to rely on sponsorship from the *sekkan* families to secure positions at court. For instance, by practicing divination for Emperor Ichijō and Fujiwara no Michinaga at the request of Fujiwara no Sanesuke, Ōe no Masahira was able to forge a solid bond with Sanesuke and win his support at court.[47]

On the other hand, those scholars who had no family connections at the State Academy could not compete with members of the *juka* and *sekkan* families who were able to win advancement on the basis of their claimed descent from a well-known scholar. Those *kika* (outsider) scholars usually found themselves neglected and side-lined at the academy.

3. What did it mean to be a *kika* scholar?

Another entry from the *Gōdanshō* might shed some light on the status of *kika* scholars. Sugawara Fumitoki 菅原文時 (899–981), who held the position of Professor of Letters at the academy, once wrote a song and showed it to Minamoto no Shitagō 源順 (911–983) before letting anyone else see it. Shitagō read it and happily sent a response to Fumitoki, praising the work. However, as puts by Brian Steininger, 'Fumitoki was very upset at

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[46] Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房. *Gōdanshō* 江談抄, eds., Gotō Akio 後藤昭雄, Ikegami Jun'ichi 池上洵一 and Yamane Taisuke 山根對助. In vol. 32 of Shin nihon koten bungaku taikei 新日本古典文学大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), 481.
[47] *Hōsei to shakai no kodaishi* 法制と社会の古代史, ed. *Mita Kodaishi Kenkyūkai* 三田古代史研究会 (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2015), 214.

[Shitagō's] thoughtlessness and others joined him in criticising Shitagō for having violated what was apparently a strict pecking order between Shitagō (*kika,* an unaffiliated scholar) and Fumitoki (*juka,* a hereditary scholar)'.[48] Steininger suggests that Fumitoki recognised Shitagō's ability to appreciate and analyse *kanbun,* and accordingly may have sent him a draft of his *kanbun* composition, but Fumitoki never expected a response from Shitagō, whom he perceived to occupy an inferior position. This story clearly demonstrates a rigid hierarchy at the academy and the family-based determination of advancement through the court hierarchy. Steininger points out that Shitagō is a prototype of the *kika* scholar who, despite having a profound knowledge of *kanbun*, had to settle for composing 'domestic' works such as entertainments for private gatherings or works for female aristocrats, rather than producing more serious works such as official documents or compositions for public consumption. He also suggests that *kika* scholars were more inclined to produce practical works in hopes of winning official employment or private patronage.[49] Shitagō's situation at the academy is apparently representative of that which Fujiwara no Akihira and many other *kika* scholars would have encountered at that time.

Fujiwara no Akihira was a *kika* scholar who remained in the fifth rank for 17 years. It was only in his late sixties that he was finally appointed as *tōgū gakushi* 東宮学士 (Tutor of the Prince) and *monjō hakase* 文章博士 (Professor of Literature). Extremely frustrated,

[48] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 214.
[49] See Steininger, 'The Heian Academy', 181.

Fujiwara no Akihira wrote a promotion application, in which he described himself as a critical figure in the revival of *kanbun* literature at court. He wrote of himself, 'Fujiwara no Akihira is the only one who has kept the tradition [of writing *kanbun*], which dates back to Emperor Ichiiō's 一条天皇 (780–1011) time'.[50] As a matter of fact, Fujiwara no Akihira was a very knowledgeable and well-respected scholar at the academy, as evidenced by his selection as tutor of the future regent Fujiwara no Yorimichi 藤原頼通 (992–1074).[51] Even though his success at the court came very late in his life, Fujiwara no Akihira had made a tremendous effort to have his family lineage made inheritable at the academy. It seems that Fujiwara no Akihira accepted the hierarchy at the academy while actively seeking a promotion, despite being truly an outlier. According to *Sakeiki* 左経記,[52] Fujiwara no Akihira was a disruptive figure. At one civil service examination, he taught his students the pronunciation of the Chinese vocabulary in advance, effectively leaking the answers to them in flagrant violation of the rules and causing great chaos;[53] this was a move that *Sakeiki* describes as 'entirely unprecedented'.[54] Seven years later, Fujiwara no Akihira again made himself a controversial figure by serving as a ghost writer for a student. According to *Shunki*

[50] '一条朝習其舊風者，明衡独遺。' See Ōsone Shōsuke 大曾根章介, *Ōchō kanbungaku ronkō: 'Honchō monzui' no kenkyū* 王朝漢文学論攷:「本朝文粋」の研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), 47. Emperor Ichijō was known as a great fan of classical Chinese literature and *kanbun*; Fujiwara no Yukinari 藤原行成 (972–1027) called him the 'virtuous emperor who loves Chinese literature'.
[51] Yorimichi succeeded his father Fujiwara no Michinaga's position and held control of the regency positions for nearly fifty years.
[52] A *kanbun* diary written by Heian courtier Minamote Tsuneyori 源経頼 (976–1039) in the mid-Heian period.
[53] Minamoto Tsuneyori 源経頼, *Sakeiki* 左経記. In Zōho shiryō taisei 増補史料大成, comp. Zōho Shiryō Taisei Kankōkai 増補史料大成刊行会 (Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1965), 386.
[54] Minamoto Tsuneyori, *Sakeiki*, 386.

春記,[55] Fujiwara no Gyōzen 藤原行善 was a student at the academy who failed his examination because he did not obey the prosodic rules of poetry composition, making a mistake referred to as a 'crane's knee (鶴膝)'.[56] However, Gyōzen did not accept this result, and wrote a letter appealing his case. He insisted that acclaimed Chinese poets such as Bai Juyi 白居易, Zhang Xiaobiao 章孝標, and the Minister of the Left (Fujiwara no Arihira, 藤原在衡) had made the same 'crane's knee' mistake despite being highly accomplished and renowned. The letter was well-written and eloquent, but, after careful investigation, the court concluded that the letter was actually written by the student's tutor, Fujiwara Akihira. *Shunki* comments that Fujiwara no Akihira's reckless personality led him to undertake such actions, and that this was a matter of great shame.[57] Although it seems that Fujiwara no Akihira was the kind of subversive figure who did not hesitate to flout the academy's rules, he nonetheless never gave up seeking an opportunity to entrench his family in the academy's hierarchy. In that sense, Fujiwara no Akihira may be seen as the model of a complex Heian scholar rising

[55] A Heian aristocratic diary written by court official Fujiwara no Sukefusa 藤原資房 (1007–1057). Ivo Smits also mentions this anecdote. Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 119–120.

[56] 'Within a five-character line, the first and the last two characters use those of the level tone and the character in the middle uses that of the deflected tone.' Luo Yuming and Ye Yang. *A Concise History of Chinese Literature* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 216.

[57] The *kakikudashibun* of the original statement is '学生藤原行善の申文の事、鶴膝病を犯す輩、及第の例、居易・章孝標、本朝の左大臣在衡等なり。此の事、非常の第一の事なり。彼の行善、更に知らさるか。是れ引汲の儒士の為す所か。定めて必す災殃を招くか。但し状中に云はく、『判定の日、儒士、公卿に推薦して許容し、遂に天覧に及ぶ。更に返却せられ、皆、鳳銜の限り有るを恐れ、鶴膝の咎無きを訴へす』てへり。「行善の事、太た以て便無き事なり。父子、更に引汲すへからさる者等の為す所なり。仰せの旨を放ち問はるるは、然るべき事なり。件の事、或る人の説に云はく、『明衡、件の例を引勘し、并びに申文を作る由』と云々。件の人、本性、落居せず。時々、此くのことき事有り。極めて苦しかるへき事なり」てへり。' Refer to Fujiwara Sukefusa 藤原資房, *Shunki; shunki datsurō oyobi hoi* 春記; 春記脱漏及補遺, in Zōho shiryō taisei 増補史料大成, comp. Zōho Shiryō Taisei Kankōkai 増補史料大成刊行会 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1965), 292–294.

from a *kika* background. His writing touches upon elements of social criticism and at times has erotic implications, but it also conveys academic and educational value that will earn the favourable regard of the powers that be. Fujiwara no Akihira's writing offers a unique perspective; although some of it may seem to go against traditional notions of *kanbun*, it suggests the various possibilities that *kanbun* writing offered for Heian scholars to surpass the limitations of the academy.

4. Writing for the performing arts: spaces for less refined literature

Performance as a topic provides a framework for an expanded consideration of *Shin Sarugakuki*. When considering the title of *Shin Sarugakuki* — literally, *The Account of New Monkey Music* — one may wonder to what the 'new *sarugaku*' refers.

To start with, *sarugaku* 猿楽, which literally means 'monkey music', is a general name for an art form that includes various kinds of performance: short dramatic pieces, song and dance, magic, acrobatics, conjuring, and puppetry.[58] *Sarugaku* is believed to have originated from *sangaku* (*sanyue*, 散樂) in Tang, China, and, according to Jacob Raz, was known in Japan 'as early as the beginning of the Nara period'.[59] *Sangaku* was first patronised by the government, and was called *Tō-Sangaku* (Tang *sanyue* in Chinese). *Sarugaku* was performed at the banquet accompanying the *sumai no sechie* (Festival of Wrestling) in

[58] Jacob Raz, *Audience and Actors: A Study of Their Interaction in the Japanese Traditional Theatre* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 44.
[59] Raz, *Audience and Actors*, 45.

Japan[60] and was featured at other common banquets as a type of entertainment. Initially, the audiences of *sarugaku* were composed of aristocrats and also the emperor. But later, according to the *Shoku Nihongi*, *sangaku* lost the patronage of the government and was eventually abolished in 782.[61]

Although no longer formally patronised by the court, *sarugaku* remained a regular feature of aristocrats' discourse. As for the reason why *sarugaku* was not performed at the court, it is possible that the art form had become popularised to such an extent that it did not require imperial support any longer. Jacob Raz suggests that it might have been because *sarugaku* came to be considered a vulgar art and therefore inappropriate for court sponsorship. Raz also suggests that *sarugaku* may have been supported by the court at first because it originated from China, as the court was a populariser of things deemed 'exotic'. Therefore, when *sarugaku* took root in Japanese soil and became popular and even developed into new forms, it no longer merited the patronage of the court.

As for the differences between *sangaku* and *sarugaku*, Raz explains that, in the tenth century, *sangaku* gradually came to be called *sarugaku*, despite having initially been two different art forms. He observes that they 'appear sometimes interchangeably and sometimes as two different arts'.[62] Examination of several Heian diaries shows that both terms, *sangaku* and *sarugaku*, were used, and the differences between the performances were not always

[60] One of the annual ceremonies at the court. Raz, *Audience and Actors*, 45.
[61] Raz, *Audience and Actors*, 45.
[62] Raz, *Audience and Actors*, 45.

clear. Raz suggests that, towards the end of the Heian period, we find *sarugaku* used more frequently, and *sangaku*, as a term, 'disappears'.[63]

According to Yoshinobu Inoura, the new *sarugaku* was not necessarily plebeian in nature. It is very likely that the plebeian dimensions developed later.[64] Raz observes that popular entertainment, such as *sarugaku*, was different from the refined art forms enjoyed at the court, in that the former highlighted the novelty and eroticism favoured by the 'pleasure-seeking audience'.[65]

From the mid-Heian period, the *sarugaku* performance was often depicted as an accompaniment to ritual events such as the Inari and Gion Festivals, and to some extent recalled or re-enacted those festivals. Furthermore, according to Yoshinobu Inoura, the new *sarugaku* focused more on mimicry and comic gestures, which attracted both the higher and lower classes of society.[66] That is to say, the new *sarugaku* drew an expanded audience, which brought about an interaction among people from various social classes whose paths would not have been likely to cross otherwise.

Also, prior to *Shin Sarugakuki* (The Account of New *Sarugaku*), there had not necessarily been a written *Sarugakuki* (Account of (Old) Sarugaku); certainly, there was no such thing documented in any Heian text and, had there been one, it was long lost.

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[63] Raz, *Audience and Actors*, 45.
[64] Yoshinobu Inoura, *The Traditional Theatre of Japan* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1981), 42.
[65] Yoshinobu, *The Traditional Theatre of Japan,* 47.
[66] Yoshinobu, *The Traditional Theatre of Japan,* 47.

Kawaguchi argues that the 'new *sarugaku*' can be understood from two angles. First, from a social and historical perspective, *sarugaku* in the mid-Heian period was undergoing a revolutionary change, reflecting the formation of a new urban city ('新しい都市形成') and the widening gap between the new and old cultures. *Shin Sarugakuki* reflected emerging social conflicts and new trends. Also, from an entertainment perspective, *sarugaku* in Japan was different from its counterpart in China, where it originated. It had branched out into new forms and had come to attract a broader audience. It appears that the new *sarugaku* might refer to a more 'localised' performance with some new elements added to the Chinese prototype.

What is more, the intention of writing on the performing arts is worth exploring. The rise of popular entertainment from the mid-Heian period suggests the emergence of new social trends and urban phenomena. As performing arts such as *sarugaku* and *dengaku* 田楽 ('field music') developed into mass entertainment, interclass contact became a common occurrence at these performances. The audience, regardless of social status, both watched and participated in the entertainment. Sometimes the mass entertainment would develop into mass violence and disorder, which would create social tensions. The extreme scenario presented in *Shin Sarugakuki*, where elites and commoners alike were naked and out of control, as well as the death of retired Emperor Shirakawa's daughter, Ikuhomon'in, which,

according to *Rakuyō Dengakuki* 洛陽田楽記 written by Ōe no Masafusa,[67] was possibly caused by her attending a *dengaku* performance, points to this popular entertainment craze being an intimidating and unstoppable force. This force, coming as it did from the street to the court, would potentially pose a threat to the social fabric. Joan Piggott perceives an image in *Shin Sarugakuki* of a 'city free of order (解禁された都市)', as the court was gradually losing control over it.[68] The public space in the city was taken up with the rituals and performances of the popular entertainment that was developing at a rapid rate. Kawaguchi observes that the urbanisation of the Song Dynasty together with the flow of different culture forms, especially the development of performing arts within the society, may have indirectly influenced the culture trends in the Heian period.[69] Moreover, especially in the late Heian period, people suffered various misfortunes and unexpected disasters and came to believe that these were due to a 'Decline of the Law (末法)'.[70] The maniacal state of the laughing audiences, together with the chaotic subversive scene in *Shin Sarugakuki*, is also indicative of the spiritual uncertainties that Heian people were experiencing.

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[67] *Rakuyō Dengakuki* gives a vivid description of the Great Dengaku performances of 1096. It also establishes a cause-and-effect relation between Ikuhomon'in's enthusiasm for *dengaku* and her death, while other documents did not clearly do so. This is further discussed in Chapter Two.

[68] Joan Piggott, 'Mō hitotsu no Heian-kyō — Fujiwara Akihira Shinsarugaku ki no nakano toshi もう一つの平安京—藤原明衡『新猿楽記』のなかの都市', in *Kōkyōsuru kodai: Higashi Ajia no naka no Nihon* 交響する古代：東アジアの中の日本, eds., Ishikawa Hideshi 石川日出志, Hinata Kazumasa 日向一雅 and Yoshimura Takehiko 吉村武彦 (Tokyo: Tokyodō Shuppan, 2011), 300–301.

[69] Kawaguchi Hisao 川口久雄, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū* 平安朝日本漢文學史の研究 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1964), 814.

[70] Refers to the idea that 'at a certain point after the lifetime of the Buddha — for some in Japan, after the year 1052 — the world would enter into a period of great lawlessness and violence when the Buddha's teachings would become increasingly difficult to teach and follow'. See Joan Piggott, *Capital and Countryside in Japan, 300–1180: Japanese Historians Interpreted in English* (Cornell University East Asia Program. 2006), 432.

These social trends were recognised and interpreted by some Heian scholars, including Fujiwara no Akihira and Masafusa. It is true that some of their writings were judged as eccentric or even obscene by contemporary scholars. However, a case can be made that their works indicate a literary trend emerging in the mid-late Heian period, as Heian scholars explored new ways to use the language of *kanbun* to advance beyond the limitations of the academy while demonstrating their mastery of *kanbun* knowledge.

Ashton Lazarus suggests that performances for commoners would bridge the gaps in society, providing a 'discursive link between high and low and center and periphery'.[71] Having studied the depiction of popular entertainment such as *dengaku* and *sarugaku*, paying special attention to the way in which commoners were represented, he argues that elites often viewed commoners as 'socially peripheral yet symbolically central'.[72] And while commoners may have been politically and economically peripheral, Lazarus claims that they 'maintained a nondiscursive culture that both fascinated and troubled elites'.[73] This also provides an interesting perspective from which to view the way *sarugaku* was depicted in *Shin Sarugakuki*.

Apart from this, according to Rajyashree Pandey's research, the second half of the twelfth century also saw the development of a new aesthetic of the 'improper' and unorthodox in Buddhist *setsuwa* collections, as more and more people tired of the

[71] Ashton Lazarus, 'Performing Culture: Representations of Commoner Performance in Early Medieval Japan', (PhD diss., Yale University, 2014), 16.
[72] Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 44.
[73] Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 16.

superficiality of court values that dictated refined and proper subject matter and behaviour.[74] Thus emerged a new literary paradigm: 'the unorthodox character whose breaking of social and ethical rules stands as a metaphor for perfect spiritual enlightenment',[75] whose madness allows him to 'escape conventional views and illusory perceptions and finally to realise the absolute reality'.[76] This literary tendency was not confined to Buddhist *setsuwa*, but also influenced the composition of fiction at court, known as 'high literature'.[77] That is to say, this was by no means an isolated trend, but a common thread in literary activity in general, echoing the social transgression and literary subversion of the Heian period.

5. Scholarship on Heian *kanbun*

Research on Heian *kanbun*, while useful, has focused primarily on the role of the academy and the adaptation of Chinese poetry and prose in the creation of Heian *kanbun*. With the exception of Gotō Akio and Kawaguchi Hisao's works, less attention has been paid to the variety of *kanbun* writings, and some *kanbun* pieces, such us *Shin Sarugakuki*, have received little study. Ivo Smits refers to *Shin Sarugakuki* as 'literature of social fringe'[78] and finds it valuable as a source of insights into the multiple dimensions of *kanbun* writing.

[74] Rajyashree Pandey, 'Poetry, Sex and Salvation: the "Courtesan" and the Noblewoman in Medieval Japanese Narratives', *Japanese Studies*, 24:1 (May 2004): 65–69.
[75] Pandey, 'Poetry, Sex and Salvation', 69.
[76] Pandey, 'Poetry, Sex and Salvation', 65.
[77] Pandey, 'Poetry, Sex and Salvation', 65.
[78] Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 118.

Okada Masayuki pays special attention to the adoption of Bai Juyi's poetry and the establishment of the academy, which he suggests had a profound influence on *kanbun* literature. The former, he claims, gave rise to the style and trends of contemporary *kanshi*, while the latter is particularly relevant to the role of *juka* families, social mobility, and scholars' involvement at the academy.[79]

Gotō Akio, Kinpara Tadashi, Kawaguchi Hisao, and Ōsone Shōsuke all discuss the overall development of *kanshibun* literature in the Heian period. Ōsone Shōsuke[80] argues that *kanbun* encountered an internal and external challenge after the exile of Michizane, who was appointed as the Minister of the Right because of his talents in classical Chinese.[81] His exile illustrates that even the most distinguished literati in Japan lacked any real political power, which undermined both the *ritsuryō* system and the link between *kanbun* writing and state authority. This was followed by the decline of the *Kidendō* at the academy. Ōsone lists Ōe no Masahira and Fujiwara no Akihira as the two main representatives of late Heian *kanbun* writing, and speaks highly of Fujiwara no Akihira's *Honchō Monzui* 本朝文粋 (The Literary

[79] Okada Masayuki 岡田正之, *Nihon kanbungakushi* 日本漢文学史, eds., Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也 and Yamagishi Tokuhei 山岸徳平 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964), 41–49; 172–179.
[80] Ōsone Shōsuke 大曽根章介, *Ōsone Shōsuke Nihon Kanbungaku ronshū* 大曽根章介日本漢文学論集 vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1998), 20.
[81] Michizane successfully passed the examination and entered the State Academy. As a scholar skilled in *kanbun*, he achieved a prestigious rank at the court. He was first appointed to the position of Professor of Literature at the State Academy and was later appointed as the Minister of the Right, one of the most powerful posts at court. Michizane's path to promotion exemplifies how social mobility operated under the *ritsuryō* system; that is, a good scholar could become an official by taking the civil service examination, and the better he did at the exam, the better his chances for a promising career at court. However, after Michizane's biggest patron, Emperor Uda 宇多天皇 (887–897), abdicated, his political rival, Fujiwara no Tokihira 藤原時平 (871–909), took control of the court and eventually exiled Michizane to *Dazaifu* (located in Kyushu, in western Japan, it was a place of exile for high-ranking courtiers in the Heian period).

Essence of Our Court)[82] and the spirit of freedom presented in it. He also categorises the features of late Heian *kanbun* literature as follows: the rise of (1) educational books aimed at *kanbun* beginners; anthologies and *ruijū* literature (類聚, literally 'category books'); and (2) translations of classical Chinese books, exotic tales, and stories. In particular, he gives expanded attention to *kanbun* writing as it explores the lifestyles of commoners and tells stories of relatively marginal types of people.[83]

Gotō Akio asserts that *kanshibun* was regarded as the literature of the Heian period that was most civilised and most closely associated with the ruling class, and offers a summary of Kinpara Tadashi and Kawaguchi Hisao's analyses. Kinpara Tadashi[84] focuses on the differences between *kanshi* and classical Chinese poetry as well as the influence of the latter on *kanshi*. He also discusses the overall structure of *kanshi* theory and the standard rules of writing *kanshi*. Both Gotō Akio and Kinpara Tadashi examine the *kanshi* and prose (*fu*) written by Heian aristocrats and scholars at court and the academy. Meanwhile, Kawaguchi Hisao observes the rise of folk literature ('庶民文学') in the late Tang Dynasty and its influence on the Heian period, as well as the relationship between *kanbun* and *kana* literature.

[82] *Honchō Monzui* is a literary anthology compiled by Fujiwara no Akihira. It comprises a selection of 427 *kanshibun* works from the preceding 240 years, including the work of 70 authors in 39 genres, organised into 14 volumes.
[83] Ōsone, *Ōsone Shōsuke Nihon Kanbungaku ronshū*, 42.
[84] Kinpara Tadashi 金原理, *Heianchō kanshibun no kenkyū* 平安朝漢詩文の研究 (Fukuoka: Kyūshū Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981).

Kawaguchi Hisao has incorporated Heian scholar Ōe no Masahira's literary theory (大江匡衡詩境篇) and provides a historical scheme of Heian *kanbun,* dividing it into three stages.[85] The first stage is the establishment of *kanbun* literature in the Nara and early Heian periods, which Kawaguchi calls the 'Golden Era of *Kanbun*', represented by Emperor Saga, Kūkai, and Sugawara no Michizane. This period saw the pinnacle of *kanbun* literature as well as the strong influence of the literary traditions of Six Dynasties China and the early and middle Tang Dynasty.

Kawaguchi considers the second stage and the third stage together and believes that, in comparison to the first stage, which saw the establishment and flourishing of *kanbun* (from the early ninth to early tenth century), the second (from the mid-tenth to early eleventh century) and the third (from the mid-eleventh to early twelfth century) could be understood as witnessing the gradual dissolution of *kanbun*,[86] especially in the third stage. Kawaguchi points to the second stage as a revival following the gradual decline of *kanbun* literature. According to Kawaguchi, the regency system brought changes to the development of *kanbun* in the second stage: although it upheld the traditions of *kanbun* from the first stage, it also reflected the features of colloquial languages and folk culture[87] coming from late Tang China.

[85] Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 3.
[86] Steininger explains that the 'dramatic overthrow of Michizane dealt a fatal blow to literati society's "political/educational philosophy of Confucianism — the attempt to unify literature and government", and this framework of *kanbun* literature was increasingly replaced by "aestheticism and decadence"'. Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 143.
[87] Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 4.

At the same time, with the wide dissemination of *kanbun* knowledge and *kanbun* allusions, it also brought about the establishment of women's writing.[88]

The third stage identified by Kawaguchi is the dismantling (*kaitai*, '解体') and transformation (変容) of *kanbun* literature. In this period, he sees *kanbun* retaining some features from the second stage, with *kanbun* writers also looking further back, as evidenced by the rise of educational books, anthologies, and *ruijū* literature. Many *kanbun* writings in this period were in fact collections of previous works or translations of classical Chinese works. *Honchō Monzui* and *Unshū Ōrai* 雲州往来[89] were compiled during this stage and reflect this trend. Kawaguchi also notices a decline and a trend towards decadence in *kanbun* writing, leading gradually to its disappearance. On the other hand, and with the chanting of monks as a medium, *kanbun* had by this time become localised and absorbed into folk culture.[90] Kawaguchi states that, with the establishment of regent politics and the shrinking of *ritsuryō* system, together with the rise of the warrior class, the legitimacy of *kanbun* writing's state-building character had weakened considerably. The pursuit of rebirth by Pure Land Buddhism also made the content of *kanbun* writing less state-centred.[91] Finally, *kanbun* was gradually undergoing a transformation to the *wakan konkōbun* (和漢混淆文),[92] which had

[88] Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 4.
[89] Known as the earliest literature of correspondence in Japan compiled by Fujiwara no Akihira. It collects various templates for letter-writing and is an important educational model for *kanbun* students and scholars writing formal letters. *Unshū Ōrai* was seen as a valuable resource for Heian aristocrats, and it sheds light on aspects of their daily life, customs, and interpersonal relationships.
[90] Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 5.
[91] Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 769.
[92] A hybrid mix of Chinese and Japanese writing styles.

become an essential driving force in the development of medieval literature in Japan. Kawaguchi argues that (some original function of) *kanbun* gradually 'disappeared' because, compared with *kanbun* in stages one and two, *kanbun* in the middle and late Heian period tended to be more 'localised (地方化)' (incorporating features unique to a locality) and 'popularised (民衆化)' (absorbing folk culture and thus becoming more accessible to common people). *Kanbun* had grown into new forms and transformed into the *wakan konkō bun*, while scholars such as Satō Michio and Shibayama argue that *kanbun* gradually lost its 'state-building' character.

Satō highlights the trend of compiling anthologies and educational books, which he sees as having drawn scholars away from the public sphere of political engagement.[93] He claims that, hitherto, a Heian scholar's main responsibility had been to participate in court affairs and to shape its political world (*keikoku chisei* 経国治世). Thus, in Sato's view, when Heian scholars turned to compiling books and collections, they gradually ceased to serve as government bureaucrats and sometimes became dependent on aristocratic families for their livelihood.[94]

Saeko Shibayama cites Fujiwara no Akihira as an example of the way *Kidendō* scholars evolved from 'purveyors cum executors of the Confucian political ideal of "state

[93] Satō Michio 佐藤道生. *Heian kōki Nihon Kanbungaku no kenkyū* 平安後期日本漢文學の研究 (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2003).
[94] As mentioned by Brian Steininger, as opportunities for *kika* scholars were limited, they were more inclined to produce useful works to win the favour of private patronage or support from the court. Nonetheless, while their composition spaces may have been narrow, this does not necessarily mean that they abandoned the idea of '*monjō keikoku*'.

building through literary activities" to introspective poet-literati'.[95] Shibayama believes that Fujiwara no Akihira's deliberate exclusion of the *Ryōunshū* in compiling *Honchō Monzui* indicates that he himself no longer advocated the idea of *monjō keikoku* presented in *Ryōunshū.*[96] Shibayama also notes the display of the 'aesthetic awareness',[97] 'culture of discontent',[98] and 'personal and temporary interests' in *Honchō Monzui* and some other mid-Heian *kanbun* writings.

Nevertheless, the importance of collections of earlier works during the late Heian period should not be downplayed as Satō has done. Those collections could be seen as new dimensions of *kanbun*, rather than evidence of its decline or dissipation. Take *Honchō Monzui*, for example: It can be regarded as the consolidation of *kanbun* literature as it stood during the late Heian period, as it gives a highly informative summary of the *kanshibun* works over the preceding 240 years. Moreover, *Honchō Monzui* also provides a classification of *kanshibun* texts in terms of their literary styles, which not only creates a model and a reference for contemporary writers but can also be seen as a literary legacy.

Finally, in regard to S*ō* 表 (memorials to the throne), and *sōjō* 奏狀 (petitions), attesting to his concern with statecraft and his awareness of *kanbun*'s state-building character.

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[95] Saeko Shibayama, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways": The Twilight of Early Chinese Literary Studies and the Rise of Waka Studies in the Long Twelfth Century in Japan' (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012), 55.
[96] Shibayama, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 55.
[97] Shibayama, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 55.
[98] Shibayama, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 55.

Kawaguchi is convinced that *kanbun* should be regarded as part of Japan's 'national literature'.[99] He argues that, although it was introduced under the profound influence of classical Chinese literature, *kanbun* underwent significant development once it occupied the realm of Japanese literature (日本文学),[100] and it was different from the former. This notion of *kanbun* being part of Japanese literature while being a hybrid form resonates with the findings in this paper, particularly taking into account the complex feelings that modern scholars have towards *kanbun*, and the sense of a 'national literature' that arose during the Heian period.[101]

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[99] Here it seems Kawaguchi limited *kanbun* to 'Chinese written by Japanese (日本漢文)'.
[100] Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 13.
[101] There are disputes over whether to regard *kanbun* as 'national literature' in Japan. Tomi Suzuki gives us a definition of national literature articulated by Meiji scholars, according to which it 'is the body of writing in which the people of a nation have expressed their particular thoughts, feelings and imagination in their national language. Literature is universal for all nations, whereas national literature is particular to one nation.' By this definition, *kanbun* would be excluded from the national literature of Japan at that time. There was also a trend from the late nineteenth century that used to exclude *kanbun* from the pantheon of national literature while elevating the importance of *kana* literature in that context. See Tomi Suzuki, 'Gender and Genre: Modern Literary Histories and Women's Diary Literature', in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, eds., Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 75. Smits refers to this as 'institutional bias'. See Ivo Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 109. Also, some scholars have stated that the use of (the) Chinese writing system remains a burden to the Japanese. For example, Richard Bowring once believed that the use of classical Chinese in Heian Japan not only oppressed the creativity of men, but also became an instrument for the political oppression of women. See Bowring, *Landmarks of Literature: Murasaki Shikibu, The Tale of Genji* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 11. Borgen states that 'the men who wrote some of Japan's greatest poetry also knew Chinese. They did not suffer from the experience. More likely, knowledge of a foreign language and culture was intellectually stimulating. Classical Chinese may have been hard to learn, but once mastered, it was beneficial.' See Robert Borgen, 'The Politics of Classical Chinese in the Early Japanese Court', in *Rhetoric and the Discourses of Power in Court Culture: China, Europe, and Japan* eds., David R. Knechtges and Eugene Vance (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 2005), 201. As for women learning *kanbun* in the Heian period, Borgen surmises that 'educated women could at least read Chinese', citing examples from the works of Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shōnagon in which one can find many *kanbun* allusions and references to Chinese poems. Sakaki Atsuko offers the analogy of 'sliding doors', which, as she puts it, 'can be opened and closed with ease, allowing the control of visibility, ventilation, and movement from room to room.' That is to say, although there were boundaries, some Heian women would have had access to the room that was supposed to be reserved for men, referring in this instance to *kanbun*. She further argues that at least some Heian women had opportunities to learn Chinese literature informally, pointing to Murasaki Shikibu. Sakaki Atsuko observes that, in *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, Murasaki expresses regret 'that her learning in Chinese would not be appreciated because she had been born a woman.' Sakaki Atsuko, *Obsessions with the Sino-Japanese Polarity in Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 105–108.

In sum, *kanbun* had developed into new spaces of expression that instead deepened its diversity and dynamics. Similarly, the appearance of *kanbun* collections could be seen as a consolidation of *kanbun* works, providing an overall summary of earlier *kanbun* texts and paying tribute to the *kanbun* writing spirit. It is possible that *kanbun* might have become localised and popularised, and some of its original functions fragmented, as is suggested by Kawaguchi Hisao. *Kanbun* also deepened its diversity and dynamics while being used in public spaces for subversive, satirical, and erotic genres of writing. But does that suggest that Heian scholars ceased to engage in politics and no longer believed in *monjō keikoku* as suggested by Shibayama? Did the evolution of *kanbun* writing ignore statecraft, focusing exclusively on personal interest? Compressed composition spaces and chances at the court would naturally limit their chances to engage directly with government issues; and it is understandable that some of the *kanbun* compositions of side-lined scholars would tend to focus more on the personal banquets, poetic prefaces and other topics requested by their male patrons. However, one can also notice some of the satirical or even subversive pieces of *kanbun* writing as collected in *Honchō Monzui*. As Fukuzawa Tōru suggests, scholars who felt themselves to be unfairly treated at the academy and were dissatisfied with regent politics as conducted by the Fujiwara family, gathered around the crown Prince. Mostow, in the context of the rivalry between Fujiwara no Michinaga and *kanbun* scholars at the academy, suggests that Michinaga supported women's writing in *kana* in order to enhance his political

position in relation to imperial authority.[102] In this sense, *kanbun* could also be seen as a literary rebellion against regent politics, a potentially *monjō keikoku* model of different ways in which Heian scholars engaged with politics irrespective of their positions at the court. While acknowledging the difficulty of distinguishing between public writing and private in the Heian *kanbun* genre, one may nonetheless posit that satire and criticism held the potential to suggest an alternative social order that could benefit the nation and improve governance. This is especially relevant to the conflict of power and authority between a legitimate emperor, notwithstanding his position as a spiritual symbol, and the Fujiwara regents. In that sense, it is feasible that the *Honchō Monzui* texts cited herein are advocating an improvement in the social order, while not necessarily aimed at totally overthrowing the current one.

Although *Shin Sarugakuki* includes some coarse language as well as depictions of sexual organs and grotesque human bodies, it is by no means a marginal *kanbun* or frivolous entertainment text from the Heian period. Rather, it touches upon interesting and important aspects of Heian *kanbun*. In particular, the topic of *sarugaku* could be regarded as a space where Heian scholars reflect on such problems as how popular entertainment and society should interact,[103] how Heian scholars manage the tension and new social trends in their writing, and the extent to which popular entertainment should be consistent with the social fabric. In addition, Fujiwara no Akihira explores the various roles that commoners played in

[102] Mostow, 'Mother Tongue and Father Script,' 137.
[103] 'Entertainment' here signifies gatherings, performances, and social/cultural events.

society, spotlighting them in a manner rarely seen in contemporary *kanbun* writing. Fukuzawa suggests that *Shin sarugakuki* resonates with modern pluralistic social-values that embrace freedom and equality,[104] which coincides with the rising participation of commoners in social activities that *sarugaku* witnessed.

6. *Shin Sarugakuki* and Fujiwara no Akihira

Fujiwara Akihira was himself a *kika* scholar at the State Academy. Ōsone Shōsuke and Kawaguchi joined on Fujiwara no Akihira's biography collected in Kurokawa Harumura's 黒川春村 (1799–1867) *Sekiso manpitsu* 碩鼠漫筆[105] and summarised brief accounts of Fujiwara no Akihira.[106] According to Ōsone, Fujiwara no Akihira's father, Fujiwara no Atsunobu 藤原敦信 was of the fifth rank at court. He was a *Kidendō* scholar from a *kika* background, as explained above, and so, although he was a very talented *kanbun* scholar, his ambitions were thwarted. Atsunobu educated and cultivated his son with high hopes for his future, as recorded in *Gōdanshō*.[107] While conversing with the scholar Kuninari, Atsunobu expressed the hope that his son Fujiwara no Akihira could grow up to be as successful as Kuninari. Despite his *kika* background, Fujiwara no Akihira presented himself as a critical figure in the revival of *kanbun* literature at court.[108] Fortunately, he succeeded in

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[104] Fukazawa Tōru, *Toshi kūkan no bungaku*, 54.
[105] '明衡朝臣小伝' in Kurokawa Harumura 黒川春村, *Sekiso manpitsu* 碩鼠漫筆, eds., Kitagawa Hirokuni 北川博邦 and Mori Senzō 森銑三. In vol. 7 of *Zoku nihon zuihitsu taisei* 続日本随筆大成, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1979), 36–38.
[106] Ōsone, *Ōchō Kanbungaku ronkō*, 18–47.
[107] '秀才国成来談敦信亭事' in Ōe no Masafusa, *Gōdanshō*, 536.
[108] Ōsone, *Ōchō kanbungaku ronkō*, 47.

having his family lineage designated as inheritable in the State Academy. Key dates for Fujiwara no Akihira have not been exactly documented, and scholars have made varied assumptions.[109] This study adopts Kawaguchi's suggestion that Fujiwara no Akihira was born in 987 and died in of 1066.[110] As for his titles, according to the *Sekiso manpitsu*, after Fujiwara no Akihira passed the *taisaku* examination (対策及第), he became the royal secretary of the Crown Prince (東宮蔵人), then the governor of *Izumo* province (出雲守) and Deputy Commissioner of Ceremonies (式部少輔). Later, as a lower fourth rank scholar (従四位下), he was named *daigaku no kami* 大学頭 (Head of the University), and finally, in his seventies, he became *monjō hakase* 文章博士 (Professor of Literature) and *tōgū gakushi* 東宮学士 (Tutor of the Prince). According to Ōsone Shōsuke's research, the claim that Fujiwara no Akihira was once appointed as the 'City Commissioner of the Right (右京大夫)' is subject to dispute, as it was never mentioned in any government letters written by Fujiwara no Akihira.[111]

Because of his *kika* background, Fujiwara no Akihira's path at the academy was not an easy one, but his tutor Ōe no Masahira 大江匡衡 (952–1012) was his strong supporter at the academy, enabling him to advance his career.[112] Interestingly enough, Ōe no Masafusa, Ōe no Masahira's grandson, regarded himself as the 'protégé' of Fujiwara no Akihira.

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[109] Ōsone listed six assumptions: 1. 987–1066; 2. 988–1065; 3. 989–1066; 4. 987–1067; 5. 990 to 995—1066; 6. 998–1066. Ōsone, *Ōchō kanbungaku ronkō*, 47.
[110] Kawaguchi, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 315.
[111] Ōsone, *Ōchō kanbungaku ronkō,* 53.
[112] Ōsone, *Ōchō kanbungaku ronkō,* 14.

Masafusa writes that one of the most memorable events of his life was receiving praise from Fujiwara no Akihira for writing 'The Stone Buried by the Falling Leaves'. Despite conflicts between the hereditary (Ōe family) scholar and the unaffiliated one (Akihira), this valuable mentoring relationship passed down from one generation to the next and cultivated several talented scholars during the Heian period. In this sense, Fujiwara no Akihira was very fortunate. Fujiwara no Akihira had few significant promotions at the academy, remaining in the fifth rank for seventeen years. At quite an advanced age, Fujiwara no Akihira was still writing poems protesting his insignificant and humble status at the court, many of which were collected in the *Honchō Mudaishi* 本朝無題詩 (*Poems from Our Court Without Allusive Titles*, 1162–64).[113] When he was the governor of *Izumo* province, he compiled *Unshū Ōrai*, the earliest literature of correspondence in Japan. In 1053, when Fujiwara no Akihira was in his late sixties, he was asked to give a name to the new-born prince; after that he gradually consolidated his position at the academy. It was also in his later years (age seventy-two) that he was appointed as *monjō hakase* and *tōgū gakushi.* Exploring Fujiwara no Akihira's experience can facilitate our understanding of his writings. It is also useful to consider his work, in the context of other mid-Heian *kanbun* works, as textual material that was shaped by contemporary culture and society, but which had its own dynamics, serving as an echo of that time.

[113] Ōsone, *Ōchō kanbungaku ronkō*, 30–31.

The oldest existing edition of *Shin Sarugakuki* is from 1243, although the author's name is not mentioned in that edition. In later editions, Fujiwara no Akihira is credited as the writer of *Shin Sarugakuki.*[114] The second oldest edition of *Shin Sarugakuki,* dated 1344, contains a commentary inscribed inside the book in 1515 to the effect that 'this was written by Fujiwara no Akihira, Deputy Commissioner of Ceremonies, lower fourth rank, *monjō hakase* and *tōgū gakushi* (或本云、式部少輔文章博士兼東宮学士従四位下藤原朝臣明衡作云)'.[115] I would still credit Fujiwara no Akihira as the author of *Shin Sarugakuki* based on similarities in the vocabulary and subject matter of *sarugaku* performance and sex organs in *Shin Sarugakuki* and Fujiwara no Akihira's other writings, such as *Unshū Ōrai* and the *Honchō Monzui*. Also persuasive is the inclusion in *Shin Sarugakuki* of extensive useful lists of objects pertaining to different fields and occupations, which indicate the author's breadth of knowledge and deep understanding of the people living in the capital city. Few scholars would have such knowledge and the ability to construct such a detailed story as *Shin Sarugakuki*. As also suggested by Kawaguchi Hisao and Joan Piggott, Fujiwara no Akihira had served in the Uemonfu and the Royal Police, and was known as the *saemon no jō* 左衛門 (Lieutenant of the Left Palace Gate Guards). The lieutenant in *Shin Sarugakuki* was

[114] According to research of Ōsone, although it is widely believed that *Shin Sarugakuki* was written by Fujiwara no Akihira, there are scholars such as Yashiro Hirokata and Ōmi Shōji who argue that it is hard to recognise Fujiwara no Akihira as the author of this text. Yashiro maintains that the content is too obscene to be the work of a decent scholar-official such as Fujiwara no Akihira and suggests that someone else might have written it under his name. Ōmi Shōji for his part suggests that *Shin Sarugakuki* could have been written in the *Insei* period, some 80 years after Fujiwara no Akihira's death. See Ōsone, *Ōchō kanbungaku ronkō,* 52.
[115] Kawaguchi, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 352.

illustrated as the *uemon no jō* 右衛門 (Lieutenant of the Right Palace Gate).[116] It seems likely that the depiction of the lieutenant and his family members could have been based in part on Fujiwara no Akihira's own experience serving as the lieutenant, supporting the theory that Fujiwara no Akihira is the writer of *Shin Sarugakuki*.

As for when *Shin Sarugakuki* was written, there are mainly three assumptions: (1) in 1024–1036, (2) in 1032, or (3) in 1053–1064. Kawaguchi's notion that it was possibly written around 1053 seems most likely. Kawaguchi believes that since Fujiwara no Akihira remained in the fifth rank for 17 years, until his late sixties, and spent that period frustrated by his lack of recognition and promotion at court, he would have had ample time to observe the society and record those observations. Kawaguchi also suggests that Fujiwara no Akihira may have found a temporary spiritual outlet in the Inari Festival[117] and the *sarugaku* performances that followed them, seeking to alleviate his frustration. It is likely that Fujiwara no Akihira would have observed the rising popularity of *sarugaku* and other forms of entertainment during that time and the possible attendant social trends. *Shin Sarugakuki* observed and witnessed the social anxiety and the uncertainties that appeared in the late Heian period. These were demonstrated by his obsession with popular entertainment, some of it highly exaggerated in *Shin Sarugakuki*, causing the latter to be seen as a revolutionary work by Kawaguchi.[118]

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[116] '此中、西京有右衛門尉者', Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 30. A mid-ranking official, probably a royal policeman.
[117] Inari, '稲荷', refers to the 'God of Harvest'. According to Kawaguchi, people would greet the 'God of Harvest' in mid-March ('迎') in the Inari Shrine ('稲荷社'), bring it to and worship it in a different place ('御旅所'), and welcome it back to the Shrine in April, when the Inari Festival started. Kawaguchi, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 43.
[118] Kawaguchi, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 321.

As for the possible readership of *Shin Sarugakuki*, Fukazawa Tōru, Kawaguchi, and Yamauchi Masujirō all suggest that *Shin Sarugakuki* conveys some of the characteristics of *ruijū* literature; in particular, it has elements of the encyclopaedic dictionaries that were written and compiled as guidance for the senior courtiers or even the emperor. The written formats of *Shin Sarugakuki* include a few exhaustive lists of subjects, as well as extensive coverage of the people living in the capital, together with a collection of conventionalised portrayals of people drawn from literary resources. This evokes an encyclopaedic format of writing and a potential educational purpose. *Ruijū* books and educational books were common in the Heian period and were used as reference books for readers ranging from the emperor to *kanbun* beginners. Fukuzawa Tōru explores the encyclopaedic features of *Shin Sarugkuki* and regards it as an 'encyclopedia of the city 都市の百科全書'.[119] He also highlights the importance of *ruijū* books as they were used as textbooks for the emperors and aristocrats.[120] In that sense, one can also recognise Fujiwara no Akihira's ambition of modelling on this particular format in constructing people of different social background and occuptions.

As we have seen, *Shin Sarugakuki* can be read in terms of several key aspects of Heian literary culture, as the following chapters examine in more detail.

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[119] Fukazawa Tōru 深沢徹. '1000 nenki no shakaigakusha: fujiwara no akihira cho shinsarugakuki ni okeru sarugaku geinō no ichi 一〇〇〇年紀の社会学者: 藤原明衡著『新猿楽記』における猿楽芸能の位置'. In *Nihon Bungaku* 日本文学, 57 (7) (July 2007): 41–42.
[120] Fukazawa, '100 nenki no shakaigakusha', 41–42.

Chapter Two examines how the topic of *sarugaku* raises more serious aspects of Heian *kanbun*, arguing that Fujiwara no Akihira's treatment of *sarugaku* implicates a variety of social issues. It looks first at the depiction of *sarugaku* in different *kanbun* texts, starting with a *taisaku* 対策 shared between the Emperor Murakami and a *Kidendō* student, Fujiwara no Masaki, regarding the *sangaku* (*sarugaku*) issue. In this text, the emperor expresses concern over potential threats that *sangaku* might pose to the social fabric, while Masaki advocates a receptive attitude towards the genre. In addition, some of the themes in *Shin Sarugakuki* are hinted at in other *kanbun* texts. For example, such scholars as Fujiwara Akihira and Ōe no Masafusa elaborate on the unorthodox and dangerous aspects of this type of popular entertainment. Fujiwara no Akihira develops his construction of *Shin Sarugakuki* based on questionable and unorthodox aspects of *sarugaku*, and depicts it in a humorous and satirical fashion while at the same time offering up exhaustive factual material in different fields. There was similar tension found in the illustration of *dengaku*, but it was depicted as being more dangerous and was associated by Masafusa with ominous and supernatural elements, such us the fox spirit, which constructed an intimidating and mysterious supernatural force that elites would keep their distance from. Thus, a study of the depiction of *dengaku* in two other *kanbun* texts can shed light on how a similar type of popular entertainment was treated in a similar social context, enhancing our understanding of *Shin Sarugakuki* by approaching it from a different angle.

Chapters Three and Four respectively offer two different perspectives on *Shin Sharaguki*, based on inconsistent, potentially contradictory indications contained in the text.

Chapter Three discusses the comic, erotic, and even subversive elements in *Shin Sarugakuki*, analysing the carnival scenes and unconventional figures that Fujiwara no Akihira depicts which challenged social norms and blurred traditional boundaries. It also takes into account Bakhtin's carnival concept to analyse the anti-hierarchical spirit, grotesque bodies, and sexualised women presented in *Shin Sarugakuki*. The dual identity of the *asobi* 遊女 (women entertainers) presented in the text and the potential for expanded spiritual spaces are also explored.

On the other hand, Chapter Four recognises the extent to which Fujiwara no Akihira embraces stereotypes and designates hierarchies in *Shin Sarugakuki*. It looks at the text's educational aspects and his encyclopaedic ordering of knowledge, as evidenced by his conventionalised depictions of certain types of people drawn from literary resources, and several exhaustive lists of information and objects. The intertextual connection between *Shin Sarugakuki* and other reference and educational works, including Fujiwara no Akihira's *Unshū Ōrai* 雲州往来, suggests that *Shin Sarugakuki* was intended to have educational value. The case is made for *Shin Sarugakuki* to be seen as a work of both educational and entertainment dimensions. It is a creative and even experimental piece of writing that demonstrates Fujiwara no Akihira's profound skills in composing *kanbun* as well as his

thorough knowledge of various areas of society, making it potentially a showpiece that would appeal to high ranking patrons.

While presenting seemingly conflicting ideas within the conventions of texts, Chapters Three and Four show that *Shin Sarugakuki* suggests a variety of possibilities for the purposes that Heian scholars could realise with *kanbun*.

Chapter Five examines how Fujiwara no Akihira compiled *Honchō Monzui* and looks at the satirical and erotic elements in *Honchō Monzui* and relates them to the analysis of *Shin Sarugakuki*. Particular attention is paid to the '*monjō keikoku*' model in *Honchō Monzui* and the manner in which Heian scholars explored in *Honchō Monzui* new ways to use the language of *kanbun* to respond to social tensions and move in the direction of social service. This examination can help us contextualise the way Fujiwara no Akihira wrote *Shin Sarugakuki*.

Chapter Two

Fujiwara no Akihira's depiction of *sarugaku* can be connected to some social issues that appear as themes in other *kanbun* texts — for instance, popular entertainment and commoners, music, and political authority. This chapter examines how the topic of *sarugaku* relates to more serious issues of Heian *kanbun*, which can help us to contextualise the way Fujiwara no Akihira treats *sarugaku* in *Shin Sarugakuki*.

First let us consider a *taisaku* 対策 (question and answer examination) administered by the Emperor Murakami 村上天皇 (926–967) to a *Kidendō* student, Fujiwara no Masaki 藤原雅材,[1] regarding the subject of *sangaku* 散楽. In it, the emperor offers both positive and negative attributes of *sangaku* and asks Masaki to discuss them. The student makes a case for the acceptance of *sangaku*. The emperor first suggests the potential threats that *sangaku* might pose to public administration, referencing Confucius's ideas on music and governance. From this we understand that the consideration of *sangaku* implicates important issues having to do with whether this form of popular entertainment can be consistent with the contemporaneous social order or will work against it. It likewise raises questions as to how

[1] Masaki completed his *monjō tokugōshō* 文章得業生 (distinguished scholar of letters) degree in 957 and became a *kurōdo* 蔵人 (royal secretary) in 960. As suggested in *Gōdanshō*, Emperor Murakami spoke highly of Masaki's *kanbun* knowledge. See Shigeta Michi 重田みち, '*Honchō monzui shoshu "ben sangaku" no kisoteki kenkyu: Honbun kotei - kaishaku oyobi sono geinoronteki kosats*u' 本朝文粋所収辨散楽の基礎的研究 ——本文校訂・解釈及ひその藝能論的考察 (PhD dissertation, Kyoto University of Art and Design), 47, and Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡, *Honchō monzui* 本朝文粋, eds., Ōsone Shōsuke 大曽根章介, Gotō Akio 後藤昭雄, and Kinpara Tadashi 金原理. In vol. 27 of *Shin nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 396.

popular entertainment and society are expected to interact and how Heian elites viewed commoners, art, and society more generally in their depictions of popular entertainment. Apart from this *taisaku*, the depiction of *sarugaku* in other *kanbun* texts — written for different purposes and potentially different audiences — is also examined. It is informative to see how *sarugaku* was discussed in different scenarios and contexts in the Heian period, demonstrating how the topic of *sangaku*/*sarugaku* provided a space where writers could talk about art and society, offering more perspectives for our reading of *Shin Sarugakuki*.

The next section focuses on the depiction of *dengaku* (the 'field music') performances, which gained popularity along with *sarugaku* in the late Heian period. The treatment of *dengaku* overlaps with that of *sarugaku* in interesting ways. Of particular interest is the depiction of *dengaku* in *Rakuyō Dengakuki* and *Chūyūki* 中右記, written by Ōe no Masafusa and Fujiwara no Munetada 藤原宗忠 (1062–1141) respectively. There were similar tensions in the depiction of *sarugaku* as in that of *dengaku*, but it seems that *dengaku* was generally regarded as the more dangerous of the two and tended to be associated with ominous and supernatural elements. One example would be the fox spirit, which created an intimidating and mysterious supernatural force from which elites were inclined to keep a distance. In fact, both *sarugaku* and *dengaku* have provided extensive material showing how Heian elites regarded popular entertainment and society. Fujiwara no Akihira develops his construction of *Shin Sarugakuki* around the ambiguous and unorthodox aspects of *sarugaku*, highlighting its grotesque and carnival-like elements while at the same time demonstrating

his detailed knowledge of different fields. Masafusa adds supernatural elements and gossip, injecting mystical overtones to downplay a political incident, thus also demonstrating his mastery of arcane knowledge and literary aesthetics. The extreme tableaux presented in *Shin Sarugakuki*, with elites and commoners alike running naked and unchecked through the streets — and the death of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa's daughter, Ikuhomon'in, who is described in *Rakuyō Dengakuki* as having been possessed and killed by some combination of the fox spirit and *dengaku* crowds — point to the tension between the dynamics set in motion by the popular entertainment and the posture of the ruling classes, who seem to fear being either fooled or killed by it. These themes reflect the social and political changes taking place in the late Heian period and provide useful background and in-depth insights for a broader understanding of *Shin Sarugakuki*.

1. *Sarugaku* in different *kanbun* contexts

This section looks at the depiction of *sangaku* or *sarugaku* in multiple *kanbun* texts and thus helps us contextualise the way *sarugaku* was depicted in *Shin Sarugakuki*:

1) A *taisaku* from *Honchō Monzui*, in which the emperor and the scholar Masaki engage in a substantive discussion of *sangaku*. Usually *taisaku* was set as the highest level of the civil service examination, which meant that its possible readers would be emperors, professors, senior fellows, and students at the academy. In this *taisaku*, *sangaku* was related to the topics of music and society, entertainment and statecraft, and how an emperor should manage his empire.

This *taisaku* was collected in *Honchō Monzui*, seen as one of the most influential literary collections in the Heian period and regarded in later times as the definitive model for writing *kanbun*. *Honchō Monzui* introduced many scholars to the significance of *kanbun*. Thus, one may ascribe a tremendous readership to this *taisaku,* in which the discussion of *sarugaku* is closely related to government and politically oriented subjects.

2) Aristocratic diaries. The depiction of *sangaku*/*sarugaku* in two diaries, *Midō Kanpakuki* and *Shōyūki* 小右記, is instructive. Both display negative and condescending attitudes towards *sarugaku* or *sangaku* performances.

3) *Unshū Ōrai* 雲州往来. Compiled by Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai* offers a catalogue of formulas for writing and reading letters. *Unshū Ōrai* employs extensive and descriptive vocabulary in describing the *sarugaku* performance and highlights its carnivalesque quality.

In comparison, Fujiwara no Akihira showcases the unorthodox and subversive dynamics of *sarugaku* and exaggerates its grotesque and satirical elements in *Shin Sarugakuki*. What is more, *Shin Sarugakuki* embodies a perspective shift whereby the audiences are not merely entertained by the performers as they were in other *kanbun* diaries, but are offered as the main attraction in the text. Readers are invited to be amused by their awkward and comical behaviour at the performance, which was not seen in the texts stated above.

2. *Sarugaku* in *taisaku*

Honchō Monzui includes 13 sets of *taisaku* works. Only *Kidendō* scholarship students and those from established scholar families were allow to sit the *taisaku* exam, as it was the highest level of civil service examination.[2] Those who successfully passed it could expect to have exceptional career paths — assuming such positions as Professor of Literature, Head of the Academy, or Head of the Ministry of Ceremonies.[3] Usually the subject matter of the questions in the examination was carefully chosen by renowned professors. In one *taisaku* sequence, the question was written by the emperor himself.[4] He was very interested in *sangaku* and asked the scholar to discuss the issue of its potential influence over the governance of the state,[5] which suggests that *sangaku* was a source of deep concern for him. Ordinarily the format of the *taisaku* was to pose a question (問) and challenge the respondents to present and analyse the pros and cons of the given subject (対). In this *taisaku*, Emperor Murakami and Fujiwara no Masaki discuss questions relating to *sangaku* (弁散楽).

The Emperor poses his question (問) as follows:

> The flourishing of *sangaku* has been happening for a long time. When dancers and performers entered the Country of Lu（魯) (and performed), their feet were chopped

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[2] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 27.
[3] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 27.
[4] Fukuzawa also talks about this connection in his work. See Fukazawa Tōru, *Toshi kūkan no bungaku*, 31–34.
[5] As for the difference between *sangaku* 散楽 and *sarugaku* 猿楽, *sarugaku* is believed to have originated from *sanyue* (*sangaku* in Japanese) in Tang, China, and was known in Japan as early as the beginning of the Nara period. *Sangaku* was first patronised by the government and had been performed at the banquet as an elegant form of art. But later, according to the *Shoku nihongi*, *sangaku* lost the patronage of the government and was eventually abolished at the court in 782. Jacob Raz explains that, in the 10th century, *sangaku* gradually came to be called *sarugaku*. See Jacob Raz, *Audience and Actors: A Study of Their Interaction in the Japanese Traditional Theatre* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 45. Jonah Salz also mentioned that *sarugaku* 'possibly derives from *sangaku*'. See Jonah Salz, *A History of Japanese Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

off (‘断足之刑’). When the comedic performers from abroad[6] came to Japan (‘嗚滸[7] 來朝’), the audiences could barely avoid splitting their sides with laughter and dislocating their jaws after seeing their performances (‘解頷之觀’). One looks into the connections between *sangaku* and the old dances to explore its current situation. It has nothing to do with the *sangaku* that was taught by the Qiang people (旄人) as documented by *Zhou Li* 周禮 (*The Rites of Zhou*),[8] and it differs from the acrobatic performances that the Yi 夷 people[9] delivered before the emperor as recorded in *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書 (*The History of Latter Han*).[10] The Shinmoka dance performance by Senta had a renowned reputation, while the dance of the country of Sera performed by Uomaro was among the best dances in the world (‘世称妙舞’). We are not sure as he raises his whip and rides through the half-opened lattice shutters — to what does he point as he rides away?[11] At the side of a pillar he prepares a quiver — for whose sake is it that he is preparing it?[12] As Anchiyoku grows old, it is hard to ensure that his sumo legacy will be passed on. The recently acquired secret techniques of *kugutsu* at the Ministry of Ceremony — one would like to learn more about this. That it would change with the cycles of the moon, as said by the Chamberlain — is this real or

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[6] According to Negayama Tōru, *Oko* 嗚呼, originates from *da ye hu* 打野胡 from China, which is, to shout out loudly to scare the ghosts away. It was a significant element in Nuo Ritual (傩祭) in ancient China. He also suggests that 嗚巾許の猿楽 *Oko no sarugaku* refers to the *sarugaku* adopted from China. In that sense, it appears that 嗚巾許 and 嗚呼 might refer to something similar. Negayama also include a entry of o*kojin* 嗚滸人 from *Sandai jitsuroku* 三代実録 and translated it as *toraijin* 渡来人 (foreign people, mainly from China and koryō). Hence translated as ‘abroad’. See Negayama Tōru 根ヶ山徹. ‘Oko no sarugaku kara kyogen e sangaku no juyo to tenkai 嗚呼の猿楽から狂言へ: 散楽の受容と展開’. Higashi Ajia kenkyū 東アジア研究, n7 (2009–3), 56–58. Ivo Smits also suggests that *oko* in classical Japanese can mean ‘silly, foolish’, which would indicate an additional playful double meaning for 嗚滸. And he suggests that ‘Scillies’ could be one translation option for a place name that would also suggest this double meaning in English (it sounds like ‘silly’).

[7] The original character is ‘巾許’.

[8] *Zhou Li* 周禮 includes a systematic list of Zhou Dynasty bureaucrats. As recorded in *Zhou Li*, Jiang people were in charge of the official teaching and dancing of *sanyue* and Yi music at the court. ‘旄人掌教舞散樂舞夷樂’ in *Zhou Li* 周禮, vol. 21 https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=284719&searchu=舞夷 (accessed 01 January 2020).

[9] Non-Han minority groups were generally labelled as Yi 夷 people. See Robin Setton, *Interpreting Chinese, Interpreting China* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Company, 2011), 14.

[10] According to *Hou Han Shu*, the king of the southwestern barbarians brought magic and *sangaku* performance to Chen Chan, the governor of Han Zhong. Chen referred to Confucius’s ideas on music and governance and ruled that, at the emperor’s court, music and performances from Yi minorities should not be admitted. The original text in *Hou Han Shu* is ‘永寧元年，西南夷撣國王獻樂及幻人，能吐火，自支解，易牛馬頭。明年元會，作之於庭，安帝與腸臣共觀，大奇之。禪獨離席舉手大言曰：「昔齊魯為夾谷之會，齊作侏儒之樂，仲尼誅之。又曰：『放鄭聲，遠佞人。』帝王之庭，不宜設夷狄之技。’ See *chen chan zhuan* 陳禪傳 in *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書, vol. 79–81, https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=213715&searchu=陳禪 (accessed 15 January 2020), and Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 11, 29.

[11] Kawaguchi interprets it as a type of dancing performance in which the performers are mimicking someone who is raising his whips bravely but is laughed at by the audience and flees. Kawaguchi, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 370.

[12] Kawaguchi explains that it refers to a dancing performance that originated from Korea (吐羅伎) and was incorporated into *sangaku* performance in Japan. Kawaguchi, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 370.

false?[13] When the middle-lieutenant general says the *sangaku* 'sheds lights over the seats' — is he criticising or praising it?[14] One should pass the accumulated Confucian knowledge from generation to generation, and expand the world of writing by applying beautiful phrasing. It is better to imitate the monkey whose voice makes people burst into tears,[15] than to restrict oneself to making the sound of a water bird[16] who would never get used to walking on the ground.[17]

Emperor Murakami starts the essay with an excerpt from the *Shi Ji* 史記[18] that talks about Confucius's ideas on music and governance. According to the *Shi Ji*, the country of Lu and the country of Qi 齊 were going to reach a peace agreement. Confucius accompanied the representatives of Lu to meet with Qi's representatives at Jiagu; he was responsible for arranging the ceremony on Lu's side. When the greeting ritual finished, music played from

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[13] '問。散楽之興、其來尚矣。俳優入魯、還當斷足之刑。蝸潛來朝，自為解頤之觀。仰尋前日之伎歌、俯察當今之風俗、不関周禮旄人之所学、亦殊漢典遠夷之所献。船太之新鞣鞨、人為美談。魚丸之世羅國、世称妙舞。未審揚鞭騎半蔀、指何方而逃去。傍柱負胡籙、為誰人而装備。安勅氏之臨老、相撲難弁其師伝。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 94, 175.

[14] Shigeta Michi translates it as the imperial guard thinks it (the *sangaku*) is a strange performance (奇怪な藝). See Shigeta Michi 重田みち, 'Honchō monzui shoshu "ben sangaku" no kisoteki kenkyu: Honbun kotei - kaishaku oyobi sono geinoronteki kosatsu 本朝文粋所収辨散楽の基礎的研究 ——本文校訂・解釈及ひその藝能論的考察', (PhD diss., Kyoto University of Art and Design), 52. Kawaguchi points out that 'to shed lights over the seats' refers to the magic illusion by which the Buddha reveals himself when the sin is very deep '罪深い', Kawaguchi, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 371.

[15] '宜学峡猿之奇態', this expression originated from Li Shan's commentary on *Jiang Fu* 江賦 (Prose on the Yangtze River), '巴東三峡巫峡長，猿鳴三聲淚沾裳' in *Wen Xuan*, which tells that the Wu gorge is among the longest of the Three Gorges, and the sound of monkeys' voices would echo through it so beautifully that it would move people to burst into tears. See *Honchō Monzui*, no. 9, 30. This sentence first appeared in *Shui jing zhu* 水經注 (The Commentary on the Water Classic) written by Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (466–527), but it is more likely that the emperor adopted this expression from *Wen Xuan*, as the latter was widely recognised and studied in Heian Japan. Kawaguchi believes that the monkey's voice refers to the humorous monkey-mimicking performance in *sangaku*, Kawaguchi, Shin *Sarugakuki*, 373. See Li Shan 李善, 'Jiang Fu 江賦', in *Wen Xuan*, https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=99140#江賦 (accessed 01 January 2020).

[16] The similar expression can be found in *Genji Monogatari* that a water bird did not get used to walking on the ground. See Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部, *Genji Monogatari* 源氏物語, ed. Yanai Shigeshi, 柳井滋. In vol. 2 of Shin nihon koten bungaku taikei 新日本古典文学大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 343–344. Also see Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 94, 175.

[17] '馮円座而放光、亜将之談非毀非譽。子伝儒家之累葉、開翰菀之詞華。宜学峡猿之奇態。莫泥水鳥之陸歩。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 94, 175.

[18] Compiled by Si Maqian 司馬遷 (145–86 BC) of the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), it is the first historical record of China in the *Jizhuanti* style (紀傳體).

Qi's side first. It was the Yi people's dancing performance. Confucius was upset because he believed that, for such a dignified and serious occasion, music from the Yi minority was not sufficiently formal. He asked the emperor of Qi to dismiss the performers; the emperor did so. During the second stage of the ceremony, when Qi's court music was played, and acrobats and midgets performed, Confucius said firmly that 'those performers are blinding the emperors, and they should be killed! Have the officials execute them!'[19] Confucius believed that such unconventional music and performances must not be allowed because they would disrupt the order of the state.

Examining this specific entry that Emperor Murakami cites from the *Shi Ji*, we find that the emperor seems to be asking if *sangaku* might potentially blind the ruler and further jeopardise the state, referring to the way Confucius links music and rituals to the governance and stability of the state. In the same excerpt from the *Shi Ji*, we learn that the emperor of Qi felt great shame for having played improper music in front of Confucius. He was furious with his attendants, telling them that (the people of) Lu had supported their emperor in the style of gentlemen ('君子之道'), while they had supported him in the style of the barbarians ('夷狄之道')! This story clearly suggests a concern that the staging of unorthodox and improper entertainment could misrepresent the emperor and weaken his image as a 'wise king'.

[19] '匹夫而營惑諸侯者罪當誅！請命有司！有司加法焉，手足異處。' Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi Ji* 史記, vol. 47, https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=384378&searchu=諸侯者罪當誅 (accessed 01 January 2020).

On the other hand, Emperor Murakami offsets this suggestion by stating that *sangaku* in Japan is far less extreme than its counterpart in China, *sanyue*. He also gives a few positive examples of *sangaku* performances in Japan that many people enjoyed and asks for Masaki's opinion about them. Emperor Murakami also makes the comment that it is better to imitate the monkey than the water bird.[20] Kawaguchi claims that the mention of the monkey's voice refers to the humorous monkey-mimicking performance in *sangaku*. It may be that the emperor believed that a good *sarugaku* performance should evoke a strong emotional response rather than emulate the dainty water bird walking awkwardly on the ground, out of his element. Kawaguchi believes that the emperor was making fun of Confucius's ideas and did not subscribe to them in governing the state, as the *ritsuryō* system was already in dismantling. Rather, the emperor was more interested in the exotic and entertaining elements in *sarugaku*, and in folk and commoner's culture.[21]

Fujiwara Masaki replies to the emperor's questions, one by one, in his capacity as a 'Distinguished Scholar of *Sangaku*' (散楽得業生).[22] This naturally suggests that the emperor is having a discussion with a scholar who has a sophisticated knowledge of *sangaku.* This also explains the detailed *sangaku*-related questions that the emperor asks and his expectation of an expert answer from Masaki. It is possible that the construction of the fake title is a sign

[20] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 94, 175.
[21] Kawaguchi, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 497. In the light of Kawaguchi's idea, this seems to have made the subversion of the social fabric brought about by *sarugaku* less of a concern compared to its counterpart in China. But given that *sarugaku* was discussed in the *taisaku* format in a very formal way and the fact that *sarugaku* might bring disorder to the government was brought up and discussed in the *taisaku,* it suggested that it could be still related to serious social issues that would potentially bring some chaos and disorder.
[22] This title was created by Masaki himself; it did not really exist at the academy.

of self-mockery on the author's part; however, it might suggest Masaki's profound knowledge of *kanbun* and *sangaku*, especially when he states in his concluding remarks that it takes tremendous effort to master the techniques of *sangaku*. It further indicates that this was not a normal sitting of the *taisaku* examination; as described by Kawaguchi, this *taisaku* was more like a court exchange initiated by the emperor, even though it was framed in a *taisaku* format, discussing connotations of *sangaku* in a novel but still formal manner. It also shows the emperor according respect to Masaki as a knowledgeable scholar.

In his 'answering paper' ('対'), Masaki starts with a discussion of music and human emotion, first based on the Confucian discourse surrounding music and society with: 'there are wise and stupid people in the world, therefore the understanding of the music tended to be different from past and present.'[23] Suggesting that music is a reflection of individual's mood deep inside one's heart, he also borrows philosophies of music and society from the *Li Ji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*),[24] which deals with music and statecraft. These philosophies hold that music reflects trends in politics and society; if the society is peaceful, then its music will be cheerful, while, conversely, discordant or hateful music reflects a turbulent society. In addition, he argues that even stupid people will be exposed to great kindness and virtue through music and thereby be influenced and educated by it. Meanwhile the wise will dance

[23] '人之稟性、賢愚区分。楽之理情、古今惟異' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 94, 175.
[24] An important Confucian classic about public administration, social forms, and rituals. *Zhou Li* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*), *Li Ji* 禮記 (*Records of Rites*), and *Yi Li* 儀禮 (*The Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial*) were known as the '*San Li* 三禮 (*Three Rites*)' in Confucian discourse.

along to the positive music and not be distracted by other types of music.[25] This resonates with the discussion of music and governance in the emperor's question. Masaki may also be suggesting that the intelligence of an individual is not entirely an attribute of their social class, subtly implying that the elites could be ignorant, while commoners could be educated and become wise. That is to suggest that potentially all people are educable, regardless of social class. Also, responding to the emperor's suggestion of threats that *sarugaku* might pose to the state, Masaki suggests that there is not necessarily a rigid hierarchy between different types of music; rather, what determines the importance of a piece of music is who listens to it. This indicates a positive attitude towards the acceptance of *sangaku*.

Masaki shows his knowledge by connecting his statements to the prevailing ideas of music and society and invoking important keywords from classical Chinese philosophy. He compares his society to the Kingdom of Huaxu as an ideal form of government: 'Nowadays our country is back to the ancient times, comparable to the Kingdom of Huaxu.'[26]

According to the anecdote recounted in *Lie Zi* 列子,[27] the Yellow Emperor dreamed of visiting the Kingdom of Huaxu, where people lived in a natural order without government or hierarchies. The harmonious, conflict-free life of the society in the Kingdom of Huaxu suggests a laissez-faire and benevolent philosophy of the ruler — that is, a philosophy that does not require rigid rituals and social orders as prescribed by Confucian tradition but,

[25] '遂使愚憃之人、飽恩酔徳、陶染淳化，質朴之性、見舞聞歌、合応御遊。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 94, 175.
[26] '我国家時反朴略、俗類華胥。' *Honchō Monzui*, no. 94, 175.
[27] A Taoist philosophy text written in or around the fourth century CE in China.

rather, allows the people to enjoy the pleasure derived from music and entertainment and fully appreciate various art forms from all perspectives. Masaki believes that were Emperor Murakami to do so, even Emperor Yao, whose virtue is compared to the Sun, would pale next to him. And Emperor Shun's *nanfeng* (南風, 'Southern Airs') could not achieve this.[28] Thus If Murakami were to be such a benevolent ruler, the music of the country would be joyous but not indecent ('楽而不淫'); and marvellous and wonderful ('神而又妙').

Masaki concludes his essay by remarking on the time and effort that it takes to master the techniques and the vocabulary of *sangaku*, underscoring that the study of *sangaku* is a serious matter and that this essay represents the culmination of his many years of experience and knowledge in this field.

In sum, Emperor Murakami begins the *taisaku* with a focus on the potential threats that *sangaku* might pose towards the ruling class and state authority, but offsets this with the observation that *sangaku* in Japan is very different from its counterpart in China. Whereas Masaki argues that there are stupid and wise people in the world, and their understanding of music tends to be different, and also suggests that the intelligence of an individual is not purely a function of their social class. Masaki also points to the Kingdom of Huaxu as a model for benevolent leadership and praises Emperor Murakami's governance for having achieved a level of rulership could match that of Kingdom of Huaxu, so that *sangaku* would

[28] '歌舜曲於薫風、其未盡善。' It is believed that Emperor Shun 舜 created a five-stringed zither and used it to sing *nanfeng* to enlighten ('教化') his people. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, 32.

pose no threat to statecraft; he further praises the music of his country as being joyous but not indecent.

3. The depiction of *sarugaku* performances in *Shin Sarugakuki* and other *kanbun* writings

As illustrated by the *taisaku* described above, *sangaku*/*sarugaku* raised important concerns regarding statecraft and society. Even when it was no longer officially sponsored by the court, *sarugaku* still figured in the lives of members of the court, as allusions to it are readily found in Heian aristocrats' diaries.

For instance, in an entry in the *kanbun* diary of Fujiwara no Michinaga,[29] the *Midō Kanpakuki*, he talks about how a *Saiō* 斎王[30] was carefully chosen in a special event, which was one of the most solemn and prestigious occasions at the court. However, the rituals were performed in a manner that reminded Michinaga of *sarugaku*.[31]

> After the *Saiō* was chosen, the ritual started at the shooting ground; the event was just as usual. Those who could shoot well did not attend. 'There were not any skilled archers who could shoot the target. Therefore, we had them tap the target with the

[29] Fujiwara no Michinaga, by marrying off three of his daughters to emperors and eliminating his enemies and competitors within the Fujiwara family, emerged as the most powerful of the Fujiwara regents in mid-Heian period. *Midō Kanpakuki* contains Michinaga's day-to-day affairs, together with the documentation of authority affairs and the public life, the ceremonial and administrative protocols of the Heian period. Heian *kanbun* diaries, which belong to the category of *kokiroku* 古記録 (Old Accounts), provided detailed records of past behaviour at court, both ceremonial and administrative. These semi-political and semi-formal accounts documented day-to-day court affairs, ritual events, and aristocrats' lives, giving a vivid record of the culture, society, and politics of Heian society and its aristocracy.

[30] *Saiō* refers to the unmarried female member selected from the imperial family who acted as the High Priestess at the Ise Shrine on behalf of the Emperor. According to the eighth-century *Nihon Shoki*, the first *saiō* may appear as early as the third or fourth century. See more about *saiō* from Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford University Press, 1997), 322.

[31] The *kakikudashibun* of the original statement is '斎王、定まりて後、弓場初。其の儀、常のごとし。能く射る者、候ぜず。「的を射る者無し。仍りて的を打たしむ」と云々。射手の数、少なく、三番を奉仕す。猿楽のごとし。'

arrow.' The number of the archers was small, so the archers were asked to shoot for three rounds. It was like a *sarugaku* performance.

Here Michinaga draws a connection between a simulated archery match and a *sarugaku* performance. The archers, since they were not skilled, were asked just to pat the target with the arrow in order to complete the ritual, which may have annoyed Michinaga. We are not entirely sure which aspect of *sarugaku* that Michinaga associated with this shooting fiasco, as he does not clarify this in his diary, but it is reasonable to speculate that poorly arranged, unprofessional, and inauthentic nature of the archery match may have reminded Michinaga of conspicuous aspects of *sarugaku* performances that he had witnessed.

The next story is taken from *Shōyūki*, written by Fujiwara no Sanesuke 藤原実資 (957–1046).[32] Sanesuke laments that a *kagura* 御神楽 (The elegant music) performance that was meant to be refined has turned out to be a *sangaku* performance and, as such, very different from previous *kagura* rituals.[33] Sanesuke explains that, because no one knows how to perform the *kagura* anymore, the dancers whom he watched were in disarray when called upon to do so. 'Everything is like this nowadays, the latter days of the Buddhist law,[34] how could it be like this?'

Reflected in Sanesuke's comment is the concern of people in the late Heian period, as the 'latter days of the Buddhist law' were approaching, that their lives were destined to

[32] Sanesuke was appointed as the Minister of Right in 1021. He was also known for having a thorough knowledge of classical Chinese, as well as customs and rites.
[33] The *kakikudashibun* of the original statement is '今夜の御神楽の作法、宛も散楽のごとし。是れ其の人無きに依るなり。人長、又、以て泥のごとし。万事、此くのごとし。末代の事、何と為んや。今日の事、惣て以て往昔の儀式に異なる。皆、以て無きがごとし。嗟乎、悲しきかな。'
[34] Also known as the 'Decline of the Buddhist Law (末法)'.

become chaotic and violent as a consequence. Here Sanesuke compares an untrained *kagura* performance to a *sangaku* performance, and this brings to his mind the fading glory of imperial rule. The author's account of traditions that are no longer maintained and rituals that are being displaced by *sangaku* points to his own uncertainty and anxiety about the future of the state.

Apart from the negative references to *sarugaku* in these two *kanbun* diaries, we also find a detailed depiction of a *sangaku* performance in *Unshū Ōrai* 雲州往来, which contains details of *sarugaku* performances in one particular set of letters talking about the Inari Festival, presenting them in a negative light.

A letter in the collection was penned after the writer saw an Inari Festival which was followed by a *sangaku* performance. In the letter, the author tells how royals, aristocrats, and commoners mingled together to watch the festival. There is also a sentence describing how the audiences enjoyed the *sangaku* performances: 'Citizens — both men and women — could not help splitting their sides and dislocating their jaws with laughter after seeing the performance (都人士女之見者莫不解頤斷腸).'[35]

The laughing people and the carnival-like atmosphere to which the model letter alludes in *Unshū Ōrai* naturally recalls the depiction of the audiences in *Shin Sarugakuki*,

[35] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai* 雲州往来, ed. Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一. In vol. 9 of *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類従 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1959), 395.

who were likewise nearly 'splitting their sides and dislocating their jaws with laughter (解頤斷腸)'.[36]

The writer also expresses a low opinion of *sarugaku* performance in the letter: 'it (*sarugaku*) is extremely base and lacking in seriousness (軽軽之甚也)'.[37]

This letter is followed by a return letter, in which the author writes,

> In regard to the Inari Festival, a few years ago, I was invited by someone to see it, and I went there secretly to watch it. In particular, there were many interesting things. While the secret palanquin was being paraded, the ritual of making offerings and laying out the sacrifices was truly as dignified as if it were revealing the god himself. Everyone should respect these rituals above all. There is no telling how many thousands of people were participating in this festival. In order to satisfy various different preferences, there were various kinds of loosely organised performances included in the festival, such as, for example, flute performances by Futōshi, tales sung by biwa-strumming minstrels, puppet shows performed by *kurōsamaru*, and *sarugaku* performed by Hakuta.[38] Performers like these were too many to be counted….[39]

Thus, we see *sarugaku* portrayed in *Unshū Ōrai* as a type of entertainment that followed the Inari Festival — one that brought laughter and amusement to audiences but, according to aristocrats' discourse, was for the most part considered vulgar or, at least, not serious (in other words, not respectable).

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[36] '先見其形、斷一端之腸。形能者、猿樂之仙也。未出其詞、解萬人之頤。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 22.
[37] '都人士女之見者莫不解頤斷腸。軽軽之甚也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai,* 395.
[38] Hakuta 白藤太, refers to '百太' in *Shin Sarugakuki*, a famous Heian *sarugaku* performer. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki; Unshū shōsoku*, 92.
[39] The original text is '稲禾祭事。先年依或人誘引密々見物。尤有興之事也。箇裏神輿渡給之間。禮奠之嚴誠存如在之儀。敢可恭敬。供奉雜人不知幾千万。為果各々之願。猥表種々之藝。横笛内藤太之横笛。琵琶禪師之琵琶。黑長丸之傀儡。白藤太之猿楽。如此之輩不可勝計。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai*, 395.

Unshū Ōrai was originally compiled as a reference work to model written correspondence in the Heian period, and it aimed to provide useful templates covering a broad range of scenarios, including detailed vocabulary, for students and scholars to adopt. For instance, there are model letters for requesting political advancement, for asking to borrow valuable books, and so forth. That is to say, the depiction of *sarugaku* in *Unshū Ōrai* is offered in the context of a template for discussing Inari festivals as well as to provide information about the nature of *sarugaku* performance; in this instance, the depiction is negative, emphasising its carnival-like features. Taken together with the entries in the *kanbun* diaries described above, both of which seem to suggest an orthodoxy towards the depiction of *sarugaku*, or the existence of a 'standard' narrative for discussing *sarugaku* performances that is relatively negative, we see Heian elites approaching *sarugaku* from a perspective of superiority. The question is, did Fujiwara no Akihira take inspiration from the letter above, which he included in *Unshū Ōrai* (of which he is the complier), drawing on its set description of a social setting, as well as template background information and vocabulary, for adoption in *Shin Sarugakuki*?[40] Or would it be more accurate to say that Fujiwara no Akihira's novel and nuanced approach to *sarugaku*, adding carnivalesque and grotesque aspects, enriched the depiction presented by previous *kanbun* diaries?

[40] It is believed that *Shin Sarugakuki* was written in Fujiwara no Akihira's late seventies, while *Unshū Ōrai* was composed earlier, when he served as the governor of Izumo (*Unshū*). Also, intertextual links among Fujiwara no Akihira's different writings are discussed in Chapter Five.

Going back to *Shin Sarugakuki*, we see that Fujiwara no Akihira highlights the unorthodox and subversive dynamics of *sarugaku* in the text, giving equal attention to the fanatical and frenzied audience members as to the *sarugaku* performers' misstep.

First of all, Fujiwara no Akihira gives a detailed illustration of the *sarugaku* performers and their audiences:

> And yet superior and inferior are not the same, and it is worth explaining the difference. Hakuta performed with miraculous aplomb — he was without equal, past or present. Jinna gains the affection of the audience wherever he appears to do *sarugaku*. Joen is the god of humour — one look at his antics and you split your sides. Keino is the elder statesman of *sarugaku*: those in the crowd dislocate their jaws before he even opens his mouth. In contrast, the master of Agata no Ido looks good, but his speech is uncouth, and he sometimes flubs his lines. The Sesonji cleric has talent but talks for too long and makes everybody yawn. Sakanoue no Kikumasa starts out cold but warms up towards the end, while Modoribashi no Tokutaka starts off full of verve only to run out of jokes. Ohara no Kikutake lacks understanding of the art — he has lots to say but leaves the audience cold. Ono no Fukumaru is nothing but a beggar — he should not be included here. So, of late there are only four or five players who really mesmerise the audience. That is why everybody, clerical and lay folk, male and female, the noble and the base, the high and the low, bombarded the players with clothing and other tokens that streamed down like rain. Having given away their clothes, some went home naked, while others were embarrassed and crawled away like dogs.[41]

[41] Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 494. The original text is '抑上下不同。論以可弁矣。百太、高振神妙之思、獨歩古今之間。仁南、常出散樂之庭、必被衆人之寵。定緣者嗚呼之神也。先見其形、斷一端之腸。形能者、猿樂之仙也。未出其詞、解萬人之頤。縣井戸先生、雖得其體骨、詞甚鄙而、時々致言失。世尊寺堂達、雖受其天性、詞剩多而、人々為欠呿。坂上菊正、初冷而、終增興宴。還橋德高、先瞻而、末無秀句。大原菊武、此道已以不覺也。己獨榮而、敢無人間愛敬。小野福丸、其體甚以非人也。偏乞匄而、不可衆中一列。近代驚耳目者、纔四五人而已。以茲、或道俗男女、或貴賤上下、被物祿物、如雨如雲。仍百之九裸而歸、萬之八犬而去。其明朝、天陰雨降、結藁為蓑、割薦為笠。或褰袴猿踵、或被袷鶴脛。有戴疊斃臥深泥、有着筵落入堀河。見之嘲哢之人、敢不可勝計。' See Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 22.

This paragraph can be divided into two parts — the evaluation of the *sarugaku* performers and the depiction of the out-of-control audience members. It is apparent that he considers many of the *sarugaku* performances to be unpolished and disappointing: referring, for example, to their uncultured speech, inability to remember lines, lack of skill, and so forth. Fujiwara no Akihira clearly considers actors' poor delivery of their lines to be a low-class trait. Describing the performer as a beggar ('乞匄') also indicates a seemingly superior attitude towards the performer based on his unimpressive performance. On the other hand, it suggests that only performers who were able to mimic the knowledge, speech patterns, or even manners and aesthetics of the elite ('understanding of the art') were fit to entertain the elite (while being the audiences). Others would be considered unsuccessful and lowly. If one views it from the standpoint of a performer, like a *kika* scholar, one could come from a humble background, provided one rose above it through erudition and skill.

Also, one can detect in *Shin Sarugakuki* a perspective shift compared to the texts discussed above. In particular, in the latter, the audiences were invisible or at least silent, passively observing the performance. Whatever entertainment they may have derived from it, the audiences were not taking part until we find them, in Fujiwara no Akihira's account, engaged in the performance. The same can be found in *Rakuyō Dengakuki*, which also shows the audiences as protagonists in the narrative and participating in the show. There is a difference in the way the two authors depict these audiences. Fujiwara no Akihira portrays them in a satirical and humorous light, encouraging the reader to laugh at the audience

members, elite and commoners alike, who would previously have been deemed aloof, occupying a role superior to that of the *sarugaku* performers. In other words, he strips the audience of their privilege. Thus, we see that, by participating in the *sarugaku* performance, an audience was provided briefly with a space in which hierarchical ranks, privileges, norms, and prohibitions were potentially suspended.[42] The amusement and entertainment of the *sarugaku* performance offered both commoners and elites a temporary escape from convention as well as an outlet for self-expression.[43]

To sum up, this section has explored the presentation of *sarugaku* in different *kanbun* texts. In the *taisakubun* examined above, *sarugaku* was examined in a formal way, as emperor and student weighed its pros and cons and related it to a larger discussion of music and state authority. They looked at *sarugaku* first within the bounds of Confucian discourse but also acknowledged that the domestic version should be treated differently from its Chinese counterpart. The unorthodox and subversive nature of *sarugaku* was raised as a potential threat to state power, but the student, Masaki, advocated a positive and benevolent attitude towards the acceptance of *sangaku*. And he suggests that because Emperor Murakami's rule was so good hence the lewd satire presented in *sarugaku* would not pose threats to the statecraft.

[42] Mikhaïlovich Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1984), 10.
[43] This angle is discussed further in Chapter Three.

On the other hand, *sarugaku* performance was frequently associated with key words such as ‘lowly’ and ‘amateurish’ in other *kanbun* writings, suggesting the existence of an orthodoxy in relation to its depiction. Michinaga looks down upon *sarugaku*, adopts a superior tone in his writings about it, and compares a poorly executed archery demonstration to *sarugaku* in his *kanbun* diary, highlighting the view of *sarugaku* as a disorganised and amateurish form of popular entertainment. Sanesuke laments that what was meant to be a dignified *kagura* performance has turned out to be a *sangaku* performance and relates this to the coming of the ‘latter days of the Buddhist law’, the harbinger of a chaotic and violent state. *Unshū Ōrai* suggests a possible intertextual link among Fujiwara no Akihira’s various writings. While providing useful vocabulary with which to discuss *sarugaku*, it still depicts the latter as a vulgar performance.

While Fujiwara no Akihira adopts a superior perspective in his description of *sarugaku* performers in *Shin Sarugakuki*, he also celebrates the unorthodox nature and high energy of *sarugaku* when he accentuates their dynamics in a humorous way.

Indeed, *sarugaku* continued to appear in Heian elite discourse, generally depicted in a negative way. However, its status at court remained ambiguous, imbuing it with a potentially fluid or even subversive social dynamic — namely, opening up an inclusive spiritual realm that aristocrats and commoners could share. This is discussed further in Chapter Three.

4. The depiction of *dengaku* and *sarugaku*: entertainment art and Heian scholars

As we consider the unique lens that *sarugaku* offers through which to examine popular entertainment, art, and society, we may observe that the way in which Heian scholars constructed and reconstructed such popular entertainment events hints at how they understood such events' relationship to the society and their attitudes towards the issues raised by this entertainment trend. There is similar tension in the depiction of both *sarugaku* and *dengaku* in the *kanbun* texts, although *dengaku* tends to be portrayed in a more ambivalent way, with overtones of danger, and is often associated with some disturbing and even supernatural powers.[44] For instance, *dengaku* features fox spirits, which hint at a mysterious supernatural force that is more intimidating than anything in *sarugaku*. Thus, a comparative study of the two genres would be informative to an understanding of how performance arts were regarded in the Heian period. The depiction of *sarugaku* in *Shin Sarugakuki* is part of a large set of works that deal with such arts, and the comparison with *dengaku* is instructive.

Dengaku 田楽, literally 'field music', originated from the music and dancing of agricultural labourers. From the late eleventh century, *dengaku* gained in popularity and

[44] Ashton Lazarus concludes that scholars view *dengaku* as a 'mass hysteria, a protest, self-assertion, religious mass movement, and a disturbance', while he suggests rather that it produced a kind of order and enabled acts of both resistance and appropriation, 'an occasion for both the articulation and contestation of authority'. See his study on *dengaku* in Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 16–65.

gradually distanced itself from its rural origins as it found a larger audience.[45] As evidenced in *Eiga Monogatari* 栄花物語 (*A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*),[46] Fujiwara no Michinaga arranged a *dengaku* performance before the court for his daughter, Fujiwara no Shōshi 藤原彰子 (988–1074), mother of Emperor Go-Ichijō 後一条天皇 (1008–1036).[47] The performances included field music together with various other kinds of singing and dancing, some of which were rarely seen at court and regarded as odd but intriguing: 'one of them carried an odd drum tied to his waist, another blew a flute, another rubbed a whisk, others performed various kinds of dance movements, and still others — strange-looking fellows — were singing songs.' This suggests that, like *sarugaku*, *dengaku* was gaining popularity at court.[48]

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[45] Jacob Raz, 'Popular Entertainment and Politics. The Great Dengaku in 1096.' *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 40, No. 3 (1985, 283–298): 283. Also see Inoue Mitsuro 井上満郎, 'Eicho Gannen no Dengaku Sodo 永長元年の田楽騒動 − 院政初期の文化と政治', *Geino-shi Kenkū*, 36 (January 1972): 1–8, and *Nihon Geino Shi*, ed. Geinoshi Kenkyuikai (Tokyo: Hosei Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982), vol. 2, 73–77, for more background on the development of *dengaku*.

[46] *Eiga monogatari* was a historical tale ('歴史物語') that honoured the Fujiwara family; 'the flowering fortunes' especially refers to Fujiwara Michinaga's path to success. The author of *Eiga monogatari* was believed to be Akazome Emon 赤染衛門 (956–1041), who was also known as a member of the Thirty-Six Elder Poetic Sages (中古三十六歌仙).

[47] 'Someone held a tattered, long-handled umbrella over an old fellow called a field boss, who wore high clogs and a very odd-looking *kiwaginu*, and whose garment-strings were untied. There was a queer woman in blackish glossed silk, with patches of white makeup on her face, also with an umbrella and high clogs. Then a field music troupe of some ten jolly, cocky fellows came walking along. One of them carried an odd drum tied to his waist, another blew a flute, another rubbed a whisk, others performed various kinds of dance movements, and still others — strange-looking fellows — were singing songs. The field drum, as it was called, made a *gobogobo* noise unlike the sound of an ordinary drum…. The field music performers had seemed subdued during the procession, but now they apparently felt quite at home, shouting, and playing with amusing gusto.' See William H. and Helen Craig McCullough, tr., *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period* (Stanford U.P., 1980), vol. 2, 592.

[48] As Jacob Raz puts it, this new style of *dengaku* performance had very strong *fūryū* elements and thus was called the *fūryū dengaku* 風流田楽. *Fūryū* as a term developed in the mid-late Heian period, during which catastrophes struck the capital frequently, and, as a result, 'processions were organized to appease the vengeful deities, demons, and ghosts believed to have caused the affliction'. See Raz, 'Popular Entertainment and Politics. The Great Dengaku in 1096', *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 40, No. 3 (October,1985): 285.

(a) *Rakuyō Dengakuki* and *Shin Sarugakuki*: the construction of popular entertainment

The *dengaku* fad was booming in 1096, 30 years after the death of Fujiwara no Akihira, as Kyoto citizens witnessed and participated in another series of carnival-like performances, known as 'The Great *Dengaku* of Eichō (永長の大田楽)'.

The *Rakuyō Dengakuki* 洛陽田楽記, written by Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房 (1041–1111)[49] (a leading *kanbun* scholar and an important figure of *Insei* 院政, the Retired Emperor Era, 1086–1192),[50] gives a vivid description of some of the Great *Dengaku* performances of 1096. Masafusa describes the crazed audiences who witness these performances in terms remarkably similar to those used to describe *sarugaku* in *Shin Sarugakuki*. He also talks about the uncontrolled spread of *dengaku* energy in the capital, attributing it to the agency of the supernatural fox spirit.

> During the summer of the first year of Eichō (永長, 1096) there were many *dengaku* performances in the capital, although no one knows where they began. They started with people from the countryside and spread to the senior nobles. Performances continued day and night without end and included stilt-walking and pole-vaulting; the playing of hip drums, hand-held drums, small cymbals, and *binzasara*; and rice-planting rites conducted by women. The noise was extreme, and people were utterly amazed by what they heard. Various district officials, government bureaucrats, and guards each formed their own groups, some making pilgrimages to temples and others filling the streets. It was as though everyone in the capital had gone mad ('一城之人皆若狂') — perhaps it was the deed of a fox spirit….[51]

[49] See the study of Ōe no Masafusa in Saeko Shibayama, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"'. I also referred to Ashton Lazarus' study of Ōe no Masafusa and *dengaku*; see Lazarus, 'Performing Culture,' 64–94.
[50] Which witnessed an attempt during this period to restore the imperial authority.
[51] Translation adapted from Ashton Lazarus, 'Performing Cultures', 87–89.

‘一城之人皆若狂’ as a phrase originates from one of Bai Juyi’s New Yue Fu poems, ‘花开花落二十日, 一城之人皆若狂’, about people’s enthusiasm for seeing the peony flowers in bloom. Here Masafusa uses this allusion to illustrate the fanatical enthusiasm that people displayed towards the *dengaku* performance, which he credits to the influence of the fox spirit.

As with the scenes depicted in *Shin Sarugakuki*, the *dengaku* performances in 1096 also attracted countless viewers of various social ranks — commoners, warriors, and aristocrats alike.

> Warriors formed into a group, and as nightfall approached, they entered the retired emperor’s palace, drumming, dancing, and leaping around. They wore extravagant robes and skirts that had been outlawed. The municipal police also took part in the *dengaku* performances. All wore gaudy clothing and moved around the streets in broad daylight. Guests of the retired emperor also formed a group and went to his palace.[52]

The *dengaku* performance was held at the Retired Emperor Shirakawa’s palace, and his daughter, Ikuhomon’in, was very enthusiastic about it. Also in attendance were various prominent bureaucrats and many who held the Diploma of Letters, such as Lords Fujiwara no Aritoshi, Fujiwara no Arinobu, Fujiwara no Suetsuna, Fujiwara no Atsumoto, and Sugawara no Ariyoshi.

However, according to Masafusa, Ikuhomon’in was possessed by the fox spirit from the *dengaku* performance, and this led to her death.

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[52] Lazarus, ‘Performing Cultures’, 87–89.

> Ikuhomon'in later became sick and before long she died. Her *dengaku*-viewing attendants now (gathered) around her funeral carriage. I believe this indicates the presence of strange spirits that are beyond the control of humans. Who among even the wise and the powerful can escape such things?[53]

Ikuhomon'in dying after watching the *dengaku* performance relates her death directly to the crowded, noisy, and uninhibited art form that was taking hold across the country. Masafusa's addition of the fox spirit indicates a perception of *dengaku* as a strange and sinister force invading the lives of the elite.

The account of the *dengaku* performance in *Rakuyō Dengakuki* overlaps with that of *sarugaku* in *Shin Sarugakuki* in interesting ways. Both emphasise the unstoppable proliferation of these performing arts, extreme aspects of which are embellished in their reconstruction of the performances. While Fujiwara no Akihira shows the *sarugaku* performance concluding with the antics of a deranged audience,[54] Masafusa would have us believe that the great *dengaku* performances were instrumental in the tragic death of the

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[53] '永長元年之夏、洛陽大有田楽之事、不知其所起。初自閭里及於公卿、高足一足、腰鼓、振鼓、銅鈸子、編木、殖女養女之類、日夜無絶。喧嘩之甚、能驚人耳。諸坊諸司諸衛、各為一部、或詣諸寺、或満街衢、一城之人皆如狂焉。蓋霊狐之所為也。其装束盡善盡美、如彫如琢、以錦繍為衣、以金銀為餝、富者傾産業、貧者跂而及之。郁芳門院殊催叡感、姑射之中、此観尤盛、家々所々、引党豫参、不唯少年、緇素成群、仏師経師、各率其類、着帽子 繍裲襠、或奏陵王抜頭等舞、其結文殿之衆、各企此業、孝言朝臣以老耄之身、勤曼蜒之戯。有俊有信季綱敦基在良等朝臣、並折桂射鵠之輩、不偏一人、或着礼服、或被甲冑、或称後巻。驍勇為隊、入夜参院、鼓舞跳梁、摺染成文之衣袴、法令所禁、而検非違使又供奉田楽、皆衣、白日渡道、蓬壺客又為一黨、歩行参院。侍臣復参禁中、権中納言基忠卿、捧久尺高扇、通俊卿両脚着平藺水、参議宗通卿着藁尻切何況侍臣装束、推而可知、或裸形腰巻紅衣、或放髻頂載田笠。六条二条、往復幾地、路起埃塵、遮人車、近代奇怪之事、何以尚之。其後院不豫、不経幾程遂以崩御、自田楽御覧之戸、差車見御葬送之車、爰知妖異所萌、人力不及、賢人君子、誰免俗事哉。' The translation was adapted from Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 87–89.

[54] 'Having given away their clothes, some went home naked, while others were embarrassed and crawled away like dogs. When the sky was cloudy and rain fell as morning came, people bundled straw for rainwear and tore off sedge leaves for umbrellas. Some hitched up their pants and walked just like monkeys; others ran like storks, hiking up their under-robes. Others, covering themselves with tatami, fell face first in the mud, and still others wrapped themselves in straw mats only to tumble into the canal.' See Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 483.

retired emperor's daughter who witnessed them. In addition, both texts place the performances in crowded and noisy environments and refer to huge and socially diverse audiences. Additionally, both texts catalogue the various types of *sarugaku* and *dengaku* performances, as well as notable performers, demonstrating their respective authors' mastery of their subject. Both texts show a paradigm shift as detached spectators from the privileged classes give way to rowdy participant audiences from across the social spectrum who are actively engaged in the show.

As discussed before, *sarugaku* and *dengaku* performances, as a form of popular entertainment, offered both commoners and elites the opportunity for an expanded spiritual realm into which they could escape and thus find a temporary respite from the natural disasters, anxieties, economic pressures, and political uncertainties of the material world they ordinarily inhabited. However, if this escapist entertainment were to translate into a society out of control, it might damage the established social order and lead to anarchy.

The way Heian scholars reconstructed such popular entertainment events hints at the way that these scholars analysed its relationship to the society and the larger issues it implicated.

For instance, how should commoners and elites interact, and what was the place of popular entertainment in the society? What were the benefits and risks of different approaches to these questions? *Sarugaku* and *dengaku* could be seen as a medium to mediate exchanges between commoners and elites, as well as between popular entertainment and

social hierarchies. As discussed previously, *sarugaku* persisted as a part of elite discourse despite continually being labelled by superior commenters as a vulgar art form. Meanwhile the account of *dengaku* performances in the *Rakuyō Dengakuki* suggests the author's ambivalence towards the dramatic growth of this popular entertainment and the extent to which its bridging the gaps between commoners and elites could be seen as an incursion into the latter's 'territory'.

(b) Different narratives: the fox spirit and how Heian scholars construct their writings on popular entertainment

Rakuyō Dengakuki offers its own construction of *dengaku* performance. The *kanbun* diary of scholar-official Fujiwara no Munetada, the *Chūyūki*,[55] also provides a vivid description of *dengaku* performance, some of which poses a slightly different narrative to that of Masafusa.

According to an entry dated 12 June 1096 in *Chūyūki*, during the Gion Spirit Festival, the whole street was filled by the *dengaku* performance, in which more than 10,000 people participated: 'The *dengaku* festival that attracted thousands of people is totally unstoppable ('萬人田楽不能制止也').'[56]

[55] A *kanbun* diary written by Fujiwara no Munetada, which is frequently studied and cited as a reliable historical source for understanding the *Insei* era.
[56] See Fujiwara Munetada 藤原宗忠, *Chūyūki* 中右記, in vol. 9–vol. 15 of *Zōho shiryō taisei* 増補史料大成, ed. Zōho Shiryō Taisei Kankōkai 増補史料大成刊行会 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1965), vol. 3, 65. Lazarus also mentions the different narratives of *dengaku* given by Munetada and Masafusa. See 'Performing Culture', 73–100.

Two days later, Munetada gives a detailed description of the *dengaku* performance in which he participated. It also focuses on retired emperor Shirakawa's organisation of the event and the participation of the emperor's daughter Ikuhomon'in and other senior officials in the performance. He describes the interaction between the audience and performers: bewitched performers played crazy music while audiences were enthralled by the magical beauty of the *dengaku* performance.[57] These two descriptions by Munetada suggest that the writer was astounded both by *dengaku*'s rapid growth and the breadth of the population to which it appealed. Although he was moved by the beauty of the performance, he also conveys concern that the music being 'performed by bewitched people', and the sheer numbers of people joining in, conspired to create an alarming and unstoppable force.

Surprisingly, Munetada does not explicitly mention Ikuhomon'in's death in his discussion of the *dengaku* performance (which raises a question as to whether this was widely believed to have been the cause). Rather, he observes that Ikuhomon'in had been ill and fatigued every springtime for the past seven to eight years:[58]

> At the hour of the Tiger (4 a.m.) on the Eighth Month of 1096, Ikuhomon'in passed away in her bedchamber in the Rokujō Palace. She was 21 years old. (From the 21st of last month [21 July 1096], she had been feverish, and she fell into fatigue and illness.)[59]

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[57] '人々入魔奏狂曲, 不可思議神妙也。' Munetada, *Chūyūki*, vol. 3, 74–75. Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 76.
[58] '而七八年來每春令労邪気。' Munetada, *Chūyūki*, vol. 3, 82–83.
[59] '嘉保三年八月七日、寅時許俄崩于六條殿寢殿、年廿一、從去月廿二日御用身有温気、兼又令労邪気給也。' Munetada, *Chūyūki*, vol. 3, 82–83.

According to Munetada, Ikuhomon'in's health had been poor for years and worsened a few days before her death. He draws no connection between her participation in the *dengaku* performance and her death, although, ten years later, commenting on another *dengaku* performance, he does remark obliquely that a 'few years ago there were some similar entertainments, and something ominous happened'.[60] This discussion of *dengaku* accounts for only a small part of *Chūyūki*, but it points to Munetada as a Heian courtier who views popular entertainment in a somewhat negative light. He vividly documents the *dengaku* craze and how it became a feature of aristocrats' daily life, characterising it as an inexorable and even sinister phenomenon.

Masafusa, on the other hand, links Ikuhomon'in's death to the *dengaku* performance, surmising that it caused a supernatural being — that is, the fox spirit — to possess her. Masafusa mentions this strange spirit twice in the *Rakuyō Dengakuki*: first, when he quotes Bai Juyi's statement that 'everyone in the capital had gone mad' and suggests that perhaps this was caused by a fox spirit.[61] He goes on to conclude that 'this indicates the presence of strange spirits that are beyond the control of humans' and from which no one can escape.[62]

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[60] '先年有此遊、不吉事出來也。' Munetada, *Chūyūki*, vol. 6, 178. Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 98.
[61] Munetada's description also suggests a spiritual procession in *dengaku* performance but does not clarify it. For a detailed study of the fox spirit, see Michelle Osterfeld Li, *Ambiguous Bodies: Reading the Grotesque in Japanese Setsuwa Tales* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 193–198.
[62] The focus of this chapter is not on the cause-and-effect relation of Ikuhomon'in's death; rather, it is to explore Masafusa's view on popular entertainment in the way he reconstructs the *dengaku* performance while adding some more elements into his own discussion (for instance, fox spirits, dramatic intentions, legendary stories, and hearsay).

It seems that Masafusa was intrigued by the inclusion of supernatural elements in his storytelling. *Kobiki* 狐媚記 (*A Record of Fox Spirits*) offers another example of the significance of the fox spirit for Masafusa, and a similar force can be found in *Rakuyō Dengakuki*, which would also help one understand the spiritual power that the popular performance might bring to its participants and audiences.

At the beginning of *Kobiki*, Ōe no Masafusa claims that, in the third year of Kōwa (1101), there were many fox spirits in the capital city, and they differed in many ways. He proceeds to recount five fox-possession stories occurring in the capital, mainly showing fox spirits disguising themselves as humans in order to trick and cause trouble for the latter.[63]

The way Masafusa introduces the *Kobiki* resembles his opening for the *Rakuyō Dengakuki*: '永長元年之夏、洛陽大有田楽之事、不知其所起。'

In both texts, Masafusa first gives a date, followed by the claim that abnormal incidents happened in that year, establishing a storytelling framework for the unique and dramatic content to follow.

At the end of the *Kobiki*, Masafusa asserts that it is well documented in literature that foxes were prone to take the forms of human beings. He also refers to Chinese classics on fox

[63] '康和三年、洛陽大有狐媚之妖、其異非一…嗟呼、狐媚變異、多載史籍。殷之妲己為九尾狐、任氏為人妻。到於馬嵬、為犬被獲。惑破鄭生業、或讀古冢書、或為紫衣公、到縣許其女屍、事在倩儻、未必信伏。今於我朝。正見其妖。雖及季葉、恠異如古。偉哉。' Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房, *Kobiki* 狐媚記, ed. Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一. In vol.9 of *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類従 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1959).

spirits, especially foxes that disguise themselves as beautiful women, such as the *Da ji* 妲己[64] and *Ren shi* 任氏.[65] He invokes these classic tales and links them to the fox spirits that he claims are appearing contemporaneously in the Heian capital city ('now in our times, we witness the fox spirits existing in our lives'; '今於我朝。正見其妖'), in hopes that this precedent will lend legitimacy to his story.[66]

The fox spirit was used by Masafusa to evoke a menacing supernatural force. Masafusa imagines and defines this force as it relates to the popular energy derived from *dengaku* and, in doing so, exaggerates the menace and mystique of the *dengaku* performance. He incites anxiety over the alleged threat posed by popular entertainments such as *dengaku*

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[64] *Da ji* 妲己 was the beloved consort of King Zhou 商紂王 of *Shang* Dynasty (1600–1046 BC). She was depicted as a seductive fox spirit in many Chinese classics and was blamed for the fall of the *Shang* Dynasty (1600–1046 BC).

[65] The figure of *Ren shi* 任氏 was drawn from a Tang Strange Tale 唐傳奇, *The Ren shi zhuan* 任氏傳 (*The Account of Lady Ren*), which depicts a romance between a beautiful woman (Lady Ren, who is actually a fox) and a scholar (who knows that his beloved is a fox and still decides to live with her) that ends in tragedy — Lady Ren is killed at the end. Although there are some exceptions involving kind-hearted fox spirits, it seems that, in both ancient Chinese and Japanese traditions, the fox spirit was identified with wickedness, danger, and seduction. Interestingly, later in Europe there was a collection of animal tales, Reynard the Fox, and, as it appears in the title, the main literary character is the fox named 'Reynard'. The collection was also seen as a satire of contemporary human society, while the fox was depicted in a more positive light.

[66] It is worth noting that Bai Juyi also has a poem about an old grey fox (古塚狐) in his New Yuefu collection. In this poem, which Bai interprets as a warning against lustfulness (戒豔色也), the fox is depicted as old, mesmerising, and malign, transforming into a beautiful woman and beguiling men with her false charms and beauty. Masafusa once incorporated Bai's New Yuefu poem in his description of the crazed scenario of the *dengaku* performance; it is very likely that Bai's verses about this old, vicious fox also inspired Masafusa's evocation of the fox spirit in other writings. 'A fox so false, a witch like this, their harmfulness seems shallow still. True falseness that comes from the daily routines of morning and night dazzles people's eyes. A woman with fox-like charm — her harmfulness lies deep. The days grow long the months drag on while she drowns people's hearts. All the more harmful are beauties such as Bao Si and Da Ji, whose poisonous bewitchment could ruin a family and overthrow a country. Dear sir if you look between this malignancy both shallow and deep, alas how could it be that false beauty is the same as real beauty?' Referring to Jordan Gwyther's translation in Bai Juyi and the New Yuefu Movement. See Jordan Gwyther, 'Bai Juyi and the New Yuefu Movement', (MA diss., University of Oregon, 2013), 141. https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/13223/Gwyther_oregon_0171N_10647.pdf;sequence=1 (accessed 01 July 2019). Gwyther thinks this is a misogynistic poem written by Bai.

and *sarugaku* — a threat against which Heian court scholars would have to defend themselves.

Ashton Lazarus argues that the manifestation of the hugely popular 'Great *Dengaku* performances' of 1096 was owing to the commoners' resistance towards newly implemented 'equal provincial levies'.[67] The levies were collected for the reconstruction of the Ise Shrine; Masafusa was the 'noble-in-charge' of this project, and Munetada was one of the assistants. In this context, the fox spirit may be seen as a device meant to divert attention from the political undercurrents of this great wave of *dengaku* by attaching intriguing supernatural rumours to Ikuhomon'in's death. This squares with Masafusa's rhetorical flourishes in reconstructing the *dengaku* performance. As suggested by Lazarus, although many regarded *dengaku* as violent and potentially dangerous, the approach taken by scholars is of particular interest. In Masafusa's case, by reconstructing the *dengaku* performance and imbuing it with a supernatural aspect, *dengaku* is rendered as a medium that 'enabled acts of both resistance and appropriation'. That is to say, Masafusa's characterisation of *dengaku* provides a spiritual outlet for commoners and elites alike, freeing all of them momentarily from anger and dread. Linking it to the death of a royal family member is a way to invigorate *dengaku* with a strong spiritual force that would make the commoners 'symbolically central' to the performance. That is to say, the temporary blurring of hierarchies in the show served to free the commoners from social norms and constraints; while the supernatural fox spirit and the uncontrolled

[67] Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 69.

dynamics of *dengaku* represented a threat to royal family members. It allows the resistance from the commoners but at the same time we see in Masafusa's construction a re-interpretation of the *dengaku* performance, and an intriguing and threatening power application attached to the performance.

(c) Masafusa and Akihira: Heian writers and their approach to emerging contemporary themes

Masafusa conjures up the fox spirit in order to create a causal relationship between *dengaku* and Ikuhomon'in's death. Aside from *Rakuyō Dengakuki* and *Kobiki*, in which he features fox spirits, Masafusa wrote such *kanbun* texts as *Yūjo no ki* 遊女記 and *Kugutsu ki* 傀儡子記, both of which depict the lifestyle and professional activities of *asobi* 遊女 (female entertainers). As a matter of fact, Masafusa was once criticised in the *Chūyūki* for writing on incidental and idiosyncratic matters. Munetada once wrote that, despite being a great Confucian scholar, Ōe no Masafusa did not carry out his official duties; instead, he documented insignificant and peculiar subjects, many of them derived from hearsay and gossip. The world could hardly approve of such behaviour.[68] Unlike Fujiwara no Akihira, who came from a *kika* family, Masafusa was born into a well-established *juka* family and was regarded as one of the more significant scholar-officials of the *Insei* era, as can be discerned

[68] '江帥匡房、此両三年行歩不相叶、仍不出仕、只毎人來逢、記錄世間雜事之間、或多僻事、或多人上、偏任筆端記世事、尤不便歟、不見不知、暗以記之、狼藉無極云云、大儒所為世以不甘心歟。' Munetada, *Chūyūki*, vol. 7, 53. Saeko Shibayama suggests that Masafusa is 'a pivotal figure in the consolidation of administrations by retired emperors in the *insei* period', which also indicates his significance at the court. See Shibayama, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 25.

from Munetada's comment. Why was Masafusa so preoccupied with these issues? Terry Kawashima argues that the way Masafusa imitates the Chinese tradition of Tang Strange Tales in his *kanbun* writings is 'a display of the virtuosic range of a writer of official records', a textual construction of exotic subject matter that shows off his repertoire of writing talents by incorporating various types of 'strange' people. [69] As a sophisticated *kanbun* scholar, it is reasonable for Masafusa to selectively adopt both themes and formats from the Tang Strange Tales, together with other classical Chinese legends and stories, to show his mastery of the written language and his keen observation of the things happening around him. Lazarus maintains that Masafusa's interest in writing about commoners attests to their being, from the standpoint of court culture, and by focusing on those subjects, Masafusa worked out 'an authorial subject, an implicit "I" that emerges into the foreground against the background of commoner crowds'.[70] That is to say, Masafusa's works are an extravagant demonstration of his language ability, as well as his rhetorical flourishes in constructing narratives about commoners. Similar authorial subjects are found in *Shin Sarugakuki*, in which Fujiwara no Akihira has created a comprehensive picture of Heian society by profiling and categorising people by class or occupation, based on his experience and imagination. What is more, Fujiwara no Akihira's work incorporates many detailed descriptions of commoners — their personalities, lifestyles, livelihoods, and so forth, although these may be

[69] Terry Kawashima, *Writing Margins: The Textual Construction of Gender in Heian and Kamakura Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2001), 36. Also see her study of Masafusa's other two writings, 28–72.
[70] Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 16.

exaggerated or biased in some instances. His approach focuses on non-elite people, shedding light on their hardships and tensions among them, as well as their social and political concerns.

Interestingly, Masafusa was immensely proud of the fact that his writing won Fujiwara no Akihira's praise. In Masafusa's autobiography, *Bonen no ki* 暮年記, he records this as a particularly important moment in his life:

> When I was sixteen, I wrote 'The Prose of Autumn Day's Idleness' (秋日閑居賦). The former Head of the Academy, his lordship Fujiwara no Akihira, appreciated this prose so much. He always liked to say: 'that young man has a sharp writing skill; surely he won't have many competitors.' Later I composed a poem on 'The Stone Buried by the Falling Leaves' (落葉埋泉石詩); he was impressed, saying that 'it has reached its zenith.' And when I saw him a few days later, he did not stop praising me. (I'm so flattered by the fact that) I touched the great Confucian scholar (Akihira) in this way.[71]

In *Gōdanshō*, in the section entitled 'Governor General's Self-Praise' ('都督自讃の事'), Masafusa also says that being noticed favourably by Fujiwara no Akihira was one of the most memorable events in his life.[72] In addition, the *Honchō Zoku-Monzui* 本朝続文粋 highlights the 'The Prose of Autumn Day's Idleness' as one of the best of Masafusa's compositions; it is published with the inscription, '(written by) Student Ōe no Masafusa in his Sixteenth (year)' (学生江匡房年十六). Masafusa accords Fujiwara no Akihira the highest

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[71] '十六作秋日閑居賦。故大學頭明衡朝臣，深以許焉。常曰：「期鋒森然，定少敵者。」後作落葉埋泉石詩，感曰：「已到佳境。」予後日見之，未盡其美。然而感先達名儒如此。'. See Marian Ury and Robert Borgen's discussion of this paragraph in '*Ōe no Masafusa and the Practice of Heian Autobiography*', *Monumenta Nipponica,* vol. 51, No. 2 (Summer, 1996, 143–151), 148–149. See also Saeko, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 154.

[72] Saeko, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 151.

respect and refers to himself as the 'protégé' of Fujiwara no Akihira.[73] Thus, it is tempting to speculate that Masafusa's writing on 'eccentric and insignificant subjects'[74] could have been inspired or influenced by Fujiwara no Akihira's construction of *Shin Sarugakuki* and the satirical and erotic pieces in *Honchō Monzui*.[75]

Kawaguchi points out that Fujiwara no Akihira and Masafusa both took an interest in the revolutionary new popular entertainment that *sarugaku* represented ('新しい変革的な世俗芸能である新猿楽的娯楽芸能'). Although from different backgrounds, they both recognised this type of performing art as a platform to illustrate various aspects of a revolutionary transformation to a new era ('新時代') and new society ('新社会'). One may surmise that Fujiwara no Akihira's account of *sarugaku* might have given Masafusa and other Heian scholars the idea to use such entertainment as a lens through which to observe people from different social classes, and to explore how they interacted in groups, or to approach topics related to social trends and public service. Specifically, Fujiwara no Akihira found in the carnival-like *sarugaku* experience a wealth of opportunities to delve deeper into the life stories of audience members, through the lieutenant and his family, and to construct a prototypical social structure; this is the main focus of *Shin Sarugakuki*. Also, Fujiwara no Akihira goes beyond the orthodox depiction of *sarugaku* by focusing on its subversive and unorthodox nature. Masafusa for his part found in *dengaku* performance the opportunity to

[73] Saeko, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 154.
[74] As commented by Munetada in *Chūyūki.*
[75] Kawashima also mentions that Masafusa's writing of *Yūjo no ki* and *Kairaishi ki* was 'thought to have been influenced by Fujiwara no Akihira's work'. Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 36.

liven up his reportage with some supernatural plot twists, such as the fox spirit, to play upon elites' anxiety and uncertainty concerning this art form as Heian society was experiencing the wane of regent politics and the rise of the warrior groups.

5. Conclusion

The depiction of *sarugaku* performances in various *kanbun* texts shows that *sarugaku*, as a type of popular entertainment in the Heian period, was neither marginal nor merely comedic. Rather, it was closely related to key issues of statecraft, art, and society. *Sarugaku* had long existed in elite's discourse and was treated as something lowly and unprofessional in some Heian *kanbun* texts. In particular, Fujiwara no Akihira moves beyond an orthodox depiction of *sarugaku* performance by shifting the perspective of the *sarugaku* performance. The audiences, both elites and commoners, were participating enthusiastically and stupidly in the performance, and were observed in this guise by the readers. One can see humour and chaos, and a temporary suspension of social ranking in the *sarugaku* performance. This dynamic was generated from the satirical and unorthodox energy of *sarugaku*. This leads us to the discussion in Chapter Three, which incorporates Bakhtin's carnivalesque theory to analyse the blurring of social hierarchies, the carnival spirit, and the grotesquely depicted figures, as well as an expanded spiritual space found in *Shin Sarugakuki*.

Chapter Three

Shin Sarugakuki is a bizarre, highly imaginative, and complex text. Scholars have approached it from a variety of outlooks. Whether we impose modern perspectives upon it or confine ourselves to contemporaneous understandings, there is no definitive way to interpret the text. Ivo Smits finds an iconoclastic quality in the text when he links the writing of *Shin Sarugakuki* to 'a subversion of Confucian values',[1] which suggests that the work is anti-political, or satirical, in nature. However, it could be read from a different angle that is not necessarily antagonistic towards the Confucian worldview, if such a view did, in fact, already exist in the Heian period.[2] Given the inconsistent, and sometimes contradictory, content of the text, *Shin Sarugakuki* can be approached from two angles. This chapter looks at the subversive and grotesque themes of *Shin Sarugakuki* in the context of the contemporary social and literary environment, Heian Buddhist values, and Fujiwara no Akihira's idiosyncratic personality. It also incorporates Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque elements in the examination of Fujiwara no Akihira's subversion of literary conventions, the

[1] Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 122.
[2] Although imported as important Chinese texts in Japan, Confucian philosophy in governing the country was not fully applied in the Heian period.

portrayal of grotesque bodies, the revelation of women's sexuality, and the ambiguous spiritual outlook of *sarugaku* as presented in the text.[3]

To begin with, *Shin Sarugakuki*'s erotic, satirical, and vulgar elements subvert the conventions of contemporary court literature, which was known for its elegant prose style and was, in most cases, elite-oriented. Moreover, judging by the fact that the oldest existing edition of *Shin Sarugakuki* does not mention the author's name, together with the criticism of Ōe no Masafusa's writing (for supposedly dealing with odd and insignificant subjects) found in the *Chūyūki* 中右記,[4] we can speculate that *Shin Sarugakuki* may also have generated criticism and controversy in the Heian period due to some of its content being considered eccentric and vulgar.

One may wonder why such a well-educated scholar as Fujiwara no Akihira would be drawn to vulgar and prurient themes. Clues to the origin of the subversive tone of his writing may be found in the author's experience and personality. As mentioned at the very beginning of this thesis, Fujiwara no Akihira embraced controversy by ghost-writing for his students at the State Academy and teaching his students specific subjects that he knew would be on their test, effectively leaking the answers, according to the *Sakeiki* 左経記.[5] Widely seen as a

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[3] Joan Piggott is also working on a monograph of *Visions of Heian Kyoto, the Metropole of the 11th Century*. This includes an annotated translation of *Shin Sarugakuki* that also 'contextualizes Monkey Music with three historical studies of the urban environment of Fujiwara Akihira.' It appears that she also brought up Bakhtin's concept of carnivalesque in the discussion of *Shin Sarugakuki* in a workshop; however, it has not been possible to consult these works as they are not yet published. See https://www-ccd.usc.edu/tools/mytools/PersonnelInfoSystem/DOC/Faculty/HIST/vita_1003604.pdf (accessed on 01 Jan 2022.)

[4] A *kanbun* diary written by courtier Fujiwara no Munetada 藤原宗忠 (1062–1141) and seen as a reliable resource for understanding Heian society.

[5] This was a *kanbun* diary written by Minamote Tsuneyori 源経頼 (976–1039) in the mid-Heian period.

disruptive figure,[6] Fujiwara no Akihira was by no means given to caution or obedience; it seems that there were some radical and subversive tendencies in his personality, which were likely to have manifested in his literary aesthetic. One may wonder whether his iconoclastic tendencies reflect the fact that Fujiwara no Akihira was disadvantaged by his *kika* background and thus held a grudge against the academy, which could explain not only his contrary behaviour but also the satirical or subversive elements in his writing.

While Fujiwara no Akihira was critical of the hierarchical structure of the State Academy and of the rigid formulas of *kanbun* writing, he did not seek to overthrow the academy or to separate himself from it. Rather, he actively sought a promotion that would afford him some power over the discourse at the academy; thus, he could prove his value and have an impact on the institution.[7] His success in that regard is evidenced by the fact that Ōe no Masafusa, born to be a *juka* scholar and one of the most renowned *kanbun* scholars in the Heian period, regarded himself as Fujiwara no Akihira's 'protégé'. Fujiwara no Akihira's quirky literary aesthetic, the originality of his choice of *kanbun* writing topics, and his poking fun at rigid hierarchies, are common elements in *Shin Sarugakuki* and *Honchō Monzui*. His way of representing commoners and elites, popular entertainment, and social interactions also suggests a critical way to explore the significance of *kanbun* in the Heian period.

[6] Minamoto Tsuneyori 源経頼, *Sakeiki* 左経記, in Zōho shiryō taisei 増補史料大成, comp. Zōho Shiryō Taisei Kankōkai 増補史料大成刊行会 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1965), 386.
[7] Fujiwara no Akihira later became the Head of the Academy.

What is more, the ‘carnivalesque’ and grotesque imagery found in *Shin Sarugakuki* point to subversive, unconventional, and erotic themes of deeper significance. For instance, in the first part of *Shin Sarugakuki*, Fujiwara no Akihira highlights the humorous, satirical, and absurd elements of the performance. He showcases the laughter and high spirits of the various carnival-goers, among whom both genders and all different social classes are represented. He depicts some of them laughing so hard that they burst into tears, while others strip off their clothing and throw it at the performers, with the result that they must slink home naked. Such outrageous and unrestrained behaviour is antithetical to contemporary mores and grips the entire audience, blurring hierarchies and class distinctions. The way Fujiwara no Akihira constructs the carnival scene with humour and chaos, and a temporary suspension of social ranking, recalls Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘carnivalesque’ concept. Some of his ideas resonate with this text and with the historical context, leading us to identify similar trends in *Shin Sarugakuki*. Granted, this is but one way to examine and interpret this text; nonetheless, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural trends of the mid-Heian period, and also provides a glimpse into the ambiguous spiritual space of *sarugaku* that may have been shared by the different social classes in the late Heian period.

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) was a Russian philosopher and literary critic. His hallmark theory of ‘carnivalisation’, which has given us the term ‘carnivalesque’, was mainly developed in analysing the novels of Fyodor Dostoevski (1821–1881) and François Rabelais (1494–1553), particularly the latter’s *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and by studying the

popular-festival life and folk humour of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Bakhtin argues that the significance of Rabelais's works was greatly underestimated; that they connected the folk humour and laughter to the tradition of folk culture and could be regarded as a renaissance in literature. He gives particular attention to the way Rabelais presented folk humour in a wildly exaggerated and grotesque way through the device of the carnival.

According to Ian Buchanan's *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, 'carnivalesque' characterises writing that

> …depicts the de-stabilisation or reversal of power structures, albeit temporarily, as happens in traditional forms of carnival. Although this may take the form of writing about, or otherwise representing (in film, painting, sculpture, etc.) actual or imagined carnivals, for Bakhtin it was important that the work itself should come to embody the spirit of carnival too.[8]

It seems that 'carnivalesque' energy could motivate humour, satire, and grotesquery in all forms, but especially with regard to the body and bodily functions, as is found in *Shin Sarugakuki*. Additionally, Bakhtin suggests that, in Europe, the humour and laughter of the carnivals can be related to folk origins and oral traditions. *Sarugaku* and *dengaku* also have folk origins that are worth further exploration. The temporary suspension of the hierarchical order, the folk origins of the carnival, the blurring of boundaries between audience and performers, and the exaggerated and grotesque depiction of human bodies are key features of the carnivalesque motif that are relevant to the discussion of *Shin Sarugakuki*.

[8] Ian Buchanan, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*, 2010 ed., sv. 'carnivalesque'.

Michelle Osterfeld Li has used Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque as a critical tool for analysing grotesque elements in premodern Japanese *setsuwa* and concluded that these elements helped the audience to confront sources of anxiety in a way that left them feeling less overwhelmed.[9] It also offered a means of 'challenging ideologies and leaders of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods without making the attack obvious'.[10] Thus, in *setsuwa*, the carnivalesque became a communal space in literature and art that allowed for social subversion. It is interesting that Heian *setsuwa* also has content similar to that found in *kanbun*, which might have suggested a common literary trend of writing on unorthodox, erotic, subversive, and socially critical topics.

This chapter looks specifically at the following aspects of *Shin Sarugakuki*: the blurring of hierarchies, the grotesque representation of male and female bodies, the hyperbolic descriptions of women's sexuality, and the ambiguous approach to social status in *sarugaku* performance. It focuses on:

1) the carnivalesque space achieved temporarily in the carnival of *Shin Sarugakuki*;
2) the use of grotesque images of the body and exaggerated portrayal of certain figures, both male and female;

[9] Osterfeld Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 242.
[10] Osterfeld Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 242.

3) the use of satire, literary subversion, grotesque aesthetics, and the degradation of high literature;
4) communal reproduction worship among people from different social classes within an accessible spiritual space;
5) whether the carnivalesque space served as a common place accessible by both commoners and elites or a hypothetical space merely for aristocrats.

1. Carnivalesque energy and the blurring of hierarchies

(a) Folk humour and laughter in *Shin Sarugakuki*

Bakhtin suggests that grotesque imagery and the laughter it provokes can be linked to the culture of folk humour. In terms of *sarugaku* and other performing arts such as *dengaku*, the folk origins are clear. *Sarugaku* originated from its Chinese counterpart, *sanyue*, which was first taught by Qiang 羌 minorities and included various performing arts, such as music and dance, magic, acrobatics, conjuring, puppetry, monkey shows, and so forth, performed and enjoyed mainly by commoners. When this form was introduced to Japan, because it was novel and exotic, it attracted an elite audience, and was reserved for them. However, although it was patronised by the court, it retained the boisterous folk elements. This explains why *sarugaku* was often depicted in a negative view by Heian court writers, because it was not formally organised and always lacked seriousness. However, the essence of *sarugaku* is to make people laugh and free them from all things serious. And the humour is very broad,

typically deriving from absurd and exaggerated performances and from the fact that the performers were deprecated and laughed at by the audience, which allowed the latter to feel superior. For instance, the monkey performance in *sarugaku* made people burst out laughing because the performers looked like and acted just like actual monkeys.

In *Shin Sarugakuki*, Fujiwara no Akihira describes how skilled the *sarugaku* performers were at making people laugh:

> With all skilled acts and comic lines, you could hardly avoid splitting your belly and dislocating your jaw with laughter…

Then the focus moves to the laughing audiences:

> Everybody, clerical and lay folk, males and females, the noble and the base, the high and the low, bombarded the players with clothing and other tokens which streamed down like rain. Having given away their clothes, some went home naked, while others were embarrassed and crawled away like dogs. When the sky was cloudy and rain fell as morning came, people bundled straw for rainwear and tore off sedge leaves for umbrellas. Some hitched up their pants and walked just like monkeys; others ran like storks, hiking up their under-robes. Others, covering themselves with tatami, fell face first in the mud, and still others wrapped themselves in straw mats only to tumble into the canal.[11]

The reader is invited to laugh at the ridiculous behaviour of the audience, who might have been expected simply to watch and be entertained by the *sarugaku* performers. The laughing spectators become, in effect, the main attraction of the story. Bakhtin similarly spotlights the audience of the carnival, whom he calls the 'the laughing people of the Middle

[11] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 483.

Ages'.[12] He argues that the audience not only watch the spectacle but also 'live in the carnival'.[13] The laughing people thus become part of the amusement of the carnival itself. This could also be applied to the laughing people in *Shin Sarugakuki*, whose behaviours Akihira exaggerates and bestialises in the carnival, creating a satirical and humorous effect. By doing so, he constructs an interaction between these audiences and his readers such that the latter experiences feelings similar to those of the people watching the carnival. As a rule, those who are watching and laughing are asserting their superiority over those who are watched and laughed at. By inviting readers to be amused by the audience laughing at the *sarugaku*, Fujiwara no Akihira enhances the comic effect and adds another layer to the traditional hierarchies of the classical *sarugaku* audience.[14]

(b) Carnival spirit in *Shin Sarugakuki*

The laughing people in *Shin Sarugakuki* also convey a strong carnival spirit. Expounding on this spirit, Bakhtin claims that it infuses many written genres that were not implicitly comic. Rather, the texts themselves were carnivalised. According to Bakhtin, the carnival spirit embodies an unorthodox and anti-authoritarian attitude that was mobilised against the 'humourless and serious' mainstream culture of the Middle Ages.[15] In addition, as

[12] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 6.
[13] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 6.
[14] On the other hand, Fujiwara no Akihira, in describing the absurd behaviour of the audience, is inviting his readership to laugh at the antics of the viewers as well as the performers. This offers an extra layer of perspective as readers are invited to mock those above, below, and on an equal footing with them in the social hierarchy—and, in so doing, to laugh at themselves. This serves to complicate the anti-hierarchical dynamics of the carnival.
[15] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 5–7.

Bakhtin sees it, carnivals were a violation of the established natural order, representing a popular renewal and regeneration; in carnival, he says, one can achieve 'a temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order',[16] which 'marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions'[17] and provided a space for literary and social subversion. Thus, carnival, as opposed to the official holy day feasts, was 'the true feast of the time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal'.[18]

The carnival scene in *Shin Sarugakuki* is presented in a wholly comic and humorous way. This audience's participation seems, in a carnivalesque fashion, to have achieved a temporary 'suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions'[19] during the brief period of the show. This suspension allows people from the upper classes, those highly respected elite figures, to appear foolish, naked, and embarrassed. The caricaturish and provocative descriptions of the audience overturn traditional assumptions about the nobility. At the same time, ordinary folk were likewise freed from the tensions, fears, and inequalities of everyday life as they shared the carnival experience with their social betters in the carnival. This challenged the hierarchies and separation existing between performers and audiences, and commoners and elites, while also challenging conventional aesthetics.

In medieval Europe, carnivals such as the Feast of Fools and the Feast of the Ass were a tradition of long standing. As Bakhtin notes, carnivals played a large part in the life of

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[16] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
[17] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
[18] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
[19] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.

medieval communities; nearly three months were devoted to them each year. The carnival spirit was 'irresistible'.[20] Enthusiasm for *sarugaku* and *dengaku* was similarly unanimous in the Heian period as more and more people sought a spiritual outlet through popular entertainment. Bakhtin calls the medieval carnival 'a completely different, nonofficial, extra-ecclesiastical and extra-political aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations'.[21] Those carnivals provided a communal space and, in Bakhtin's view, were totally subversive to official church feasts, to the point of achieving a suspension of all hierarchical precedence.[22] In the case of *Shin Sarugakuki*, while *sarugaku* was not meant to be in opposition to any particular formal ritual, its unorthodox nature makes it potentially iconoclastic. As a genre of performing art, *sarugaku* did occasionally coincide with formal ritual observances where it entertained both commoners and elites. As interclass contacts became more frequent at such shows, the carnivalesque energy emerged. Fujiwara no Akihira captures this dynamic and exaggerates it in *Shin Sarugakuki*. Thus, it is still helpful to look at the text with Bakhtin's concept in mind. The presentation of the *sarugaku* performers and audiences in the text imparts a carnivalesque tone, setting the scene for the appearance of the grotesque characters depicted by Fujiwara no Akihira.

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[20] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 13.
[21] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 6.
[22] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10. There are scholars who argue that carnivals were different from what Bakhtin imagines; claiming in particular that not all of them seem to have been anti-hierarchical. In their view, the carnival 'violently abuses and demonises weaker, not stronger, social groups — women, ethnic and religious minorities'. See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), also Li, *Ambiguous bodies*, 48.

2. Grotesque figures in *Shin Sarugakuki*

(a) The perfectly sexually compatible couple: the fourteenth daughter and her husband

Fujiwara no Akihira depicts a couple who are, sexually at least, perfectly matched. Of particular note is the crude, extravagant language used to describe their sex organs:

> The fourteenth daughter's husband is indeed an idiot… He is very greedy and seizes everything he wants. He is good at scheming and taking advantage of others. He used to be a gambler and a thief. He does not take care of his parents nor does he have a good relationship with his brothers. However, he is known for having a penis that is twenty-six centimetres long and four fingers wide. It is as strong as a tree trunk and as hard as an iron hammer. Once erect, it will stay that way for the whole night. No girl dares to marry him, except for the fourteenth daughter, whose vagina could fit his size perfectly. The fourteenth daughter is extremely short and ugly, her face is always pale green, and her eyebrows are always red. But they fit each other precisely, like a yin-and-yang balance. So, people call them a match made in heaven. The fourteenth daughter's husband used to be a Hōō (King of the Buddhist Faith) at the Temple of Dōkyō 道鏡, but after he became the fourteenth daughter's husband, he was only known for his poverty.[23]

First, the mention of Dōkyō is worth exploring. Dōkyō (700–772) was a monk of the Hossō sect of Buddhism, as well as a thaumaturge who successfully cured Empress Kōken in 761 when she was stricken with a serious illness,[24] thus earning the latter's great trust. Later, with her support, he became a very influential figure at court. Dōkyō was also famous for

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[23] Summarised and translated from the original content, '十四御許夫不調白物之第一也。高事喚嘆自身、短弱謗他上。高聲則放逸、多言則豐顔。食歎而嗜味、負欲而要物。好笑常齒露、愛戲早面暴。所好、謀計横法、所立、博奕竊盜。為父母不孝、於兄弟不和。但有一屎、謂閑大而如横虹梁。雁高而似戴蘭笠。長八寸大四伏。紐結附贅、如蜘蛛咋付、帶縛筋脉、如蚯蚓跂行。剛如木株、堅如鐵搥。晚發曉萎。敢無被嫁之女。但此十四御許一人翫之、聊無所憚。件女見姿、頂平口甚廣、侏儒跗頗小。面色常青、眉黛以赤。陰相互和合、神所媒夫妻也。但昔道鏡院、雖有法王賞、今白太主、啻振貧窮名矣。' See Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin sarugakuki*, 179.

[24] Stanley Weinstein, 'Aristocratic Buddhism', in *Cambridge history of Japan* vol. 2: Heian Japan, eds., Donald Shively and William McCullough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1988–1999), 453–454.

having a huge penis and purportedly had an intimate relationship with Empress Kōken. This relationship has been hailed as 'the most scandalous episode in Japanese history'.[25] Dōkyō was believed to have seduced the Empress with his huge penis. Although she granted him the title of Hōō, upon her death he was immediately banished from court and lived in obscurity as superintendent (*bettō*) of a local temple for the remaining two years of his life.[26] Certainly, a man with a huge penis who advances rapidly at court is the stuff of bureaucratic satire.

The outlandishly large penis seems to be the fourteenth daughter's husband's only asset. Like Dōkyō, he used to be a Hōō but now lives in poverty. Associating him with Dōkyō invites a stereotypical analogy in which the penis stands for humanity's unlimited and uncontrolled desires as well as the chaos it could bring about if unleashed. As suggested by Bakhtin, 'a massive body often symbolises the violation of natural boundaries'. The disproportionate penis thus exceeded the conventional aesthetic principles of bodily form and blurred the boundaries between normal and abnormal.

The word 'grotesque' originates from an Italian word, *grottesca*, which refers to something distorted that might be found in an underground grotto or cave.[27] A grotesque body, as Bakhtin conceives of it,

> is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which

[25] Weinstein,'Aristocratic Buddhism', 453–455.
[26] Weinstein,'Aristocratic Buddhism', 453–455.
[27] Justin Edwards and Rune Graulund believe that grotesque work 'influences a collective consciousness, a shared set of social, cultural and historical assumptions that arise from conventional beliefs and attitudes.' Justin Edwards and Rune Graulund, *Grotesque* (London; Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 13.

> the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world. This means that the emphasis is on the apertures or the convexities, or on various ramifications and offshoots: the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, and the nose.[28]

In most Heian court literature, the description of the body is relatively vague, and even eroticism is realised more through implication than overt description. However, in *Shin Sarugakuki*, comic and vulgar language is used to describe people's bodies as well as their behaviour, mentality, and sexuality. For example, take the highly specific description of the exaggerated sex organs of this couple. Elements such as this opened a carnivalesque space that could potentially free people from constraints while challenging conventional aristocratic ideologies and lifestyles.

(b) The greedy seventh daughter and the suffering husband

The seventh daughter is obsessed with wine and food and has terrible table manners. 'When her husband is at her side, she fawns over him like a cat with her claws hidden. But at mealtime she goes wild, licking her chops like a canine.'[29] She has a lovely appearance and could have married up, but instead she married a man who rents out horses and carts, who brings her whatever food and wine she desires.[30]

While the seventh daughter enjoys a comfortable and luxurious life, her husband never takes even one day's rest and dedicates himself to his family. His only purpose in life is

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[28] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 26.

[29] English translation was taken from Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 495. The original text is '眺夫順嬌、猶如貓藏爪。望食進悶、宛如狗舐牙。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 106.

[30] '仍雖形貌端正、願為馬借、車借之妻也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 106.

to ‘sustain his wife and children with the flesh and blood of his oxen and horses’.[31] The soles of his feet are cracked ‘like Yamashiro eggplants just after frost, and his legs are chapped like Yamato melons under the sun’.[32] Notwithstanding this hyperbolic imagery, the depiction of the long-suffering husband as a lender of horses and carts sheds some light on the life of the commoner of that time. As Ivan Morris observes, Heian literature depicts the elite life in great detail, but ignores almost entirely that of the lower classes.[33] Jeffrey Angles in turn suggests that the rare descriptions of the latter in Heian literature were probably invented or imagined. It was unusual to talk about such unconventional topics combining crude description, high literature, and the concerns of commoners; ‘as a result, there were fewer texts that depict the lives of agricultural and manual labourers in a systematic way’.[34] However, *kanbun* texts like *Shin Sarugakuki* filled this gap. Although some depictions may have come in part from the imagination of the writers, the carnivalesque space is still created by the focus on non-elite groups of people.

The seventh daughter is depicted as exploiting her husband, who for his part seems very accepting of this behaviour. By emphasising the seventh daughter’s desire for food, Fujiwara no Akihira offers an extensive accounting of the food that she consumes:

> …steamed rice with quail eyes, gruel with toads’ eyes, chopped mackerel, pickled sardines, grilled whole sea bream, and carp barbecued on a skewer. Among the vegetarian dishes she prefers are malodorous fermented leeks, barbecued radish, salty

[31] ‘只以牛馬之血肉、將助妻子之身命而已。’ Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 106.
[32] ‘踵皹、如山城茄子相霜。脛瘃、如大和瓜向日。’ Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 496.
[33] Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince*, 98.
[34] Jeffrey Angles, ‘Watching Commoners, Performing Class, *Japan Review* No. 13 (2001): 34.

> fermented soybeans, and parboiled and sesame-marinated greens… For sweets she likes steamed rice cakes without bean filling, doughy dumplings, soft ripe plums, and overripe cucumbers. To drink she takes raw sake and, as a side dish, she prefers roasted beans.[35]

The list suggests the author's extravagant knowledge, which was frequently showcased in *Shin Sarugakuki*. The abundance of food also indicates the seventh's daughter's excessive appetites, reflecting her desire for excessive power. The comparison of the seventh daughter to a cat and a canine suggests a bestialisation of her character. The primitive nature of her behaviour around food and her animalised traits could be considered features of the grotesque style.

According to Bakhtin, 'the transformation of human to animal is one of the most ancient grotesque forms'.[36] The seventh daughter's greedy appetite spotlights the role that the mouth plays in the grotesque; Bakhtin calls the open mouth a 'wide-open bodily abyss'.[37] The mouth could be viewed in an erotic context, as something needing to be filled, but here seems to connote an excessive desire for food and a materialistic over-indulgence. It also paints such desires as being strong enough to control and enslave people, as seen in the description of the relationship between this woman and her husband; Fujiwara no Akihira concludes by saying: 'it is the seventh daughter who has given the household a bad name.'[38]

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[35] Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 495. The original text is '鶉目之飯、蠢眼之粥，鯖粉切、鰯酢煎、鯛中骨、鯉丸燒。精進物者、腐水蔥香疾、大根舂鹽、辛納豆、油濃、茹物面穢。菓子無核溫餅、粉勝團子、熟梅和、胡瓜黃。酒醴醪。肴煎豆。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 106.
[36] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 316.
[37] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 317.
[38] Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 495. '寔伏一家之面、只有七娘之處。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 106.

This type of grotesque feminine desire also raises a gender issue that merits further exploration. In this text, the grotesque female body is inevitably closely connected with women's sexuality, which is often depicted in a 'demonised' or 'animalised' way. Furthermore, this crude and forthright depiction of feminine desire, which stands in contrast to the delicacy of court-appreciated *kanbun* texts, offers the possibility to break free from social norms in a space in which conventions are overturned.

(c) The ugly and promiscuous thirteenth daughter and her lover, the old charcoal seller

> The thirteenth daughter is the worst of all the lieutenant's daughters. She is too ugly to be described, and too shallow to serve her husband. She has a fat body and a short forehead, with dishevelled hair and a dirty face. She has a narrow forehead, short lips (that cannot cover her teeth when she talks), long jaws, curly ears, high cheekbones, narrow cheeks, misaligned teeth, an uneven tongue, a crooked nose bridge and a narrow nose. She has a pigeon's breast and her belly is as big as a frog's belly. She cannot walk straight, and her feet are like crocodile feet. Her face is covered with scabies and dark spots. Her neck is so short that her collar is very loose but, as she is tall, the dress ends up being too short for her. She has a stinky smell and her clothes are full of fleas. Her hands are like iron claws, and her feet are shaped like shovels. She has a fox face, and once she puts rouge on it, her face is red exactly like the bottom of a monkey. She is promiscuous and not picky about her partner. She is very jealous and lacks self-discipline. She has no talent for sewing or stitching, and is by no means good at managing a home; instead, housekeeper there is not a single penny left in the household budget. She meets all the criteria of the 'Seven Grounds[39] for Divorcing a Wife'.[40]

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[39] These seven were: not obeying her in-laws, childlessness, adultery, jealousy, disease, talking too much, and theft.

[40] '十三娘者、之中糟糠也。醜陋不可見人。頑鄙不可仕主。其躰、蓬頭、額短。齟脣、頤長。攣耳、顬太。歷齒、蹄涎。腽肭、塞鼻。傴僂、鴿胸。蓬脹、蛙腹。傍行、戾腳。疥癩、歷易。短頸、而襟有餘。長身、而裙不足。身薫胡臭、衣集蟣虱。手如鐵釽、足如鍬枚。施粉、宛似狐面。著脛、猶如猨尻。婬泆而不擇上下。嫉妬而不脩心操。織紝裁縫、甚以手筒也。家治營世、頗以亡路形也。凡六行永離、七出完具女也。' See Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 168.

In the text, the thirteenth daughter's appearance and sexuality are depicted in an extreme way. Grotesque elements are highlighted, as when her breasts, belly, and face are likened to those of a pigeon, frog, and monkey. These were conventional derogatory terms used in the Heian period to convey that a female body was undesirable; apparently, Fujiwara no Akihira construed, imagined, or borrowed such allusions to fulfil stereotypical images of an ugly woman. One finds remarkably similar descriptions in the contemporary classical Chinese text, *The Lechery of Master Teng-tu* 登徒子好色賦. For example, Teng-tu's wife is extremely ugly; she has dishevelled hair, a curly ear, and misaligned teeth. She cannot walk straight. She is humpbacked and always stumbling. Her body is covered with scabies and piles.[41]

Despite her ugliness, Master Teng-tu loves his wife; she bears him five children whom they raise together. But unlike Song Yu, who plays up the ugliness of Teng-tu's wife to show just how much Teng-tu loves her, Fujiwara no Akihira appropriates a well-known literary device simply to create an unflattering portrait of a female character.

When it comes to the thirteenth daughter, she is not only ugly, but also promiscuous and slatternly. A frequent visitor to her home is an old charcoal seller who hates warm days and only waits for winter to set in. His temples are grizzled, and his fingers have all turned black. He harbours a hatred of the people who enjoy a luxurious life at court, lamenting that

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[41] '其妻蓬頭攣耳，齞脣歷齒，旁行踽僂，又疥且痔。登徒子悅之，使有五子。'
Song Yu 宋玉, ' Deng Tuzi Hao Se Fu' in *Wen Xuan Zhu* 文選注, https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=580759 (accessed 01 May 2018).

his own clothes are threadbare and patched. Covered with ash and dust, he has always relied on charcoal selling to make his living.[42]

This depiction of the charcoal seller recalls Bai Juyi's satirical poem, '*The Elderly Charcoal Seller*', which reveals the author's concern and sympathy for the poor and their sufferings. However, as suggested by Ivo Smits, Japanese *kanshi* modelled on this and other poems from Bai Juyi differ from the poems of their Chinese counterparts in their lack of moral and political undertones.[43] They tended to borrow 'descriptive passages and imitated [these] in their own poems',[44] and to depoliticise the contents in order to better appreciate them. That is why poems like '*The Elderly Charcoal Seller*' were read not as political poems so much as texts 'offering exotically new subject matter'.[45] Smits uses as an example a group of poets, including the imperial prince and many high-ranking aristocrat politicians (including Fujiwara no Akihira's own younger son who was president of the court university), transforming and recomposing 'The Elderly Charcoal Seller', which was supposed to be a critical and satirical poem. As suggested by Smits, these poets lifted sentences directly from Bai's poem, showing no concern for the social mobility of the poor.

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[42] '但近來有夜這人云々。大原居住老翁、壹岐大掾。姓山口、名炭武。常願天之寒、鎮惡氣之暖。十指黑、兩鬢白。出苦官使之奢、入憂弊衣之破。身常交灰煙、命僅係炭薪矣。' See Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 170.
[43] Ivo Smits, *Reading the New Ballads: Late Heian Kanshi Poets and Bo Juyi*, 174, http://www.meijigakuin.ac.jp/~pmjs/papers/Smits_Reading_New_Ballads.pdf (accessed 14 May 2018).
[44] Ivo Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 174.
[45] Ivo Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*,175.

The poem's appeal lay in the inclusion of the social fringe as an exotic subject matter to incorporate into their own composition.[46]

One may wonder if Fujiwara no Akihira followed this practice, especially when he paired the charcoal seller with the ugly and promiscuous daughter, the 'least flattering' type of mate that one could construct. Fujiwara no Akihira's approach, read from Smits' perspective, is to depoliticise the contents and incorporate the image of the charcoal seller in his own writing, utilising the poor as exotic subject matter in high literature; if this were the case, it would tend to weaken the satirical and subversive elements and complicate the carnivalesque space.

However, when comparing Fujiwara no Akihira's depiction with its counterparts written by Bai Juyi and contemporary Heian poets, one finds that, rather than offering 'elegant' and sympathetic, or even romanticised, feelings towards the old charcoal seller, Fujiwara no Akihira constructs an exaggerated and ambiguous figure. As Bakhtin claims, the grotesque image was widely regarded as purely satirical and negative only because people judged it from the perspective of 'classic' aesthetics. Fujiwara no Akihira, however, embraces a different literary aesthetic that appreciates the ambivalence of the grotesque, so we must not assume that his use of the grotesque was exclusively negative or satirical.

[46] Smits also gave some examples of Early Heian *kanshi* that lament the fate of Japan's poor, and these may well have taken their inspiration from Chinese poetry; see Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 172.

Let us read Bai Juyi's poem first: 'The Old Charcoal Seller (lamenting on the fact that the charcoal seller is suffering because of palace market requisitioning)'.[47]

The old charcoal seller
Cuts firewood, burns charcoal by the southern mountain.
His face, all covered, with dust and ash, the colour of smoke,
The hair at his temples is grey, his ten fingers black.
The money he makes selling coal, what is it for?
To put clothes on his back and food in his mouth.
The rags on his poor body are thin and threadbare.
Distressed at the low price of coal, he hopes for colder weather.
Night comes, an inch of snow has fallen on the city,
In the morning he rides his cart along the icy ruts,
His ox weary, he hungry, and the sun already high.
In the mud by the south gate, outside the market, he stops to rest.
All of a sudden, two dashing riders appear:
An imperial envoy, garbed in yellow (his attendant in white),
Holding an official dispatch, he reads a proclamation.
Then turns the cart around, curses the ox, and leads it north.
One cartload of coal — a thousand or more catties!
No use appealing to the official spiriting the cart away:
Half a length of red lace, a slip of damask
Dropped on the ox — is payment in full![48]

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[47] The original translation of this subtitle was 'suffering palace market' (*ku gong shi ye*, 苦宫事也); see Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 175. Nevertheless, here I translated it as 'lamenting on the fact that the charcoal seller is suffering from palace market requisitioning', to make it more precise. The subtitle was inspired by the fact that in 797 a palace eunuch was appointed Commissioner for palace purchasing whose sole commission was to organise requisitioning raids. People were unable to oppose these officially sanctioned robberies. Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 175.

[48] Translation by Eugene Eoyang, amended by Ivo Smits; Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 175. The original poem is:
賣炭翁，伐薪燒炭南山中。
滿面塵灰煙火色，兩鬢蒼蒼十指黑。
賣炭得錢何所營，身上衣裳口中食。
可憐身上衣正單，心憂炭賤願天寒。
夜來城上一尺雪，曉駕炭車輾冰轍。
牛困人饑日已高，市南門外泥中歇。
翩翩兩騎來是誰，黃衣使者白衫兒。
手把文書口稱敕，回車叱牛牽向北。
一車炭，千餘斤，官使驅將惜不得。
半匹紅紗一丈綾，系向牛頭充炭直。

Bai renders the charcoal seller's miserable life in great detail, including his appearance; his face the colour of smoke, his grey hair and blackened fingers, and his life of bare subsistence that is made more miserable by government abuse, especially by the eunuchs (the 'imperial envoy') who force him to sell his charcoal for an extremely low price: 'half a length of red lace and a slip of damask dropped on the ox'. The government that was supposed to provide its people with financial security instead exploited them ruthlessly. Hence Bai is 'lamenting on the fact that the charcoal seller is suffering from palace market/requisitioning' and criticising a government that cheats its people by force. Because Bai's poetry has strong political and moral implications, his poems, especially the 'new ballads' (*xinyuefu*, 新樂府), have been categorised as 'poems of admonition and instruction' (*fengyushi*, 諷喻詩).

There was a *kanshi* salon centred on the late-Heian regent, Fujiwara no Tadamichi 藤原忠通 (1097–1164),[49] in which 'The Old Charcoal Seller (賣炭翁)' was one of the subjects most frequently composed upon. Tadamichi and the imperial prince, Fujiwara no Sukehito 輔仁親王 (1073–1119), devoted several *kanshi* to it; some were a faithful reflection of Bai's poem, while some explored new dimensions.

Tadamichi composed two poems on 'The Old Charcoal Seller', the first of which he seems to have sent to Fujiwara no Akihira's son, Fujiwara no Atsumitsu 藤原敦光 (1063–

See Bai Juyi 白居易, *Mai tan weng* 賣炭翁 in *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩. https://ctext.org/quantangshi/zh?searchu=%E5%8D%96%E7%82%AD%E7%BF%81 (accessed 01 May 2020).

[49] The eldest son of Fujiwara no Tadazane 藤原忠実 (1078–1162), a powerful regent in late Heian period.

1144, also the current Master of the Ministry of Ceremonies),[50] who wrote another poem in return. Thus, Tadamichi's second poem was written to 'harmonise with the excellent poem (written by Atsumitsu)', both of which were modelled on Bai's 'The Old Charcoal Seller'.

Tadamichi used highly similar descriptions in his two poems: 'chopping wood and burning it to charcoal', 'dust covers his face in the wind from the peak at dawn', and 'his clothes are unlined: he cannot endure this snow-cold feeling'. This is especially noticeable in the lines detailing how the old charcoal seller is abused: 'messengers from the palace in their white liveries haul his cart away; one roll of red silk, one should not belittle that'.[51] This poem appears as a faithful adoption of Bai's poem in condensed form, borrowing many allusions and much vocabulary from the original. In Tadamichi's poem, similar expressions can also be found, but Tadamichi summarises the text and rephrases some of these allusions in his own language: For example, 'he knows his livelihood and heart's desires, whether awake or asleep. For his trade, of what use is a scorching sun? For his family, he hopes for shadow-cold winds'; and 'he is afraid of the white liveries, which come galloping south of the city. The charcoal is more than a thousand catties, the silk but ten foot long. The clerk

[50] Fujiwara no Akihira made his family linage hereditary at the academy, which greatly benefited his heirs.
[51] English translation was from Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 176–177.

'The old charcoal seller,
Let us ask what the old man intends to do with.
Chopping wood and burning it to charcoal, how he spends the last years of his life.
Dust covers his face in the wind from the peak at dawn;
The fire blocks his view of the moon above the mountains.
The price is low: crying he returns over frozen roads;
His clothes are unlined: he cannot endure this snow-cold feeling.
Messengers from the palace in their white liveries haul his cart away:
One roll of red silk, one should not belittle that.'

speaks the imperial order — who is the greedy one?'[52] In this poem, Tadamichi is more explicitly critical of the imperial order ('who is the greedy one?') and clearly sympathises with Bai's point of view on the old charcoal seller.

However, there was not a palace market in the Heian period as depicted in Bai's original poem. That is to say, this kind of condemnation of official robbery was not relevant in Heian Japan. Heian *kanshi* writers tended to appreciate the themes of Chinese compositions as an exotic subject and depoliticised their contents.[53] Readers had to be familiar with the literary background; otherwise they might be confused as to why an imperial regent was composing something deprecating towards the imperial court regarding issues that had no meaning in a Japanese context.[54]

Below is a recreation of Bai's poem, in which the old charcoal man has become an old charcoal woman.

> On seeing an old charcoal woman
> 'The old charcoal woman' — now, listen very carefully!
> Her village lies far off, in the Ōhara mountains.
> Her clothes unlined, her journey dangerous, she sets out with the wind.
> The sun set, the sky cold, she returns, seen home by the moon.

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[52] The English translation was taken from Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 177.
> The heavy rains find the old man from the mountains in his thatched hut.
> He knows his livelihood and heart's desires, whether awake or asleep.
> For his trade, of what use is a scorching sun?
> For his family, he hopes for shadow-cold winds.
> He is ashamed of his white hair, the result of hard work;
> He is afraid of the white liveries, which come galloping south of the city.
> The charcoal is more than a thousand catties, the silk but ten foot long.
> The clerk speaks the imperial order — who is the greedy one?'

[53] This is not to say that all Heian *kanshi* writers ignored the social mobility or political implications in borrowing/rewriting this type of *kanshi*, but there was a tendency towards treating this subject as an exotic matter rather than as seriously satirical poetry.

[54] For example, the eunuchs' exploitation of the poor.

Her voice soars to the clouds and fills the streets.
The autumn wind drives up the price in the ravaged village.
The earth's products should be brought forth by able-bodied men,
So, I am moved to pity now seeing her white hair.[55]

Although modelling his poem on the figure of the old charcoal man, the writer, Sukehito (the imperial prince), makes the subject a woman. The change in the gender of the subject, along with the use of conventional vocabulary and expressions, shows how Sukehito worked with this subject as a way to practice his *kanshi* writing, and how he recreated several images based on the original figure of the charcoal seller. The woman resembles the old male charcoal sellers in *kanshi* and Bai's poem. In the last sentence, Sukehito shows conventional pity for the old woman, sad that she is doing a difficult job, which should be done by able-bodied men, for a living.

Upon examination of several *kanshi* on the theme of the old charcoal seller, along with the literary background of the *kanshi* salon, together with the conventional depictions and the intertextual references to the old charcoal seller, it seems that these scholars chose social-fringe figures more as an expression of artistic interest in exotic subjects than an effort to remedy the plight of the poor.[56] In that sense, it is reasonable to assume that some Heian scholars viewed the lower classes from a purely elite perspective, as an 'other' that they would keep at a distance, but which could serve as a subject of their poetry.

[55] The English translation was taken from Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 179.
[56] Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 179.

However, Fujiwara no Akihira's view seems more nuanced:

> Recently there is a man (the old charcoal seller) who visits her (the thirteenth daughter) frequently at night.
> This old man lives in the Ōhara mountains, his name is Yamaguchi Sumitake. He hates warm days and waits for winter to set in. His temples are grizzled, and his fingers have all turned black. He has a hatred of the people who enjoy a luxurious life at court, lamenting his own thin clothes marred by multiple repairs and patches. Covered with ashes and dust, he depends for his whole livelihood on his charcoal selling.[57]

In a departure from previous versions, the charcoal seller here is portrayed as the lover of an ugly and promiscuous woman who 'met all the criteria of the "Seven Grounds" for Divorcing a Wife' and was regarded as the worst of all the daughters. Despite her copious flaws, he still visits her frequently. This stands in contrast to other *kanshi* that focus more on how the charcoal seller was abused by the imperial envoy, faithful to the text of Bai's original poem.

The old charcoal seller was more of a submissive, silent, and long-suffering figure in the *kanshi* cited above. Fujiwara no Akihira, however, focuses on the grotesque aspects he assigns to this character, reinventing him as someone who has a complicated erotic relationship with a controversial female, and also as someone who harbours intense resentment for the upper classes.

As suggested by Bakhtin, the grotesque could blur the boundary between normal and abnormal and, by rejecting conventions, be more inclusive of all the people. The

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[57] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 175.

unconventional description of the old charcoal seller in *Shin Sarugakuki* challenges the classic image of a long-suffering, pathetic figure. Instead of adhering to the stereotype modelled on Bai's figure, Fujiwara no Akihira adds more dynamics and puts flesh on the bones to create a richer character. His portrayal of the old charcoal seller and the ugly thirteenth daughter serves to construct an exaggerated and ambiguous figure that undermines the conventional romanticised and sympathetic versions that presented him as an 'other' from an elite perspective.

(d) Grotesque female bodies and the exaggerated depiction of women's sexuality

Having looked at the artistic and social implications of the grotesque in relation to the exaggerated body images and female sexuality, let us focus on the portrayal of women. Take Fujiwara no Akihira's description of the lieutenant's first wife:

> The hair on her neck is hoary just like frost in the morning, while the wrinkles on her face ripple like waves in the evening. Her upper and lower teeth have fallen out, giving her the face of a pet monkey. Her breasts hang down like a bull's testicles in summer. Even when she makes herself up, there is no one to love her — she's just like the moon shining on the coldest winter night… As regards her husband, she has the jealous eyes of a writhing serpent and the enraged countenance of a glaring demon…she ought to shave her head and become a nun, but clinging to her fleeting existence, she has been transformed into a huge viper….[58]

[58] Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 485. The original text is '見首髮、皤々如朝霜。向面皺、疊々如暮波。上下齒缺落、若飼猿頰。左右乳下垂、似夏牛閹。雖致氣裝、敢無愛人。宛如極寒之月夜。雖為媚親、更多厭者。猶若盛熱之陽炎。不知吾身老衰、常恨夫心等閑…嫉妬瞼、如毒蛇之繞亂。忿怒面、似惡鬼之睚眦。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 36.

Exaggeration is used to distinguish the first wife's body as an undesirable body. Animal similes — a monkey, a bull, and a viper — are used to convey her ugly and abnormal appearance. This could also link back to the depiction of the thirteenth daughter. According to Bakhtin, 'woman is essentially related to the material bodily lower stratum; she is the incarnation of this stratum that degrades and regenerates simultaneously….'[59] Bakhtin puts special focus on the material body in his examination of grotesque images. He highlights the gross exaggeration and hyperbole in describing bodily features and food, as well as the conflation of human and animal traits.[60] The first wife's portrayal (including her body, behaviour, and mentality) presents us with a vivid image of an aged, jealous, fanatic, and even demonised female figure, which stands in sharp contrast to traditional images of elegant ladies of the court. Conventional images of refined courtly beauty, as seen in the *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (*The Tale of Genji*)[61] and many *kanbun* and *kana* diaries, have accustomed us to 'the plump faces, the thick brows, the small rosebud lips, and the long flowing hair',[62] as well as suitable and modest personal attire to showcase the taste of the wearer. The depiction of the lieutenant's original wife is at odds with all of these conventions. The lieutenant is probably of the fifth or sixth rank, and his wife, as suggested in

[59] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 240.
[60] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 316.
[61] Written by Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (978–1014/1025), who gives a vivid description of the life of Heian courtiers and women aristocrats. *Genji monogatari* talks about the love stories and political struggles that Prince Genji had at the court; it is regarded as the oldest novel in Japan. One can find abundant depiction of elegant and beautiful ladies in Genji.
[62] Pandey Rajyashree, *Perfumed Sleeves and Tangled Hair: Body, Woman, and Desire in Medieval Japanese Narratives* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), 43.

the text, comes from a powerful family. She could belong in the category of a refined aristocratic women. However, she is shown as an old woman with a grotesque appearance, possessing a relentless desire and being entirely out of control, challenging the reader's assumptions about aristocratic female figures. Also, by making it very clear that the lieutenant married his first wife to attain money and status, rather than out of romantic love, Fujiwara no Akihira also challenges a conventional assumption of marriage and inspires the reader to view the figure of first wife in a more ambivalent light.

The grotesque female bodies are also connected with female sexuality, recalling the description of the thirteenth daughter, in which her pigeon's breast and frog's belly are juxtaposed with her promiscuity. Although her body is described in an unflattering way, the blunt presentation of the thirteenth daughter's sexual needs represents a freedom from the moral discipline and Buddhist ideology that repressed women's desires. The sexuality of women is openly expressed in the text, making their voices heard, albeit through the interpretation of others. This can be seen as a literary subversion of the contemporary court literature.

The first wife's enthusiasm for reproduction worship and primitive ritual activities is also described extensively in *Shin Sarugakuki*.

> She makes offerings to her patron deity, Shōten (Ganapati), the god of marital bliss, but to no apparent effect. She also propitiates her personal talisman of the deity of fecundity, the Dōsojin, but with meagre results. At the Man Festival at Igatome of Fox Hill, she thumps her genitals and dances; and at the Love rites at Akomachi on Fox Mountain, she nuzzles the phallic symbol with joy. She offers a thousand rice cakes to the guardian deity on Fifth-ward Avenue and the night demons at the East

Temple. Clapping and dancing she visits a thousand shrines and runs around donating a hundred cloth offerings.[63]

Thus, she engages in endless sex-related ritual activities, desperately hoping they will bring her husband back to her. These rituals convey a strong sense of carnivalesque spirit and genital worship.

As described by *Honchō Seiki* 本朝世紀,[64] reproduction worship, as evidenced by displays of likenesses of genitals on the street of Kyoto city, was rampant at that time. Painted wood-carving male and female figures with obvious emphasis on the sex organs were frequently displayed on the street. People welcomed them and offered them money and flowers, calling them the '*Kunado-No-Kami* (岐の神)'.

The description of the ritual activities in which the first wife engages does shed some light on the ritual atmosphere and mentality of the people of this period. According to the *Engi shiki* 延喜式 (*Procedures of the Engi Era*),[65] there were strict regulations on the social body, hierarchy, and protocols of Heian rituals, prescribing particular arrangements at strictly 'defined times of the year, month, and day'.[66] This could be understood as a 'sociological concern and a concern with purity and pollution'.[67] That is to say, there was a specific

[63] Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 485. The original text is '本尊聖天供如无驗。持物道祖、祭似少應。野干坂伊賀專之男祭、叩鮑苦本舞、稲荷山阿小町之愛法、鼈鰹破善喜。五条道祖、奉粢餅、千平手。東寺夜叉、飢飯、百籠子。叩千社躍、捧百幣走。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 36.
[64] A historical chronology written in the late Heian period.
[65] Completed in 927 under the order of Emperor Daigō (885–930), it is a book about regulations on laws and customs.
[66] Allan G. Grapard, 'Religious Practice', in *Cambridge history of Japan* vol. 2: Heian Japan, eds., Donald Shively and William McCullough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1988–1999), 546.
[67] Grapard, 'Religious Practice', 546.

framework in terms of a certain social group and its worship, within which the rituals were normally hierarchical and exclusive.

However, the first wife's obsession with genital worship (which was not supposed to be a proper object of worship for an aristocratic female) points to the ambiguous position of these rituals — an ambiguous position that was welcomed by different social groups.[68] Those grotesquely-depicted activities not only provide a means of challenging the regulation of rituals, ideologies, and the social order, but also opens a new space in which to escape from the problems of daily life. They may not have actually threatened the social hierarchy; nonetheless, this was polished high literature juxtaposing such rituals with commoners' lifestyles, beliefs, and performances, into the aristocratic discourse. As suggested by Bakhtin, this could destabilise the social hierarchy, spiritually and psychologically.

As seen in the examples given, women's sexuality was often connected to jealousy, which in turn would lead to their demonisation. The lieutenant availed himself of the wealth and political power of his first wife's family by marrying her, but came to regret this as she, being much older than he, began to lose her beauty and became a jealous and aggressive woman who was fixated on her own needs and desires.

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[68] Many rituals in the Heian period emphasised hierarchy and code. This can be seen from the clear contextualisation of time and space and within frameworks of exclusion and inclusion: 'included were the social group whose personal *kami* were worshipped, as well as the social group charged with the governance of shrines and ritual observances before, during, and after the main rites. Excluded was any social group that, by definition, did not worship ancestors or ancestral *kami* of others', *The Cambridge History of Japan* v.2. Heian Japan, 547. According to Kawaguchi, the genital worship-related rituals in which the first wife participated were, for instance, the *Dōsojin* (持物ノ道祖), which, as symbols of fertility, were worshipped by *asobi*. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki.* trans. Kawaguchi Hisao, 42.

As for the first wife, her jealousy might come from the fact that her husband has married up the social order, making this a hypogamous marriage.[69] In most cases, women in this type of marriage were used by their husbands to obtain political or economic influence. However, now that they have been married for many years, and her powerful father possibly having passed away, she has lost her leverage. Meanwhile, her husband was not restricted to his original wife and, according to the text, is deeply in love with the third wife and respects his second wife. That is to say, the first wife was likely to be ignored, leading her to become jealous and resentful. Her suppressed jealousy and desires, her disappointment at aging, as well as hostility from her husband, could conspire to drive her mad, causing her to behave in ways that invite her demonisation as a viper. Ordinarily the demonisation of a woman on grounds of her sexuality would aim at her exclusion, forming the basis for a powerful discourse for control and didacticism. This tendency is frequently seen in medieval literature, especially under the influence of Buddhist beliefs. However, if one reads Fujiwara no Akihira's narrative from a grotesque perspective, the first wife is not a submissive figure; rather, she is actively seeking the favour of her husband and her 'demonised' character may be seen to empower her and set her free from the devaluation of aged women and moral strictures against women's sexuality.

[69] Here I refer to marriage between a higher-status woman and a lower-status man. Piggott also mentions this in 'A Comedy of Marriage and Family in Eleventh-century Kyoto: Fujiwara no Akihira's Shinsarugakuki,' *Kodaigaku* (2009), 1.

Women's bodies and the image of demonised old women also connect closely to Buddhist values in the Heian period. In many Buddhist sutras, and *śātras* (religious treatises), women's sexuality and seductive women could hinder men from achieving enlightenment. As Osterfeld Li puts it, intimate relations with a woman were 'an undesirable experience in most Buddhist frameworks',[70] and it follows that women's bodies and their sexuality are at the root of their inferior status. By the tenth century, women's bodies were regarded as 'impure and inherently of a sinful nature'.[71]

Buddhist *setsuwa* that condemned women's sexuality and bodies were prevalent in the Heian period.[72] The depiction of women's bodies and aging women's figures in *Shin Sarugakuki* indicates a more complex, nuanced attitude towards them. For instance, Fujiwara no Akihira shows us a fifteenth daughter who is a widow who has totally abandoned the notion of sex and dedicated herself to Buddhism. She has cut off any possible contact with men, devoting herself day and night to Buddhist sutra. She laments being a woman, expecting and trusting to be reborn in the Pure Land. Fujiwara no Akihira portrays the fifteenth daughter as having 'overcome' the undesirable characteristics of womanhood, attained purity of mind, and found her own peace in Buddhism.[73] This is a highly conventional

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[70] Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 83. For more discussion about the association of women and demons in Heian *setsuwa*, 230–238.
[71] Pandey, 'Poetry, Sex and Salvation', 69.
[72] There were some *setsuwa* which had a less critical attitude towards female bodies and heterosexual sex; see Pandey, *Perfumed Sleeves and Tangled Hair*, 14.
[73] '十五女者、孀也。道心堅固、而日夜歸依佛法精進勇猛、而旦暮參詣道場。已斷夫種、永期佛果。只歎受女身、偏欣生極樂。見春花、則視世間之無常。望秋月、曾悟諸法之寂滅。念佛讀經不懈、貪欲瞋恚遠離。脫櫛鬢、代烏瑟髻、投匿鏡、誂月輪之貌。彼八歲龍女、速唱南方之八相。此十五娘君、偏期西方之九品矣。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 188.

understanding of women: their bodies were impure, their sinfulness was a given, and they could not be reborn in the Pure Land. The overall tone of this depiction is didactic — that is, when a 'sinful' woman is able to completely abandon her desires and refrain from contact with men, and devote herself to Buddhism, she will reach a purity of mind and be saved in her next life.

On the other hand, as Fujiwara no Akihira concludes regarding the first wife, 'still, despite her many flaws, she is the mother of his many children, so what is there to do?'[74] He highlights the vulnerability of women due to the struggles, desires, and disrespect that overwhelms them and suggests a marginalisation and devaluation of aging women while also suggesting the threat that they may pose to Buddhist values. Thus, he hints at the conflict between the Buddhist demand for purity and enlightenment and the Heian people's physical desires and aristocratic lifestyles.

As noted, Bakhtin challenges the widespread supposition that the grotesque image has purely satirical and negative connotations, arguing that much of what is taken to be ugly and monstrous is only because we judge it 'from the point of view of "classic" aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed'. He insists that a grotesque image has both positive and negative poles and the grotesque body is neither completed nor closed but, rather, connected to the outside world.

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[74] '但雖有諸過失、既為數子之母。' Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 485. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 36.

Thus, the question is, when using the word 'grotesque' or 'ugly' to describe the first wife, is it solely 'from the point of view of "classic" aesthetics' as argued by Bakhtin? Victor Hugo felt that 'ugly' and 'incongruous' have the 'primary function of heightening our appreciation of beauty and perfection';[75] that is, 'sublime upon sublime scarcely presents a contrast, and we need a little rest from everything, even the beautiful. On the other hand, the grotesque seems to be a halting-place, a mean term, a starting-point whence one rises toward the beautiful with a fresher and keener perception'.[76] Both Bakhtin and Hugo suggest that 'grotesque' could be viewed from a more positive perspective that complicates our aesthetics about beautiful and ugly. From a grotesque perspective, it is difficult to determine whether the description of the first wife, and Fujiwara no Akihira's other figures, is positive or negative, and possibly unnecessary to make such a determination if these portrayals allow us to recognise more possibilities, imperfections, and facets of certain groups of people.[77] The grotesque is realised through the author's focus on non-elite subjects — figures, who, despite enduring stereotypes and without being able to speak for themselves, are nonetheless at the centre of the narrative.

[75] Charles W. Eliot, *Prefaces and Prologues to Famous Books* ([S.l.]: Forgotten Books, 2015), 366. Also Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 38.
[76] Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 38.
[77] For instance, the mother-turned-demon figure emphasises the vulnerability and suffering of the women. Mother-turned-demon is also a frequently used subject in *setsuwa*, as Osterfeld Li summarises it: 'a constant reminder of human fragility and mortality'. See Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 183.

(e) Ambiguous social status, rituals, and an opened-up spiritual space: the dual identity of the *asobi*

The Heian period also witnessed a privatisation of ritual activities. With the decline of the position of the Emperor and the rise of the Fujiwara clan, as well as the gradual acceptance of the Pure Land Beliefs, more and more ritual activities were practiced in private.[78] Such rituals combined elements of Shintoism, Buddhism, *yin-yang* philosophy, and Taoism. The purpose of practices varied: some were for longevity, some were for protection, some were for military success, and some were even conducted to 'separate a wife from her husband so that she became available for the amorous ardour of a prince or emperor, or to cause two persons to fall in love'.[79] It is true that there were hierarchical rituals that served to reinforce social bonds within clear contexts of time and space; however, some were open to, and practiced by, people from all social classes.

It was not only the *Kunado-No-Kami* that was welcomed and worshipped by both commoners and aristocrats as referenced in the profile of the first wife. There was also a particular god that gained popularity among *asobi* (women-entertainers) and aristocrats. According to the *Yūjo no ki* written by Ōe no Masafusa (1041–1111), the *asobi* undertook pilgrimages to a deity named *hyakudaifu* 百太夫, which was 'a representation of the male sexual organ made of wood or paper'.[80] They worshipped it and prayed for the prosperity of

[78] Grapard, 'Religious Practice', 541.
[79] Grapard, 'Religious Practice', 541.
[80] Yung-Hee Kim Kwon, 'The Female Entertainment Tradition in Medieval Japan: The Case of *Asobi*', in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 321. Kawashima also talked about this worship in her examination of Masafusa's *Yūjo no ki* 遊女記, see Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 32.

their business and the favour of male customers. Interestingly, this worship was not confined to the *asobi* group. It also attracted attention from aristocrats and thus 'a curious interaction between *asobi* and the nobles was played out, taking one of the most secular and profane forms of carnal and material transactions'.[81] *Asobi* and aristocrats were intermingled and bound together through this spiritual space, regardless of their social class. Through these ritual activities and this worship, a common spiritual space, accessible to *asobi* and nobles, was created where all could be nurtured psychologically and on an equal footing.

But how and why did this particular worship come about? How was the *asobi* group different from ordinary commoners? What did a shared worship between *asobi* and nobles signify? How should we understand the depiction of *asobi* in *Shin Sarugakuki*?

Some scholars trace the origin of *asobi* back to a goddess by the name of Ameno-uzume-no-mikoto.[82] According to the *Kojiki,* the Sun Goddess Amaterasu retreated into a cave to avoid her brother's trickery. Since she was the Sun Goddess, her sojourn in the cave caused total darkness in the celestial space. Ameno-uzume-no-mikoto danced in front of the cave to draw her out. In the course of the dance, she became 'half-naked exposing her breasts and lower body to public view'.[83] Watching this display, other deities burst into laughter, and

[81] Kim, 'The Female Entertainment Tradition in Medieval Japan', 321.
[82] Kim, 'The Female Entertainment Tradition in Medieval Japan', 321, and Pandey, 'Poetry, Sex and Salvation', 63. The origin of *asobi* remains unclear. Kawashima has summarised scholars' debates in *Writing Margins*, 29.
[83] Kwon, 'The Female Entertainment Tradition in Medieval Japan', 318. The exposure of genitals 'is believed to have magic power to drive away evil spirits.' See *Kojiki* 古事記, trans. Donald Philippi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 84.

this merriment finally drew Amaterasu out. She opened the cave, peeking out to see why the other gods were enjoying themselves so much.[84]

Ameno-uzume-no-mikoto's 'shamanistic behaviour' was called '*asobi* (樂)' in the *Kojiki*.[85] This might indicate that the original function of the *asobi* had something to do with pleasing and comforting the gods through music or dancing. Scholars such as Origuchi Shinobu claim that the *asobi*'s primary role was that of a priest, specially tasked with handling death and bringing relief from its threat of disintegration, chaos, and communal paralysis; he believes that *asobi* could bring renewal or resurrection through rituals.[86]

There is also an association of *asobi* with female shamans in *Shin Sarugakuki*. At the very beginning, Fujiwara no Akihira mentions the '巫遊之氣裝' in the carnival. Piggott translates this as 'painted face of a shrine prostitute (*asobi*)'.[87] Shigematsu Akihisa explains that '巫遊' here refers to '遊女化した巫', a shaman who became an *asobi*,[88] while Kawaguchi Hisao regards this person as having a dual identity — that is, she is a shaman who serves the god in addition to being an *asobi*.[89] '氣裝' here refers to 'waiting-for-men

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[84] Kim, 'The Female Entertainment Tradition in Medieval Japan', 318.
[85] '天宇受賣者為樂', See *Kojiki*, trans. Donald Philippi, 83–86.
[86] Kim, 'The Female Entertainment Tradition in Medieval Japan', 318–319. As the later Taiho Reform code confirms, *asobi* are 'groups of people engaged in funeral services, exempt from taxes and conscript labour, they live without working and are allowed to move freely around'. However, as the Taiho Reform was aborted and Buddhism became dominant, *asobi* lost their religious status, and many of them gradually turned to entertainment and prostitution. Gorai Shigeru also traced the origin of the *asobi* to '*asobibe*', who 'may have performed pacifying rituals at the imperial funerals in the pre-Heian periods'. See Gorai Shigeru 五来重, 'Chūsei josei no shūkyōsei to seikatsu 中世女性的宗教性と生活', in *Nihon joseishi* 日本女性史, vol. 2, Chūsei 中世, comp., Joseishi sōgō kenkyūkai 女性史総合研究会 (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1982), 103–136. Also Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 29.
[87] Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 492.
[88] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki; Unshū shōsoku*, 11.
[89] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 20.

makeup'. In this regard, the whole phrase could be understood as referring to a female shaman, who is also an *asobi* performer, and is wearing 'waiting-for-men makeup'. Shigematsu further explains it as presenting an image of a shaman who has 'degenerated into' an *asobi* and is expecting male customers. However, considering the description of *asobi* in the *Kojiki*, '巫遊' can hardly be regarded as a 'degeneration', as the *asobi* is expected possibly to mediate between her dual identities.

Examining the depictions of *asobi* and shamans in the text, we find strong similarities between the two, which again suggests the *asobi*'s dual identity.

> The sixteenth daughter is the leader of the night-working *asobi*, the love-favouring one downriver in Eguchi. What she is used to is the task of entertaining on the river, and what is talked about is her irreverent manners at the bottom of the slope. During the day she bears a big umbrella and gives her body to those high and low. At night she beats the rim of the boat and gives her heart to the customers coming and going. Now, her abundantly-sexual conduct and trying-to-gain-favour, her skills at supine postures and nurturing the wind, her virtues of 'half-strings and barely-teeth',[90] and her uses of 'flying dragons and tiger steps' — there are none that she does not employ. Not only that, but her voice is like the kalavinka bird, and her form is like that of a heavenly maiden… Therefore, who would not be cast under her spell? What kind of person would not be smitten? While she is still young, she may pass her days selling herself, but after her colours fade, how will she spend the rest of her life?[91]

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[90] 'Euphemisms for the types of reactions of the female genitalia', as seen in Ishinoho; a compilation of medical texts from the Sui and Tang dynasties in China. See Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 39, for more information on how Fujiwara no Akihira took Chinese terminology and applied it to a supposedly 'Japanese phenomenon, which contributed to the construction of this very category, "*asobi*"'.

[91] Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 38. The original text is '十六君者、遊女夜發之長者、江口河尻之好色也。所慣者、河上遊蕩之業、所傳者、坂本無面之風。晝荷簦、任身於上下之倫、夜叩舷、懸心往還之客。抑淫奔徵斐之行· 偃仰養風之態· 琴絃麥之齒德· 龍飛虎步之用、無不具。加之、聲如頻伽、貌若天女。雖宮木小烏之謌、藥師鳴戶之聲、准之不仇、喻之不屑。故孰人不迷眼、誰類不融心。於戲年若之間、自雖過賣身、色衰之後、以何送餘命哉。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 194.

In this paragraph, the *asobi*'s beautiful appearance, wonderful voice, and sexual conduct and adeptness at sexual techniques are emphasised and presented without moral judgement. Nor is the *asobi*'s seductiveness or sexuality criticised as it is with respect to other female figures in *Shin Sarugakuki*. In addition, according to Terry Kawashima's research, the terminology that Fujiwara no Akihira uses (such as flying dragons and tiger steps) are all borrowed from classical Chinese medicine books, and this sort of stereotyped description of *asobi* in *kanbun* and *kanshi* appears frequently in Heian period texts.[92]

In addition, one finds similarities in the depiction of the fourth daughter, who is a shaman.

The fourth daughter is a respected shaman, known for practicing divination, offering up songs and dances to the deity, playing instruments to greet the deity, and speaking on behalf of the deceased. Just as with the sixteenth daughter, the fourth daughter's dance and voice are compared to the 'kalavinka bird', and she herself to the 'heavenly maiden' who attracts pilgrims from all over the world.

The association of the *asobi* with a deity could be attributed to the incarnation of the Bodhisattva Fugen, in the belief that *asobi* could be reborn in the Pure Land after death.[93] It could also relate back to the anecdote about *asobi* in the *Kojiki*, as it is believed that their

[92] Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 39.
[93] Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 51. Kawashima also argues that the association of *asobi* with the divine would empower these women but also suggests some complexities. That is, 'the extreme privileging of women's sexuality can also be read as a projection of male desires to co-opt the *asobi* and their powers into the Buddhist realm.' Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 50.

dance and singing are charming enough to entertain the gods and relieve the pains of human beings. This also explains why *asobi*'s singing and dancing performances were frequently mentioned and highly praised in the text, as it suggests Fujiwara no Akihira's expectations and imaginings of *asobi*.

On the other hand, the depiction of the *asobi* also reflects a very interesting phenomenon — namely that, as influenced by Buddhist values, women's desires and sexuality were often regarded as sinful and were demonised and marginalised, with the sixteenth daughter being a notable exception to this rule. It seems that *asobi* must have been judged by a different standard. As a group who used their sexuality and performance as a profession, they were judged by their merits in sexual techniques and their skill in singing and dancing. Their association with shamans and deities also indicates an ambiguity in their representation as a group.

However, although she is not demonised, the remark that the *asobi*'s colour will inevitably fade is a reminder that the *asobi* is in a profession of impermanence. This also indicates a male gaze in the depiction of *asobi*; it sees the skilful sexual techniques as a virtue, but entertains the notion of a sad and even tragic ending.

There is one particular letter in *Unshū Ōrai* written by Fujiwara no Akihira that refers to *asobi*. Fujiwara no Akihira wrote this letter in a tone of a person who lacks recognition at court. He said, 'how about taking a boat and paying a visit to Yu River where *asobi* lives nearby (欲遊豫江口邊遊女所如何)', the life is short and the time passes quickly like a

white pony's shadow across a crevice; a joyful night would allow people to forget that the old age is just around the corner.[94] The depiction of *asobi* suggests that they were understood to represent pleasure-seeking which would bring their patrons comfort, however short-lived.

The interwoven identity of *asobi* and shamans and the shared worship of *hyakudaifu* amongst *asobi* and aristocrats suggests the existence of only a flimsy boundary between these professions and an open psychological space in which people of different social classes could share and participate.

In terms of the social fluidity of *asobi*, as observed by *Yujo no ki*, they were socially and morally in an ambiguous position:

> The singing women form groups: poling small boats, they reach the ships and offer bedroom companionship. Their voices halt the clouds in the valley, and their melodies linger in the waterside breeze. There is no one who passes by who does not forget all about his home….[95] It may be that under heaven this is the most amusing place….[96] They become wives or concubines and are cherished until their death.[97]

Janet Goodwin states that *asobi* could mix freely with elites although not of elite status themselves.[98] In addition, as evidenced by the *Shun ki* 春記, *asobi* could seek assistance from local authorities and win a lawsuit as a result, which suggests that they enjoyed a degree of social mobility.

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[94] '一生不幾。白駒如過隙。一宵樂遊可忘老之將至也。人心不同。譬如其面。不得意之人定嘲此事歟。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai*, 417.
[95] Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 31. '倡女成群。掉扁舟。旅舶。着以薦枕席。聲遏溪雲。韻飄水風。經迴之人。莫不忘家。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai*, 417.
[96] '盖天下第一之樂地也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai*, 417.
[97] '又為人妻妾。歿身被寵。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai*, 417.
[98] Janet Goodwin, *Selling Songs and Smiles: The Sex Trade in Heian and Kamakura Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 25.

Thus, by exploring *asobi*'s dual identity and ritual activities in which people from different social classes participated, we have identified an accessible spiritual space shared by commoners and aristocrats. Furthermore, the whole *sarugaku* performance could be seen as a shared space that was enjoyed by commoners and elites, in which the depiction of the performance was mediated by the language and rhetoric of the elites. This is not a singular case involving an ambiguous social status; Ashton Lazarus also summarises the intersection of commoners and elites at *dengaku* performances.[99]

Applying Bakhtin's ideas to the temporary carnivalesque space presented in *Shin Sarugakuki*, we have seen how the grotesque complicates our aesthetics surrounding beauty and ugliness, and how literary subversion is realised through the power of satire and a focus on non-elite people, which reveals the sufferings of, and tensions among, individuals and groups as well as their social and political concerns.

Drawing on Michelle Osterfeld Li's application of Bakhtin's carnivalesque theories to the grotesque elements in premodern Japanese *setsuwa*, we see that, just as the grotesque presented in *setsuwa* may have helped the audience to confront their problems,[100] it also provided a circumspect means of 'challenging ideologies and leaders of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods'.[101] Thus, as the carnivalesque in *setsuwa* created a communal space in literature and art that allowed for social subversion, so the carnivalesque space in *Shin*

[99] See Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 182–193.
[100] Osterfeld Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 242.
[101] Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 242.

Sarugakuki may have done in the middle and late Heian period. While there is a question whether this space is accessible to all or only to aristocrats, there seem to have been instances in which social status was ambiguous, although it is true that texts such as *Shin Sarugakuki* were written in *kanbun* and had a relatively limited circulation among people, mostly aristocrats, with a deep understanding of *kanbun*.

Given some inconsistency observed in the writing of *Shin Sarugakuki*, the following chapter explores another perspective to complement the current understanding of the text — namely, Fujiwara no Akihira's educational and encyclopaedic ordering of information — in which he includes several exhaustive master lists of different occupations and social classes. While this chapter has looked at the absurd, obscene, and exaggerated way of expression and mainly discussed the subversive and grotesque energy of *Shin Sarugakuki*, the next one mainly explores its potential educational value, in hopes of creating a more layered understanding of the text. Meanwhile, the temporary suspension of hierarchy within Bakhtin's model would enable these two perspectives on the text to coexist more easily.

Chapter Four

Chapter Three examined the subversive, grotesque elements presented in *Shin Sarugakuki* that confounded the conventions of the time and transgressed the boundaries of social norms and hierarchies. However, given the complexity and inconsistency of this text, a deeper look is required. Accordingly, this chapter looks at how the author also, in some instances, embraces stereotypes and conventions and even supports the designation of hierarchies. This is seen most clearly where the text adopts an educational tone, as Fujiwara no Akihira undertakes an orderly presentation of knowledge in an encyclopaedic format in *Shin Sarugakuki*.

It is difficult to be certain why *Shin Sarugakuki* would include so many rhetorical formats and exhaustive lists along the lines of those seen in contemporary educational materials. Was Fujiwara no Akihira doing this for practice to refine his craft, as a training exercise for others, or to amuse himself? Was this intended as a reference book that would show off his skills and enable him to enhance his reputation as a scholar, even though he remained outside the political sphere in which scholars typically courted fame and influence? Or was it a showpiece with both entertainment and educational value, written perhaps for a patron with some knowledge of *kanbun*? Meanwhile, the exaggerated and fanciful contents in the exceptionally detailed lists present a curious merging of satirical effects and educational content.

Thus, a case can be made that *Shin Sarugakuki* is a work that combines both educational and entertainment elements. It is a creative and even experimental piece of writing that demonstrates Fujiwara no Akihira's profound skills in composing *kanbun* as well as his arcane knowledge of various areas of society, and, as such, seems to have been designed to appeal to a sophisticated patron.

To begin with, Chapter One discusses the limitations and disadvantages a *kika* scholar would have encountered at the academy, based on the examples of Minamoto no Shitagō and Fujiwara no Akihira. We can only find very limited evidence of Fujiwara no Akihira's intention of writing; therefore, we may rely more on Shitagō's experience at the academy to help us understand the writing environment that Fujiwara no Akihira would have encountered there. Steininger suggests that Shitagō is a reflection of the *kika* scholar who had a profound knowledge in *kanbun* but ended up composing 'domestic' kinds of works for entertainments and private gatherings or works for female aristocrats, rather than producing more serious works such as 'official documents' or compositions intended for a public audience. He concludes that, among all of Shitagō's composition, the works he wrote for his male patrons were 'exclusively poetic prefaces', most of which were 'part of an evening's entertainment at a private banquet or outing'.[1] Meanwhile his more serious and formal works, including petitions and vows, were written 'on behalf of aristocratic women'.[2] From this, one can

[1] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 213.
[2] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 213.

surmise that *kika* scholars had few opportunities to engage directly in formal and serious kinds of writing in *kanbun*. Therefore, they were more inclined to produce practical or entertaining works in order to attract official employment or private patronage.[3] For those *kika* scholars with a profound knowledge of *kanbun* and *waka*, the compiling of educational books and anthologies would provide a good platform to showcase their language abilities and win favour from the court and their patrons. The mid-Heian period saw a rise in the production of educational works and *ruijū* literature. Akihira and Shitagō both played a part in this trend. Shitagō compiled the *Wamyō Ruijūshō* 和名類聚抄 (*Categorical Miscellany of Yamato Names*)[4] and is one of five compilers of the *Gosen Wakashū* 後撰和歌集,[5] while Fujiwara no Akihira compiled *Honchō Monzui* and *Unshū Ōrai,* and *Shin Sarugakuki* also included abundant *ruijū* elements. This was not an advantageous career choice, but it helped *kika* scholars such as Fujiwara no Akihira to practice their craft, demonstrate their composition skills, and enhance their reputations through informal networks outside of

[3] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 213.

[4] A Japanese dictionary of Chinese characters compiled by Shitagō under the request of Emperor Daigō 醍醐天皇 (885–930)'s daughter, Kinshi-naishinnō 勤子内親王 (904–938). The dictionary documents and categorises around 2600 Chinese characters; each entry cites its original meaning from Sinitic literary works and dictionaries, the Sinitic pronunciations, and also a *kundoku* reading. It refers to dictionaries such as *Yōshi Kangō shō* 楊氏漢語抄 and *Benshiki ryūjō* 辨色立成. *Wamyō Ruijūshō* is an important encyclopaedic dictionary in Heian and has set a standard for dictionaries in this format, which greatly influenced the development of similar dictionaries in later periods. See https://japanknowledge.com/introduction/keyword.html?i=713 (accessed on 1 December 2021). As observed by Steininger, the contemporary dictionaries were too short and too specialised, while *Wamyō Ruijūshō* filled the gap 'between vernacular language and the literary Sinitic canon.' The dictionary is arranged hierarchically, from Heaven and Earth, to Humans, the Body, the Arts, Buildings and so forth. See Brian Steininger, 'Reading Out Loud: Literary Writing and Oral Performance' in *Chinese Literary Forms in Heian Japan* (Harvard University East Asia Center, 2017), 198–199.

[5] An imperial anthology of Japanese *waka* compiled at the request of the Emperor Murakami 村上天皇 (926–967). Shitagō is one of the 'Five Men of the Pear Chamber' (梨壺の五人, Nashitsubo no gonin) who compiled this anthology.

imperial channels. This tendency could explain the practical and educational content woven through Fujiwara no Akihira's two anthologies.

It is possible that *Shin Sarugakuki* was motivated by the popularity of the educational genre, but it is not a serious educational work. Rather, it may be seen as a creative or even experimental writing in which Fujiwara no Akihira uses a seemingly functional, encyclopaedic approach that, by virtue of its comprehensiveness, demonstrates his vast knowledge of *kanbun*, but also injects some clever insights and arcane wit into the text, possibly in hopes of attracting the attention of a possible patron.

In the first section of *Shin Sarugakuki*, Fujiwara no Akihira describes both the comic *sarugaku* performance and the frenzied audience. In this audience, a specific lieutenant and his family are highlighted. Fujiwara no Akihira brings exhaustive knowledge to bear in his conception of all the individual family members, including detailed accounts of each one's social status, physical appearance, personality, occupation, and daily life. Thirty-four of them represent a gamut of occupations within the society. The exhaustive listing of vocabulary and stereotypical labels classifying people into different occupations display an impressively encyclopaedic ordering of knowledge in *Shin Sarugakuki*.

Here is a summary of the lieutenant's family members drawn from Fujiwara no Akihira's description, showing the family structure that Fujiwara no Akihira constructs and the varied occupations he assigns to the family members.[6]

1) The first wife (第一本妻) is from a prominent family. She has just passed age sixty and begun to lose her beauty. She is very jealous and is obsessed with rituals by which she hopes to rekindle her husband's interest.[7]
2) The second wife (次妻) is an exemplary housewife and loyal housekeeper for the family who does not have many flaws.[8]
3) The third concubine (第三妾) is the lieutenant's favourite lover: very young (18 years old), pretty, feminine, and charming. She is friends with a court lady from a wealthy family.[9]
4) The eldest daughter's husband (太君夫) is a gambler who is scheming and unscrupulous, even to the point of being willing to commit theft or murder.[10]
5) The second daughter's husband (中君夫) is a warrior, an undefeated fighting man who has never surrendered.[11]

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[6] Although some of the figures listed have been discussed in previous chapters, here are presented a few sentences for each just to show an overview of the lieutenant's family.
[7] '第一本妻者、齢既過六十、而紅顔漸衰。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 36.
[8] '次妻者、夫婦同年也。雖非勝西施、又無指過失。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 52.
[9] '第三妾者、有所之女房、強縁之同僚也。年始十八、容顔美麗、放逸豐顔也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 57.
[10] '又大君夫者、高名博打也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 62.
[11] '中君夫、天下第一武者也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 70.

6) The third daughter's husband (三君夫) is the acting lieutenant governor of Dewa, Tanaka Toyomasu, a proficient farmer who has always been able to make ends meet.[12]

7) The fourth daughter (四御許) is a respected shaman whom people come from all over the world to consult.[13]

8) The fourth daughter's husband (四御許夫) is a clerk (*shishō*)[14] as well as a skilled goldsmith.[15]

9) The fifth daughter's husband (五君夫) is a Confucian scholar who is skilled at *kanbun, wabun*, calligraphy, and math, comparable to Ōe no Masahira,[16] a renowned poet and scholar.[17]

10) The sixth daughter's husband (六君夫) is a sumo wrestler who has never lost a bout.[18]

11) The seventh daughter (七御許) is a wine lover with an uncontrolled appetite for food.[19]

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[12] '三君夫、出羽權介、田中豐益。偏耕農為業。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 76.
[13] '四御許者、巫女也。占神遊、寄絃、口寄之上手也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 84.
[14] 'A clerk at a provincial headquarters. The codes mandated three *shishō* as members of the staff of every provincial headquarters.' Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, 324.
[15] '尋其夫…鍛冶鑄物師并銀金細工也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 84.
[16] Ōe no Masahira 大江匡衡 (952–1012), a very important scholar-official in mid-Heian period. Masahira was also a Professor of Letters at the academy; he was highly skilled at composing *kanbun* and *waka*.
[17] '五君夫、紀傳、明法、明經、算道等學生也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 91.
[18] '六君夫、高名相撲人也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 98.
[19] '七御許者、食歎愛酒女也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 106.

12) The seventh daughter's husband (七御許夫) devotes his toil and sweat to the whole family, seeking to earn enough to keep pace with his wife's greed.[20]

13) The eighth daughter's husband (八御許夫) is a skilled artisan who has been granted the fifth rank.[21]

14) The ninth daughter's husband (九御方夫) is a renowned doctor who has cured many patients, comparable to such Chinese counterparts as *Shen Nong*[22] and *Bian Que*.[23]

15) The tenth daughter's husband (十君夫) is an *onmyoji* (陰陽師),[24] a master of yin-yang and the Five Elements, specialising in magic and divination.[25]

16) The eleventh daughter's lover (十一君氣装人) is a *waka* poet. Skilled with any kind of *waka* as well as musical instruments, he is highly respected by people from all social classes.[26]

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[20] '只以牛馬之血肉、將助妻子之身命而已。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 106.
[21] '八御許夫者、飛驒國人也。位大夫大工。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 116.
[22] Shen Nong 神農, venerated as the 'father of medicine' in ancient China.
[23] Bian Que 扁鵲, a legendary doctor in ancient China. '九御方夫者、右近衛醫師、和氣明治也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 125.
[24] 'An expert in yin-yang lore, connected with the Yin-Yang Office (Onmyō Ryō), an organ of the Bureau of Central Affairs' in Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, trans. Royall Tyler (London: Penguin, 2003), 1168.
[25] '十君夫者、陰陽先生賀茂道世也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 132.
[26] '十一君氣装人者、一宮先生柿木桓之、管絃并和歌上手也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 144.

17) The twelfth daughter (十二公) is a true beauty whose appearance would make the Tang Dynasty's Empress Yang[27] jealous and could have taken the place of Empress Li had she been born in the Han Dynasty.[28]

18) The twelfth daughter's lover (十二公假借人) is an advisor on the Council of State, the Secretary Captain, and the upper magistrate.[29]

19) The thirteenth daughter (十三娘) is a very ugly woman who is promiscuous and has never married.[30]

20) A frequent visitor to the thirteenth daughter's home is an old charcoal seller who has a hatred of the people who enjoy a luxurious life at court, lamenting that his own clothes are threadbare and patched. Covered with ash and dust, he has always relied on charcoal selling to make his living.[31]

21) The fourteenth daughter (十四御許) is an ugly, pale, and short woman.[32]

22) The fourteenth daughter's husband (十四御許夫) used to be a gambler and a thief. He is indeed an idiot. However, as a couple, they are well matched

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[27] Yang Guifei 楊貴妃, a famous beauty of the Tang Dynasty.
[28] '皆云、昔唐玄宗之代、必為猜楊貴妃。漢武帝之時、自為替李夫人乎。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 158.
[29] '十二君假借人者、侍從宰相、頭中將、上判官、藏人少將、左衛門佐等也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 158.
[30] '十三娘者、之中糟糠也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 168.
[31] '但近來有夜這人云々. . . 常願天之寒、鎮惡氣之暖。十指黑、兩鬢白。出苦官使之奢、入憂弊衣之破。身常交灰煙、命僅係炭薪矣。' See Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 170.
[32] '件女見姿、頂平口甚廣、侏儒跗頗小。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 179.

sexually; the fourteenth daughter is the only woman who can accommodate his extremely huge penis.[33]

23) The fifteenth daughter (十五女) is a widow and a devout Buddhist.[34]

24) The sixteenth daughter (十六君) is a beauty and an *asobi* (entertainer).[35]

25) The first son (太郎主) is skilled at all kinds of *shodō* (calligraphy).[36]

26) The second son (次郎) is a Buddhist conjurer.[37]

27) The third son (三郎主) is a renowned cabinetmaker.[38]

28) The fourth son (四郎君) is an exemplary retainer for provincial governors.[39]

29) The fifth son (五郎) is a notable monk from the Tendai sect who is knowledgeable of all kinds of Buddhist classics.[40]

30) The sixth son (六郎) is a distinguished painter of all kinds of Japanese paintings.[41]

31) The seventh son (七郎) is a master-artisan who makes exquisite statues of the Buddha.[42]

32) The eighth son (八郎) is a profit-driven merchant who is very calculating.[43]

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[33] '十四御許夫不調白物之第一也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 179.
[34] '十五女者、孀也。道心堅固、而日夜歸依佛法。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 188.
[35] '十六君者、遊女夜發之長者。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 194.
[36] '大郎主者能書也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 205.
[37] '次郎者、一生不犯之大驗者、三業相應之真言師也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 216.
[38] '三郎主者、細工并木道長者也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 228.
[39] '四郎君、受領郎等。刺史執鞭之畧也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 236.
[40] '五郎者、天台宗學生、大名僧也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 254.
[41] '六郎冠者、繪師長者也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 266.
[42] '七郎者、大佛師也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 272.
[43] '八郎真人、商人主領也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 279.

33) The youngest son (九郎小童) has been adopted by someone who works at the *Gagakuryō* 雅楽寮 (the bureau of *Gagaku*).[44] Although he is only 15 years old, he is already emerging as a promising and popular dancer.[45]

34) The lieutenant. There is no individual section dedicated to the lieutenant himself. Only through indirect references from Fujiwara no Akihira's portrayal of his wives do we learn that, initially, he took advantage of his first wife's family background to advance himself socially but soon grew bored of her aged appearance and is now obsessed with his beautiful young third concubine.[46]

Fujiwara no Akihira thus makes an extensive list that includes many occupations pursued in the capital. He sets up an artificial social structure by profiling the family members and assigning them stereotypical social ranks and occupations. Also, in each family member's section, Fujiwara no Akihira lists all kinds of information and vocabulary that is related to their specific occupation. Kawaguchi refers to this format that Fujiwara no Akihira uses in *Shin Sarugakuki* as a type of *shokunin zukushi* 職人尽し,[47] signifying a painting or *waka* that catalogues details about a particular profession, including its members' work

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[44] '九郎小童者、為雅樂寮人之養子也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 294. *Gagaku* 雅楽, the 'Elegant Music', the term 'commonly used to designate foreign or foreign-style music and dance of the type supervised and performed by the Gagakuryō'. See *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 2: Heian Japan, 744. Kawaguchi believes that the texts flow nicely by starting with a *sarugaku* performance and ending with a profile of a promising *gagaku* performer from the lieutenant's family.

[45] Summarised from the preface and contents in *Shin Sarugakuki.*

[46] Although the lieutenant is not allocated a separate section in *Shin Sarugakuki*, he is described here, as he is an important figure in the family. '夫年者、僅及五八而好色甚盛矣。蓋弱冠奉公之昔、偏耽舅姑之勢德、長成顧私之今，只悔年齢懸隔。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 36.

[47] Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 811.

environment, lifestyle, clothing, and so forth. A similar approach can also be found in *Shin Sarugakuki.* Take the depiction of the third son:

> The third son, Master Saburo, is a renowned cabinetmaker and woodcraftsman. He is good at making such wooden products as small utility boxes, boxes for inkstones, wooden box-pillows, comb boxes, cabinets, trunks, legs for screens, frames for folding screens, lamp stands, stands for Buddhist icons, offering tables, sutra-reading tables that the master could sit on when delivering a sermon. He also makes saddle frames, frames for fans, quivers, decorations for long swords, long-handled parasols, handmade flowers, and rattan articles. There is no one to compare with him in good taste and craftsmanship. The dexterous efforts of his ten fingers keep his household prosperous, and his four-inch blade supports his five-foot frame…[48]

Here Fujiwara no Akihira set an example of what a master cabinetmaker's life is like by listing all kinds of wooden products and crafts that he is skilled at, with the details of his working environment.

What is more, a striking feature of Fujiwara no Akihira's text is that he depicts the many members of this one lieutenant's family as being of such varied social rank that they all seem to occupy parallel but discrete spaces, with no connection nor communication between them. Those members are grouped together ostensibly on the basis of family, but the way they are treated as individual entries in a large encyclopaedia, each annotated with a cluster of information and vocabulary, could serve as an educational prototype for *kanbun* writing. Fujiwara no Akihira puts various sorts of people together to create a vivid but artificial social

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[48] Piggott's translation, with some modification of my own, cited from Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 494. The original text is '三郎主者、細工并木道長者也。手箧、硯箱、枕筥、櫛箧、厨子、唐櫃、几帳手、屏風骨、燈臺、佛臺、花机、經机高座、禮盤、懸盤、大盤、高坏、脇足、【已上木道。】鞍骨、扇骨、箙、太刀裝束、唐笠、造花、藤巷上手也。惣風流曲節、無所可喩人。故因十指攝、致一家稔。持三寸小刀、資五尺大身乎。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 229.

terrain, a living compendium of people from a broad spectrum of occupations. Fujiwara no Akihira also incorporates in the instructive text some elements of entertainment; the storytelling sequence is easy for the readers to follow and would naturally attract their attention. One may wonder about the unrealistic depiction of the family figures, as well as the artificiality of the hierarchy that Fujiwara no Akihira has constructed, and whether its educational value is diminished by the inclusion of both idealised and exaggerated contents. Just as was true of the old charcoal seller in the previous chapter, Japanese writers were more interested in borrowing the 'descriptive passages [from Chinese poetry] and imitated [these] in their own poems'.[49] It was the exotic subjects and beautiful writing styles that they were drawn to, rather than the political implications or historical realities. The same attitude could be imputed to the borrowed content of *Shin Sarugakuki*. That is, it was offered to the reader for its abundant vocabulary and useful information on particular fields, while also demonstrating a model for skilful *kanbun* writing.

In addition, compared to other family members, there is very little description of the lieutenant himself. Despite the fact that the lieutenant is the head of this whole family, we are given only indirect information from Fujiwara no Akihira's portrayal of his wives.

As a character, the lieutenant seems not to exist in any real sense. It seems that the purpose of this figure is as a device to set up a background to the story and provide a scope (a family space in which Fujiwara no Akihira can add more elements). He serves as a thread

[49] Smits, *Reading the New Ballads*, 175.

connecting the other characters. Why is there no substantial description of him? One possible explanation is that the lieutenant is a reflection of one persona of the writer himself. We are told that he is a lieutenant of the Right Palace Gate Guards, *uemon no jō* 右衛門尉, which is a mid-ranking official and a royal policeman.[50] As noted by Kawaguchi Hisao, Joan Piggott and Fukuzawa Tōru, Fujiwara no Akihira had served in the Uemonfu and in the Royal Police and was known as *saemon no jō*, the lieutenant of the Left Palace Gate Guards 左衛門尉. This position exposed Fujiwara no Akihira to a broad range of people in society. It is thus reasonable to speculate that the depiction of the lieutenant and his family members was partially inspired by Fujiwara no Akihira's own experiences. His guard service would have given him an understanding of the different social roles that people occupied, and this may have contributed to his creation of the social structure presented in *Shin Sarugakuki*. If the figure of the lieutenant who is the nominal 'centre' of the family is seen as a reflection of one persona of Fujiwara no Akihira, observing and constructing the family as a whole, this could explain why the character does not interact with them substantially. Fujiwara no Akihira did attach some labels to the lieutenant — that he is a womaniser, for example. If one views this figure through the persona of Fujiwara no Akihira, the lieutenant's lust for his young, pretty lover and his neglect of his aging wife could be Fujiwara no Akihira making fun of himself to amuse the reader. Fukuzawa points out that the lieutenant, whose duty is to manage and

[50] Joan Piggott, 'A Comedy of Marriage and Family in Eleventh-century Kyoto: Fujiwara no Akihira's Shinsarugakuki', *Kodaigaku* 1(2009), 63–65.

oversee the capital space (‘都市空間’), would be familiar with the situations and dynamics of the citizens. Also, in *Shin Sarugakuki*, the lieutenant is acting as the head of the family, uniting the various family members, which is analogous to uniting the citizens of capital city into a community. In that sense, *Shin Sarugakuki* offers a bird’s eye view of life in the capital and a window on the capital space.[51]

What is more, the way that the daughters and their husbands/partners are given pride of place in the narratives described above, followed by the depiction of the sons (with no details given regarding the latter’s wives and partners) is worth noting. It may reflect the fact that uxorilocal marriage was still common — that is, ‘sons were still “marrying out” in mid-eleventh-century courtier society’[52] and could enjoy multiple associations (to the lieutenant’s household and to their father-in-law) — while, as Piggott suggests, their wives and partners were not considered to be truly a part of the lieutenant’s family.[53]

1. Fujiwara no Akihira establishes the breadth and depth of his knowledge: conventionalised depictions of literary prototypes

The family structure that Fujiwara no Akihira depicts includes some mid-ranking courtiers, like the lieutenant, alongside various lesser officials and commoners. The latter

[51] ‘家族共同体’. See Fukazawa, ‘1000 nenki no shakaigakusha’, 43–44.
[52] Piggott, ‘A Comedy of Marriage and Family in Eleventh-century Kyoto’, 63–65. Marriage in the Heian period mainly took two forms: visiting marriage and uxorilocal marriage. In Chapter Three, one can see that, despite the first wife’s copious flaws, ‘the lieutenant still visits her frequently’, which refers to the first form of marriage, that the couples lived apart and the husband visited his wife.
[53] As the husband moved into the wife’s residence, in that sense, he is more affiliated with his father-in-law’s family. That might also explain why the daughters were placed first in the family structure, as she remains in her own family, but the sons had moved out. Piggott, ‘A Comedy of Marriage and Family in Eleventh-century Kyoto’, 63–65.

were a segment of society with which Heian elites were less familiar and were often treated as peripheral or 'other' in their discourse.[54] As discussed in Chapter Three, Fujiwara no Akihira challenges the conventional depictions of certain figures by departing from stereotypes, and also works frequently outside of the Heian scholar's conventional use of Chinese allusions, opening up new ways of expressions and offering more complicated characters. However, he utilises more conventional characters in his construction of the lieutenant family.

To begin with, the first wife is depicted as a caricaturishly desperate, jealous, and fanatical old woman, in contrast with the refined courtly female image of the Heian period. However, if one goes on to read Fujiwara no Akihira's description of the second and third wives, one finds that he construed these characters as, respectively, an ideal housewife and a perfect lover.

> The next wife is the same age as her husband. She's no rival to China's Xishi but does not have any flaws either. She has a placid temperament, adjusting to circumstances like liquid to its vessel. She can be assertive or compliant, like clouds trailing in the wind. Moreover, in sewing, dyeing, weaving, spinning, supervising the household staff or commercial concerns, keeping accounts, and running the household, she cannot be praised too much. In the morning and evening she serves food as his heart desires; and in summer and winter she lays out apparel appropriate to the season. The lieutenant has his wife's know-how to thank for his residential wear: cap, hunting robe, trousers, lined robe, inner robe, outer robe, pyjamas, unlined robe, pantaloons, and outdoor wear; and for his daytime livery: hat, outer robe, vest, undertrain, inner

[54] Ashton Lazarus argues that elites often viewed commoners as 'socially peripheral yet symbolically central: though politically and economically marginalised, commoners maintained a nondiscursive culture that both fascinated and troubled elites.' See Lazarus, 'Performing Culture', 44.

trousers, outer trousers, sash, sword, sceptre, fan, shoes, and socks; and for his saddle, bow and quiver, as well as his retainers and servants.[55]

As he did in the depiction of the third son, Fujiwara no Akihira enumerates all possible attributes to show the characteristics of a good housewife. The second wife is depicted as virtuous, although not flawlessly beautiful. She occupies the role of household manager and a good helper for her husband. By providing a long list of the outerwear and residential wear that the lieutenant possesses, Fujiwara no Akihira suggests that the second wife has taken good care of all the details related to her husband, and the whole family is in good order due to her virtue (‘皆依此女房之德也’).[56]

If the second wife is construed by Fujiwara no Akihira as an ideal housewife, then the third concubine is described as a perfect lover. She is the friend of a court lady from a wealthy family, and she is very young (18 years old), pretty, feminine, and charming. The lieutenant is totally addicted to her company, as he ‘ignores everyone’s gossiping and closes his ears to the jealous words of both his other wives’; to him, ‘this young concubine is better than an elixir of youth or eternal life’.[57] Additionally, the third concubine is portrayed as

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[55] ‘次妻者、夫婦同年也。雖非勝西施、又無指過失。心操調和、如水隨器、剛柔進退、如雲聳風。矧乎、裁縫、染張、經織、績紡之道、吏桿興販、家治能治之条、嘆而猶有餘。朝夕厨膳叶心、夏冬裝束、若時。烏帽子、狩衣、袴、袷衣、袍、褂、衾、單衣、差貫、水旱、【已上夜裝束。】冠、袍、半臂、下襲、大口、表袴、帶、太刀、爵、扇、沓、襪、【已上晝裝束。】馬、鞍、弓、胡籙、從者、眷屬、皆依此女房之德也。’ in Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 52. English translation cited from Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 493, translated by Piggott.

[56] Piggott claims that the second wife was depicted as a ‘taken-in bride’, that she may have married up, in terms of wealth. See Piggott, ‘A Comedy of Marriage and Family in Eleventh-century Kyoto’, 64.

[57] Piggott, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 494.

simple and innocent. In Fujiwara no Akihira's words, she is 'relying solely on her feminine charms, and she has never learned the ways of the world'.[58]

The lieutenant sits at the top of the family hierarchy and enjoys the political and economic backing derived from the social status of his first wife. Meanwhile he has his second wife acting as the loyal housekeeper for the family, freeing him to spend time with his true love, the third concubine. Something of a perfect fantasy scenario for Heian audiences.

Apart from the two ideal female figures discussed above, Fujiwara no Akihira also includes in *Shin Sarugakuki* a conventionalised depiction of a certain type of beautiful woman drawn from literary sources that were familiar to Heian readers.

> The twelfth daughter's lover is an advisor on the Council of State, the Secretary Captain,[59] an upper magistrate, a third-level royal secretary, an assistant lieutenant of the Left Palace Gate Guards, and more. He is given to attaching his poems to the branches of plum trees and then having his attendants take them to those for whom he has written them, or he will write *waka* on paper dyed with cherry blossoms and have his warriors or attendants deliver them to the intended recipients. Countless romantic letters come to him like heavy waves. Aristocrats gather around him like clouds and mist, they pour out their heart, but it does them no good.
> As for the twelfth daughter's appearance: her hair pin is as smooth as the feather of the kingfisher, and her make-up has a graceful beauty. When her beautiful eyes turn to meet one's own, she could melt one's heart. Whenever she raises an eyebrow, she receives lots of love and admiration. Her skin is pure white without the need for powder, and her lips are naturally red without any lipstick. Her lips are like a red fruit, while her skin is as pure as the white snow. Her wrist is as pretty as jade; her teeth as white as a seashell. Her voice is mild and elegant, and she talks articulately. She

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[58] '第三妾者、有所之女房、強緣之同僚也。年始十八、容顔美麗、放逸豐顔也。一偏立妖艶之道、未曾知世間上。雖然養沈淪窮屈之性、罷世路喧囂之思。縱雖奉公衛官之營、談之日已彼忘、縱云仕佛事神之務、交之時更此重。攝眉對之自開、怒面會之自和。所痛觸之忽愈、所苦得之速安。夜專夜愛、晝隨晝翫。挑眼不痛、投財不惜。不憚水火、不障風雨。於萬人之嘲哢振頭、於兩妻嫉妬塞耳。長生不老之藥、遐齡延年之方、莫過於斯若妻乎。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 57.

[59] A Heian court position, meaning the one who is holding this position is the *Kurōdonotō* (Head of *Kurōdo*) as well as the *konoefu* (member of the middle-Inner Palace Guards).

> adorns herself with beautiful outfits and scents them with fragrance of orchids and musk. She keeps a beautiful bird-shaped mirror as company[60] and learns calligraphy which resembles the imprints of bird tracks. Although her beauty and temperament were cultivated in her cloistered chamber, their renown has spread far and wide. People all say that 'if she were born in the Tang Dynasty, her appearance would make Yang Guifei[61] jealous, and if she were born in the Han Dynasty, she could replace Lady Li.[62]

Here Fujiwara no Akihira also uses many conventionalised depictions of beauty in constructing the twelfth daughter. First of all, Bai Juyi's poems served as a major literary inspiration for Fujiwara no Akihira. For instance, the image of the twelfth daughter who lived in a cloistered chamber, but with beauty already well-known around the world, originates from Bai Juyi's poem, the 'Song of Everlasting Sorrow', in which Bai describes Yang Guifei's incomparable beauty:

> The girl from the family of Yang had just come of age, she lived in a cloistered chamber and was not yet known to others. [Yet] her natural beauty was hard to ignore, and one day she was selected to stand at the side of His Majesty. She could

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[60] '鸞', the Luan bird, which was known for its loyalty to its lover. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 165.
[61] Yang Yuhuan 楊玉环 (719–756), also known as Yang Guifei and Empress Yang. She was famous for her incomparable beauty and was the beloved consort of the Emperor Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (719–756) of Tang Dynasty (618–907). As the emperor was so obsessed with her that he neglected his duties, she was blamed for the downfall of the nation and strangled to death in Mawei Station, Sichuan. Yang Yuhuan has become a classic tragic icon in love stories shown in both Chinese and Japanese contexts.
[62] '十二公假借人者、侍從宰相、頭中将、上判官、藏人少将、左衛門佐等也。或文付梅枝、以隨身小舍人被賜、或歌書櫻花、以帶刀瀧口等被送。艷書來、如鋪波、貴使集、似雲霞。遞碎心肝、未有得意。抑其女形貌言者、翡翠之釵滑、嬋娟粧靜。迴芙蓉之瞼一咲、成百媚、開青黛之眉半向、集萬愛。不著粉自白、不施赭自赭。潤唇如丹菓、膏膚似白雪。腕諭玉、齒含貝。詞少顯旨、音和通事。綾羅纏身、蘭麝薰衣。擎鸞鏡為伴、習鳥跡為師。身養深窓、艷自風聞於天下。質在幽閨、色情髣髴於遠近。皆云、昔玄宗之代、必為猜楊貴妃。漢武帝之時、自為替李夫人乎。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 158. Lady Li, '李夫人', the concubine of Emperor Wu (156–87 BC) in the Han Dynasty, was also famous for her 'kingdom-toppling beauty'(傾城) as described in his brother Li Yannian's poetry.

melt one's heart with her coquettish smile, all of the powdered faces of the ladies in waiting from the six palaces paled in comparison.[63]

Also, in the 'Song of Everlasting Sorrow', Bai depicts Yang as having 'dark black hair, and the face of a flower, with golden jewellery dangling from her hair',[64] and further writes that 'her ornate headdress fell to the ground, and nobody picked it up; her kingfisher hair ornament, her gold sparrow hairpin and her jade hair clasp'.[65] This is remarkably similar to Fujiwara no Akihira's depiction of the twelfth daughter: 'her hair pin is as smooth as the feather of the kingfisher, and her make-up has a graceful beauty'. In addition, the suggestion that the twelfth daughter could have made Yang Guifei jealous was probably inspired by another poem of Bai in the New Yuefu collection, '*Shangyang baifa ren* 上陽白髮人 (The Grey-Haired Maiden of Shangyang)'. The poem is written in the voice of the grey-haired maiden. When she was young she was sent to the palace by her family, who believed that she would naturally win the emperor's favour ('皆雲入內便承恩'), as her face was like hibiscus and her bosom like jade ('臉似芙蓉胸似玉'). However, Yang Guifei was jealous of her

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[63] '楊家有女初長成，養在深閨人未識。天生麗質難自棄，一朝選在君王側。回眸一笑百媚生，六宮粉黛無顏色。' Bai Juyi 白居易, *Chang hen ge* 長恨歌, https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=191153&if=gb (accessed 01 May 2020).
Empress Yang was one of the most frequently cited figures appropriated by Heian scholars for their construction of female figures at the court. For instance, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* compares Empress Teishi and Emperor Ichijō to Yang Guifei and Emperor Xuanzong, recalling the ill-starred love and tragic ending between this couple: 'Korechika and Takaie have gone, and her majesty has taken religious vows, the police reported. How pitiful, thought Emperor Ichijō, that his pregnant consort should have suffered so greatly! Miserable at the thought of Teishi's unhappiness, he shed many surreptitious tears. Was not the ancient story of the "Song of Everlasting Sorrow" very much the same sort of thing, he wondered sadly.' McCullough, Helen Craig, and William H. McCullough, trans., *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1980), 192.
[64] '雲鬢花顏金步搖', in *Chang hen ge*, https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=191153&if=gb (accessed 01 May 2020).
[65] '花鈿委地無人收, 翠翹金雀玉搔頭。' In *Chang hen ge*, https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=191153&if=gb (accessed 01 May 2020).

beauty (‘已被楊妃遙側目’), and she was sent to the Shangyang Palace before she even had a chance to meet the emperor (‘未容君王得見面’) and was forced to stay in the palace ever after.[66]

The other figure whom Fujiwara no Akihira compares with the twelfth daughter, Lady Li, is also depicted in the New Yuefu collection. Bai wrote a poem entitled ‘*Li Furen* 李夫人 (*The Lady Li*)’. It describes Li’s kingdom-toppling beauty (‘傾城色’) and how her enduring charms enchanted the emperor even after her death. Such depictions of Yang Guifei and Lady Li provided a useful point of reference for Fujiwara no Akihira to talk about beautiful women. As the most well-known Chinese poet in the Heian period, Bai had provided Heian writers with much inspiration; his writings were embraced, appropriated, and reconstructed in various ways. His work endured as a model for talking and writing about specific topics, and his refined vocabulary and elegantly composed allusions gave guidance to literary aesthetics for a long time. Thus, Fujiwara no Akihira’s adoption of Bai’s work also suggests a skilful and conventional approach based on reworking Bai’s vocabulary, which would be a helpful model for readers who had some *kanbun* knowledge but lacked the facility to incorporate it into their own work.

In addition, some of Fujiwara no Akihira’s couplets and vocabulary had been used before to depict female beauty in the *Wakan Rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 (*Collection of Japanese and Chinese Poems for Singing*), one of the major literary educational materials in the Heian

[66] ‘上陽白髮人’ in *Xin Yue fu* 新樂府, https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=78082&page=17.

period. Fujiwara no Akihira demonstrates how to recycle the poetic language drawn from famous literary collections. As a matter of fact, *Wakan Rōeishū* was a major channel for the reception of Chinese poetry, especially the work of Bai Juyi and Yuan Zhen.[67] One can find overlaps between Bai's anthology and *Wakan Rōeishū.* That is to say, the models Fujiwara no Akihira chose and used were the most widely circulated and best recognised sources in his time, and his work was already in line with existing educational texts.

Let us look at the couplets that inspired Fujiwara no Akihira in his writing:

'嬋娟兩鬢秋蟬翼, 宛轉雙蛾遠山色'

A graceful beauty, a pair of sideburns like autumn cicada wings. Tossing about a pair of moth-like eyebrows: those distant peaks so colourful.[68]

This is recalled in Fujiwara no Akihira's '翡翠之釵消, 嬋娟之粧靚'

Her hair pin is as smooth as the feather of the kingfisher, and her make-up has a graceful beauty.

We also find:

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[67] Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) was known as one of the most influential and renowned Chinese poets in early Japan. Many discussions, seminars, and gatherings at court centred on Bai's work, and it was a literary fashion at court for people to quote the work of Bai and other Chinese poets. Therefore, the way Fujiwara no Akihira adopted and reworked Bai's texts also suggests that he had found a way to participate in the courtly fashion. See Guest, 'Primers, Commentaries, and Kanbun Literacy in Japanese Literary Culture, 950–1250 CE', 18. And Sakaki Atsuko, *Obsessions with the Sino-Japanese Polarity in Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 105–108. Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831), a Chinese poet and politician in Tang Dynasty. Yuan and Bai were both involved in the movement of 'New Yuefu' compositions, and hence called 'Yuan Bai (元白)'.

[68] Fujiwara no Kintō 藤原公任, *Wakan Rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集, in vol. 19 of Shinpen nihon koten bungaku zenshū 新編日本古典文学全集, ed. Sugano Hiroyuki 菅野禮行 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1999), 369. See Jordan Gwyther's translation from *Bai Juyi and The New Yuefu Movement*, Gwyther, 'Bai Juyi and the New Yuefu Movement', (MA diss., University of Oregon, 2013), 133. https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/13223/Gwyther_oregon_0171N_10647.pdf;sequence=1 (accessed 01 July 2019).

‘李延年之僂族，託一妍以始飛’

This notes that the advancement of Li Yannian’s family is based on his sister Lady Li’s graceful beauty. It describes her beauty indirectly and indicates that Lady Li and her family exert a strong influence at court. This might also have served as a literary model for Fujiwara no Akihira in his characterisation of the twelfth daughter. In constructing her image, Fujiwara no Akihira adopts widely known phrases drawn from various famous collections that describe beautiful women. He draws upon language conventionally used for this purpose in Chinese textual counterparts and influential *kanshibun* writings. This approach demonstrates Fujiwara no Akihira’s mastery of *kanshibun* knowledge and provides the reader with a useful lexicon of current vocabulary about feminine beauty. A similar approach can also be seen in his construction of other figures.[69]

Following is another example showing how Fujiwara no Akihira was inspired by characters in Bai’s poetry. The eighth son is depicted as a trader and profit-driven merchant; all he cares about is money, and he pays no attention to his wife. He is very good at scheming and calculating, able to return profits of 10,000-fold, and he can turn bricks into gold. When he travels to the villages, he does not have a place to stay, and he ties his whole life and all his treasures onto his boat. He trades in local specialities and products all over the country.

[69] Wiebke Denecke finds that many Japanese poets communicate creatively with the Chinese tradition, and some even tend to rewrite, overwrite, and transpose Chinese themes. Denecke, ‘Topic Poetry Is Ours’: Poetic Composition on Chinese Lines in Early Heian Japan’, 46.

He spends most of his time dealing with his customers, so much so that he barely has time to stay with his wife.[70]

This depiction of the eighth son brings to mind Bai Juyi's depiction of the merchant in his long poem, 'Pipa Xing' (琵琶行):

> All he (the merchant) thought of was money, parting never bothered him.
> So, the month before he'd gone to Fuliang, to buy tea,
> And she (his wife) had been left to tend the boat all alone,
> No company but the cold water and the moon.[71]

Apart from the examples above, we can find other figures and allusions that were borrowed from the Chinese as a source of inspiration for Fujiwara no Akihira. For example, the fourth daughter's husband, a blacksmith, is compared to Mo Ye, who devoted, and sacrificed himself, to make the best sword for his king. The ninth daughter's husband, a renowned doctor, was compared to Shen Nong (who was venerated as a father of medicine even after he died experimenting on himself with different plants) and Bian Que, a legendary doctor in ancient China. Similarly, the first son, a distinguished calligrapher, is compared to Wang Xizhi, who mastered all kinds of calligraphies and was regarded as one of the greatest Chinese calligraphers in the country's history.

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[70] '八郎真人、商人主領也。重利不知妻子、念身不顧他人。持一成萬、搏壤成金…於村邑過日夜、無留所。財寶貯於波濤之上、浮沈任於風前。運命交於街衢之間、死生懸於路頭。噫、賓客之清談、甚繁、妻子之對面已稀焉。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 279.

[71] '商人重利輕別離，前月浮梁買茶去。去來江口守空船，繞船月明江水寒。' See Bai Juyi 白居易, *Pipa xing* 琵琶行. https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=191194&searchu=%E7%90%B5%E7%90%B6%E8%A1%8C&searchmode=showall&if=gb#result (accessed 01 May 2020).

These examples point to a pattern in Fujiwara no Akihira's writing, namely that, in most cases, he would choose the most successful or famous people to borrow from, not limiting himself only to Chinese counterparts but also drawing upon Japanese examples. By doing this, Fujiwara no Akihira easily devises a set of stereotypes to populate his artificial family structure.

Thus, looking at the relatively conventional and representative figures that Fujiwara no Akihira incorporates in his construction of people of different occupations and social classes within the lieutenant's family, we see that he has created conventionalised depictions of particular types of people drawn from literary sources and popular stereotypes. In terms of the family members discussed above, one can find archetypes or models that must have served as his sources. Fujiwara no Akihira meanwhile has created a fictional context for these disparate individuals so as to stitch them together into a family.

At the same time, in addition to telling colourful stories about these characters, he provides abundant useful vocabulary related to the attributes of each one. This latter aspect is presented in such a form as to constitute an encyclopaedic ordering of knowledge, a reference work that digests information from each field or discipline that is cited. This is a way in which he potentially adds value to his work, causing it to be seen as an instructive piece of writing that provided useful terminologies and contextualised different types of people featured in influential literary resources.

2. Reading *Shin Sarugakuki*: An exhaustive listing of knowledge infused with Fujiwara no Akihira's unique insights

(a) Lists in *Shin Sarugakuki* and encyclopaedic works

As suggested before, there are striking structural similarities between *Shin Sarugakuki* and educational books from the Heian period. In particular, the *ōrai* writing genre may have served as an inspiration for Fujiwara no Akihira. Fukazawa Tōru, Kawaguchi, and Yamauchi Masujirō have all suggested that *Shin Sarugakuki* exhibits several characteristics that resemble *ruijū* (category book), especially its encyclopaedic presentations. Sakai Kenji argues that the contents of *Shin Sarugakuki* belong to a broader category of *ōrai* writing ('広義の往来物'), as the vocabulary Fujiwara no Akihira uses indicates an educational purpose, and he seems intent on providing encyclopaedic and functional knowledge of Heian daily life.[72] Kawaguchi also suggests that *Shin Sarugakuki* may also have potentially influenced *ōrai* texts in later periods.[73]

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the earliest collection of model correspondence (*Unshū Ōrai*) includes a list of templates aimed at aiding in the teaching of writing and reading letters, covering some of the most common occasions and topics. The categories include friendship (交遊), presentation-reply letters (贈答), asking for favour (依頼), rituals

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[72] '教育的配慮'. See Sakai Kenji 酒井憲二, *Shin Sarugakuki no goi josetsu: tsuki, goi, sakuin* 新猿楽記の語彙序説: 付、語彙索引, 78. Also Katō Daikaku 加藤大鶴, '*Chūsei waka kanbun shiryō ni arawareru kango shoten no yure: 『shin sarugakuki 』kōanbon - kōeihōn - ko shōhon no hikaku kara*' 中世和化漢文資料に現れる漢語声点の揺れ:『新猿楽記』弘安本−康永本−古抄本の比較から (Ōsaka Daigaku Sekai Gengo Kenkyū Sentā) Ronshū（大阪大学世界言語研究センター）論集 8 (2012), 23–41.

[73] Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 814.

(祭礼), Buddhism-related (仏事), borrowing and lending (貸借), recommendation and career advancement (昇進), important things (用件), divination (卜占), proposal letters (質義), letters to local governors (地方官の動靜), and *kanshi* and *waka* composition (作文作歌).[74] The settings and terminologies that Fujiwara no Akihira offers are for educational purposes and provide the readers with useful and detailed instructions on how to write letters on specific topics. *Unshū Ōrai* is known as the earliest *ōrai mono* to draw upon the vocabulary of multiple subjects; it influenced the development of subsequent *ōrai* writing. This section explores the encyclopaedic and educational elements of *Shin Sarugakuki* by looking at its extensive lists and examining their relationship to *ōrai* writing and encyclopaedic works.

i. The eighth son

The lieutenant's eighth son has travelled to the land of the Emishi in the east and to Kikai Island in the west and trades in countless items from China, Korea, and Japan. Fujiwara no Akihira provided a long list of the foreign products that the eighth son imports, including:

> Aloeswood, musk, perfume, cloves, spikenard, frankincense, birthwort, camphor, pride-of-India, 'chicken-tongue',[75] sandalwood, sanderswood, bischofia, sappanwood, alum, 'red snow', 'purple snow', gold elixir, silver elixir, purple gold salve, croton oil, orpiment, myrobalans, betel nuts, gamboge, indigo, cochineal, verdigris, azurite, minium, cinnabar, ceruse, leopard and tiger skins, wisteria stems, tea cups, wicker baskets, rhinoceros horns, water-buffalo sceptres, agate belts, glass urns, twill, brocade, scarlet raiment, 'elephant eye' damask, 'cloud-patterned' brocade, soft

[74] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki; Unshū shōsoku*, 279.
[75] A type of clove. See Bruce Batten, *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries, and Interactions* (University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 193.

> Koryō brocade, Tonkin brocade, 'floating-line' twill, silk gauze and crape, Chinese bamboo, sweet bamboo, and hollow glass balls.[76]

Akihira first creates a detailed list of the luxury items in which the merchant would have traded, shedding light on the trading dynamics in the late Heian period. Batten states that, apart from the goods imported from China (*karamono*, 唐物) and Korea (*Koryō*, 高麗), there were items that hailed from Indochina, Cambodia, and Persia, as evidenced by the list above.[77] Batten regards *Shin Sarugakuki* as a 'veritable encyclopaedia of late Heian life',[78] as the characters and contents described therein are composites of real Heian individuals and provide abundant, albeit possibly exaggerated, insights into the trading customs of the period.

ii. The fourth son

> The fourth son, Lord Shiro, is an exemplary retainer for provincial governors and serves as their whip-carrying lieutenant. There is nowhere in the Five Inner Provinces and Seven Circuits that he hasn't been, nowhere in the sixty-odd provinces that he hasn't seen…. Although there are some as good as he is, none are better, Thus he is appointed as deputy in the record bureau, the local defence squad, the police office, the survey office, the storehouse, the attendants' office, the kitchen, or the secretariat; or he is entrusted with duties as a surveyor, tax collector, exchange specialist, field overseer, or special assessment agent even though he didn't request such assignment. Without unduly harassing the residents he manages to collect taxes, and he's good at insuring his noble master against losses while ensuring his own profit at the same time. Since everybody does just as he says, his residence is always bustling — it is full of produce gathered from every province and is extremely prosperous. There is

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[76] According to Batten, some of the items listed are unidentifiable; for instance, we only know that the 'red snow' and 'purple snow' were the name of medicines, but do not know what they were made of; see Bruce Batten, *To the Ends of Japan*, 193. The original text is '唐物、沈、麝香、衣比、丁子、甘松、薫陸、青木、龍腦、牛頭、雞舌、白檀、紫檀、赤木、蘇芳、陶砂、紅雪、紫雪、金液丹、銀液丹、紫金膏、巴豆、雄黄、可梨勒、檳榔子、銅黄、紺青、燕脂、綠青、空青、丹、朱砂、胡粉、豹、虎皮、藤、茶垸、籠子、犀生角、水牛如意、馬瑙[帶]、瑠璃壺、綾、錦、緋襟、羅、穀、吳竹、甘竹、吹玉等也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 279.

[77] For instance, 'gamboge, a yellow pigment made from the sap of a tree related to the mangosteen, could only have come from Cambodia.' Batten, *To the Ends of Japan*, 194.

[78] Batten, *To the Ends of Japan*, 192.

> silk from Awa; silk floss from Echizen; eight-foot bolts of cloth from Mino and persimmons, too; figured silk cloth from Hitachi; finely woven silk from Kii; spotted cloth from Kai; pongee from Iwami; paper from Tajima; sumi ink from Awaji; combs from Izumi; needles from Harima; swords from Bitchū; small utility boxes, whetstones, bamboo blinds and sardines from Iyo; woven cushions from Izumo; round cushions from Sanuki; cruppers from Kazusa; stirrups from Musashi; kettles from Noto; pots from Kawachi and bean paste as well; lumber from Aki; iron from Bingo; cows from Nagato; horses and paper from Mutsu; pears from Shinano; chestnuts from Tanbu; glutinous rice from Owari; carp from Omi….
> One after another, carts carrying all kinds of tribute products arrive, provisioning an abundant market, it is said. So, on the mornings when new postings are announced, all manner of folk, whether intimates of the household or not, seek an audience with him.[79]

Just as he does with the eighth son, Fujiwara no Akihira provides an exhaustive list of all the tributes and local treasures that the fourth son receives. This implicitly demonstrates Fujiwara no Akihira's broad knowledge of novelties and local specialities alike, as well as his knowledge of officialdom, courtesy, and customs of the time.

The sought-after goods that Fujiwara no Akihira lists coincide with the local specialities categorised in the *Engishiki* 延喜式, a collection of Heian laws and customs compiled under the command of the Emperor Daigō. This book has 50 volumes, organised by

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[79] Piggott's translation, with some modification of my own, cited from Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 494. The original text is '四郎君、受領郎等。刺史執鞭之畧也。於五畿七道、無所不届、於六十餘國、無所不見。乘船則測風波之時、騎馬迺達山野之道。於弓箭不拙、於算筆無暗。入境着府之作法、神拝著任之儀式、治國良吏之支度、交替分付之沙汰、不與狀之文、勘公文之条、雖有等者、更莫過之者。是以、凡廳目代、若濟所、案主所、健兒所、撿非違所、田所、出納所、調所、細工所、修理所、若御廐、小舍人所、膳所、政所、或目代、或別當。況乎、撿田、收納、交易、國佃、臨時雜役等之使、不望自所懸預也。但不弊[民]濟公事、君無損自有利上手。仍得萬民追從、家常贍、集諸國土産、貯甚豐也。謂阿波絹、越前棉、美濃八丈、又粽。常陸綾、紀伊國縑、甲斐班布、石見紬、但馬紙、淡珞墨、播磨針、備中刀、伊豫手筥、【并砥、簾鰯、出雲莚、讃岐圓座、上總鞍鞦、武藏鐙、能登釜、河内塙并味曾、安藝槫、備後鐵、長門牛、陸奥駒又紙、信濃梨子、丹波栗、尾張粔、若狹椎子、近江鮒、又餅、越後鮭又漆、備前海糠、周防鯖、伊努鯛、隱岐鮑、山城茄子、大和苽、丹後和布、飛驒餅、鎮西米等。如此贄菓子轆々繼踵濟々成市。故除目之朝、不云親疎，先被尋求者也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 236.

department. Local specialities are listed in the *Engishiki* by specific geographic area. It catalogues similar products with a longer list of tribute from given areas: for instance, eight-foot bolts of cloth from Mino, glutinous rice from Owari, paper from Tajima, iron from Bingo, pears from Shinano, and salmon and lacquer from Echigo. These are all treated as valuable tribute offerings and mentioned individually under the heading of the different locations from which they came, which suggests that these local products were valued by the court to which they were presented. The abundant details presented in *Shin Sarugakuki* also provide extensive insights into this custom. It seems that *Engishiki* may have launched a tradition of making encyclopaedic lists of local specialities in an encyclopaedic format, a practice that Fujiwara no Akihira takes even further by providing practical knowledge of tribute and court customs for his readers, who could put this information to use in different scenarios, such us letter-writing, official documents, educational works and so forth.

Considering Fujiwara no Akihira's demonstrated knowledge of people in *Shin Sarugakuki*, we find many similar expressions, social settings, and vocabulary in *Unshū Ōrai*.

In one letter in *Unshū Ōrai,* Fujiwara no Akihira talks about receiving citruses, oranges, pears, persimmons, pheasants, fish, frogs, and mussels as precious local specialities from a courtier.[80] In another letter he mentions delivering valuable fruits, birds, and fish to the governor at Ise.[81] In a later letter he talks of a long-awaited ship from the Song court in

[80] '可被求送。甘子。橘。梨子。枝柿。雉。鯉。生鮭。蠣。' See Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡, *Unshū Ōrai* 雲書往來, ed. Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一. In vol. 9 of Gunsho ruijū 群書類従 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1959), 416.
[81] '伊勢守殿。獻上。珍菓。魚鳥。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai,* 416.

China finally reaching Japan under divine protection[82] and people being thrilled to see the countless treasures sent by the Chinese merchants, including musk, beautifully carved sculptures, jewels, light-reflecting pearls, rhinoceros horns, and so forth.[83] From this and the previous description of the merchant, the eighth son, we see the trading of local specialities, as well as the frequent trading between Japan and overseas nations, and learn that such treasures and local specialities were also exchanged and delivered as a courtesy between officials. Fujiwara no Akihira not only demonstrates his knowledge of the abundant local specialities of different places but also shows his familiarity with the customs and traditions of gift-giving at court in both *Shin Sarugakuki* and *Unshū Ōrai*. Fujiwara no Akihira also amassed copious knowledge of geopolitical affairs and diplomatic customs at the court, which also formed an important part of court life that his readers would find extremely useful to know about.

In addition, a very similar format is seen in the *Teikin Ōrai* 庭訓往來, a collection of correspondence believed to be written by Gen'e (1279−1350), a Buddhist priest of the Tendai sect. This was also used as a writing textbook in later periods. The *Teikin Ōrai* lists famous specialities from each province, and the list largely overlaps with the ones in *Shin Sarugakuki*, which was written earlier.

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[82] It had been dangerous to travel back and forth from China to Japan in ancient times due to the lack of proficiency in sailing. Therefore, people would attribute a successful sailing to the divine's protection. When Michizane suggested to abort *kentōshi* 遣唐使 (Envoys to the Tang), one of the reasons he gives is the dangerous environment of the journey.
[83] *Shin Sarugakuki*; *Unshū shōsoku*, trans. Shigematsu Akihisa, 238.

There is one entry in the *Teikin Ōrai* that details local residents with different occupations, of which the author provides an extensive list including:

> *Sarugaku* performers, *dengaku* performers, lion dancers, puppeteers, biwa-strumming minstrels, shamans, (the best) female entertainers, *Shirabyōshi* dancers, *asobi*, doctors, yin-yang masters, painters, Buddha-making artisans, sew masters, sumo wrestlers, monks from the Zen and Risshū Buddhist sects, sophisticated Tendai scholars, renowned monks from the Sutrayana and Mantrayana schools, Shugenja,[84] respected monks, wise men, court nobles, *Kidendō* scholars, *Myōbōdō* and *Myōgyōdō* students, *waka* poets who are also good at playing instruments, masters good at rhythm and sound, monks who believe that one will be reborn in the Pure Land, local retainers for provincial governors, talented calligraphers, skilful *kanbun* and *kana* writers, those who are good at reading Sanskrit and Chinese characters, those who are eloquent and knowledgeable…[85]

This particular section from the *Teikin Ōrai* is entitled 'The prosperity of the nearby county'. Like the *Unshū Ōrai*, the *Teikin Ōrai* was created to provide writing models and templates. Here it provides the longest possible list of residents and their different occupations to demonstrate the prosperity of the town. And the list largely overlaps with the characters that Fujiwara no Akihira creates in the *Shin Sarugakuki*. If one goes back to the family at the beginning of this chapter, one finds very similar situations depicted in *Shin Sarugakuki* and the *Teikin Ōrai*. Kawaguchi also suggests that *Shin Sarugakuki* may have influenced the *ōrai* writing texts of later periods. Fujiwara no Akihira constructs the family

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[84] 修験者, a Buddhist priest who trains himself by enduring ascetic practices, see https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:5125/lib/display/?lid=40030PJE1993600 (accessed 01 January 2020).

[85] '猿楽田楽師子舞傀儡子琵琶法師県御子傾城白拍子遊女夜発之輩并医師陰陽師絵師仏師摺縫物師武藝相撲之族或禅律両僧聖道浄土碩学顕教密宗学生修験行者効験貴僧智者上人紀典仙経儒者明法明経道学士詩哥宗匠管絃上手引声短声声名師一念多念名僧検断所務沙汰人清書草案手書真字仮字能書梵字漢字達者宏才利口者辯舌博覧類' in *Teikin Ōrai* 庭訓往来, ed. Ishikawa Matsutarō 石川松太郎 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1973), 89.

structure in such a way as to cover a broad array of people with different occupations and social classes, which may seem unrealistic and artificial to be occurring in a single family structure, but would fit nicely in an *ōrai mono* (*ōrai* writing), as the latter tend to focus more on the listing of knowledge. In that case, it would help us to understand better this piece of writing. It is more like a show piece to demonstrate one's knowledge for a *kanbun* training, a practical work that collects ample knowledge from various disciplines in a single work.

Fujiwara no Akihira labels his characters similarly to the way that the *Teikin Ōrai* categorises local residents. This could explain why there was no communication among individual figures in *Shin Sarugakuki*, even though they were from the same family. If we understand *Shin Sarugakuki* as an *ōrai mono*, each figure that Fujiwara no Akihira presents can be seen as a discrete entry in a long list**,** all existing parallel to one another. For instance, in the *Teikin Ōrai*, *sarugaku* performers, shamans, female entertainers, doctors, yin-yang masters, painters, Buddha-making artisans, sumo wrestlers, monks, court nobles, governors, and so forth are listed in a single long list, offering a panoramic glimpse of the local residents. No individual connects or communicates with any of the others; instead, each one serves only to represent a given field. Fujiwara no Akihira might have applied this way of listing and demonstrating knowledge (as frequently seen in *ōrai mono*) in the *Shin Sarugakuki*. However, unlike *ōrai mono*, which simply lists names and occupations, Fujiwara no Akihira takes it a step further in the *Shin Sarugakuki*, developing every single entry by placing it in context and constructing a background story for it. He creates a panorama of the

local residents in the capital, placing them under the rubric of a family. Fujiwara no Akihira also maps out a hierarchy within the family context; one might imagine that, in a family, members from different classes and occupations would mingle in a large family, but he has them compartmentalised for maximum comic effect, remaining in their own spaces.

To sum up, structural similarities in *Shin Sarugakuki* and *ōrai* writing suggest an instructive approach to writing in Heian *kanbun* and point to a larger category of educational lists that continued to develop over time.

(b) Intertextuality in *Shin Sarugakuki* and *Unshū Ōrai*

i. The fifth daughter

The fifth daughter's husband is a student in *Kidendō*, *Myōbōdō*, *Myōgyōdō*, and *Sandō*. His first name is Masafumu and his last name is Sugawara; his courtesy name is Kanryosou. He has read the *Wen Xuan* 文選, *Monjū* 文集 (*Poetry Collection of Bai Juyi*), *Shiji* 史記, *Han shu* 漢書 (*Book of Han*), *Lun yu* 論語 (*Analects*), *Xiaojing* 孝經 (*Classic of Filial Piety*), *Mao shi* 毛詩 (*Mao Commentary*), *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, *ryō* 令 (Administrative code), *ritsu* 律 (Criminal code), *kyaku* 格 (Prohibition order), and *shiki* 式 (Constitutions). He is skilled at writing poetry, rhapsody, prefaces, *hyō* 表 (memorials to the throne), *shō* 詔 (edicts), *senji* 宣旨 (imperial edicts), *senmyō* 宣命 (imperial edicts), *iki* 位記 (appointment letters), *sojō* 奏狀 (petitions), *gammon* 願文 (vows), *jukan* 呪願 (prayers), *fuchō* 符牒 (official passes), *kyōsho* 教書 (formal edicts), *nikki* 日記 (diaries), *mōshibumi* 申文 (petition), *shōsoku* 消息 (letters), *ōrai* 往來 (correspondent letters),[86] and *gebumi* 解文 (report). He is also skilled in composing *waka*, Chinese poetry and prose by following the format and rhythm

[86] As for the difference between *shōsoku* and *ōrai*, Shigematsu Akihisa summarises that both referred to letters, while *shōsoku* was considered as normal written letters (one way), while *ōrai* was more like a set of two letters (which would include the return letter). Also, he suggests that *shōsoku* typically are actual letters, while *ōrai* is more like a collection of various examples of correspondence, prepared as an educational tool. See Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin sarugaku ki*; *Unshū shōsoku*, trans. Akihisa Shigematsu, 276.

perfectly. He is not in the least inferior to such top scholars as Ōe no Mochitoki, Ōe no Masahira, Sugawara no Fumitoki, and Tachibana no Naomoto.[87]

This paragraph offers a conventional depiction of a *Kidendō* scholar in the Heian court. Again, Fujiwara no Akihira provides the longest possible list of what a distinguished *juka* scholar would be able to achieve. As discussed in Chapter One, there were 'Four Paths' at the academy: the *Myōgyōdō*, the *Kidendō*, the *Myōbōdō*, and the *Sandō*.[88] In the Heian period, the *Kidendō* was the most prestigious of these. Fujiwara no Akihira presents us with the perfect *Kidendō* scholar: born in a *juka* family, well-educated, with numerous academic accomplishments to his name. The fifth daughter's husband is not only educated in all four of the curricula at the academy, but has also mastered all kinds of writing. He is accordingly regarded as one of the best scholars of the Heian period.

The scholar's name, Sugawara Masafumu, is apparently a combination of the names of the only two *juka* families who established their family lineages at the academy in the Heian period: Sugawara and Ōe (no Masafusa) family names. Such a name, clearly meant to justify the fifth daughter's husband's prestigious and well-educated background, also identifies him as a fictional figure, because a person could only inherit his name from one specific family, and could not have combined the two.

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[87] '五君夫、紀傳、明法、明經、算道等學生也。姓菅原、名匡文、字菅綾三。文選、文集、史記、漢書、論語、孝經、毛詩、左傳、律、令、格、式、盡部讀畢。仍詩賦、序表、詔、宣旨、宣命、位記、奏狀、陳狀、勘狀、勘文、移牒、移文、願文、咒願、【諷誦文】、符牒、告書、教書、日記、申文、消息、往來、【請文】等上手也。令律文明而憲法不違於格式。風月心工而詩賦不背於韻題。豈異以言、匡衡、文時、直幹等哉。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 91.
[88] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 143.

Fujiwara no Akihira comments that Sugawara Masafumu could compete with the top Heian scholars. Generally speaking, scholars from *juka* families would naturally have greater chances for advancement, as their families had accumulated social and political capital over the years. Aristocratic families in Heian Japan had two main options for their education: the academy and home tutoring. Students from *juka* and *sekkan* families would enjoy greater benefits from home tutoring, as they would have more resources and familial academic legacies on which to draw. As we can see, Sugawara Masafumu has read many Chinese classics and dynastic histories, which shows not only his diligence but the fact that all these materials were readily available to him.

The *Midō Kanpakuki* records that Michinaga once received a very precious edition of the *Wen Xuan*, and, on the same day, his daughter Shōshi presented it to Emperor Ichijō to win his favour, as the latter was a great lover of the *Wen Xuan.*[89] This shows that scholars from the *sekkan* and *juka* families would naturally have more access to the Chinese classics and could use this as an advantage for their career advancement.

In one particular model letter in the *Unshū Ōrai,* which is talking about reading *Wen Xuan* copies, the author, a courtier-without-post from the Sugawara family (散位菅原) adds a few comments of his own, saying:

> …The *Wen Xuan* commented by Li Shan, is indeed a standard version, and should be read over carefully. However, even though one has read that, if one did not master the essence of it, he will still be laughed at as ‘a bookshelf’ (slang for a person who reads

[89] Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長, trans., Kuramoto Kazuhiro 倉本一宏, *Midō kanpaku ki zen gendaigo yaku* 御堂関白記全現代語訳, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2009), 233.

> lots of books but never understands the meaning of them). One should read it over and over, and excerpt from it. Those talented scholars are all gone, and who else is going to be one's mentor?[90]

The *Wen Xuan* is listed in *Shin Sarugakuki* as the first item in the book list that Sugawara Masafumu has read, which implies its importance amongst the literary texts studied at the academy. Both the description of Sugawara Masafumu and the letter indicate the acceptance of Chinese classics and histories by Heian scholars, and their efforts to read them in order to become qualified scholars at the academy. In *Shin Sarugakuki*, Fujiwara no Akihira presents us with a stereotypical, even unrealistic description of an ideal Heian scholar; that is, he comes from a prestigious *juka* family, with proper classical Chinese training and access to all necessary materials, has read all the literary classics, mastered all kinds of writing, and, finally, has become a peerless and distinguished scholar. However, judging by what the other Sugawara said in his reading of *Wen Xuan*, one can see that, even though he was from the *juka* family and had full access to essential materials such as *Wen Xuan*, it was never easy for him to master the essence of it, and he also lamented the lack of real masters in his days. That is to say, Fujiwara no Akihira's excessively detailed lists are far-fetched, suggesting a recognition that, in real society, nobody could really perform so many feats, just as no one could be that superlative in every area. The over-exaggerated description of this scholar also indicates a satirical and comic attitude towards the unrealistic expectations placed by the court on the *juka* scholars. It also indicates the short-sightedness

[90] '李善之注可為規模。能可御覽也。雖讀書籍不得其心。則有文廚子之嘲。且以反覆。且以可覽抄也。才子已沒。師匠誰人乎。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai*, 415.

of having the academy dominated by just two families, and points to the lack of support and social mobility for lower-ranked families as the cause of the shortage of skilled individuals.[91]

ii. The lover of the eleventh daughter

> The lover of the eleventh daughter is called Kakinomoto no Tsuneuki. He is the *waka* mentor of the First Princess. He is particularly good at writing *waka* and playing instruments. There are no instruments, whether with holes or strings, that he cannot play. The zither, the seven-stringed zither, pipa, koto, standing bell, or shakuhachi, or whether go, sugoroku,[92] shogi,[93] Chinese chess,[94] ball-playing, shooting, knife making, cooking, writing *waka* and singing old songs, he is among the best. Among the [talents] above, he is extremely sophisticated at *waka* composition. Tsuneuki carried forward the old tradition conveyed by the Naniwa Bay poem and the old song written at River Tomino; his *waka* catches the essence of them. The long poem, the short poem, the returning poem, the mixed poem and the linked poem,[95] the love poem, and the celebration poem, there is nothing that he cannot write smoothly. He had finished reading all the songs and the collections since the eras of Susanoo-no-mikoto and Prince Shotoku, when the 31-syllable poem was established, and has read the *Man'yōshū*, the *New Man'yōshū*, *Kokin Wakashū*, *Gosen Wakashū*, *Shūishō*, as well as collections from other famous *waka* poets. He is not in the least inferior to the famous *waka* poets such as Sarumaru no Taifu or Sotōrihime; nor would he be outdone by Ōshikōchi no Mitsune, Ki no Tsurayuki, or Ono no Komachi. Archbishop Henjō is good at writing *waka*, but his *waka* is criticised for drawing a painting of a woman that stirs one's heart in vain. Although Ariwara no Narihira has his fame, he inevitably attracts the criticism of being a merchant dressed up in nice dress. From past to present, there are thousands of poets who are good at writing the songs; however, Kakinomoto Tsuneuki is the only one who keeps the old tradition. If one were to ask his family lineage, he is the youngest grandson of Kakinomoto no Hitomaro. If one were to ask where does he live, he stays in the house where Yamabe no Akahito used to live. His thirty-one-syllable poem fulfils the principle of the 'Six Modes'.[96] It has the rhythm of five, seven, five, seven, seven, and also avoids the

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[91] If one looks at this ideal *Kidendō* scholar from Fujiwara no Akihira's perspective, as a disadvantaged *kika* scholar, it is possible that Fujiwara no Akihira depicted him from a more satirical angle. This perspective is discussed further in Chapter Five.

[92] 'Double six', a traditional Chinese board game. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 150.

[93] Japanese chess. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 150.

[94] '彈棊', a type of ancient Chinese chess. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 151.

[95] *Kakushidai*, a certain type of *waka* in which the content of the poem has nothing to do with the subject of the poem. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 152.

[96] As stated in the *mana* preface of *Kokin Wakashū*, that

> eight prosodic faults. His poem has richness as well as sincerity. The beginning and end match neatly together. His words flow just as smoothly as five-foot long hair immersed in water; his emotions are expressed just as naturally as pearls strung together. Therefore, he has won the favour of the courtiers as well as earning a reputation amongst aristocrats and commoners.[97]

First of all, as in the case of Sugawara Masafumu, the name of the eleventh daughter's lover, Kakinomoto no Tsuneuki, seems to have been taken from the three most renowned *waka* poets — Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, Ōshikōchi no Mitsune, and Ki no Tsurayuki, implying again that this is another imaginary, composite figure. Just as Sugawara Masafumu is one of the best scholars in his time, Kakinomoto Tsuneuki is by no means less proficient in *waka*, as already suggested by his name. Just like the way Fujiwara no Akihira refashions contents adopted from the most widely circulated and recognised *kanshibun* sources such as *Wakan Rōeishū*, his construction of Kakinomoto no Tsuneuki is greatly inspired by the literary works mentioned in the *mana* and *kana* prefaces of the *Kokin Wakashū* 古今和歌集

The Japanese *waka* has six modes ('和歌有六義').
The first is called 'Feng', literally, 'Airs', which means parody or satire.
The second is called 'Fu', literally, 'Prose', which refers to the direct narration.
The third is called 'Hi', literally, comparison or explicit metaphor.
The fourth is called 'Kyo', literally, implicit metaphor.
The fifth is called 'Ga', literally, the elegantiae.
The sixth is called 'Shō', literally, the praise poem.
See *Kokin Wakashū* 古今和歌集. Comp. Ki, Tsurayuki 紀貫之, Ozawa Masao 小沢正夫, and Matsuda Shigeho 松田成穂. In vol. 11 of Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 新編日本古典文学全集 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1994), 422–423.

[97] '十一君氣裝人者、一宮先生、柿木桓之、管絃并和歌之上手也。有穴者吹、有絃者彈。箏、琴、琵琶、和琴、方磬、尺八、圍基、雙六、將棊、彈基、鞠、小弓、包丁、料理、和歌、古歌、天下無雙者也。就中、至于和歌、所拔能者也。扇難波津之古風、汲富緒河之末流。長歌、短歌、旋頭、混本、連歌、隱題、戀、祝等、聊無所停滯。凡素盞鳥尊、聖德太子御代、定卅一字以降、古萬葉集、新萬葉集、古今、後撰、拾遺抄、諸家集等、盡以見畢。不可恥於猿丸大夫、衣通姫等。不在所於躬恒、貫之、小野小町等。花山僧正之長此道、猶有畫女之動人情之難。在原中將之得其名、自招賈人著鮮衣之訕。況其外好此道【者】、於古今幾千萬。雖然、纔存古風、【者】、此公一人而已。溫其氏則、柿本人丸之末孫。問其家又、山邊赤人之前跡也。卅一个字備六義、五七五、七々避八病。花實兼備、首尾相調。其詞滑、如五尺鬘沃水。其情縡、如一旒縷貫珠。故蒙公臣之寵愛。有貴賤之饗應。彼藤六主者、以之為活計之媒。此先生君者、以之為出世之橋耳。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 144.

(Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times).[98] The *Kokin Wakashū* is a significant *waka* anthology in the Heian period that continued to influence the development of *waka* in later periods. It is also an important instructive guide for writing *waka*, as it discusses the origins of the *waka* tradition, as well as the major pieces of *waka* composition. Again, Fujiwara no Akihira's work is in line with some leading educational texts in this field.

Nearly all the *waka*-related knowledge in *Shin Sarugakuki* was adopted from the *Kokin Wakashū* with some modification made by Fujiwara no Akihira himself. The reader with a basic knowledge of *waka* would quickly recognise the background and the significance of each *waka* writing that Fujiwara no Akihira mentions. His adoption of *waka* knowledge from *Kokinshū* also implies his acceptance of the two prefaces of the *Kokinshū* in the Heian period.

Fujiwara no Akihira begins by placing Kakinomoto no Tsuneuki's *waka* in the context of the old tradition of *waka* origin: 'Like the old tradition conveyed by the Naniwa Bay poem and the old song written at River Tomino, Tsuneuki's *waka* catches the essence of them.'

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[98] Informally known as *Kokinshū* 古今集. Compiled and edited in the early tenth century under the command of Emperor Daigō. It is the first imperially commissioned *waka* collection and was known to be profoundly influenced by the poetry of China. The *mana* preface of the *Kokinshū* is closely related to that of *Shi Jing* 詩經 (*Book of Poetry*), including the theory of poetic criticism and the ultimate meaning of the poetry. In addition, *Kokinshū* adopted many poetic images and themes from Chinese poetry, especially the Chinese poetry in the Six Dynasties (六朝). The practice of 'composing poems on assigned topics', which originated in China but was rarely seen in the *Manyōshū*, can also be found in *Kokinshū*. Donald Keene sees it as 'a shift from the imitations of Chinese models to a freer use of Chinese poetic sources as a means of enriching the *waka*', while a similar approach can also be found in Fujiwara no Akihira's composition; that is, to borrow elements from useful *kanshibu* sources and enrich his own works. See Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late Sixteenth Century* (New York: Holt, 1993), 245–246.

The Naniwa Bay refers to the 'Naniwa Bay poem' in the *Kokinshū*, while 'an old song written at River Tomino' refers to a poem written at the River Tomino for Prince Shōtoku. Here Fujiwara no Akihira compares Kakinomoto Tsuneuki's *waka* with two very important *waka* in history.[99] The 'Naniwa Bay' poem is mentioned in both *kana* and *mana* prefaces of the *Kokinshū.*[100] It celebrates the beginning of a reign, and also represents a turning point in *waka* history.

'The old song written at River Tomino to Prince Shōtoku', refers to the poem written by a starving beggar who praised the compassion of Prince Shōtoku, who gave him food and drink at River Tomino, a theme that was also adopted by the *mana* preface, '富緒川之篇報太子', from the *Kokinshū*. However, unlike the 'Naniwa Bay' poem, the poem at the River Tomino was only mentioned in the *mana* preface.[101]

Also, the statement that 'his 31-syllable poem fulfils the principle of the "Six Modes (六義)"' can also be found in the *mana* preface. The 'Six Modes' likewise appear in Fujiwara no Akihira's other works as an important principle in the writing of *kanshi*. In one particular letter from the *Unshū Ōrai* that was written to the Professor of Letters asking permission to attend a *kanshi* gathering, the author states,

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[99] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 151.
[100] When Ōsasagi tennō was in Naniwa and was Prince, he and the Crown Prince both ceded their rank and refused to take the throne for three years. Because of this, the man called Wani became uneasy and composed a poem to present to the sovereign. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 151
[101] Kawaguchi states that the fact that only the *mana* preface mentioned this story, while the *kana* one did not, indicates a 'slightly different attitude (in an ambivalent nuance)' towards Prince Shōtoku. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, trans. Kawaguchi, 152.

> Humble as I am, even though I do not have the talents of writing a poem within seven steps time as Cao Zhi[102] did, I can at least learn about the 'Six Modes'. I will be extremely honoured even to sit at the most inferior seat.[103]

It seems that the principle of the 'Six Modes', which was applauded in the *mana* preface, was seen as an important poetic expression in both *waka* and *kanshi* writing. In Fujiwara no Akihira's case, by observing and capturing literary fashions and useful vocabulary in the field of *waka* and *kanshi* writing, he was equally able to create a conventional expression in his depiction of the *waka* poet figure from the *Shin Sarugakuki*, or in his example letter of a *kanshi*-related gathering. Both of these had an educational aspect and potentially provided a means by which to bring some unorthodox subjects into orthodox writing.

As briefly discussed in Chapter One, the *mana* preface of *Kokinshū* is more linguistically related to classical Chinese, while the *kana* preface is more similar to classical Japanese; therefore, there are disputes over such questions as 'which one was written earlier?' and 'which one is more significant?'. The answers relate to the important discourse of Heian literature discussed in Chapter One; writing and identity, Han and Yamato. It may be difficult to avoid placing any modern interpretation on premodern literature, especially when it is related to such issues as cultural and linguistic identity. However, it is never a 'one

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[102] Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232), the prince of the state of Cao Wei in the Three Kingdoms period (220–280) of China. Cao's poetic style and accomplishment in Chinese poetry made him an important literary figure in the history. Cao was forced by his brother, who took the throne after their father died, to write a poem within seven steps, hence it was called 'Seven Steps Poem'.
[103] '下官雖非七步之才。聊學六義之詞。辱欲關末座。'Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai*, 391.

or the other' choice, in terms of 'Han and Yamato', or '*kana* and *mana*' in Heian Japan. Fujiwara no Akihira's composition is a good example of this. In the process of creating a character of great *waka* talent, he was flexible in choosing suitable models from both the *kana* and *mana* preface. Their 'Japaneseness' or 'Chineseness' does not seem to be an issue for him in his evaluation of what is a good *waka* or *kanshi*. Rather, it is the style, topic, and poetic expression in which he is most interested.

What is more, rather than simply 'copying and pasting' the original content, Fujiwara no Akihira 'mixes and matches' terms and themes in the interest of rhythm and flow, which also suggests a creative way to refashion materials in one's writing.

> Archbishop Henjō is good at writing *waka*, but his poem lacks sincerity; it is like a painting of a woman which stirs one's heart in vain. Ariwara no Narihira has the fame, but his poetry is like a merchant dressed in elegant robes.

Archbishop Henjō and Ariwara Narihira are mentioned in both the *mana* and *kana* prefaces, but Ariwara Narihira is regarded differently in the two prefaces. Henjō in the *mana* version is described thus: 'Arch-bishop Henjō has the form, his poems are fancy but lack sincerity; they are like a painting of a woman which stirs one's heart in vain'.[104] However, the depiction of Ariwara Narihira — 'Ariwara Narihira has the fame, but his poetry is like a merchant dressed in elegant robes' — is taken from the depiction of Fun'ya no Yasuhide in the *mana* preface: '文琳巧詠物。然其體近俗也。如賈人之著鮮衣'; 'Fun'ya is good at composing poems on subjects, but the form is lowly, like a merchant dressed in elegant

[104] '花山僧正、尤得歌體。然其詞花而少實。如圖畫好女、徒動人情。' *Kokinshū*, 425.

robes'.[105] Meanwhile the depiction of Ariwara Narihira in the *mana* preface is this: 'Ariwara Narihira's poem has emotion but his vocabulary is weak. Like the withered flower with its colour fading away'.[106] It is worth considering whether Fujiwara no Akihira has made a mistake in citing the original content. Kawaguchi's explanation is that, compared with his *kanbun* knowledge, Fujiwara no Akihira was not as sophisticated in *waka*; therefore, there could be some inaccuracy in his writings related to *waka*.[107] However, it seems more likely that Fujiwara no Akihira was composing this as a general description of a prodigious *waka* talent who is steeped in the great *waka* writing tradition and is among the best of contemporary *waka* poets. Fujiwara no Akihira may have created this character with a reader in mind who already had some proper *waka* education, so that he could mix and match and refashion those materials. That is to say, Fujiwara no Akihira's focus is not so much on transposing exactly the content that he cites, as he is not writing a serious *waka* primer. Rather, Fujiwara no Akihira is demonstrating his *waka* skill and 'playing' around with different narratives. For instance, Fujiwara no Akihira may just be claiming that Narihira receives that general kind of criticism[108] while Kakinomoto no Tsuneuki has poetic writing skill superior to that of Narihira. Also, judging by the way Fujiwara no Akihira tailors Chinese allusions and approaches new ways of expression in previous examples, it is possible

[105] In the *kana* preface, it was presented as 'Fun'ya no Yasuhide used words skilfully but the expression does not suit the contents. His poetry is like a tradesman attired in elegant robes.' *Kokinshū*, 17–20.
[106] '在原中將之歌、其情有餘其詞不足。如萎花雖少彩色。'*Kokinshū*, 17–20.
[107] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 156.
[108] That his vocabulary is weak, and his poetry has flaws.

that he might have wearied of copying exactly the same content and decided to make some small changes to make the overall statement flow nicely for a better writing example. Thus, Fujiwara no Akihira's jumping around and application of different expressions to the same person might be out of a concern for rhythm and euphony. This could also inspire and encourage his readers to work with those materials in their own way.

Depicting a figure of exceptional *waka* talent, Fujiwara no Akihira lists the important *waka* compositions in history and then claims that none of these could be compared to this person's work. This encourages his reader to review all these important works, and also teaches the reader how to draw on this knowledge to pay a compliment to another poet, that is, to praise their work by referring to exemplary works from the past, which was also an important activity in the Heian scholar's social life.

In the *Unshū Ōrai*,[109] there is a particular letter that discusses *waka*-related issues in a manner that relates back to the way Fujiwara no Akihira compares Tsuneuki's *waka* to significant examples drawn from *Kokin Wakashū* and praises Tsuneuki's incomparable *waka* works discussed above:

> Archbishop Henjō is good at writing *waka*, but it is a pity that his poem is like a painting of a woman which stirs one's heart in vain.
> Ono no Komachi has the fame, but her poem is like a lady who suffers from a sickness putting on powders on her face.

[109] *Kanshi* and *waka* composition (作文作歌) is one of the main subjects in *Unshū Ōrai*.

> Your *waka* (‘御歌’) has the richness as well as the sincerity, and the beginning and end match neatly together. There were not many poets in the past who can achieve this, and there is not a single one in our time who is able to do this…[110]

Fujiwara no Akihira bestows effusive praise on the *waka* poem he has received, and the comments and the content of this letter are very similar to the ones in *Shin Sarugakuki*. Fujiwara no Akihira deferentially states that the poem is very well-written and that no one’s writing today (that is, in his contemporaneous period) can match it. This corresponds to the depiction of Tsuneuki in *Shin Sarugakuki* as one of the best *waka* poets of his time. In this particular letter of ‘composing *kanshi* and *waka*’, Fujiwara no Akihira gives a model for how to praise another’s *waka* poetry properly: by comparing that one’s *waka* to the works of famous *waka* poets in history, evaluating their writings and concluding that their *waka* is undoubtedly the best. The same approach is seen in *Shin Sarugakuki*, which also includes more detailed discussions of the history of *waka*, important *waka* works, and principles and traditions of *waka.*[111]

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[110] ‘難波津古風一篇事。右拝見之處。花山僧正之長此道。猶悲畫女之動人情。小野小町之得其名。還嫌病婦之着花紛。御歌之為體。花實兼備首尾相得。不耻古人。無比當世。’ Fujiwara no Akihira, *Unshū Ōrai*, 397.

[111] Gustav Heldt gives a full translation of the *mana* preface and *kana* preface to *Kokinshū*; see Heldt, *The Pursuit of Harmony: Poetry and Power in Early Heian Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2009), 325–335.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter argues that *Shin Sarugakuki* can be viewed as an experimental work blending educational and entertainment elements, and as a showpiece designed to appeal to a prospective patron who already has some interest in, and knowledge of, *kanbun*.

The relatively conventional figures that Fujiwara no Akihira constructs seem in many respects to be drawn from the most widely circulated and recognised resources of the time, suggesting that *Shin Sarugakuki*, despite its irreverent and unconventional elements, was intended also to fall in line with existing educational texts. Also educational are the extensive terminologies and useful information provided on various occupations, as well as models for *kanbun* writing.

Also noteworthy are the structural similarities between *Shin Sarugakuki* and educational works, especially *ōrai* writings. The instructive and encyclopaedic presentation that Fujiwara no Akihira adopts resonates with the educational nature of *ōrai* writing and other *kanbun* works in the late Heian period. And the lists in the *Shin Sarugakuki*, while excessive in length, provided useful formats and vocabulary that could be applied to various topics in *kanbun* writing. In particular, the encyclopaedic details that Fujiwara no Akihira lists for each character and his systematic way of ordering information are reminiscent of a reference work. The intertextuality in the *Shin Sarugakuki* and *ōrai* writing points to a strong connection between them and provides further grounds for understanding *Shin Sarugakuki* as a text with educational substance.

Chapter Five

While previous chapters explored different readings of *Shin Sarugakuki* and how it engages with broader issues of Heian literature, this chapter takes a look at the literary anthology compiled by Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, and explores the connection among Fujiwara no Akihira's different writings. It also considers the '*Monjō keikoku*' model and how Heian scholars expressed their concern over matters of governance and engaged in social criticism in their *kanbun* writings. In addition, the satirical and erotic elements presented in the *kanbun* compositions from *Honchō Monzui* are related back to the discussion of *Shin Sarugakuki*. Also covered in this chapter are: the way in which Heian scholars coped with matters such as writing authority and political advancement, how *kanbun* provided a space for them to react to social tensions, and how they explored new ways to use the language of *kanbun* as they found the public space for personal advancement shrinking. This look at how the world of mid-Heian *kanbun* writing expanded is aimed at helping us understand the diverse range of *kanbun* in premodern Japan.

1. The '*monjō keikoku*' model and the composing of *Honchō Monzui*

Honchō Monzui, compiled by Fujiwara no Akihira, is a literary anthology that encompassed a selection of *kanshibun* works from over the preceding 240 years. It compiled 427 pieces from 69 authors into 14 volumes, which were classified among 39 genres. The first volume collected *fu* 賦 (rhapsodies), *shi* 詩 (poetry), and *ge* (歌, songs). Volumes two to

seven focused on government and bureaucratic writings, including *shō* 詔 (edicts), *chokusho* 敕書（imperial orders), *kanpu* 官符 (State Council decrees), *iki* 位記 (appointment letters), *taisaku* 対策 (civil service examination essays), *hyō* 表 (memorials to the throne), and *sōjō* 奏狀 (petitions), together with seventeen *shōjō* 書狀 (private correspondence) collection. *Shijo* 詩序 (poetry prefaces) is the largest group in the *Honchō Monzui*, with 156 items, covering volumes eight through eleven. Volume twelve has *mei* 銘 (inscriptions), *ki* 記 (accounts), *san* 讃 (encomia), and *den* 伝 (biographies), while religion-related works, *ganmon* 願文 (vows) and *fujumon* 諷誦文 (recited writings), were compiled in volumes thirteen and fourteen.[1]

The overall collection of the *Honchō Monzui* provides a panorama of contemporary Heian *kanshibun*. Although its method of ordering different literary works was inspired by *Wen Xuan* 文選 (*The Selection of Refined Literature*)[2] and *Tang Wencui* 唐文粹 (*The Best of the Tang Literature*),[3] *Honchō Monzui* created new entries related to the development of Japanese *kanshibun*. For instance, Fujiwara no Akihira includes a *waka* preface and Buddhist religion-related compositions (such as *ganmon* and *saimon*) among the 39 genres; this was not observed in earlier Chinese counterparts.

[1] Some translations consulted Denecke's overview; see Wiebke Denecke, 'Anthologization and Sino-Japanese Literature: Kaifūsō and the Three Imperial Anthologies', in *Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, 189.
[2] Compiled by Xiao Tong 萧统 (501–531), the crown prince of the Liang Dynasty 梁朝 (502–557). *Wen Xuan* is one of the earliest and most important anthologies of Chinese poetry and literature arranged by topics. It continues to be one of the primary sources for literary education in premodern China.
[3] Compiled by scholar Yao Xuan 姚鉉 (967–1020) in the Northern Song period 南宋 (960–1126). It has 100 scrolls and was divided into more than 20 categories.

The practical utility of the *Honchō Monzui* also stands out. It includes important categories of bureaucratic writings to help scholars learn useful forms of *kanbun.* For instance, how to write a proper letter of resignation, how to ask favours for career advancement, how to produce a presentation to the court, what constitutes a good preface for a poetry gathering, the introduction to a typical banquet, and so forth.

As for the authors of *Honchō Monzui*, many of them were from the *juka* families, while works by lower-ranking officials, monks, and women were not included in the anthology.[4] Brian Steininger suggests that, when it comes to the variety of material in *Honchō Monzui*, it is not actually as diverse as it appears to be at first glance; many of the genres are represented only by a single item and were not widely seen in other Japanese sources.[5] On the other hand, works from the more common genres, such as regulated verse (which constituted a majority of *kanshi* composition in the Heian period), were not collected in *Honchō Monzui*. Wiebke Denecke also observes Fujiwara no Akihira's 'idiosyncratic choices for the poetry section', that Fujiwara no Akihira is having fun with literary games: acrostic poetry, palindromes, and the only Heian example of *kyōka* ('crazy song'), whichi

[4] Denecke, 'Anthologization and Sino-Japanese Literature', 189. Kawaguchi summarises the most frequently collected authors and their works in *Honchō Monzui*. They are: 1. Ōe no Masahira (48 pieces); 2. Ōe no Asatsuna (44); 3. Sugawara no Fumitoki (39); 4. Ki no Haseo (37); 5. Sugawara no Michizane (36); 6. Minamoto no Shitagō (33); 7. Ōe no Mochitoki (27); 8. Yoshishige no Yasutane (22); 9. Kaneakira Shinno (19); 10. Miyako no Yoshika (12); 11. Ki no Tadana (12). See Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 782. As we can see, the two biggest groups are the Ōe and Sugawara families, the most powerful *juka* families at the court. *Honchō Monzui* collected 121 works from the Ōe family (7 authors) and 84 works from the Sugawara family (7 authors), which suggests that the Ōe and Sugawara families still dominated the *kanbun* production at the court. Most of the writers I examined can be found in this list. It is also worth noticing that Fujiwara no Akihira also valued the works written by *kika* scholars, among the most collected authors in the list above. Ki no Haseo, Minamoto no Shitagō, Yoshishige no Yasutane, Miyako no Yoshika, Ki no Tadana are both from a *kika* background.

[5] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 27.

only became popular in the Edo period. Fujiwara no Akihira also included supernatural and non-courtly themes. Denecke also suggests that Fujiwara no Akihira's perference of preferred plain prose (in contrast to the officially dominant ornate parallel prose) shows the impact of mid-Tang 'Returning to Antiquity' movements.[6]

That is to say, although *Honchō Monzui* may not be regarded as a comprehensive collection of contemporary Heian *kanshibun* due to certain limitations, it definitely has profound significance in Japanese literary history. Not to mention the fact that it was compiled by Fujiwara no Akihira on his own, without any official support from the court.

Scholars disagree as to the motivations underlying the composition of *Honchō Monzui*. Brian Steininger highlights its utilitarian aspect, which links back to our discussion in Chapter One of scholars and the academy in the Heian period. Steininger suggests that Heian scholars might have adjusted their compositions to fit the social and academic atmospheres they found themselves in. He points out that scholars who were not closely associated with the academy or who were not members of the *sekkan* or *juka* families (as in Fujiwara no Akihira's case) limited their output to 'the domestic sphere' rather than producing publicly oriented compositions, and they were more inclined to turn their energies to the production of useful works in the hope of winning official employment or private

[6] Denecke, 'The Literary Essence of Our Court (*Honchō Monzui*)', 191.

patronage.[7] Against this background, Kawaguchi highlights the critical and resistant spirit conveyed by *Honchō Monzui*, describing it as a 'symphony of the refined and vulgar'.[8]

Denecke also remarks on the vulgar aspect of *Honchō Monzui.*[9] She explores Fujiwara no Akihira's possible intentions in compiling the *Honchō Monzui*, especially with regard to the frequent references to sexual organs in *Tettsui den* 鉄槌伝 (*The Biography of an Iron Hammer*),[10] which was among the works collected in *Honchō Monzui*. Denecke speculates that Fujiwara no Akihira's purpose in including this work in *Honchō Monzui* may have been to provide an instructive model that would teach people terminology related to sex, and that he was indulging in some academic humour at the same time. She also speculates that Fujiwara no Akihira's intention in *Tettsui den* could have been to 'mock the repressed literary decorum at court and ridicule bureaucratic structures by viewing them through the career course of a male organ'[11] She also suggests that erotic pieces composed by Bai Juyi's brother, Bai Xingjian, might also have inspired the Japanese poets.[12]

Meanwhile, Saeko Shibayama believes that Fujiwara no Akihira's deliberate exclusion of the *Ryōunshū* from *Honchō Monzui* indicated that he himself no longer

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[7] Steininger, 'The Heian Academy', 181.
[8] '雅趣と俗味との的交響', Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 795.
[9] Wiebke Denecke, 'The Literary Essence of Our Court (*Honchō Monzui*)', in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, eds., Shirane Haruo, Suzuki Tomi and Lurie, David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 192.
[10] Steininger, 'The Heian Academy', 192. *Tettsui den* is a biography of an 'iron hammer', which represents the penis. The author of *Tettsui den* remains unknown, although Denecke accredited Fujiwara no Akihira as the author. See discussion of *Tettsui den* in following pages.
[11] This story features a man with a huge penis who easily excels at court, in a blatant satire on the way the bureaucratic structures operated under the regency politics.
[12] Denecke, 'The Literary Essence of Our Court (*Honchō Monzui*)', 192.

advocated the idea of '*monjō keikoku*' that is presented in the *Ryōunshū*.[13] She sees Fujiwara no Akihira's compiling of *Honchō Monzui* as exemplifying the way in which *Kidendō* scholars evolved from 'purveyors cum executors of the Confucian political ideal of "state building through literary activities" to introspective poet-literati'.[14]

Shibayama suggests that Fujiwara no Akihira's own ideas are clearly revealed by his choice of pieces to include in (or leave out of) *Honchō Monzui*, which requires a further discussion. Even if we were to take *Honchō Monzui* as indicative of Fujiwara no Akihira's belief in *kanbun*'s state-building character, we cannot ignore the fact that he does include a variety of works, some of which talk about the importance of '*monjō keikoku*' and the writing of *kanbun*. One example is the application letter written by an early-Heian courtier, Sugawara no Fumitoki (899-981), who later became the Professor of Letters at the academy. The letter is entitled 'A Petition to Not Abandon the Kōrokan;[15] to Maintain It as a Place to Welcome Guests from Far Away and for Scholars to Pursue Their Craft (請不廃失鴻臚館懐遠人励文

[13] Shibayama, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 55. See a more detailed discussion of '*monjō keikoku*' in Chapter One.
[14] Shibayama, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Convergence of the "Ways"', 55.
[15] 'Government offices set up in 608 in the port of Naniwa (now Ōsaka), in 688 at Dazaifu, and sometime after 794 in Heiankyō (now Kyōto) for the reception and accommodation of foreign embassies and merchants. When regular diplomatic relations with China and the Korean state of Silla ended in the 9th century, these offices fell into disuse, and the buildings were used to accommodate Chinese and Korean merchants. By the 12th century they had fallen into private hands.' See https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2683/lib/display/?lid=10800HS002307 (accessed 01 Jan 2022).

士事)'.[16] In this letter, Fumitoki makes the case that the Kōrokan was where foreign envoys were welcomed and the Japanese government's hospitality was on display. It was also an excellent place for poetry and prose gatherings; those who were good at writing *kanbun* were chosen to participate in the arrangements for welcoming foreign ambassadors and then greeting these guests as a show of courtesy from the Japanese government. Fumitoki saw the Kōrokan as a vital hub for cultural exchange and believed that it performed a very important diplomatic function while also providing a location where the importance of *kanbun* writing, as a means of ordering the state and educating its people, could be showcased. Advocating for his cause, he offers an allegory, namely the example of Zigong, Confucius's pupil. One day Zigong wanted to discontinue the ritual of sacrificing a goat at an ancient traditional ceremony that, in his view, had lost its practical significance. Confucius refused, stating that the presence of the goat was what legitimised the ceremony, and that this was what people would recognise.[17] Therefore, the Kōrokan should not be abandoned, just as the ritual of

[16] Kōrokan was established by the Japanese court as a place for greeting and accommodating foreign embassies. This location helped to maintain an important diplomatic relationship between China, Korea and Japan. '右鴻臚館者、爲外賓所置也。星律多積、雲搆頻頹。頃年以來、堂宇欲尽、所司不能修造。公家空以廃忘。礼曰、以舊防爲無所用而壞之者、必有水敗。以旧礼爲無所用而去之者、必有乱患。恐彼帰化之國、慕徳之鄉、得風聞於万里、成狐疑於両端。一以爲君恩薄、而無懐柔之情。一以爲國用乏、而無含弘之力。加之國家故事、蕃客朝時、択通賢之倫、任行人之職、礼遇之中、賓主闘筆。又抜諸生能文者、令預餞別之席。因茲翰苑鋭思之士、無不以對蕃客爲其心期。方今詞人才子、顧相誡曰、人命有限、世途難抛。何徒勤苦於風月之間乎。請見鴻臚館之不可復爲文場矣。昔子貢欲去告朔之餼羊、仲尼不許。以爲羊在猶所以識其礼也。今陳不廃此館者、蓋亦爲文章道焉。夫文章者、王者所以觀風俗、厚人倫、感鬼神、成教化也。無翼而飛、無脛而至。敵國見之、而知有智者。故憚而不侵。殊俗聞之、而覺有賢人。故畏而自服。魏文帝所謂、文章経國之大業、不朽之盛事者也。伏望、深図遠慮、勿廃廃失此賓館。然則遐方不離心、文士無倦業。是則示海外以仁沢之広、耀天下以威風之高也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 68, 159.

[17] '以為羊在猶所以識其禮也。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 68, 159.

sacrificing the goat could not be discontinued, as it related to the integrity of the rituals and, if cancelled, would potentially cause the neglect of other rituals and lead to a moral degeneration of society (in Confucius's mind). Fumitoki associates this story with the Kōrokan, arguing that its continued existence would similarly legitimise Japan's diplomatic and cultural status and the integrity of the country's learned image (which is that they respect and follow the protocols of rituals, and its people are well-educated and behaved). In addition, Fumitoki relates the significance of *kanbun* to state legitimacy; he says that one should not abandon the Kōrokan just as one should also follow the essence of literature; as he explains, 'the sovereign can observe social customs through literature. Literature can also nourish human relations, make the spirits and ghosts feel pity, and can also serve as a means of education and enlightenment.'[18] Thus, this was a matter of legitimising Japan's role in a diplomatic and cultural community in which *kanbun* had a critical role to play in ordering the state. He also identifies the Kōrokan as a unique place where Japan could participate in the learned culture of East Asia. As he argues, 'if the Kōrokan is kept, our enemies would know that we have wise people in our country, and they would be too afraid to invade us'[19] Fumitoki points to an important connection between *kanbun* and statecraft, as he cites the concept of *monjō keikoku*, brought up by Emperor Wen of Wei. Fumitoki is convinced that the Kōrokan offers a way to spotlight the expression of Japanese cultural progress and

[18] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 68, 159; the original text was taken from The Great Preface of *Shijing*.
[19].Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 68, 159.

legitimise the country's status within the broader geopolitical sphere. In his view, this is similar to the rationale for the importance of scholars and especially for the prestigious position that should be accorded to *kanbun* by virtue of its state-building character.

Fumitoki's application letter offers an example of a Heian scholar dealing with the concept of *monjō keikoku* and actively engaging with issues of public service, by relating the importance of *kanbun* directly to statecraft and incorporating these concerns in his application letter to the emperor. Sato Michio once stated that the main responsibility of a Heian literatus was to participate in court affairs and to shape its political world, rather than compiling books or collections.[20] As a court official from one of the most powerful *juka* families, Fumitoki was in a reasonable position to write this application letter and have it delivered to the emperor. In that sense, Fumitoki conducted a classic *monjō keikoku* approach, that is, to directly participate in the political world and express his own ideas on matters of state through his writing. However, the ways in which Heian scholars engaged in realising *monjō keikoku* were different, and their opportunities for engagement varied, depending in particular on their backgrounds. It is true that the public sphere was compressed at the academy, and that occasions for a more active engagement at court, or access to the wider collection of precious classical Chinese books, were limited to the upper nobility and those from established scholarly families. The way Fujiwara no Akihira chose and arranged the *Honchō Monzui* could provide insights into this tendency.

[20] Satō Michio, *Heian kōki Nihon Kanbungaku no kenkyū.* Also discussed in Chapter One.

The *Honchō Monzui* created a vast panorama of the *kanbun* compositions covering the preceding 240 years, many of which were still centred on government, religion, and scholarship. For Fujiwara no Akihira to compile such a huge literary collection attests to his profound knowledge of *kanshibun*, as well as his professionalism and perseverance. At the same time, his selection of satirical, humorous, and critical pieces for inclusion in *Honchō Monzui* speaks to Fujiwara no Akihira's literary aesthetics and his attitude towards public service.

2. Satire and erotic parodies in *Honchō Monzui* in the context of other Heian *kanbun* compositions

Chapter Two discusses the writing of *taisaku* as a vital skill for *Kidendō* students to acquire. This, together with the letter discussed above, point to *kanbun* being a significant tool for Heian scholars to express their concerns related to government matters. The *Honchō Monzui* covers a wide range of subjects of *kanbun* composition. These include asking favours in order to advance in rank, complaining of one's lack of recognition at the court, and criticising court policies. There are pieces that debate the pros and cons of seclusion, as well as pieces that are overtly satirical or erotic. Taken all together, these demonstrate the multiple facets of *kanbun* in the mid-Heian period and provide insights into the way that Heian scholars reacted to social tensions and engaged in social criticism.

Honchō Monzui includes pieces that are subversive from a literary standpoint; these contain direct critiques of the low level of social mobility in their hierarchical society, as well

as oblique metaphors for an author's resentment of mistreatment at the court, and unexpectedly sexual themes. Denecke also remarks on the dissent, criticism, and parody of court life, which occupy a prominent place in *Honchō Monzui*. Denecke further observes that 'Akihira was certainly critical of the scholarly world, but he also disapproved of the low impact scholars had on political affairs'.[21] This resonated with disappointment among mid-Heian literati, as eminent scholars and even royal family members could be victims of regent politics.[22] The varied examples that Fujiwara no Akihira assembles highlight very different approaches to social criticism; in many instances we see writers interjecting such criticism in narrative expositions of society and politics, or while professing to entertain or to expound on literary aesthetics.

In one particular song, 'High Phoenix: A Song to Mock Socialising between the Distinguished and the Lowly (高鳳刺貴賤之同交歌)', the author highlights the lack of social mobility in a satirical manner:

> High Phoenix, High Phoenix, whose child is he? Grandson of a sixth-rank, son of a seventh. He waits for a job in Shima Prefecture and hopes for a salary in the palace kitchens.
> He has got the mouth of a simpleton. Incessantly his voice rumbles like thunder; and with all the talent of a marionette. A spawn of the lowest prospects. Examining the belt around his waist, one finds an aged Izumo stone. Even the socks on his feet are made of tattered Shinano cloth. The morning he first approached the Chamberlain's Office, his hemp robes invited attack.
> One evening he snuck past the barracks of the Prince's Guard, but his cap drew their ridicule. Long ago there was a High Phoenix who studied the classics and had a reputation as a sage. This High Phoenix today is given the title 'old fool' in graffiti.

[21] Denecke, 'The Literary Essence of Our Court (*Honchō Monzui*)', 190–191.
[22] Denecke, 'The Literary Essence of Our Court (*Honchō Monzui*)', 190–191.

> High Phoenix! High Phoenix! Though named the same, your nature's different. Long ago a sage, but today how stupid! How stupid! How could there only be examinees' names on the wall?
> Not worth speaking of, not worth mocking,
> We are ashamed to see white idiot flying among the blue clouds.[23]

The writer, Minamoto no Shitagō (911-983) calls this mid-ranked aristocrat's grandson 'High Phoenix' in a whimsical manner, while his true feelings about the character are more clearly expressed in the description of 'a white idiot flying among the blue clouds'. In particular, Shitagō observes that 'High Phoenix' used to be an appellation applied to someone who was well-educated or wise — a sage. 'High Phoenix' or 'Gao Feng (高鳳)' refers to a Chinese scholar in the Later Han Dynasty (25–221CE). Gao was born in a farmer's family and known for studying diligently and tirelessly. It is said that he was asked by his wife to take good care of the wheat in the field but was too busy concentrating on reading his books and so failed to notice that the rain was falling heavily into the wheat, so that the crop on which their livelihood depended was ruined. Later he became a famous Confucius scholar but refused to serve at the court, choosing instead to teach lessons in the mountains and enjoy a reclusive life.[24] However, in Shitagō's narrative, this 'High Phoenix' has merely inherited the title from his father and has no talent or skill. In other words, he is an idiot who holds an undeserved title of wisdom. Kakimura suggests that 'High Phoenix' is possibly a mockery of

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[23] The English translation was taken from Brian Steininger, with some of my own modifications. See Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 80, and original texts in *Honchō Monzui*, no. 43, 136. '高鳳々々、彼誰人子。正六位下孫、七位上子。待年官於志摩國、期月俸於内膳司。口是木訥、天鼓之聲頻鳴。才是土偶、地望之胤最卑。訪其帶於腰間、則出雲石老。尋其韈於足下、亦信濃布穿。初参蔵人所之朝、布袴招責。偸過帯刀陣之夕、烏帽取嘲。昔有高鳳、読書伝賢士之名。今有高鳳、障文注愚老之字。高鳳々々、名同性異。昔賢人、今愚哉愚哉。何啻壁上張文冊人。不足言、不足嘲。共恥白物之入青雲。'

[24] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, 404.

the surname of the Takahashi family, as they were responsible for the Imperial Kitchen through inherited positions,[25] a theory borne out by the beginning of the text. In this prose, Shitagō directly criticises the system of aristocratic hierarchy that enabled many important posts to be inherited by individuals who were in fact stupid and incompetent.

It is enlightening to examine this song together with a *dajōkanpu* 太政官符[26] that issued a decree to resume an earlier tradition of choosing talented *Kidendō* students as qualified candidates (regardless of their background).[27] These two pieces of work overlap in interesting ways, and represent different approaches towards public service.

The decree was written by Yoshimine no Yasuyo 良峯安世 (785–830), son of Emperor Kanmu 恒武天皇 (737–806) and also the Master of the crown prince's household (*tōgū no daibu* 春宮大夫).[28] It shows at the end that the decree was issued under the command of the emperor ('奉勅'). The decree states that the academy is a place where talented people are nurtured and educated, and that wise men from far and wide are gathered there. Yasuyo draws upon some well-known Chinese examples to bolster the claim that wise men may come from other than a prominent family, and that a noble background does not

[25] See Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 79, for Kakimura's analysis.
[26] 'A written directive issued by the Council of State to governmental offices to promulgate a royal command'. See Piggott, *Capital and Countryside in Japan*, 420. The *Daijōkan*, especially, was the 'Council of State established by the *ritsuryō* codes to advise the monarch and promulgate his orders'. *Daijōkan* included eight ministers, together with *jingikan* (Department of Shrines), these two were set under the *ritsuryō* system with the emperor at the head. See Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 425.
[27] '応補文章生并得業生復旧例事', Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 64, 145.
[28] '春宮大夫', can also be written as '東宮大夫'; both refer to the master of the crown prince's household. See Robert Bogen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, (University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 423. Also Japan Knowledge https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:3644/lib/display/?lid=2001013025000 (accessed on 3rd March 2020.)

necessarily mean that a man will be wise (‘高才未必貴種，貴種未必高才’).[29] He says two very talented [disciples of] Confucius, Ziyou and Zixia, were not from prestigious or politically important families. Similarly, there were famous prose writers, such as Sima Xiangru[30] and Yang Xiong,[31] who came from poor family backgrounds. Accordingly, he concludes that the emperors should value an individual’s merit (and not his background) when selecting people for office.[32] The decree was written at a time when the emperor still held actual power and the *ritsuryō* system was at its peak. Therefore, the emperor still had the discourse power to implement the *ritsuryō* code and to order that the scholars should be assessed by their merit instead of their lineage at the academy. Whereas in Shitagō’s time, the academy, although designed to support the *ritsuryō* code as its counterpart did in China, had already come under the control of regent politics, which had turned it into a hereditary and ceremonial institution. This in turn meant that the ability to excel in *kanbun* was no longer necessarily linked to the opportunity to excel in government.

As is supported by the story from *Godanshō* discussed in Chapter One, Sugawara Fumitoki (the scholar cited above) composed a song and shared it with Shitagō before showing it to anyone else but was very upset that Shitagō presumed to respond with a comment. It seems that Sugawara wished to pay a compliment to Shitagō’s scholarship by

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[29] Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 64, 146.
[30] 司馬相如 (179–117 BCE), an influential Chinese poet in the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC–24 AD).
[31] 揚雄 (53 BC–18 AD), a scholar-official in Western Han who came from humble beginnings.
[32] ‘何者大學尚才之処、養賢之地也。天下之俊咸來、海内之英並萃。游夏之徒、元非卿相之子。揚馬之輩、出自寒素之門。高才未必貴種、貴種未必高才。且夫王者之用人、唯才是貴。’ Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 64, 145–146.

honouring him with the first look but, at the same time, assumed that Shitagō (an unaffiliated scholar) would respect the hierarchy and not speak without an invitation to do so. Shitagō spoke out of turn, and this made Fumitoki feel uncomfortable.[33]

'High Phoenix: A Song to Mock Socialising between the Distinguished and the Lowly' stands in opposition to the idea that one's position and/or promotion should be solely determined by one's social class, or that people from a lower-class background who demonstrate merit should not be able to break through the stratified layers of the hierarchy. The decree, which envisages scholars being able to enjoy a fluid social mobility at the academy, also sheds light on the ideological conflicts that scholars such as Shitagō encountered between the ideal of the *ritsuryō* system and the reality of the contemporary regency system from the mid-Heian period on. As the political stature of the men of letters declined, so too did the respect given to their writing. Nonetheless, one could still use *kanbun* to engage in social criticism and satire directed at the undue influence of heredity in determining advancement through the court hierarchy.

If we revisit the ideal *Kidendō* figure discussed in Chapter Four in the light of Shitagō's work and his status as a disadvantaged *kika* scholar, it may shed new light on the depiction of this figure as presented in *Shin Sarugakuki*. It is very possible that Fujiwara no Akihira is presenting him from a more satirical angle than was apparent at first glance.

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[33] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 214.

Fujiwara no Akihira offers us an absurdly unrealistic model of the perfect *Kidendō* scholar; his name is a combination of two renowned Heian scholars' surname and last name, which indicates his prestigious *juka* background. He is impossibly well-educated, has mastered every kind of *wabun* and *kanbun* writing, and has achieved any number of remarkable accomplishments in academia:

> The fifth daughter's husband is a student in *Kidendō, Myōbōdō, Myōgyōdō,* and *Sandō.* His first name is Masafumu and his last name is Sugawara, his courtesy name is Kanryosou. He has finished reading *Wen Xuan* 文選, *Wen Ji* 文集, *Shi Ji* 史記, *Han Shu* 漢書, *Lun Yu* 論語, *Xiao jing* 孝經, *Mao shi* 毛詩, *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, the *ryō* 令, *ritsu* 律, *kyaku* 格 and *shiki* 式. He is skilled at writing poetry, rhapsody, prefaces….
> He is also skilful at composing *waka,* Chinese poetry, and prose by following the formats and the rhythm perfectly. He is not in the least inferior to such top scholars as Ōe no Mochitoki, Ōe no Masahira, Sugawara no Fumitoki, and Tachibana no Naomoto.[34]

It seems that, born as a *Kidendō* scholar, one would naturally be expected to become a prestigious scholar; with strong family backing and abundant resources at his disposal, one would be able to acquire profound knowledge in all fields. One would also enjoy upward social mobility at the court. However, it seems as though Fujiwara no Akihira's endeavour to construct a perfect *Kidendō* scholar from a *juka* family who has risen meteorically at court

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[34] '五君夫、紀傳、明法、明經、算道等學生也。姓菅原、名匡文、字菅綾三。文選、文集、史記、漢書、論語、孝經、毛詩、左傳、律、令、格、式、盡部讀畢。仍詩賦、序表、詔、宣旨、宣命、位記、奏狀、陳狀、勘狀、勘文、移牒、移文、願文、咒願、【諷誦文】、符牒、苦書、教書、日記、申文、消息、往來、【請文】等上手也。令律文明而憲法不違於格式。風月心工而詩賦不背於韻題。豈異以言、匡衡、文時、直幹等哉。況大算剩除、九々、竹數八面藏、開方除、開立方除、町段步數積募、算術、算經無所闇。凡近代給析、得業、進士、秀才、成業、大業者、誰人有比肩之者哉。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 91.

may have been complicated by the author's ambivalent attitude towards the political advantages that the *juka* scholars enjoyed. What is demonstrated is the easy success that *juka* scholars automatically attained at court; what is not so clearly stated is the fact that most *kika* scholars were ignored and held back from achieving similar success, essentially invisible under the shadow of the *juka* scholars.

As Steininger also points out, Shitagō is an instructive figure because his works and experience can offer some insights into the treatment of *kika* scholars during the Heian period and the way they engaged in social criticism through *kanbun*.[35] This would also help us to know more about the similar environment in which Fujiwara no Akihira must have operated at the same time and to understand the way he reacted to social tensions.

Scholars varied greatly in the manner in which they chose to express social criticism. The first letter application is written in a polite and sincere tone, following the formal structure of a decree that promoted the idea that an individual's merits should be of paramount importance when selecting people for office, whereas the song is very satirical and irreverent in its expression of Shitagō's discontent with the aristocratic hierarchy and regency politics.

Apart from the overt social criticisms discussed above, Shitagō's other poetry, 'Song of a Tailless Ox' (無尾牛歌), deals with the author's misfortune and bitterness in old age,

[35] Steininger, 'Poetic Ministers', 214.

and the mistreatment he suffered after retirement from the court, using the metaphor of a tailless and 'useless' ox.

In this song, Shitagō praises his tailless ox, endowing it with five virtues: (1) it will not dirty its tail when it empties its bowels; (2) the owner of the neighbouring garden cannot tie a dead ox skull to its tail should the ox accidentally stray into that garden;[36] (3) the herd boy can easily identify the ox in the field from far behind; (4) with white markings on its black back, it is never stolen;[37] and (5) no one wants to borrow it for work, so it won't be overused.[38]

In the closing verse, Shitagō laments that with his meagre salary he can no longer afford to hire servants, leaving him with only this tailless ox for company. He also promises to repay his ox for its loyalty as soon as he himself receives a promotion.

> Tailless, tailless, do you know what I mean?
> In the age of the sages, they used loyalty, not wealth!
> That's why I get up early, rest but little at night.
> And if my worthless loyalty should win some paltry return,

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[36] 'Normally when an ox wanders into the garden the owner would tie an ox skull to its tail and make it run several miles.' Referenced in Burton Watson's translation of this poem in Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 487. Denecke also talks about the bitter social satire in this poem; see Denecke, 'The Literary Essence of Our Court (*Honchō Monzui*)', 191.

[37] According to a Chinese monk, a man had a black ox with white markings on its back that was stolen. The magistrate thereupon offered to pay double the price for ox rides, and when one matching that description was brought to him and identified by the owner of the ox, the thief was arrested. Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 488.

[38] '我有一牛尾已欠、人人嘲為無尾牛。本是野犢被狼囓、免彼狼口実有由。英靈疑是松精化、肥大曾非菓下流。雖無一尾有五德、請我一一叩角謳。初食弱草糞共分、時不放以尾污輗。【其德一也。】入園縱逢園夫怒、不可結着死牛頭。【牛入園中，園主以死牛頭骨、結着其尾、令走數里。此牛無所結着。其德二也。】又入曠野群牛中、牧童遠知不尋求。【其德三也。】黑牛背上白毛点、古賢験之遂得偸。君若擒釽兼督盜、何必以毛告定州。短尾猶為長久験、盜者終須為繫囚。【其德四也。】家々兒女走車出、遠向山寺近市楼。或投暮帰或隔夜、牛疲輪刓主人愁。我牛無尾人不借、人皆雖嘲我無憂【其德五也。】' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 41, 135.

I'll surely pay you for your years of hard work![39]

Shitagō was a courtier of the upper fifth rank and the compiler of the *Wamyō Ruijūshō*, as well as being a talented *waka* poet listed as one of the *Thirty-six Poetry Immortals*. However, he found himself with no choice but to spend his final years with only a handicapped farm animal for company. This song satirises the society in which Shitagō finds himself, in which elderly scholars and officials are considered useless. The tailless ox can also be seen as a metaphor for Shitagō himself, in that he was of no further use to the court but was also fortunate enough not to attract criticism nor jealousy, or cause any problem, so that he could at least enjoy his twilight years after his retirement in safety and obscurity.

There are various genres of writing featured in the *Honchō Monzui* that express social criticism as Shitagō does when he uses metaphors and circumlocutions to indicate the resentment he harbours towards court policies. The 'Rhapsody on Tuqiu' (兎裘賦), also complains of the unjust treatment that the author has received from the court and laments his miserable fate in a writing style modelled on the classical Chinese writing of Jia Yi. In the rhapsody, the writer tells how he has been forced to withdraw from his duties at the court and live in reclusion at Tuqiu, which can be interpreted as signifying deliberate political isolation.

The rhapsody was written by Kaneakira Shinno 兼明親王 (914–987), son of the Emperor Daigō 醍醐天皇 (897–930), who was supposed to be a person of privilege until he fell afoul of Fujiwara politicking. Kaneakira was deprived of his royal title for a period, so,

[39] '無尾々々汝知不。明時用忠不用富、所以夙興夜暫休。愚忠若遇糠豆瞻、數年汝功必将酬。' Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 488.

for a time, he was called Minamoto no Kaneakira. When his title was restored in his later years, he was appointed as the Minister of Left, but was resented by Fujiwara no Kanemichi and eventually forced out of this position.

In the preface to this rhapsody, Kaneakira writes that his desire was to resign and live out his days in a secluded place, but that he is not able to live a peaceful life because people will not stop falsely accusing him. He blames it on the biased emperor and the devious regent (Fujiwara Kanemichi, 藤原兼通). Kaneakira compares himself to the Duke Yin of Lu, who was assassinated just when he was about to abdicate and spend the rest of his days in the house at Tuqiu. In the night-time Kaneakira is 'chanting the *Rhapsody on the Owl* and lamenting his misfortune, and in the mornings he thinks of Tuqiu, the place where the Duke Yin of Lu stayed, and summons up his courage.'[40]

The writing of the 'Rhapsody on Tuqiu', according to the preface, was inspired by the 'Rhapsody on the Owl' (鵩鳥賦) written by Jia Yi, a Chinese scholar-official who also suffered political misfortune at court and was exiled to southern China.[41]

The 'Rhapsody on the Owl' was written when Jia Yi was sent away from the capital. One day an owl, which was considered to be a bad omen, flew into his house and alighted there. Afraid that this was a bad omen and that something unfortunate would happen that would lead to his death, Jia Yi wrote this rhapsody right after seeing the owl in order to

[40] '吟鵬賦而夕惕，顧兎裘而朝発。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 13, 129.
[41] Luo, *A Concise History of Chinese Literature*, 81.

comfort himself. The rhapsody is presented in the form of a conversation between Jia Yi and the owl.[42]

Jia Yi explores his personal suffering in the context of Taoist philosophy by demonstrating that everything in the world changes constantly and that good and bad fortune are inevitably intertwined.

> All things alter and change, never a moment of pause; rotating and moving, sometimes advancing and retreating… How could it be overstated?
> Misfortune is what fortune leans on; fortune is what misfortune relies on. Trouble and joy gather at the gate; good and bad luck share the same place. Wu are strong and big, and Fu Chai was defeated. Yue was restricted to Kuaiji, but Gou Jian became hegemon of the age. Li travelled and consequently succeeded, but finally underwent the five types of mutilation. Fu Yue was sent into bondage and then became minister to Wu Ding. Fortune and misfortune, how could they differ from an interwoven strand? Their fates cannot be explained. Who knows their apex?[43]

Kaneakira adopts Jia's format and expression in the 'Rhapsody on Tuqiu':

> The sky is high, and the ground is wide, it is limitless to the top and endless to the bottom. Everything in the world is just like the clouds, appearing and disappearing. Wind and rain form, everything is propelled in a circle. All things evolve and change, without a certain rule. Misfortune and fortune rest on each other, both sadness and

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[42] '誼為長沙王傅三年，有鵩鳥飛入誼舍，止於坐隅，鵩似鴞，不祥鳥也。誼既以謫居長沙，長沙卑濕，誼自傷悼，以為壽不得長，迺為賦以自廣。'
See Li Shan 李善, *Pengniao Fu* 鵩鳥賦, in *Wen Xuan* 文選, https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=487103#%E9%B5%A9%E9%B3%A5%E8%B3%A6 (accessed 01 January 2020).

[43] '萬物變化，固亡休息。斡流而遷，或推而還。形氣轉續，變化而嬗。沕穆亡間，胡可勝言！禍兮福所倚，福兮禍所伏；憂喜聚門，吉凶同域。彼吳彊大，夫差以敗；粵棲會稽，句踐伯世。斯遊遂成，卒被五刑；傅說胥靡，乃相武丁。夫禍之與福，何異糾纆！命不可說，孰知其極。' English translation taken from Carine Defoort, *The Pheasant Cap Master (He guan zi): A Rhetorical Reading* (New York: State University of New York Press: 1996), 60–63.

> happiness are uncertain, blossom and wither rest on the same branch, while songs and tears burst out at the same place.[44]

Like Jia Yi, Kaneakira also associates the uncertainty of the individual's fate with a few Chinese examples.

> Bo Yi acquired virtue but lived in poverty, there was nothing he could do, while Dao Zhi, the robber, lived long and died in peace, and no one knows why. Ji Zi was imprisoned, and Bi Gan was punished.[45] It is hard to tell whether this is a favour from Heaven. Therefore, Liu Xiahui (Zhao Huo) never felt regret, despite the fact that he was dismissed from his position three times. That is why Chen Zhongzi went into reclusion and never came back.[46] Not to mention nowadays there are people like Zhao Gao at the court, pointing at a deer and calling it a horse, and people like the arbitrary and overbearing Liang Ji. It is like putting a human's clothing on a ferocious tiger, it is beyond any common sense.[47]

Kaneakira adopts a conventional use of Chinese allusions in the *Rhapsody on Tuqiu*. While basing his work on Jia Yi's model, he adds details that hark back to his personal experiences at court, that is, the mistreatment and resentment directed towards him by the Fujiwara regents and the fact that he never received any support from his father, the biased emperor. Kaneakira also adopts some classical historic Chinese figures to express his anger and suffering. It seems Jia Yi, who was more subtle and moderate in expressing his emotions,

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[44] '惟夫天高而地広、上無始下無極。萬物云生、或消或息、風雨陶冶、寒暑廻薄。千変萬化、有何常則。寵辱相招、禍福相須、憂喜不定。栄枯同枝、歌哭同径。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 13, 129.

[45] Both Ji Zi and Bi Gan were devoted officials in King Zhou of Shang's time but were allegedly forced out and punished for their unpalatable advice to the King. Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 13, 129.

[46] The discussion of Bo Yi, Dao Zhi, and Zhongzi can be found in *Meng Zi*. It is possible that Kaneakira was inspired by this. '孟子曰：“于齐国之士，吾必以仲子为巨擘焉。虽然，仲子恶能廉？充仲子之操，则蚓而后可者也。夫蚓，上食槁壤，下饮黄泉。仲子所居之室，伯夷之所筑与？抑亦盗跖之所筑与？所食之粟，伯夷之所树与？抑亦盗跖之所树与？是未可知也。'

[47] '伯夷得仁而飢、彼無奈其。盗跖以寿而終、是亦若為。箕子囚繋、比干傷夷。天之与善、其信未知。故柳下三黜而不悔、子仲長往而無帰。況今趙高指鹿之日、梁冀跋扈之時、【後漢書注曰、跋扈，狐強也。或書云、扈者、梟字也。】虎而冠兮、匪常理之可謂。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 13, 129.

accepted his trials and tribulations and proceeded to settle into a reclusive state. In comparison, Kaneakira ends his rhapsody by saying that the 'sage King Wen of Zhou had long passed away and, questioning whom I should follow, I decided to go and stay in my house at Tuqiu'.[48] Kaneakira seems, in his rhapsody, not to have made peace yet with his situation.

The 'Rhapsody on Tuqiu' exemplifies a type of political protest conveyed by means of a borrowed Chinese model. Kaneakira's staying at Tuqiu is more like a political reclusion; he has withdrawn from his position and duties at the court as a protest against the biased emperor and the Fujiwara regency and chosen to stay in reclusion as the sage King had done before him in the absence of a benevolent administration.

If the 'Rhapsody on Tuqiu' offers up a direct social criticism in the description of a character's political reclusion, there are other works of reclusive literature[49] in the *Honchō Monzui* that indicate a more ambivalent attitude towards social tensions by approaching the state of reclusion as a 'middle ground' of self-cultivation, an opportunity to live outside the doctrine and hierarchies of Heian society.

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[48] '嗟乎、文王早没、吾何之隨。已矣々々，命之衰也。吾将入龜緒之巖隈、帰兎裘而去來。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no.13, 129.

[49] The idea of reclusion as a literary topic was adopted from China; both Bai Juyi and the Seven Sages were seen as the spiritual models for Japanese writers. The reclusive-related *kanshibun* first appeared in *Kaifūsō* (懐風藻, *Poetic Gems Cherishing the Styles of Old*). By the end of the Heian period, reclusion had become a major theme in both poetry and prose. For a summary of the reclusive literature in Heian period, see Kendall Brown, *The Politics of Reclusion: Painting and Power in Momoyama Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 40–44.

A similar attitude can also be found in *Kaifūsō* (懐風藻 Poetic Gems Cherishing the Styles of Old).[50] Take poem 96, 'Passing the Ruins of the Former Residence of Counselor Ōmiwa' (過神納言墟)[51] written by Fujiwara no Asomi Maro (藤原万里),[52] for example. In this poem, the author compares Ōmiwa no Takechimaro to Qu yuan 屈原 (c.340–278 BC), a Chinese official who was loyal to the emperor but was unfairly deprived of his posts:

Who can say that the way of the ruler is easy?

Yet it's always been hard for a subject to be righteous.

His remonstrances were in the end ignored;

He went back home, resigning from his post.

Wandering around at leisure, in Ji Kang's bamboo grove;

Sunk in melancholy thought, adorned with the orchids of Chu.

Once the palace gates had opened to him again,

He was as happy as a fish returned to water![53]

The Middle Counselor Ōmiwa no Takechimaro, once urged Empress Jitō not to go to Ise during the harvest season, which would interfere with the peasant's labors. He soon

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[50] The earliest known anthology of *kanshi* 漢詩 (Chinese poetry) was written by Japanese poets and is one of the earliest extant works of Japanese literature. It was created by an unknown compiler in 751 and was arranged in chronological order.

[51] Ōmiwa no Takechimaro 大神高市麻呂 (657–706).

[52] Junior Third Rank Minister of the Left and Right Capital Offices.

[53] '君道誰云易。臣義本自難。奉規終不用。歸去遂辭官。放曠遊嵇竹。沉吟佩楚蘭。天閽若一啓。將得魚水歡。' Kaifūsō 懐風藻, ed. Kojima, Noriyuki 小島憲之. In vol. 69 of Nihon koten bungaku taike 日本古典文学大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), 159. English translation is taken from Judith N Rabinovitch and Timothy Roland Brandstock, *Dance of the butterflies: Chinese poetry from the Japanese court tradition* (Ithaca, NY: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2005), 44–45.

resigned to show his discontent because Empress Jitō did not take his advice. In this poem, the author talks about how the counselor's remonstrances were ignored and he chose to resign from his post. Read together with 'Rhapsody on Tuqiu', we may interpret his withdrawal from court duties and reclusion at Tuqiu as signifying deliberate political isolation.

As we can see from the poem, although Ōmiwa no Takechimaro admires Ji kang 嵇康 (one of the Seven Sages of Bamboo in Six Dynasties)'s reclusion attitude, the poet clearly states that once the gate (of power) was open to him, Ōmiwa no Takechimaro would be like a fish back to water. In other words, Takechimaro did not intend a total withdrawal from the court or the world but suggests a political reclusion that evokes an 'alternate space' and a 'counter ideology to power' owing to his lack of recognition in the current political climate. Takechimaro did get the chance to go back to the court and served as governor of Nagato and master of the Left Capital Office respectively.[54] It is possible that the author is linking himself to Takechimaro, hoping that one day the gate of power would also open to him.

One representative piece of reclusive work in the *Honchō Monzui* is the *Chiteiki* 池亭記 (*Record of A Pond Pavilion*), written by Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保胤 (933–1002), a low-ranking court official who later became a monk, taking vows in Pure Land Buddhism. Shirane regards Yasutane as exemplifying someone who was 'marginalised by the aristocratic socio-political hierarchy and turned to the alternative of reclusion and Pure Land

[54] Judith N Rabinovitch and Timothy Roland Brandstock, *Dance of the butterflies*, 44.

Buddhism'.[55] Apart from the Buddhist influence, Yasutane takes the figures of Bai Juyi and Seven Sages as his spiritual models in his pursuit of reclusion.

The *Chiteiki* starts as follows: 'in twenty-some years of wandering about I observed both the east and west capital districts. The population at the west is shrinking, the whole area was mainly in ruins. People are leaving and never returning, houses are collapsing, and no one is repairing them'.[56] This introduction is followed by Yasutane's account of the suffering he has observed among people living in the capitals and his intention of living a reclusive life so as to be detached from the secular world.

The opening of the *Chiteiki* offers a very similar setting to that seen in *Shin Sarugakuki*, starting from an overview of the narrator's twenty-some years of experience, prefacing a scene that was extraordinary against that background, followed by a further description of it.[57] One can also find a similar formula in the beginning of *Rakuyō Dengakuki.* Both texts may be taken as evidence of a larger literary trend in *kanbun* writing at that time that entailed presenting specific views of the capital with an opening in a storytelling style.

In the *Chiteki*, Yasutane describes a series of misfortunes and unexpected disasters that happened in the capital, such as fires and robberies, which gradually turned the western capital into a devastated area. As he puts it,

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[55] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 489.
[56] '予二十余年以來、歷見東西二京、西京人家漸稀、殆幾幽墟矣。人者有去無來、屋者有壞無造。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 375, 335.
[57] '予廿餘季以還、歷觀東西二京、今夜猿楽見物許之見事者、於古今未有。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Shin Sarugakuki*, 3.

天之亡西京、非人之罪明也

It is clear that the god wants to destroy the western capital, not the human sin.

Yasutane describes how the people living in the capital have fallen prey to such anxiety and uncertainty that they can no longer laugh in enjoyment of happy occurrences, nor can they cry out loud for the sad things.[58] They are in great panic, afraid of going forward or pulling back. Having witnessed people's increasing spiritual crises caused by disasters and social instability, and having failed to achieve recognition at court, Yasutane then gradually turns to the alternative of reclusion and dedicates himself to Pure Land Buddhism, through which he is able to find inner peace and consolation:[59]

> Position and title I leave up to fate, for the workings of Heaven govern all things alike. Heaven and earth will decide if I live a long life or a short one — like Confucius, I have been praying for a long time now. I do not envy the man who soars like a phoenix on the wind, nor the man who hides like a leopard in the mists. I have no wish to bend my knee and crook my back in efforts to win favour with great lords and high officials, but neither do I wish to shun the words and faces of others and bury myself in some remote mountain or dark valley. During such time as I am at court, I apply myself to the business of the sovereign; once home, my thoughts turn always to the service of the Buddha.[60]

The writing of 'Rhapsody on Tuqiu' approaches direct social criticism in its portrayal of an apparent political reclusion. Although, unlike others, in Yasutane's case, he responds to

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[58] '有楽不能大開口而咲、有哀不能高揚声而哭。進退有懼、心神不安。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 375, 335.
[59] Yasutane took vows in Pure Land Buddhism in 986, and his Buddhist name is *Jakushin*. See Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 489.
[60] '官爵者任運命、天之工均矣。壽夭者付乾坤、丘之禱久焉。不楽人之為風鵬、不楽人之為霧豹。不要屈膝折腰、而求媚於王侯将相。又不要避言避色、而刊蹤於深山幽谷。在朝身暫隨王事、確家心永帰佛那。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 375, 336. English translation was taken from Burton Watson, cited from Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 489–490.

social impediments and spiritual crises with a relatively moderate reclusion in pursuit of the philosophy of Buddhist and Chinese models.[61]

Apart from religious influences, Yasutane also found himself in good company with the wise men of the past in his reclusion, as conveyed in his attitudes towards 'retirement at court (朝隠)'.

> When my dinner is done, I enter the eastern library, open my books, and find myself in the company of worthy men of the past, those such us Emperor Wen of the Han, a ruler of another year, who loved frugal ways and gave rest to his people; Bai Juyi of the Tang, a teacher of another time, who excelled in poetry and served the Buddhist law; or the Seven Sages of the Chin, friends of another age, who lived at court but longed for the life of retirement. So I meet with a worthy ruler, I meet with a worthy teacher, and I meet with worthy friends, three meetings in one day, three delights to last a lifetime. As for people and affairs of contemporary world, they hold no attraction for me.[62]

Kendall Brown argues that as Yasutane felt the conflict between serving at the court and the desire for a life of reclusion, thus the Seven Sages is a 'comforting example of the compatibility of these opposing desires'.[63] However, the Seven Sages' story did not end well. Take two of the most representative figures in the Seven Sages, Ji Kang and Ruan Ji, for example. Ji Kang was first offered a position at the court by Sima Zhao, the regent of the state of Cao Wei; he declined and chose to stay away from politics. However, later on he was

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[61] The pursuit of Pure Land Buddhism is frequently seen among Heian aristocrats. Fuijiwara no Akihira himself wrote 'Kiraku wakashū no jo' (極楽和歌序), which expressed his hope of rebirth in the Pure Land. See Kawaguchi, *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi no kenkyū*, 774.

[62] '飯飡之後、入東閤、開書巻。逢古賢。夫漢文皇帝為異代之主、以好倹約安人民也。唐白楽天為異代之師、以長詩句帰仏法也。晋朝七賢為異代之友、以身在朝志在隠也。予遇賢主、遇賢師、遇賢友。一日有三遇、一生為三楽。近代人世之事、無一可恋。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 375, 336. English translation taken from Watson, in Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 489–490.

[63] Brown. *The Politics of Reclusion*, 42.

falsely accused of a crime and then executed by Sima Zhao. Ruan Ji, on the other hand, has to make himself unconscious every day to escape from marrying his daughter to Sima Zhao.

Michele Marra has suggested that the pursuit of reclusion evokes an 'alternate space' and a 'counter ideology to power'. Brown also argues that the criticisms implicit in reclusion literature operate as 'a type of social conscience'. Furthermore, he regards works like the *Chiteiki* as compatible and suggests that they offer an 'instructive alternate order'.[64]

However, Yasutane's citing of the figures of the Seven Sages indicates an ambivalent attitude towards the dominant culture and the contemporary political leadership. There is ambiguity arising from the possibility that Yasutane might just be claiming that he is interested in the aesthetic reclusive lifestyle that the Seven Sages once promoted. This could consist, for instance, of living in a refined environment, playing Chinese seven-stringed zither, drinking wine, composing music, and indulging in philosophical discussions. On the other hand, as Yasutane says in the *Chiteiki*, 'the people and affairs of the contemporary world, they hold no attraction for me', which suggests that the idea of serving at court but longing for a life of reclusion might also be indicative of an implicit rejection of contemporary politics and an ambivalent attitude towards political power more generally.

The reclusion-themed *kanbun* composed during the Heian period were inspired by their Chinese counterparts, and in turn had a profound influence on the development of

[64] Brown. *The Politics of Reclusion*, 42.

reclusive literature in traditional Japanese literature.[65] In particular, the two pieces of reclusive literature discussed above indicate the variety of approaches by which Heian scholars responded to social adversity: some pursued a political reclusion while adopting a Chinese model; others focused on the social difficulties and spiritual crisis that people were suffering and retreated into a moderate literary and religious reclusion, composing works that convey a reclusive aestheticism and an implicit criticism of contemporary politics. Similar energy can also be found in the writing of *Shin Sarugakuki*. Reclusion suggests something about social criticism and the '*monjō keikoku*' model in *Honchō Monzui*, which are also seen in Fujiwara no Akihira's other works as a whole. Furthermore, there is strikingly different content in the erotic works of *Honchō Monzui* that happens to overlap with *Shin Sarugakuki*; the startling interjection of sexual content in the writings also implies an oblique form of social criticism.

To begin with, Chapter Three examines the sexually explicit elements of *Shin Sarugakuki*, the descriptions of sex organs in the text, when talking about male and female sexuality and the grotesque depiction of human bodies and exaggerated sexual appetites. There are two very similar *kanbun* pieces from the *Honchō Monzui* that deserve attention in this context.

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[65] The format and the content of the *Chiteki* naturally reminds one of the *Hōjōki* 方丈記 (*An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut*), written by Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1155–1216) in the early Kamakura period. In *Hōjōki*, Chōmei described the misfortunes and unexpected disasters that happened in the capital: the great fire, the whirlwind, the famine, and the earthquake in which houses were burnt down and thousands of men and women died. It was significantly influenced by the Buddhist philosophy of rejection and was regarded as political dissension directed towards the court.

The first one, which is called ‘Danjo kon’infu’ 男女婚姻賦, (*Rhyme-Prose on the Marriage of Man and Woman*), gives a detailed description of Yin-Yang sexual intercourse. The second one, *Tettsui den* 鉄槌伝 (*The Biography of an Iron Hammer*), gives a biography of an ‘iron hammer’, which is in fact someone’s penis. The image of a hammer may also remind us of the depiction of the fourteenth daughter’s husband, whose penis is ‘as hard as an iron hammer’. Interestingly, both Smits and Denecke have suggested that the *Tettsui den* was written by Fujiwara no Akihira under the pseudonym Dick Large (Ra Tai 羅泰).[66]

In the first place, ‘Danjo kon’infu’ mainly talks about how ‘love and emotion bring mutual responses, and afterward the body becomes pregnant’.[67] The prose elaborates upon this process with much more erotic overtones and many more specific physical details. Regardless of the blunt and sexually explicit language that the author, Ōe no Asatsuna 大江朝綱, a Heian scholar-official, uses, it can be seen as an instructive piece, a marriage manual. It tells of the love and affection generated between a man and a woman, and how these things lead to marriage.

> First, he solicits the matchmaker, skilled in all the arts a glib tongue can command,
> He plies her with Japanese poems, bit by bit entangling the strings of her heart.
> He seeks a glimpse of her face, so hard to see; listening for a voice as yet unheard.
> As his yearning grows more fervid, he smiles a secret; as the talks grow more intimate, he feels his heart break….[68]

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[66] Smits, ‘The Way of the Literati’, 120, Denecke, ‘Anthologization and Sino-Japanese Literature’, 191, and Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, 335–336.
[67] Smits, ‘The Way of the Literati’, 121.
[68] ‘始使媒介、巧盡舌端之妙。継以倭歌、彌亂心機之緒。原夫尋形難見、聞聲未相。思切々而含笑、語密々而断腸。’ Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 15, 130.

The author presents us with a romantic and erotic scene of the young couple coming together.

> Unbinding the sash of her single robe, knowing she cannot tie it again, baring flesh as white as snow, forgetting for once to be ashamed:
> 'He's the one I'm to be buried with, the mate I will share throughout all my life!'
> When the form is lovely, love will be deep, when passion penetrates, the body will grow full;
> Not the union of husband and wife alone that counts, but the thought of sons and grandsons to rely on![69]

The 'Danjo kon'infu' contains erotic humour, and describes love and sex as a mutual response of Yin and Yang energies. It also has an instructional message. It constructs a complete story line with detailed steps: first there is a meeting, then they must please the matchmaker, followed by communicating verbally and in writing. They move on to flirting by means of their body language and, at last, they have sex, followed by a reminder that the ultimate satisfaction of the sexual act lies in procreation. Ōe no Asatsuna summarises this sequence as a balance of Yin and Yang, the 'Creator's natural way'. This prose is written in a provocative manner; it suggests that love's raptures are hard to resist, and acknowledges that no one is a pure and saintly sage,[70] thus encouraging people to pursue their sexual impulses. The author concludes with the reassuring statement that, 'should widows and young boys hear of such things, none of them would be stirred to desire!'[71]

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[69] '於是忍其初、親其後。解單袴之紐、更不知結。露白雪之膚、還忘厭醜。豈同穴之相好、是終身之匹偶。則知形美者其愛深、感通者其身妊。不啻夫妻之配合、宜凝子孫之庇蔭。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 15, 131.
[70] '是知、媚感難免、誰有聖賢。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 15, 131.
[71] '俾夫孀婦与角子、莫不聞之相憐。' Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 15, 131.

The text refers to some classical love poetry, including verses written by Ono no Komachi and Ariwara no Narihira, but, as Shirane observes, it 'supplies far more erotic and physical detail than was allowed in the elegant *waka* tradition',[72] which suggests that the author, in his own composition, has taken an expanded approach to the realm of love and erotic poetry. He has pushed past the limits of conventional elegant ideas of love poetry, and instead indulges in intimate details and lewd exaggerations. What is more, his use of blunt language taken together with his encouragement of pursuing love and desire can also be seen as poking fun at the literary decorum of the court. One can see that Fujiwara no Akihira was not the only one who played with erotic parody in *kanbun* composition as a means of expressing social criticism.

As for the *Tettsui den*, Smits calls it one of Japan's earliest works of pornography and observes that it has been marginalised by later scholars.[73] Meanwhile the author remains unknown. Fujiwara no Akihira is often credited as the author due to the similar expressions and contents presented in the *Tettsui den* and *Shin Sarugakuki*.[74]

Just like the husband of the fourteenth daughter in *Shin Sarugakuki*, *Tettsui* is also known for having a huge penis. It is about 21 centimetres long, as wide as a wolf's mouth,

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[72] Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 485.
[73] Smits, 'The Way of the Literati', 120.
[74] Apart from Smits and Denecke who suggested Fujiwara no Akihira might be the author, Akiko Yano believes both *Tettsui den* and *Shin Sarugakuki* were written by Fujiwara no Akihira. See Akiko Yano, 'Historiography of the "Phallic Contest" Handscroll in Japanese Art', *Japan Review*, 26 Special Issue Shunga (2013): 68. The other possible candidate is Fujiwara no Hirofumi (藤原博文, ?–929), '或説博文作云々'. Horifumi passed the *taisaku* examination in 902, after which he became a lecturer of *Nihon Shoki.* He was appointed as the *tōgu gakushi* in 925 and *monjō hakase* in 926. Hirofumi is a lower fourth rank courtier. See Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, 396.

and ‘its head pointed like a mackerel’s head’.[75] Because of his huge penis, *Tettsui* has found favour with the high-ranking ladies and younger women. He is loved by the Princess and has been appointed as a lord. He is also smart and talented, and very good at composing Chinese prose. Apparently aided by his penis, he is able to overcome his humble background and break through the powerful ranks (‘為人勇捍、能破権勢之朱門’). He is blessed with some Yin virtue so that he will never grow old or die. His wife Zhu is a follower of Pengzu, a long-lived Taoist Sage, from whom she is learning such techniques as ‘arts of the flying dragon and the walking tiger’.[76] Smits suggests that this erotic terminology was derived from Chinese manuals of medicine.[77] The terminology that the author uses here is likewise found in Fujiwara no Akihira’s account of the sexual conduct of the sixteenth daughter as discussed in Chapter Three. That the sixteenth daughter, leader of the night-working *asobi*, uses techniques such as ‘flying dragons and tiger steps’ to win the favour of her clients suggests, as pointed out by Terry Kawashima, that the terminology that Fujiwara no Akihira uses is all borrowed from classical Chinese medicine books.[78] Thus the techniques the wife has learned from Pengzu can be linked to the seductive sexual conduct of *asobi*, leading us to speculate that the wife herself may have some contact with the *asobi* group, or at least may have been exposed to some of their sexual techniques.

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[75] Akiko, ‘Historiography of the “Phallic Contest” Handscroll in Japanese Art’, 69.
[76] ‘学竜飛虎歩之術’, Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 377, 338.
[77] Smits, ‘The Way of the Literati’, 120.
[78] Kawashima, *Writing Margins*, 39.

‘Ah! The love between the couples, it is part of nature!’[79] the author tells us. After *Tettsui* marries and grows old, his wife is portrayed as weeping in great sadness every time she sees her husband’s aged face. Later on, *Tettsui* loses his powerful backing and, in the end, the couple decides to abandon their sexual lives.[80] At this point, the author comments that the sex drive that *Tettsui* shares with his wife is indecent (‘此是淫奔’). The negative portrayal of *Tettsui* suggested a moral judgement and satirical nuance, that the huge penis that had worked so much to his advantage eventually led to a sad ending.

The whole story reminds one of Dōkyō 道鏡, whom Fujiwara no Akihira mentions once in *Shin Sarugakuki* in comparison with the fourteenth daughter’s husband. Like *Tettsui*, the *Dōkyō* was appointed as an influential figure at the court for having successfully cured Empress Kōken when she was suffering from a serious illness. The exaggerated penis, the unlimited sexual appetites, and the quickly aging couple in *Tettsui den* all seem to convey a similar didactic nuance, namely that an excessive sex drive is harmful and indecent. In addition, the tale of a man with a huge penis who advances rapidly at court can be seen as a satirical view of the bureaucracy. It is also worth noticing how sexual content was often used for satirical purposes. The blunt mention of sex organs in both *Tettsui den* and *Shin Sarugakuki* suggests an implied social criticism if we consider that the penis is something someone is born with, something ‘inherited’ from the parents, as is one’s social class in an

[79] ‘夫婦之愛、天然之至性也’, Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 377, 338.
[80] ‘後朱門落魄、着一端之犢鼻。年及五十、杜門不処人事云。’ Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō Monzui*, no. 377, 338.

aristocracy. If one views the court bureaucracy through the fictional device of a male organ's career, as conceived by Wiebke Denecke — the miserable ending of Dōkyō (who is banished after the death of Empress Kōken), the fourteenth daughter's husband (who used to be a *Hōō* but now lives in poverty), and *Tettsui* (who has lost his powerful backing and grown old) — the point is that one should not expect to lead a successful life with an oversized penis (noble family name) as one's only advantage.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has considered the '*monjō keikoku*' model and the varied ways in which it was employed by Heian scholars. In particular, Fumitoki provides a classical approach of the '*monjō keikoku*' ideal, that is, modelling direct engagement in politics while associating *kanbun* to the legitimacy of this statecraft. Other scholars meanwhile explored different ways to use the language of *kanbun* to respond to social tensions and craft an approach to public service in *Honchō Monzui*; furthermore, the compiling of *Honchō Monzui* may itself suggest different models of '*monjō keikoku*'.

Considering how satirical and erotic elements figure in the *kanbun* compositions from *Honchō Monzui*, this chapter has also looked at how Heian scholars coped with matters such as writing authority and political advancement, and how *kanbun* provided them a space in which to express social criticism. Some appropriated Chinese allusions and historical figures to create a classical satirical setting, some used metaphors to create a more veiled form of satire, some were driven to reclusion in response to political and social tensions, some used

grotesque sexual themes and affirmations of sexual freedom to make fun of the literary decorum of the court, and some used the metaphor of an overgrown penis to challenge the entrenched hereditary hierarchy at the court. The satirical and erotic energy in *Honchō Monzui* enables us to better understand and contextualise the similar tensions and dynamics that appear in *Shin Sarugakuki*.

Taken together, all these elements point to a wider trend in literary activity, which not only allowed space for social transgression and literary subversion, but also adopted a range of different methods and subject matter to engage in a diverse array of *kanbun* production during the Heian period.

Conclusion

To sum up, *Shin Sarugakuki* was not an inconsequential outlier or purely vulgar phenomenon. Its impact was far broader than what scholars have envisaged, and, as this dissertation has shown, its multi-faceted content brings together significant threads in the discussion of *kanbun*.

Brian Steininger suggests that Heian scholars adapted their writing to fit the social and academic milieus they occupied. Because these tended to be determined more by heredity than aptitude, this would mean that *kika* scholars like Fujiwara no Akihira were constrained by the need to secure official employment or private patronage. As a result, their aspirations tended to be limited to 'the domestic sphere' of utilitarian works and official documents rather than the compositions aimed at public consumption. Against that background, one could regard Fujiwara no Akihira as the prototypical complex Heian scholar seeking to rise above a *kika* background; his writing is daring and innovative to the extent that it incorporates elements of social criticism and at times has erotic implications, but he cannot afford merely to satisfy his own intellectual or artistic inclinations. Thus, as a sort of insurance policy, he ensures that his work also conveys academic and educational value. These considerations must also have influenced the way that other Heian scholars expressed themselves as they touched upon new spaces for *kanbun* writing shaped by the trends of a changing political and cultural environment.

In addition, we find that the intertextual relationship between *Shin Sarugakuki* and other Heian *kanbun* texts serves to connect *Shin Sarugakuki* to the satirical and erotic pieces in *Honchō Monzui* and suggests a common thread in literary activity in general and the way Heian scholars approached social criticism in their *kanbun* writing. In addition, *Honchō Monzui* covers a broad range of *kanbun* topics and would potentially provide a new '*monjō keikoku*' model that was not limited by an author's position in the class-based hierarchy at the academy.

Because the development of *kanbun* was closely related to the imperial order, the decline of the *ritsuryō* system, coupled with the waning of regency politics, as well as the rise of the warrior class, was bound to pose some threat to the integrity of *kanbun*. Hence Kawaguchi characterises the mid-late Heian period as the 'period of dissolution of *kanbun*' as its utilitarian functions lost their prevalence and its state-building character garnered less recognition. However, I argue that Fujiwara no Akihira's approach to *kanbun* writing points to its significance in relation to social issues in *kanbun* discourse. He created a more nuanced *kanbun* literature and pushed the boundaries of what contemporary scholars could understand from it. Fujiwara no Akihira's contribution invites a broader study of the diversity of *kanbun* because it suggests that the *kanbun* pieces produced by Heian scholars are complex and cannot be strictly classified as either public or personal in nature. We learn from him that even a seemingly coarse and unrefined piece of *kanbun* could engage serious discussion related to society and government.

We can form a picture of the rise of popular entertainment by examining the texts of well-established *juka* scholars, Heian courtiers, and Fujiwara no Akihira himself. The latter's vivid and crude description of the commoners in *Shin Sarugakuki* was a novelty; rather than depicting them in a romanticised but essentially faceless way, as an exotic backdrop to a more important story, he embraces them with creativity and sensitivity. Yet Fujiwara no Akihira is not without biases and stereotypes, and, in sketching the commoners' profiles for us, he displays a penchant for the grotesque, which resonates with the social transgression and literary subversion of the mid-Heian period. It is on account of these qualities that we should value *Shin Sarugakuki* as a sketch of Heian society and a unique evocation of its social constructs. The focus on non-elite groups of people, the anti-hierarchical spirit, and the perspective shift between audiences and performers in *Shin Sarugakuki* also reveal Akihira's unique literary aesthetics, his impulse to challenge the social norms, and his craving for freedom of literary expression. For him, *kanbun* was not merely a practical tool for engaging with academia, nor a medium for entertaining himself or his patron; it was also an instrument of social change and literary invention.

This reading of *Shin Sarugakuki* has focused on the subversive and erotic energy of the texts, while taking into account Bakhtin's interpretation of the carnivalesque as a manifestation of anti-hierarchical spirit. At the same time, it has formulated a justification for considering *Shin Sarugakuki* as a potentially educational piece that includes exhaustive lists of useful knowledge and terminology that may serve to educate the scholar who needs

practice in *kanbun* writing. These two angles — the irreverent and the didactic — form a counterpoint with one another other and intimate that *Shin Sarugakuki* deserves a significant place in Heian literature.

Last but certainly not least, this thesis aims to provide a stepping-stone to further research on *Shin Sarugakuki* and Heian *kanbun* as a whole. For one thing, by pointing to other approaches to reading and understanding *Shin Sarugakuki*, it connects that work to *ruijū* and other educational sources and indicates possible directions of future research on *ōrai* and its significance in premodern Japan. For another, it explores the complexity of *kika* scholars who, while seeking recognition at the court, were rebelling at the same time against societal constraints. This points to opportunities for further exploration of the trend of literary subversion in the Heian period, placed in the context of the overall development of *kanbun*.

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I must apologise for the missing page numbers in some of the footnotes. In some cases, I have been obliged during the writing of this thesis to rely on online resources due to having limited access in China to some secondary sources and premodern Japanese books.

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