

Heian Love: Domestic and Imported

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In chapter 21 of *The Tale of Genji*, Genji's son Yūgiri celebrates his coming of age. Just when everyone is expecting him to be awarded the suitably exalted fourth rank, his maternal grandmother is appalled to see him appear dressed in light blue, the color worn by those holding the mere sixth rank. She questions his father about this, and Genji explains that, because Yūgiri would benefit from devoting two or three years to study at the court university before beginning his government career, he had been given the rank suitable for a student, not an official. Genji goes on to note he himself had suffered because of his own inadequate education in the classics. Even the clever son of a high-ranking man, he explains, is unlikely to surpass his father's achievements. Although publicly all may praise him, behind his back they will deride him, and, as soon as his father is out of the picture, he will lose his place in the world. Genji concludes, "After all, learning is what provides a firm foundation for the exercise of Japanese wit. [Yūgiri] may be impatient now, but if he aspires in the end to become a pillar of the state, he will do well even after I am gone. Never mind if he is none too secure for the present, because as long as this is my way of looking after him, I cannot imagine anyone sneering at him for being one of those poverty-stricken [university] students." When the grandmother notes that Yūgiri is miserable because even his cousins now hold higher rank than he, Genji responds, "His disappointment will soon be gone once he acquires some learning and understands a little more."

Yūgiri is given his style, his adult, academic name (*azana* 字), with appropriate ceremony. High aristocrats, who normally had little to do with the university, gather

out of curiosity, but the professors are terrified when Genji instructs them to do it up right, to “stint on nothing and … not relax whatever precedent may require.” Of the professors, we are told “they shamelessly wore odd, ill-fitting clothes that they had had to borrow elsewhere, and everything about them presented a novel spectacle, including their manner of taking their seats with grave voices and pompous looks.” When they speak, their language is stilted. Everyone has a good laugh at their expense, as they persistently rebuke the assembled nobles for their ignorance of proper decorum. After the ceremony concludes, Genji summons the professors and a few enthusiastic amateurs for a round of versifying in Chinese on a topic assigned by the professor of literature. The poems are fraught with learned allusions to the Chinese classics extolling the value of scholarship. Surely, everyone thinks, even the Chinese would be impressed. Yūgiri, on the other hand, is not at all pleased by the prospect of a few years at the university, but he is a diligent youth and determines to complete his studies expeditiously so he can get on with his career. In just four or five months, he works his way through *The Records of the Historian* (*Shiji* 史記). Although Yūgiri’s status may be far too grand for his academic surroundings, he persists and takes the various examinations as he advances in his studies. One examiner, we learn, “was too great an eccentric to have found employment commensurate with his learning, and he lived in poverty and neglect.” Ignoring aristocratic prejudices, Genji continues to invite such scholars to his mansion to compose poems in Chinese. ⁽¹⁾

This familiar episode is apt to be cited as evidence that in Murasaki Shikubu’s day the elite of the Japanese court viewed the university and its faculty in a manner modern professors might find disappointingly familiar. Even a bright young man resents his father’s decision that he would benefit more from a higher education than an early start in his career, and the father’s friends laugh at the pretensions of the impecunious professors, who are portrayed as unfashionable pompous prigs. The

above passage also suggests that the professors, or at least their specialized knowledge, might have been more at home in China than in Japan. When they compose poems, they aim to impress their continental neighbors, and their countrymen are convinced they could do so. They have Yūgiri begin his university education by reading *The Records of the Historian*, China's classic of historical writing. Such Sinological knowledge, Genji himself explains, is a good foundation for what Royall Tyler, following Helen McCullough, has translated as "Japanese wit," the earliest extant reference to the "*Yamato-damashū*" 大和魂 that in later times, rendered "Japanese spirit," would acquire more ominous nuances as it came to be associated with militant nationalism.⁽²⁾ The purpose of this essay will be, among other things, to defend the reputation of these professors by demonstrating that Japanese wit sometimes enlivened their Sinological exercises, although it may not have by the sort of wit Genji had in mind. To put it another way, they too liked to have fun, even if less educated aristocrats may not always have gotten their jokes. Their appreciation of wit also led Japanese to value works that might not have amused their Chinese counterparts, at least publicly.

More specifically, examples from Japan's literature in Chinese, largely the product of the professors caricatured in *The Tale of Genji*, will be used to show how Japanese literati experimented with placing Japanese literary content into Chinese forms and valued themes the Chinese did not. The principle examples are two items from *Honchō Monzui* 本朝文粹, or "The Literary Essence of Our Court," a collection of Japan's writings in Chinese from the mid-Heian period. Just as in the world of *waka*, Japan's vernacular poetry, anthologies are important guideposts in the study of Japan's literature in Chinese, and *Honchō Monzui* is a particularly important one. Since these collections are less familiar than those of *waka*, a brief review may be useful. Japan's earliest anthology of works in Chinese, the eighth-century *Kaifūsō* 懷風藻, and its first two imperially sponsored anthologies from the early ninth century,

contained only poetry. The third imperial anthology, *Keikokushū* 経国集, completed in 827, included a wide range of genres. Subsequent anthologies were privately compiled, some consisting of compositions—both prose and poetry—by individual authors, other selecting notable works by various writers.

Honchō Monzui, compiled in the *Kōhei* 康平 era (1058-65), was the most ambitious of these private anthologies to that date, the first to mimic the range of *Keikokushū*, even if it fell six scrolls short of the earlier collection's twenty-scroll length. Predictably, its compiler was a man who would serve as professor of literature at the court university, Fujiwara no Akihira (藤原明衡 989-1066). Despite his distinguished surname, he was born not to the powerful “Northern House” (Hokke 北家) of the family, but its “Ceremonial House” (Shikike 式家) that had long since ceased to be involved in court politics at the highest level. Although both his father and grandfather had training in Chinese literature, neither held positions at the university, where posts in the prestigious literature curriculum had come to be dominated by the Sugawara and Ōe families. Akihira too studied at the university and even passed the civil service examination, but not until he was in his forties. He would spend most of his adult life holding modest positions at court or in the provinces until 1062, when, finally, at the age of 73, he was named professor of literature. Although his skill at composition in Chinese was recognized, he had also acquired a slightly unsavory reputation. Once he was caught passing information to students who were taking the university's entrance examination. Several years later, a student who failed the examination petitioned for reconsideration. The language of the petition seemed erudite beyond the student's abilities, and Akihira was found to have helped him draft it. An anecdote recorded years later tells of how he got into trouble for borrowing the bedchamber of a married women to conduct an affair with a court lady. Commenting on the student petition, a contemporary said of Akihira, “He has a restless personality, which sometimes causes incidents like this. They are very

painful.”⁽³⁾ This “restless personality” could have been either the cause or the result of his many years in unsuitable posts and may also explain his literary eccentricities. Whereas the fictional Yūgiri may have chafed at the university’s academic demands, since his hereditary status assured him a secure place at court anyhow, the actual Akihira displayed genuine Sinological talent but seems to have chafed at the constraints placed on his career by his family’s position as aristocrats of only middling rank.

Whatever his personality, his anthology, *Honchō Monzui*, is an impressive work, consisting of 432 items dating from the early ninth to the early eleventh centuries. He arranged them by genre into thirty-nine sections. Among the genres are many we might expect to find in a literary anthology: rhapsodies (賦, *fu* in both Chinese and Japanese), poems (詩, *shi* in both Chinese and Japanese), and literary “records” (*ki* 記, or, in Chinese, *ji*). Also anthologized, however, are various types of official documents and many Buddhist prayers. These may not seem so “literary” to modern readers, but they help us understand what the types of writing Heian literati esteemed. The titles of many works suggest their very “Chinese” content. The “Rhapsody on the Pure Wind that Warns us to Prepare for the Cold” 清風戒寒賦 suggests Confucian moralizing, whereas the “Eight Autumn Songs at a Mountain Dwelling” 山家秋歌八首 point to the eremitism typically associated with Daoist thought. Yet the anthology also includes distinctively Japanese items. For example, after 139 introductions to Chinese-language poems, it includes eleven introductions (also written in Chinese) to *waka*, poems in Japanese. The presence of Japanese elements reflect the anthology’s relatively late date. It was compiled long after court enthusiasm for literature in Chinese had peaked in the early ninth century and imperial sponsorship of *Kokinshū* had legitimized poetry in Japanese at the start of the tenth. When *Keikokushū* had been compiled, emperors sponsored collections only of literature in Chinese. By the time of *Honchō Monzui*, imperial anthologies were all devoted to

Japanese poetry.

Japanese authorities generally agree that the model for both *Keikokushū* and *Honchō Monzui* was the Chinese *Wen Xuan* 文選 or “Selections of Refined Literature,” a work substantially larger than either, compiled around 530 by the crown prince of the Liang Dynasty.⁽⁴⁾ Both the variety of works and their arrangement in *Wen Xuan* are similar to those in *Honchō Monzui*, albeit without the Japanese touches. In the Sui and Tang dynasties, *Wen Xuan* became required reading for candidates who aspired to passing the civil service examinations. By the Song dynasty, students celebrated it in a ditty:

Wen xuan thoroughly done,
Half a diploma already won!⁽⁵⁾
文選爛／秀才半

Following the Chinese lead, the Japanese too placed it on the reading list that was prescribed for their university in 701. Thus, in both China and Japan, it was a literary exemplar that helped define what was canonical and, to the extent it was also Akihira’s model, presumably he aspired to produce a collection of works that would serve as exemplars for Japan’s writers of literature in Chinese.

Several measures indicate that he succeeded. *Honchō Monzui* served as a model for subsequent Heian anthologies of literature in Chinese. Allusions to it can be found in later works, most notably *The Tale of the Heike*. It provided models for those who had to compose documents in highly formal language. Although by the Edo period, the ornate literary style favored in *Honchō Monzui* had fallen out of fashion, a printed edition appeared in 1629 and others followed. Of the various anthologies of Japan’s literature in Chinese that were compiled during the Nara and Heian periods, none survives in as many copies as does *Honchō Monzui*, not even the imperially sponsored anthologies from the ninth century and not even the collected works in Chinese of

Sugawara no Michizane (菅原道真 845-903), who was popularly worshipped as a god of literature. The actual number of copies, perhaps twenty-eight manuscripts plus numerous examples of the printed editions, is small compared to those of Japan's vernacular classics: approximately 270 copies of *Kokinshū* and maybe 400 of *Genji* survive.⁽⁶⁾ That, however, is not an appropriate comparison, for it only demonstrates that, predictably, key works from the vernacular canon found a wider audience than those in difficult Chinese. *Honchō Monzui* found a secure position in the more rarified canon of Japan's literature in Chinese. In 1660, the Confucian scholar Hayashi Gahō (林鷺峰 1618-80) explained "*Honchō Monzui* is an important contribution for later generations, since few personal collections of works by the literati of old now survive. Were it not for the *Literary Essence*, what would display our nation's literature?"⁽⁷⁾

One practical indication of *Honchō Monzui's* status in the Japanese canon, or least its canon of works in Chinese, is that it became the first anthology of Heian Japan's literature in Chinese to have appeared in a modern annotated version. When Kakimura Shigematsu published that edition in 1922, however, he omitted the two works that will be the focus of this paper. The reason he gives, in fine print, is that "although they are essential works for understanding the society of that time, to annotate them today would be improper and so they are omitted."⁽⁸⁾ One of them is a rhapsody by Ōe no Asatsuna (大江朝綱 886-957) that Burton Watson has translated as "Rhyme-prose on the Marriage of Man and Woman" (*Danjo kon'in no fu* 男女婚姻賦). In his introduction to it, Watson also touches upon the second, "a far more salacious piece entitled 'Biography of Iron Hammer,' [*Tetutsuiden* 鐵槌伝] a life history of a phallus by someone who writes under the alias of 'Organ Extraordinary [Luo Tai 羅泰]'. Interesting as it may appear in conception, however, it turns out in execution to be one of the most tedious works of pornography in all literature."⁽⁹⁾ For that reason, Watson chose not to translate it.

“Marriage of Man and Woman” is an interesting work. Its author, Asatsuna, was in fact another professor of literature, but apparently he was no prude. His rhapsody describes how a virile man seduces a gentle woman “[plying] her with Japanese poems.” Asatsuna tells us the lovers are like the famed Japanese libertines Ono no Komachi 小野小町 and Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 but goes on to describe the woman’s beauty in terms borrowed from China:

Her eyebrows painted in willows of Wei 魏,

Lips touched with rouge of Yan 燕.

At this point, he begins to get more explicit, considerably more so than Murasaki does when she writes of love in *The Tale of Genji*, although Asatsuna still remains safely within the bounds of Columbia University Press’s sense of propriety. The woman snuggles up to a stranger and gets undressed, revealing her snow-white skin. After sharing some moans and fluids, the lovers fall asleep to dream of a Heaven of Perfect Peace. Asatsuna concludes by noting that any boy or widow who hears of such things would surely be stirred to desire.⁽¹⁰⁾ In other words, the scene his rhapsody describes will arouse the sexually frustrated, or perhaps the purpose of the rhapsody is precisely to do so. *The Tale of Genji* is thought to have been set in the first half of the tenth century, an era that had come to be seen as a golden age by the time Murasaki was writing *Genji* around the turn of the eleventh century.⁽¹¹⁾ In other words, it was set in Asatsuna’s lifetime and so he could well have been Yūgiri’s professor, were Yūgiri not a fictional character. If this rhapsody is any indication of what professors of literature regarded as writing worthy of preservation, perhaps Yūgiri had more fun at the university than he let on to his parents or to the author of them all, Murasaki. In other words, men apparently had their own masculine bawdy literary world that may have excluded women.

In fact, the appearance of such works in a collection of literature in Chinese has implications beyond the question of whether or not professors and their students

were a livelier bunch than the conventional wisdom suggests. It shows that Japanese authors brought their own aesthetic standards both to their compositions and anthologies, regardless of whether they were writing in Chinese or Japanese. Although they were perfectly capable of turning out conventional poems and the like in proper Chinese that a Chinese reader could never identify as having been written by a foreigner, they also wrote pieces that do not have any equivalent in Chinese literature, or at least in its canonical realms. More specifically, whereas in Japan love was a central topic in the most orthodox, canonical of literature, Chinese were far more reticent in their treatment of the subject. In Japan's classical vernacular literature, *Kokinshū*, the first imperially-sponsored anthology of poetry, was surely the standard of canonical orthodoxy. It includes fully five chapters of poems on the topic of love. Only poems on the seasons are more numerous, and this pattern was followed in subsequent imperial anthologies of poetry. Since emperors did not sponsor anthologies of vernacular prose, that part of the literary canon was not so clearly defined, but certainly by medieval times it included works of fiction focusing on love such as *Tales of Ise* and *The Tale of Genji*. Like the poetic anthologies, they stress the tribulations of courtship and sadness of lost love rather than the emotionally and physically satisfying love that Asatsuna celebrates in Chinese. When the juices flow in vernacular literature of the canonical variety, they do so in private, out of the reader's view. Only subsequent pregnancies confirm that love was consummated. In the vernacular canon, love is both melancholy and modest. Japan's love in Chinese was more exuberant and physical.

The "Biography of Iron Hammer" further illustrates this point. Although its author hides behind a pseudonym, modern scholars have speculated that he is probably the compiler of *Honchō Monzui*, Akihira himself.⁽¹²⁾ They base this view on similarities in both language and content to two works Akihira wrote under his own name, "*Shin Sarugaku Ki* (新猿楽記 A New Account of *Sarugaku*) and *Meigō Ōrai* (

明衡往来 Akihira's Correspondence, also known as *Unshū Shōsoku* 雲州消息 or "Izumo Letters"). The former describes a family going to view a performance of *sarugaku* 猿楽, a vaudeville-like entertainment popular at the time. One of the family members is a simpleton whose only noteworthy feature is his phallus, so big it seems it could wear a rush hat 藁笠, so hard it resembles an iron hammer. The biography of "Iron Hammer," not only continues that particular metaphor, but also tells us that "Rush Hat" is his style or adult name. "Akihira's Correspondence" is a collection of model epistles, among them one sent to a shut-in describing a visit to the Inari Festival. There, the writer sees a performance of *sangaku* 散楽, the antecedent of *sarugaku*. In one of its scenes, an old man courts and makes love to a young maiden. The audience, both the men and the women, roars with laughter.⁽¹³⁾ In other words, Akihira was another professor who enjoyed a good laugh and was not shy in writing on sexual topics.

As the translated title "Biography of Iron Hammer" suggests, the work itself is a parody of a traditional "biography," a "*den*" 傳, or, in Chinese, a "*zhuan*." In China, the term was applied to a variety of accounts, both fictional and otherwise, but the Japanese usually restricted its use to formal biographies of historical individuals. When Japanese wrote works comparable to China's fictional *zhuan* in the vernacular, they usually called them monogatari or "tales." Biographies of religious figures may have contained their share of miracles, but believers surely accepted them as fact. Iron Hammer's "biography" is a parody of orthodox historical writing in the Chinese manner, using a serious form playfully to convey sexual content. The first and most admired of China's official dynastic histories was the one Yūgiri mastered in five months, *Records of the Historian* by Sima Qian 司馬遷. It begins with the chronicles that served as a model for Japan's first six national histories and concludes with a series of "biographies," a structure that was followed in the subsequent *History of the Han* and *History of the Later Han*, all works in the curriculum at Japan's court

university.

Despite its name, in form, Iron Hammer's biography actually is something of a hybrid, combining elements from two Chinese models, the biography and the rhapsody. It begins with a personal introduction in which its author explains he holds a sinecure and devotes his time to reading. Apparently, he has come across something about Iron Hammer, who is described as if he were an aged Daoist sage, now unemployed and devoting his time to gathering medicinal herbs on one of China's holy mountains. Historians, the author continues, have neglected him because he suffers the disabilities of age and no longer pursues his former activities. Still, since he is our guide and source of life, the author promises to record what he can learn about him in order to bring a private smile to readers. Although one can find biographies with introductions in China's dynastic histories, they are not common.⁽¹⁴⁾ This introduction, beginning with a first person pronoun and statement of the writer's current official post, is much closer to those found before some of the rhapsodies in *Wen Xuan*, including ones of a biographical nature.⁽¹⁵⁾ Rhapsodies were a genre the Japanese knew well—they composed some of their own—and may have provided the inspiration for this introduction.⁽¹⁶⁾

The biography itself, however, closely follows the pattern found in China's dynastic histories, although it is not nearly so long. It begins by giving Iron Hammer's style, his native place (the village of "Amidst Hair" in the district of "Beneath Trousers"), a nickname, "Mara," (磨裸 literally meaning "polished nudity," and at the same time a phonetic rendering of a Buddhist euphemism for phallus, usually written with other characters such as 魔羅), and his height (seven inches). It describes his childhood and career. When young, he had hid away at home and would not come out, even when summoned by a princess. After he grew up, he was given an official post within the vermilion gate, where he proved to be a diligent worker and so was

rewarded with various titles such as “Progenitor of the Realm.” He was also a diligent student of Daoist-inspired medical texts. The biography then moves to his close friend from his native village, “Master Two,” who had followed a similarly successful career but had not accumulated any wealth and so was given the nickname “No Accrued Profit” written with characters (不俱利) that, pronounced in Japanese as “*fuguri*,” become the native Japanese word for scrotum. The biography concludes with a list of Iron Hammer’s descendants. If one can overlook the double-entendre found in virtually every sentence of the biography, it reads very much like a condensed version of a standard Chinese one. Chinese biographies too typically began with a person’s style and native place. At that point they cease to follow a fixed pattern, but, like our Japanese biographer, Chinese writers too were apt to include such details as a person’s physical size, studies, official career, wealth (or lack of it), friends, and descendants.⁽¹⁷⁾

China’s official biographies often conclude with a few editorial remarks. Those in *The Records of the Historian* are introduced with the phrase, “The Grand Historian remarks” 太史公曰. In the histories of the Han and Later Han, they take one of two possible forms, a eulogy (Chn. *zan* 贊) or an opinion (*lun* 論). The Japanese biographer chose to write opinions and in fact provided three of them, something one does not find in his Chinese models. The first opinion seems to start off on a Confucian note by describing Iron Hammer as a true gentleman, but then reveals its Daoist foundations by explaining he could perfectly conduct the arts of the bed chamber even when lying down and thus endowed the great way of humanity, even though he had not mastered the Confucian classics. The second opinion begins by recounting Iron Hammer’s achievements. Although he might bow down, he soon springs upright again, and so forth. It goes on to introduce his wife, who comes from the same region as he. Before marrying, she too mastered Daoist techniques. “Ah, the love of husband and wife is the greatest of natural qualities,” our narrator exclaims. At the

age of fifty, she closed her gate and retired from the world as her husband had done. The final opinion is the briefest and most abstract, filled with references to the yin and the yang, to things such as “dragon’s flight” and “cicada’s clinging.” The latter two turn out to be sexual techniques described in a surviving medical text. Chastity is difficult to maintain, the author notes, and he concludes by observing, “This is indeed licentiousness. Who could call it proper behavior?” The term here translated as “proper behavior” more literally means something like “the proper way of walking.” In Japanese, the characters used to write it (矩歩) can be pronounced *kubo*, literally meaning a sunken place, but also a euphemism for the female genitalia. Thus, as with the rhapsody on marriage, this biography concludes by stressing its own impropriety. As its author promised in his introduction, readers who get the jokes will privately enjoy a few chuckles reading this mock biography.

At this point, some may suspect that Watson was right in dismissing “The Biography of Iron Hammer” as bad pornography that concerns sex, not love, and Murasaki was equally right in suggesting that those who produced it were pompous bores. Although such views cannot be completely dismissed, the modern annotator, Kakimura, surely was right in noting that the works he purged from his edition of *Honchō Monzui* are indeed valuable sources to help us understand the neglected corners of Heian court culture that we are apt to overlook when we focus our attention on more familiar items in the classical literary canon. These corners reveal a culture that simultaneously was more Sinified and more explicit in treating sexuality than a reader of *Genji* might expect to find. Closer examination further demonstrates that this world did not exist in isolation. The Chinese language of its texts had clear ties both to the Japanese vernacular, and, at the same time, to authentically Chinese works that the Chinese themselves did not necessarily treasure.

Watson categorized “Iron Hammer,” as pornography, a term notoriously difficult

to pin down. Although this is not the place to attempt a precise definition, the following scale may prove useful in the discussing portrayals of love and sex, topics that may be distinguishable in certain contexts but commonly appear in conjunction with each other. At one end of the spectrum is romance, in its conventional meaning of “a love story,” and on the other extreme sexology. Romance, in this sense, focuses on emotional attachments that certainly have a sexual side, although it is kept discreetly in the background or perhaps totally ignored. On the opposite extreme are medical texts that offer detailed descriptions of sexual behavior but treat the matter as a purely mechanical or perhaps intellectual problem, ignoring any emotions that may be involved. Many writings fall in between. If they give more attention to love, then they might be called erotic; if they focus more on sex, they are pornographic and apt to be regarded as somehow improper. This scale may be imperfect but serves the limited purpose of helping to place works such as “Iron Hammer” in a broader context of Japanese writing about love and sex.⁽¹⁸⁾

Following this terminology, many of the familiar classics of Heian literature, notably including *Genji* would fall into the category of “romance.” Other well known pieces—some poems by Ono no Komachi for example—clearly move along the scale in the direction of the erotic. In terms of works appearing in familiar English-language anthologies of Japanese literature from the twentieth century, that would be as far in the direction of sexology that Heian literature would seem to go. However, anyone who takes the trouble to read further, even in English, will discover works that are clearly erotic and offer a very different picture of Heian love than what is found in more familiar texts. The rhapsody on marriage that Watson translated is one example, and equally enthusiastic depictions of sexual love can be find in translated vernacular literature too, notably in *Ryōjin Hishō* 梁塵秘抄, or “Songs to Make the Dust Dance.” Here is an example:

<i>Iza nenamu.</i>	Come on, let's sleep together.
<i>Yo mo akegata ni</i>	The night is changing to dawn.
<i>narinikeri.</i>	The bell too has been struck.
<i>Kane mo utsu.</i>	Although since nightfall
<i>Yoi yori netaru dani mo</i>	We've been lying together,
<i>akanu kokoro wo ya</i>	What can I do
<i>ika ni semu</i>	About my insatiable heart? ⁽¹⁹⁾

Lest one think that this collection of song lyrics in Japanese is irrelevant to a discussion of works in Chinese, here is another example from the same collection:

<i>Kimi ga ai seshi</i>	That rush hat
<i>agaigasa</i>	you loved so well,
<i>ochinikeri</i>	it fell in.
<i>ochinikeri.</i>	It fell in!
<i>Kamogawani</i>	Into the Kamo River,
<i>kawanakani</i>	the middle of the river.
<i>sore wo motomu to</i>	As we looked
<i>tazune to seshi hodo ni</i>	and searched for it,
<i>akenikeri</i>	dawn broke.
<i>akenikeri.</i>	Dawn broke!
<i>Sarasara sayake no</i>	After the rustling
<i>aki no yo wa.</i>	on a clear autumn night. ⁽²⁰⁾

As Yung-Hee Kim notes in her study of *Ryōjin Hishō*, this song is describing “a successful consummation by a pair of lovers, symbolized by the man’s rush hat (*ayaigusa* 綾蘭笠) dropping into the river (the woman).”⁽²¹⁾ In other words, the image of a rush hat, albeit not always written the same way, as somehow phallic is shared

by this poem, by Akihira in his *New Sarugaku*, and by the author of “Iron Hammer” (who may be Akihira). The shape of a rush hat explains why it came to be regarded as phallic, for it consisted of a very wide brim with a cylindrical protuberance in the center.⁽²²⁾ Presumably “rush hat” was slang that would have been familiar to anyone at the Heian court, but its appearance in such different works is significant. Whereas literature in Chinese was very much “top-down culture” that flourished under government sponsorship, *Ryōjin Hishō* is a remarkable example of bottom-up culture that should cause us to question familiar clichés about the disdain of Heian aristocrats for the commoners around them. It consists primarily of *imayō* 今様, “songs in the modern style,” that had originated among courtesans, presumably similar to the modern geisha, who sang, danced, and offered sexual favors. Nonetheless, these songs had found acceptance among court aristocrats by 1008, when Murasaki Shikibu makes the earliest extant reference to them in her diary. *Ryōjin Hishō* itself was compiled by Emperor Go-Shirakawa 後白河 (1127-92, r. 1155-58). Thus, exploration in the less-canonical regions of vernacular love poetry leads to the discovery of explicit expressions of sexual love that unexpectedly employ a vocabulary shared by learned scholars and high-class prostitutes. To put it another way, familiar distinctions between women’s vernacular literature and men’s Chinese literature turn out to be less clear than conventional wisdom might lead one to expect.

Although no one would get rich marketing a translation of “Biography of Iron Hammer” on the web, it would probably place on the pornographic side of erotic on the scale. Its author even acknowledged its impropriety, suggesting that the pejorative sense of “pornographic” is quite appropriate. Furthermore, anyone who reads the footnotes to the annotated edition will discover that the Japanese also had writings firmly planted further along in the medical side of the scale. In 984, Tanba no Yasuyori 丹波康頼 (912-95), a court doctor, compiled his *Ishinpō* 医心方 (Essential Methods of Medicine), which consists of quotations primarily from Chinese medical

works, plus a few from Korean sources. Chinese medicine was closely tied to the branch of Daoism concerned with the search for immortality, which in turn was associated with sexual hygiene. Accordingly, *Ishinpō* has a chapter on the subject. As its translators note, however, it generally ignores sexual pleasure, but concentrates instead the importance of health and the goal of attaining an immortal's powers.⁽²³⁾ Although this work was compiled as a reference for fellow doctors, apparently it found a wider readership, as it is the source for “dragon’s flight” and “cicada’s clinging,” the sexual techniques mentioned in “Iron Hammer”. In short, Heian Japanese had texts that covered the whole spectrum from romance to sexology, although those that survive on the medical side of the scale are very Chinese indeed.

“Iron Hammer” also calls into question established views in English-language scholarship stressing first that Heian writing in Chinese was the exclusive preserve of men and moreover, as the Heian period progressed, even men lost interest in the difficult Chinese texts that were at the core of the university’s curriculum. Instead, they cultivated a taste for the aesthetic associated with what Donald Keene once termed “the feminine sensibility of the Heian era.”⁽²⁴⁾ If this is true, perhaps Murasaki was right: professors may have enjoyed their learned off-color jokes, but for the average courtier of their day and virtually all women, as for modern readers, this was wit incomprehensible without the footnotes that killed any chance of amusement. Or alternatively maybe our view of the Heian court needs to be modified.

First, recent scholarship has suggested that Heian court ladies may have known more Chinese than conventional wisdom allows.⁽²⁵⁾ The ability to write in Chinese may have been exceptional, but literacy seems not have been so remarkable. Furthermore, even if interest in Chinese literature did decline after its flowering in the ninth century, it continued to find an audience throughout the Heian period. Whether or not the sensibility of the mid-Heian period was feminine, it certainly was

different from that of orthodox Confucian China, and in the mid-tenth century, Japanese tastes in Chinese literature seem to have shifted to reveal a preference for works less serious than those valued in China. According to legend, Emperor Murakami 村上 (926-67, r. 946-67) asked Ōe no Koretoki 大江維時 (888-963), cousin of the rhapsody on marriage's author, to lecture on "A Dalliance in the Immortals' Den" (*Youxian ku* 遊仙窟). This is a Chinese work dating from the late seventh century that was introduced to Japan not too long after it was written and achieved some popularity there. Japanese alluded to it in *Man'yōshū* and parodied it in the Edo period. In contrast, the Chinese soon forgot it and so it survives only in Japanese manuscripts. It is the story of a man who gets lost and enters a cave inhabited by two mysterious women with whom he first exchanges poems and then spends the night. In the scheme proposed here, it would qualify as erotic. During the ninth century, when Japanese took their Chinese literature quite seriously, scholars had shown little interest in this work, but enthusiasm for it grew in the following century with the waning of serious Sinology.⁽²⁶⁾ Apparently, the development of vernacular literature, in which love was a canonical subject, and its legitimation in the form of imperially sponsored poetry anthologies had the side effect of encouraging interest in a Chinese work that matched the tastes of Japanese courtiers, who were generally more accepting too of playfulness. The same Emperor Murakami who commanded the lecture on "Roving Immortals" also drafted a mock civil service examination question on *sangaku*, one of the vaudeville-like entertainments previously mentioned. Both the question and the candidate's answer were then preserved in *Honchō Monzui*.⁽²⁷⁾ Japan's literature in Chinese thus had ties to its vernacular literature that made it more accepting of playful, romantic, and even sexual themes than its stereotypical image as a corpus of dreary and derivative writing might imply.

"The Biography of Iron Hammer" also suggests additional issues that can be addressed only briefly here. One concerns the Chinese intellectual traditions that

influenced early Japan. In introductory surveys, Japanese intellectual history typically begins with Shinto, to which Buddhism is soon added, and finally in the Edo period Confucianism too becomes conspicuous. More careful examination reveals that already in the Nara and Heian periods, Japanese were studying both the Confucian classics and Daoism. The content of “Iron Hammer” may be at odds with moralistic Confucian teachings, but its form is taken from China’s dynastic histories that are steeped in Confucian ideology. Its content, in contrast, points to an aspect of Japanese culture that is even less studied: the various elements that make up the Daoist tradition. Japanese poets writing in Chinese skillfully alluded to *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, just as their Chinese counterparts might have. “Iron Hammer” points to another aspect of Daoism, its interest sexual hygiene as a means of attaining immortality. Although the search for immortality may not have been as conspicuous in Japanese culture as in Chinese, this aspect of Daoism influenced not only “Iron Hammer,” but the more familiar stories of Urashima Tarō and Kaguyama-hime, both of which survive today as children’s stories that no one would associate with sexual hygiene, yet they too are ancient works influenced by Daoist ideas. Daoism in Japan is an important topic that deserves further study.

A second issue concerns the audience for Heian literature. The more sexually explicit of the works discussed here are either in the Chinese language, written by men for an audience that would have been primarily masculine, or, in the case of the songs from *Ryōjin hishō*, probably written by women whose profession was to entertain men and then recorded by a man. In contrast, court ladies produced the best of the more romantic works. Perhaps in the Heian court, men were the primary audience for sexually explicit works and women for romantic fiction. This line of reasoning breaks down, however, when one investigates the songs in *Ryōjin Hishō* too carefully. They are classified as *imayō*, or “modern songs.” Although *imayō* reached the height of their popularity in the late Heian period, they are also

mentioned in the familiar classics of Heian women's literature, Murasaki's dairy being but one example. Their audience was not restricted to men and their female entertainers, although the songs Murasaki mentions may not have been as bawdy as some of those Go-Shirakawa recorded over a century later.

Finally, some comparisons may be useful. The obvious one is with Chinese literature. Once the conventional view was that the Chinese were not interested in love, at least in their literature. Instead of love between man and woman, they wrote about friendship between men.⁽²⁸⁾ That view is now generally dismissed. Indeed, *Shijing*, the ancient Classic of Poetry is not only full of love poems, it is one of the six classics of Confucianism. Not long after *Wen Xuan* had been compiled, the younger brother of its editor ordered the creation of a second anthology, *New Songs for a Jade Terrace* (*Yutai Xinyong* 玉臺新詠), consisting exclusively of love poems. Looking at prose fiction, Stephen Owen writes that “the mid-Tang saw the rise of a culture of romance,” noting that he uses the term “romance” just as it has been used here “in its popular, rather than its technical literary sense.”⁽²⁹⁾ In later times, love would become a central theme in both fiction and drama, although this occurred long after the period under consideration here. The erotic tale a Japanese emperor had a scholar read to him was in fact Chinese, as were the contents of the medical text *Ishinpō* with its chapter on sexual hygiene. In other words, not only did the Chinese fall in love and engage in sexual activity, they also wrote about both. Moreover, some of the conventions found in Chinese writing about love resemble what one finds in Japan's vernacular literature. For example, the poems in *A Jade Terrace* are apt to mourn the passing of love, stressing that, like life itself, love is soon over.⁽³⁰⁾ Courtship, in *Cave of the Roving Immortals*, focuses on the exchange of love poems. These are features shared by canonical Japanese writing about love.

In fact, Chinese models probably inspired the authors of Japan's erotic works. Bo

Xingjian 白行簡 (775-826), younger brother of the great poet Bo Juyi 白居易 (772-846), wrote a “Rhapsody on the Supreme Joy in the Mingling of Heaven and Earth, Yin and Yang,” (*Tiandi Yinyang Jiaohuan Dale Fu* 天地陰陽交歡大樂賦) which in content resembles the Japanese works presented here. Far from being canonical, however, it had been long forgotten until 1906, when the French Sinologist Paul Pelliot acquired the single extant copy at Dunhuang, where it had been recently discovered.⁽³¹⁾ The Chinese also had a tradition of mock biographies, said to have begun with “The Biography of Fur Point” (*Maoying Zhuan* 毛穎傳) by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), a contemporary of the brothers Bo.⁽³²⁾ Thus, works suggesting both the form and the content of “Iron Hammer” had appeared in China just about two centuries before Akihira would compose his parody in Japan. In all likelihood, he was inspired by them, but there is no way of knowing whether he had more immediate Chinese models or alternatively he himself came up with the idea of putting erotic content, a personified phallus, into a mock biography.

Despite Chinese precedents for “Iron Hammer,” love has a distinctly different place in China’s and Japan’s literary traditions. The Chinese may have written about love, but they were reluctant to treat it as a canonical subject. The poems in *The Classic of Poetry* were interpreted as political allegories that did not quite mean what they said. *Wen Xuan* does have a section of four rhapsodies on “passions” (*qing* 情) but three of them treat love for goddesses, and in the fourth, “Master Dengtu the Lecher,” the narrator is accused of lechery by Dengtu and protests his innocence.⁽³³⁾ *A Jade Terrace* may be all about love, but it is hardly canonical. As Anne Birrell, its translator notes, “Chinese down through the centuries have tended to look askance at it, dismissing much of it as ‘all flowers and moonlight,’ or hiding it from public view as a delectable object of shame. ... Had it not been read and enjoyed by the Japanese, ... this anthology would still be languishing under the dust of time.”⁽³⁴⁾ The mildly erotic *Cave of the Roving Immortals* survives only in Japan and the closest Chinese model

for “Iron Hammer” is a text that had been stashed away in a frontier grotto. None of the original Chinese medical texts that *Ishinpō* draws upon were preserved in their native land. Only in 1973 were similar works describing sexual hygiene located in China when they were excavated from the tombs at Mawangdui.⁽³⁵⁾ In short, the Chinese may have written of both love and sex, but, at least for the past thousand years or so, they did not accord their writings the same respect the Japanese did. In Japan, love was canonical; in China, it was not.

“Iron Hammer” is not unique as an example of writing about a bawdy topic in learned language. In Siena, around the year 1525 a scholar wrote a work that has been translated as “The Book of the Prick.” It takes the form of a learned Platonic dialogue about sex that concludes with a fable in which personified body parts, among them phalluses, squabble among themselves, with each organ representing a faction in the Siennese political arena.⁽³⁶⁾ Although this text was in the vernacular, other humanists of the Italian renaissance produced bawdy jokes in Latin, the classical language. In his study of this writing, Donald Franz concludes,

There was, in short, a tradition of learned erotica. The literature in this tradition, even when couched in the most forthright of language, depends upon the reader’s knowledge of the world of scholarship.⁽³⁷⁾

This comment might apply equally well to “Iron Hammer.” Playfully erudite pornography is not a unique phenomenon, even if it may not attract a large audience nor find its way into the literary canons of most cultures. Its place in a canonical anthology may be “Iron Hammer’s” most distinctive feature, as well as a significant comment about the place of love—and its corollary sex—in the Japanese literature. *Genji* may have argued that Chinese learning was the foundation for Japanese wit. In this case, Japanese wit accorded certain types of writing in Chinese a place of honor they would not have enjoyed in China.

Biography of Iron Hammer

(Some say a man of great learning wrote this.⁽³⁸⁾ This biography should be read
with feeling)

by

Luo Tai⁽³⁹⁾

Former Governor of Yanmen 雁門⁽⁴⁰⁾

Holding the sinecure of Yanmen, I live quietly in my small home, like a snail in its shell, while my eyes dwell on the bindings of books and my heart wonders in their texts. Although Iron the Unemployed has a name, he has no biography. The Unemployed gathers medicinal herbs on the Heights of Song 嵩.⁽⁴¹⁾ (On Mt. Song are many wizards and their miraculous herbs.) He secludes himself at Beneath Trousers. Suffering the disabilities of age, he weakens and no longer likes going to work. For this reason, previous histories have not bothered to write of him. That which nurtures us is our parents and that which guides us is Iron Hammer. He is the principal route of the yin and the yang, the gate of passage for the future bloodline. Ah, this is where my own life began! I will collect what I have heard and record his activities. I do not write this for myself but to bring a private smile to others.

Iron Hammer's style is Rush Hat. He is a native of Amidst Hair, Beneath Trousers. "Mara" is another of his names. His ancestry is traced from Iron Shank. His is seven inches tall with a big mouth and pointed head. (As *The Classic of Physiognomy* 相經⁽⁴²⁾ states, "A wolf's mouth and a mackerel's head.") Below his neck are some useless swellings. When he was young, he hid away at Beneath Trousers and refused to be stirred, even though a princess often summoned him. Eventually he grew up and went to work at the Vermilion Gate, where he was greatly revered and eventually rewarded with the title "Progenitor of the Realm." (Or perhaps that

should be “Penetrator of the Dark”?) His nature was nimble, and he regularly studied *Diffusing the Essentials* 賦樞.⁽⁴³⁾ Dawn to dark, he recited it until he had it mastered, tirelessly polishing his skills and never failing to penetrate the depths of “The Zithern String” and “The Barleycorn.” (“The Zithern String” and “The Barleycorn.” are names of chapters in *Diffusing the Essentials*.⁽⁴⁴⁾) As an adult, he boldly penetrated the most formidable vermillion gate and so was known to the world as “Penetrate the Formidable,” but when he was young, he had been named “Poor Weakling.” In his native district there also dwelled Master Two, who was his close companion. All day long they were together and could not bear to be parted. When Two was ordered to serve in the office of Assistant Beneath the Gate,⁽⁴⁵⁾ he found himself in a richly oiled place with abundant moisture. He had intercourse with those outside, and, although no personal treasure accrued to him privately, he was given the nickname “Family Jewels.”⁽⁴⁶⁾ Another name was “Lower Bulge.”⁽⁴⁷⁾ He was good at predicting the wind and rain in the climate and so people of the day called him “Hermit Nest.”⁽⁴⁸⁾ Iron Hammer’s son was Scoop Water; Scoop Water’s was Sad Decline; and Sad Decline’s was Run Penetrate Formidable. Run Penetrate Formidable’s heir was Shrivel. In his place Deer Boar stood firm and wallowed in lasciviousness. Eventually, he used a replica.⁽⁴⁹⁾

In my opinion:

Iron, out of government service, is a hero from Beneath Trousers, Amidst Hair. His actions are unpredictable; his movements, always proper.⁽⁵⁰⁾ When you look at him, sometimes he is firm, other times, soft, depending on the disposition of his body’s yin and yang. He either goes forth or rests at home, a true gentleman, in both word and deed. Moreover, he has achieved the ability to control the flood of semen and scoop up boiling water without harming himself. As the nation met tranquility under the Star of Peace, he released the essence of the fundamental ether. At this time, he could perform lying down the arts of the bedchamber with no imperfection whatsoever, and thus the Great Way of humanity was here endowed. Since he

lacked training in the Six Classics he did not speak of them nor of the Early Sages. He did not know even a tenth of what I do. Accordingly, he is said to have only poked through these matters.⁽⁵¹⁾

In my opinion:

Master Iron, upright and strong, grew old but did not die. Although he might bow down, he would then spring upright. Already he has bestowed clandestine blessings. Truly he deserves the nickname “Strokes Well.”⁽⁵²⁾ His Essential Troops arise at dawn and his Penetrating Knights are busy in the night.⁽⁵³⁾ They assault the imperial sisters and smash the young women. Although the Purple Hall has long been closed, its Vermillion Gate yields of its own accord. The rotten mouse scurries about and the great goose rises up.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Neither bone nor flesh,⁽⁵⁵⁾ he knows the bedchamber intimately. Iron Hammer’s wife, from the same district, is a woman of the Vermilion clan. She likes the style of makeup that makes her seem to be crying.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Within the bedroom, she does not follow the rules. She wandered the world, always devoted to the creation of things. When she first met Pengzu,⁽⁵⁷⁾ she learned the techniques of the dragon’s flight and the tiger’s step.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Before she had even finished polishing her skills, she had gone beyond what he had to teach. Gradually her appearance began to deteriorate and so she returned to Beneath Trousers, where in the end she married Iron Hammer, vowing to be true until they were buried in the same grave. Ah, the love of husband and wife is the greatest of natural qualities. Whenever she sees Iron Hammer’s aged visage, she never fails to shed a tear and feel sad. Eventually, the vermilion gate became dilapidated and covered with a calf’s nose.⁽⁵⁹⁾ When she reached the age of fifty, it is said she closed the gate and neglected human affairs.

In my opinion:

When the Vermillion Gate is not closed, the white sunshine breaks in. Sun and fire are yin elements,⁽⁶⁰⁾ and the yin place does not have room for even a single man, but moon and water are yang elements, and Yang Springs⁽⁶¹⁾ can easily tumble

myriad enemies. Ah, the Holy Rock⁽⁶²⁾ is lofty, and the feeling of longing for a husband⁽⁶³⁾ is hard to prevent. When the Zithern String is suddenly stretched, the chastity required to prevent arousal cannot be maintained. One shallow, one deep, he takes the method of dragon's flight. Now looking up, now reclining, he applies the technique of cicada's clinging.⁽⁶⁴⁾ In the end, the calf's nose at night is moist and the goose head's spirit attacks.⁽⁶⁵⁾ This is indeed licentiousness. Who could call it proper?⁽⁶⁶⁾

注

- (1) Summarized, with a few quotations, from Royall Tyler's translation, Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001) pp. 380-84. Ivo Smits has more on aristocratic views of professors in his "The Way of the Literati: Chinese Learning and Literary Practice in Mid-Heian Japan," *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries*, Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto, eds., (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), pp. 105-28, which also touches upon several other issues addressed in this essay.
- (2) For McCullough's discussion of "Japanese wit," see her *Okagami, the Great Mirror, Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1027) and his Times: a Study and Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) pp. 43-45.
- (3) *Shunki* 春記, *Chōkyū* 長久 2 (1041) 3/18 (*Zōho Shiryō Taisei* 増補史料大成, vol. 7) p. 295. The other information on Akihira is from Ōsone Shōsuke 大曾根章介, *Ōchō Kanbungaku Ronkō* 王朝漢文学論攷 (Iwanami Shoten, 1994) pp. 18-55, and Tanahashi Mitsuo 棚橋光男, *Kodai to Chūsei no Hazama de: Jidai wo Utsu Ōchō Chishikijin* 古代と中世のはざまで：時代を撃つ王朝知識人 (Kanazawa: Hokkoku Shinbun, 1997) pp. 39-57. The story about Akihira's borrowed bedchamber originally appeared in *Konjaku Monogatari shū*. A later version, from *Uji Shūi Monogatari*, has been translated into English: *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, trans. by D. E. Mills (Cambridge at the University Press, 1970) pp. 181-82.
- (4) Ōsone, *Ōchō Kanbungaku Ronkō*, pp. 56-83; David R. Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature, Volume One: Rhapsodies on the Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton University Press, 1982) pp. 1-70. Note that Ōsone, after noting the importance of *Wen Xuan* as a model, goes on to stress how *Honchō Monzui* differs from it.
- (5) Knechtges, *Wen xuan*, p. 1. I have modified his translation somewhat for the sake of euphony.
- (6) This is based my attempt at counting the versions listed in *Kokusho Sōmokuroku* 国書総目録 (Iwanami Shoten, 1989-90). I believe the rankings are correct, even if the numbers may not be absolutely precise.
- (7) *Honchō Ichinin Isshu* 本朝一人一首, Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之 ed., SNKBT 63 (1994) pp.

- 188, 395; information on the influence of Honchō Monzui is based on studies by Ōsone, reprinted in his *Ōchō Kanbungaku Ronkō*, pp. 335-446.
- (8) Kakimura Shigematsu 柿村重松, *Honchō Monzui Chūshaku* 本朝文粹註釈 (Fuzanbō, 1975 reprint) p. 8.
- (9) Burton Watson, *Japanese Literature in Chinese, Volume 1: Poetry and Prose in Chinese by Japanese Writers of the Early Period* (Columbia University Press, 1975) p. 53, reprinted in *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*, Haruo Shirane, ed. (Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 485-86. The original texts for both works appear in Kojima Noriyuki, *Kaifūsō, Bunka Shūreishū, Honchō Monzui* 懷風藻、文華秀麗集、本朝文粹, vol. 69 of *NKBT* (1964), pp. 340-44 (“Marriage”) and 429-36 (“Iron Hammer”). Subsequent references are all to this edition. Smits discusses these and a third related work, “In Praise of the Yin Chariot” (*Insha no San* 陰車讚), written in 1094 by Fujiwara no Suetsuna 藤原季綱, a late Heian literatus whose dates are unknown (“The Way of the Literati,” pp. 120-22). “In Praise of the Yin Chariot” appears in *Honchō Zoku Monzui* 本朝続文粹, *Kōchū Nihon Bungaku Taikei*, vol. 24 (Seibundō, 1932) p. 726. Tanahashi discusses “Iron Hammer,” in *Kodai to Chūsei no Hazama de*, pp. 39-57, and, like Watson, labels it “pornography,” using the English word.
- (10) Watson, *Japanese Literature in Chinese, Volume 1*, pp. 53-56.
- (11) For the setting of Genji, see Haruo Shirane, *The Bridge of Dreams: A Poetics of ‘The Tale of Genji’* (Columbia University Press, 1987) pp. 8-10.
- (12) Ōsone, *Ōchō Bungaku Ronkō*, pp. 80-80, 137-8, and his *Ōsone Shōsuke: Nihon Kanbungaku Ronshū* 大曾根章介：日本漢文学論集 (Kyūko Shoin, 1998) vol. 1, pp. 121-22.
- (13) Shigematsu Akihisa 重松明久, *Shin Sarugaku Ki, Unshū Shōshoku* 新猿楽記・雲州消息 (Gendai Shisōsha, 1982) pp. 45-46, 90. Joan Piggott’s partial translation of *Shin Sarugaku Ki* includes other sexually explicit passages (*Traditional Japanese Literature*, Shirane ed., pp. 491-97). Also see Marian Ury, “Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life” in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume Two: Heian Japan* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 385-87.
- (14) See, for example, *Shiji*, ch. 74.
- (15) See, for example, *Knechtges* vol. 3, pp. 167, 171, 179, etc.
- (16) A Japanese example, complete with a personal introduction, is in my *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994) pp. 44-45.
- (17) William H. Nienhauser, Jr. analyzes the structure of Chinese biographies in his “A Structural Reading of the Chuan in the *Wen-yüan ying-hua*,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 36.3 (May, 1977) pp. 443-56. Examples in English, are found in Burton Watson’s translation, *Records of the Grand Historian, Volume II* (Columbia University Press, 1961) for size, p. 115, youth, p. 193, friends, 119, wealth p. 118, studies p. 130, children p. 153-54.
- (18) David Franz quotes another such scheme in his *Festum Voluptatis: A Study of Renaissance Erotica* (Ohio State University Press, 1989) p. 4. No doubt the diligent scholar could find others in the extensive corpus of scholarly writing on pornography.

- (19) A substantially revised version of the poem found in Yung-Hee Kim, *Songs to Make the Dust Dance: The Ryōjin hishō of Twelfth-Century Japan* (University of California Press, 1994, p. 130. For the original, see Ueda Setsuo 上田設夫, *Ryōjin Hishō Zenchūshaku* 梁塵秘抄全註釈 (Shintensha, 2001), p. 501.
- (20) A slightly modified version of a translation in Kim, *Songs to Make the Dust Dance*, p. 127. For the original, see Ueda, *Ryōjin Hishō*, p. 359. Note that Ueda, along with other Japanese annotators consulted in preparing this paper, overlooks the sexual implications of the poem. Commentaries, however, are numerous and only a few were consulted.
- (21) *Songs to Make the Dust Dance*, p. 127.
- (22) See, for example, the illustration accompanying the entry for “ayaigasa” in *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* (Shōgakkan, 1972) vol. 1, p. 447.
- (23) Emil C.H. Hsia, Ilza Weith, and Robert H. Geertsmā, *The Essentials of Medicine in Ancient China and Japan: Yasuyori Tamba’s Ishimpō* (Brill, 1986) vol. 1, pp. 20-21. For a general discussion of Daoism and medicine, see pp. 14-16.
- (24) *Landscapes and Portraits: Appreciations of Japanese Culture* (Kodansha International, 1971), pp. 26-39. One suspects that Keene would find a different term to describe that sensibility today, although he probably would still stress the importance of the aesthetic values he describes.
- (25) See, for example, my own “The Politics of Classical Chinese in the Early Japanese Court,” in *Rhetoric and the Discourses of Power in Court Culture: China, Europe, and Japan*, David Knechtges and Eugene Vance eds., University of Washington Press (2005), pp. 199-238.
- (26) Kawaguchi Hisao 川口久雄 *Heianchō Nihon Kanbungakushi* 平安朝日本漢文学史研究 (Meiji Shoin, 1964), 491-95. Whereas Kawaguchi questions the veracity of the story of Koretoki, Ōsone is inclined to believe it (*Ōchō Bungaku Ronkō*, p. 80). Paul F. Rouzer has translated it in an appendix to his *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series no. 53, 2001) pp. 313-54; for his analysis of the work, see pp. 202-16.
- (27) Kakimura, *Honchō Monzui*, vol. 1, pp. 515-24.
- (28) See, for example, Arthur Waley, *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1918) p. 18; or Henry H. Hart, *The Hundred Names: a Short Introduction to the Study of Chinese Poetry with Illustrative Translations* (University of California Press, 1938), pp. 5-7.
- (29) *The End of the Chinese ‘Middle Ages: Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford, 1996) p. 130.
- (30) Anne Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace* (George Allen and Unwin, 1982) pp. 14-15.
- (31) Robert Hans van Gulik discusses this work in his *Sexual Life in Ancient China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974) pp. 202-07; for an annotated edition, see Iida Yoshirō 飯田吉郎, *Haku Kōkan: Tairaku Fu* 白行簡大樂賦 (Kyūko Shoin, 1995).
- (32) Translated by William H. Nienhauser, Jr., in *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese*

- Literature* (Columbia University Press, 1994) pp. 747-50, the original appearing in *Tang Wen Cui* (*Siku Quanshu* vol. 1344) p. 463. Also see Beverly Bossler, “Faithful Wives and Heroic Maidens: Politics, Virtue, and Gender in Song China,” in *Tang Song Nüxing yu shehui* 唐宋女性与社会, Deng Xiaonan 邓小南 ed. (Shanghai : Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 2003) pp. 754-56.
- (33) See Knechtges, vol. 3, pp. 349-55.
- (34) *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, pp. 25-26.
- (35) Ruan, Fang Fu, *Sex in China: Studies in Sexology in Chinese Culture* (Plenum Press, 1991) is a useful study; Douglas Wile, *Art of the Bedchamber: The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics, Including Women’s Sole Meditation Texts* (State University of New York Press, 1992) includes both a detailed study and translations of key texts.
- (36) Antonio Vignali, *La Cazzaria: The Book of the Prick*, Ian Frederick Moulton, ed. and trans. (Routledge, 2003). For other studies of renaissance erotica, see Paula Findlin, “Humanism, Politics, and Pornography in Renaissance Italy,” in Lynn Hunt, ed. *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800* (New York: Zone Books, 1993) pp. 49-108 (and other contributions to that volume).
- (37) *Festum Voluptatis* p. 42.
- (38) The term here translated as “great learning” (博文) could also be a personal name. For example, Fujiwara no Hirobumi (藤原博文, d. 929) was appointed professor of literature in 926.
- (39) Although this could be a Chinese name, the “Luo” is also the second character in *mara*, a Buddhist euphemism for “penis,” and the “Tai” means “extreme,” hence Watson renders it “Organ Extraordinary,” although Smits’s “Dick Large” is more colorful and “name-like.”
- (40) Yanmen is an actual place in Shanxi province, but its first character, meaning “goose” suggests the word “*karikubi*,” or “goose head,” which in turn means glans penis.
- (41) In Henan, one of China’s “Five Peaks,” holy mountains associated with both Daoist and Buddhist traditions.
- (42) Unidentified.
- (43) Apparently the name of a now-lost medical text.
- (44) They are also euphemisms for women’s genitalia.
- (45) More conventionally, “Commandery Administrator,” a provincial office.
- (46) A free translation intended to convey the pun in the original, which says, somewhat more literally, “Although he mingled with the outside world, he accrued no personal profit. Accordingly, he was known as “No Accrued Profit.” The characters for “no accrued profit” are pronounced, in Japanese, “*fuguri*,” which is Japanese for “scrotum.” Note that this pun works only in Japanese, even though the text otherwise can be read in Chinese too.
- (47) A medical term for a swollen scrotum.
- (48) Perhaps an allusion to Chao Fu (巢父 literally “Nest Father”), a legendary hermit said to have slept in a nest in a tree.
- (49) The passage is cryptic. The names have sexual overtones, but in most cases their meaning

- is no longer known. The point seems to be “when he grow old and weak, a dildo was used.”
- (50) More literally, something like “proper walking” 矩歩 the term generally means to behave according to the rules. It can be pronounced “*kubo*,” which in Japanese means “a sunken place; a depression,” and can also refer to women’s genitalia. The term reappears as the final word in both the original “biography” and this translation.
- (51) Another free translation intended to suggest the original pun. More literally, it says “he brought up general outlines,” but the word for “outline” also means “a firm stick.”
- (52) A translation of the characters used here to write *mara*, the word for penis that appeared earlier, albeit using a different character for the syllable *ra*.
- (53) The term translated as “essential troops” more accurately means something like “specially selected soldiers,” the “specially selected” being written with a character that also means “semen.” The “penetrating knights” are mounted warriors who drove deep into enemy territory.
- (54) The mouse and goose are euphemisms for the penis.
- (55) A metaphor for seeming happy.
- (56) A style of makeup mentioned, for example, in *The History of the Later Han*.
- (57) A Chinese wizard, said to have lived 800 years.
- (58) “Tiger’s step” is a sexual technique described in *Ishinpō*. See Emil C.H. Hsia, Ilza Weith, and Robert H. Geertsma, *The Essentials of Medicine in Ancient China and Japan: Yasuyori Tamba’s Ishinpō* (Brill, 1986) vol. 2, p. 177. In that source, “tiger’s step” is preceded by “dragon inverted,” which may be what the author had in mind when he wrote “dragon’s flight.”
- (59) A woman’s undergarment
- (60) According to a system of divination in the *Yijing*.
- (61) Yangquan, literally “Yang Springs,” is a Chinese place name.
- (62) Literally, “Hole Stone,” a euphemism for the female genitalia.
- (63) “Longing for Husband” translates a phrase that is ambiguous, for the verb can mean “to look off in the distance for,” or “to wait longingly for,” or simply “to desire.” All of these meanings are suggested in this phrase, which also alludes to the Chinese legend of “Longing for Husband Rock,” in which a chaste wife sees her husband off to war from a mountaintop and then turns into a stone there.
- (64) Another sexual technique from *Ishinpō*, op cit, p. 178.
- (65) “Calf’s nose” is a woman’s undergarment; for “goose head,” see above, note 40.
- (66) See above, note 50.