

Chinese Letters and Intellectual Life in Medieval Japan: The Poetry and Political
Philosophy of Chūgan Engetsu

By

Brendan Arkell Morley

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Committee in charge:

Professor H. Mack Horton
Professor Alan Tansman
Professor Paula Varsano
Professor Mary Elizabeth Berry

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Abstract

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Professor H. Mack Horton, Chair

This dissertation explores the writings of the fourteenth-century poet and intellectual Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月, a leading figure in the literary movement known to history as Gozan (“Five Mountains”) literature. In terms of modern disciplinary divisions, Gozan literature straddles the interstices of several distinct areas of study, including classical Chinese poetry and poetics, Chinese philosophy and intellectual history, Buddhology, and the broader tradition of “Sinitic” poetry and prose (*kanshibun*) in Japan.

Among the central contentions of this dissertation are the following: (1) that Chūgan was the most original Confucian thinker in pre-Tokugawa Japanese history, the significance of his contributions matched only by those of early-modern figures such as Ogyū Sorai, and (2) that *kanshi* and *kanbun* were creative media, not merely displays of erudition or scholastic mimicry. Chūgan’s expository writing demonstrates that the enormous multiplicity of terms and concepts animating the Chinese philosophical tradition were very much alive to premodern Japanese intellectuals, and that they were subject to thoughtful reinterpretation and application to specifically Japanese sociohistorical phenomena. No less intrepid in the realm of poetry, Chūgan candidly addressed themes such as illness, war, and poverty, and experimented with unusual Sinitic forms such as hexasyllabic quatrains and the vernacular “song lyric” or *ci* 詞, which though popular in China was very seldom seen in Japan.

The thematic and stylistic breadth of Chūgan’s oeuvre reveals the catholicity of Gozan literary culture and suggests directions for further research into Japanese intellectual history and Sinitic poetry during the medieval era.

Table of Contents

	Biographical Introduction	1
1	Political Suasion in a Time of Crisis: The Memorials of Chūgan Engetsu and Yoshida Sadafusa	12
2	Figuring Moral Kingship: Constant Norms and Expedient Policies in Chūgan's <i>Chūseishi</i>	62
3	<i>An Essay on the Kun and the Peng</i> 鯤鵬論: Hermeneutics, Cosmology, and the Figural Reading of Fictional Characters	90
4	Poems of Remembrance, Poems of Social Engagement	130
5	New Directions in Form: <i>Ci</i> Poetry and Hexasyllabic <i>Shi</i>	170
6	Gozan Literature in Retrospect: <i>Kanshibun</i> and the Legacy of <i>Kokugaku</i>	194
	Appendix: <i>Kanshibun</i> , <i>Kundoku</i> , and the Japanese Language	209
	Bibliography	227

Biographical Introduction

Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月 (1300-75) was a Japanese monk of the Rinzaï 臨濟 sect of Zen Buddhism. He emerged as an early leader in the literary and intellectual movement known today as *Gozan bungaku* 五山文学, “Five Mountains Literature,” after the so-called “Five Mountains and Ten Temples” 五山十刹 system of ranking and organizing Zen monastic establishments. Born in the eastern city of Kamakura to the Tsuchiya 土屋 family, an offshoot of the once-powerful Taira 平, his childhood appears to have been a difficult one marked by illness and familial upheaval. His brief autobiographical chronicle (*jirekifu* 自歴譜) records that as an infant, he was taken by a wet nurse to Musashi Province after his father was sent into exile for unspecified reasons.¹ At the age of eight he was entrusted by his grandmother to the temple Jufukuji 寿福寺 in Kamakura, where he began his training in the priesthood as a child acolyte (僧童). The text does not specify what this earliest period of instruction was like, but three years later he evidently began to receive a formal, secular education under the supervision of a priest named Dōkei 道恵. The curriculum included *The Classic of Filial Piety* (孝經) and *Analects* (論語), both standard works in East Asian education, and also *The Nine Chapters on the Mathematical Art* (*Jiuzhang suanshu* 九章算術), a work whose influence on East

¹ Chūgan’s autobiographical chronicle may be found in Tamamura Takeji 玉村竹二, *Gozan bungaku shinshū* 五山文學新集 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1969), vol. 4, pp. 611-32.

Asian mathematics was comparable to that of Euclid's *Elements* in the West.² At the age of 13 he took the tonsure and moved to the Sanbōin 三寶院 in Kyoto, where he studied esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō* 密教), which included meditation on the Matrix-store and Diamond Realm Mandalas (*Taizōkai mandara* 胎藏界曼荼羅, *Kongōkai mandara* 金剛界曼荼羅).³

Shortly thereafter he shifted his interest to Zen, which had established itself as a distinct sect over the course of the previous century. Ties between the Japanese and Chinese Zen establishments were strong, and in 1318, Chūgan, like many promising monks before and after, attempted to travel to China. At the time he was residing at Engakuji 円覚寺, a major Zen temple in Kamakura founded by the expatriate monk Wuxue Zuyuan 無學祖元 (J. Mugaku Sogen) in 1282.⁴ Chūgan made the lengthy journey from Kamakura to the southern port city of Hakata, and although he apparently found a ship that was heading for his preferred destination of Jiangnan, for reasons unspecified he was refused passage by the ship's captain.⁵ The delay would prove fortuitous, however, as it would later afford him the

² The *Jiuzhang suanshu* (J. *kyūshō sanjutsu*) is listed in the *Nihon kenzaisho mokuroku* 日本見在書目録, a bibliographic source from the early Heian period. Historian of mathematics Fujiwara Matsusaburo (1881-1946) once observed that Chūgan's references to the *Jiuzhang suanshu* offer the only direct evidence that the work was still studied in Japan during the medieval era. The paucity of such references notwithstanding, if a mathematically inclined youth at a temple in Kamakura had access to the work and a teacher to teach it to him, then it seems likely that both the text itself and mathematics education more generally were reasonably prevalent in major Buddhist monastic centers.

³ *Jirekifu* (hereafter *JRF*) Shōwa 1 (1312); Shōwa 2 (1313).

⁴ Wuxue had been an advisor to the most powerful military leader in Japan, Hōjō Tokimune 北条時宗 (1251-84), during the Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281, and his influence upon the early Gozan system was substantial.

⁵ *JRF* p. 614, Bunpo 2 (1318). *Gozan bungaku shinshū* vol. 4, p. 614.

opportunity to associate closely with Kokan Shiren 虎関師鍊 (1278-1345), who was in seclusion in Kyoto completing *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釈書 (1322), an exhaustive history of Buddhism in Japan.⁶ Chūgan was among the only visitors Kokan accepted, and their meetings are generally thought to have been a major influence on the young Chūgan's intellectual development.⁷

Chūgan was finally able to travel to China in 1324, six years after his first attempt. He visited several important Chan temples and was the only Japanese monk to receive the seal of enlightenment (C. *yinke*, J. *inka* 印可) from Dongyang Dehui 東陽德輝 (fl. early 14th c.), a Linji master in the line of Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089-1163).⁸ Dongyang appointed Chūgan to the post of secretary (記室) at the temple Dazhishou Shengchansi 大智寿聖禪寺, an unusual achievement for a foreign monk.⁹ After nearly eight years abroad, Chūgan returned to Japan during the summer of 1332, residing temporarily at Kenkōji 顯孝寺 in Hakata before accompanying his patron Ōtomo Sadamune 大友貞宗 (d. 1334) to Kyoto the following year. Opinionated and headstrong by his own account, he was intensely active politically, submitting two essays and a memorial to Emperor Go-Daigo in 1333. Go-Daigo had formed a coalition of warrior leaders and rebelled against the

⁶ Marian Ury, "Genkō Shakusho, Japan's First Comprehensive History of Buddhism: A Partial Translation, with Introduction and Notes" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1970).

⁷ Inoguchi Atsushi 猪口篤志, "Nihon kanshi" 日本漢詩 in *Shinshaku kanbun taikei* 新釈漢文大系 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1972), vol. 45, p. 84; Ury, *Poems of the Five Mountains* (1977), p. 63.

⁸ See Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 1994), vol. 2, p. 182 n. 88.

⁹ Iriya Yoshitaka 入矢義高, ed., *Gozan bungaku shū* 五山文学集 (1990) p. 235.

Kamakura shogunate, and Chūgan was deeply concerned about both the immediate direction of Go-Daigo's revolution and the long-term prospects for an increasingly militarized Japan.

In 1334, Chūgan returned to Kamakura following the sudden death of Sadamune, who had been an ally of Go-Daigo and was instrumental in facilitating Chūgan's access to the throne. The Ōtomo family would continue to provide financial backing to Chūgan even as his views on the revolution soured. In 1339, three years after Go-Daigo's nascent regime collapsed, Sadamune's heir Ujiyasu 氏泰 backed construction of the temple Kichijōji 吉祥寺, located on a family demesne in the province of Kōzuke 上野, and asked Chūgan to assume its headship. Though Chūgan's involvement in politics seems to have diminished in the 1340s, he regained access to the highest echelons of society when Kichijōji was named an Imperially Vowed Temple (*goganji* 御願寺) in 1352. For the next two decades he traveled almost constantly, moving nearly every year between Kyushu, Kyoto, Kōzuke Province, and the city of Kamakura. These journeys were lengthy and not always welcome, but he had become by this time an "eminent monk" (*kōsō* 高僧) and was extended numerous invitations to reside at the most influential temples of the day, including Manjuji 萬壽寺 in Bungo Province, Manjuji in Kyoto, Tōjiji 等持寺, Kenninji 建仁寺, and Kamakura's Kenchōji 建長寺, the highest ranked temple in the Kamakura Gozan.

Throughout his life, and even during times when his professional fortunes were looking down, Chūgan remained a prominent poet and intellectual. In 1341,

he famously earned the ire of cultural nativists by writing *A History of Japan* (*Nihon sho* 日本書), sadly no longer extant, in which he claimed that the Japanese imperial family was descended not from gods but from immigrant continental nobility.

Undoubtedly his single greatest work is the philosophical treatise *Chūseishi* 中正子 (1334), which is among the most important Japanese intellectual works of pre-Tokugawa times. It is comprised of ten chapters that each address distinct topics, including Confucian ethics, effective governance and the legitimate use of military force, a numerological exposition of the lunar and solar calendars, the birth and death of living beings, and the Three Learnings of Zen (*sangaku* 三学), i.e. the precepts (*kai* 戒), meditation (*jō* 定), and the wisdom gleaned from studying Buddhist teachings (*e* 慧). The chapter on governance and the use of force is translated in Chapter Two of the present study.

While other notable figures in the Gozan milieu, in particular *Gidō Shūshin* 義堂周信 (1325-88) and *Zekkai Chūshin* 絶海中津 (1334-1405), eclipse *Chūgan* in fame today, such was not always the case. For instance, the noted Neo-Confucian scholar *Fujiwara Seika* 藤原惺窩 (1561-1619) declared that when it came to sheer breadth of learning (*gakushiki* 学識), *Chūgan* ranked first among all Gozan literati.¹⁰ This assessment is not out of step with the laudatory views expressed by some of *Chūgan*'s contemporaries, including the Linji (Rinzai) master *Zhuxian Fanxian* 竺仙

¹⁰ See Inoguchi, p. 48.

梵僊 (1292-1348), a redoubtable scholar of Neo-Confucianism in his own right.¹¹ Zhuxian, who had come to Japan at the behest of Ōtomo Sadamune, judged Chūgan to be learned in both the inner and outer classics (i.e. Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts) and noted that his expertise extended to the “many masters and hundred schools” (*zhuzi baijia* 諸子百家) of early Chinese thought; astronomy, geography, and yin-yang theory.¹² And while it is probably true that Chūgan was known by his contemporaries more for his expository writing than for his poetry, the creativity and iconoclasm characterizing his philosophical oeuvre are present in equal measure in his verse. He treated subjects such as illness, death, and poverty with striking candor and specificity (see Chapter Four), and he is one of only two medieval Japanese poets known to have composed *ci* 詞, a vernacular form that was practiced avidly in Song and Yuan China but which is almost entirely absent from the tradition of Sinitic poetry in Japan (see Chapter Five).

The poetic voice that emerges from Chūgan’s non-occasional, declarative verses is a conflicted one, at times supremely confident and morally righteous and at times besieged by pessimism and self doubt. Chūgan was the only early Gozan figure to opine at length about moral and political problems, and it is his poems on these topics that most distinguish him from his contemporaries. Much of his self image seems to have been shaped by the belief that he alone fully understood the predicament facing Japan in the wake of the failed Kenmu Restoration. Chūgan’s

¹¹ See Ashikaga Enjutsu 足利衍述, *Kamakura Muromachi jidai no jukyō* 鎌倉室町時代の儒教 (Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshū Kankōkai, 1932), pp. 211 and 255.

¹² 如中巖者、学通内外乃至諸子百家天文地理陰陽之說. Ashikaga, p. 255.

poetry of social engagement will be examined in Chapter Four, but an appreciation of his sensibilities may be quickly gleaned from poems such as this:

藤陰雜興

Under the Shade of Wisteria: Various Inspirations

No. 10

邪靡堆國三千歲	In the country of Yamatai, three thousand years old,
帝册姬宗百代傳	The imperial charter has been transmitted for a hundred generations through the scion of Ji.
海畔紅桑花片落	By the seashore, a red copperleaf petal falls;
鴈奴驚火叫荒田	A sentinel goose, startled at the blaze, sounds the alarm over fallow fields. ¹³

Chūgan believed the Japanese imperial line to be related to the Ji 姬 clan, royal progenitors of the Zhou Dynasty, and he even posited euhemeristically that the indigenous “Shinto” deity Kunitokotachi no Mikoto 國常立尊 was in fact a very mortal descendant of Taibo 太伯, legendary founder of the state of Wu 吳. The two couplets of this short poem are difficult to integrate without resorting to symbolism; the image of a copperleaf blossom on the seashore is exceptionally uncommon, but it does occur in a very long poem by the Daoist poet Cao Tang 曹唐 (c. 797-866) and is juxtaposed there to an image of great, but long dead, Chinese emperors.¹⁴ The

¹³ Small and easily alarmed, a “sentinel goose” (鴈奴) is so named because its function within the flock is to call out and warn of danger. Copperleaf (J. *enokigusa*) petals are bright red.

¹⁴ The poem is “A Poem on Wandering Immortals in Ninety-Eight Couplets” (小游仙詩九十八首, *QTS juan* 641.1) and the relevant line reads “Where, in death, are the First Qin Emperor and Han Wudi? By the seashore, red copperleaf blossoms open as they will” 秦皇漢武死何處、海畔紅桑花自開.

connection is speculative but promising, as the political positions Chūgan articulates in his prose make it plausible to identify the sentinel goose as Chūgan himself, whose warnings about the impending breakdown of Japan's imperial institution fall on deaf ears. More often than not, even this level of symbolism was avoided in favor of a still more direct style that left no doubt as to Chūgan's stance on matters:

擬古

In Imitation of Old

浩浩劫末風	O'er the waste blows the wind of the Last Days;
塵土飛蓬蓬	Dust and dirt fly in a chaotic roar.
天上日色薄	High in the sky, the sun shines pale;
人間是非隆	In the world of men, both right and wrong flourish.
螻蟻逐臭穢	Mole crickets and ants chase after putrid filth,
鳳凰棲梧桐	While phoenixes roost in their parasol trees.
獨有方外士	But alone there is a man who stands apart from others:
俛仰白雲中	He looks up, he looks down, at home in his white cloud abode.

Though known more for social engagement than for self-reflection, Chūgan could be as critical of himself as he was of the wider world. In several verses from the 1340s and later he reproves himself and hints at the ongoing enmity he received from some of his contemporaries. This enmity stemmed primarily from his hugely controversial decision to switch sectarian affiliations in 1339. When Kichiōji was built, Chūgan publicly abandoned the Sōtō line of his initial master, Dongming Huiji 東明惠日 (J. Tōmei E'nichi, 1272-1340), in favor of the Rinzai line of Dongyang Dehui 東陽德輝 (fl. 1330s), a lesser known figure with whom he had studied briefly while in China. Despite the doctrinally diverse, broadly ecumenical character of medieval Japanese religion, sectarian loyalties were strong and competition could

be intense, analogous perhaps at the milder end to the competition between business firms in the same industry, and at the extreme end to that between military houses. The move provoked bitter attacks from former friends and colleagues (and even an alleged knife attack), and would affect Chūgan's personal and professional life for decades thereafter.

藤陰雜興

Under the Shade of Wisteria: Various Inspirations

No. 6

閒花野草亦朝人	Even flowers sprouting in crevices and grasses growing on the moors pay obeisance to men;
余獨何心忌混塵	So why do I alone detest this polluted world?
小子更休勤學我	Disciples, you must cease at once all efforts to take after me,
誤來四十六年身	Someone who has spent in error the forty-six years of his life!

No. 7

臨危獨念故交顧	In times of danger, I reminisce alone of friends from bygone days;
何處世途非履冰	Where in this world is there a path that isn't like treading on ice?
只得胸中無我愛	I can only resolve to expunge from my heart the sense that the self is precious,
不干身外有人憎	And stand unperturbed by the ill will of others.

The resentment bred by Chūgan's transgression seems to have been surprisingly tenacious. In the winter of 1362, as Chūgan was about to begin meditation with acolytes at Kenninji, one or more unknown assailants shot two

arrows at him, both of which fortunately missed.¹⁵ While details surrounding the incident are scant, modern scholars generally ascribe this apparent assassination attempt to his decision to abandon Dongming's lineage nearly twenty-five years earlier.

Chūgan persevered, and in 1370 he was asked to take up residence at Kyoto's Nanzenji 南禪寺, the highest ranking temple in the Kyoto Gozan. Owing perhaps to his age, he found the assignment uncongenial and "firmly declined it, refusing to move" 堅辭不起, and chose instead to remain at the nearby Ryūkōji 龍興寺.¹⁶ As late as 1373, he was asked by Hosokawa Yoriyuki 細川頼之, then the shogunal deputy (*kanrei* 管領) and one of the most powerful men in Japan, for assistance rebuilding Tenryūji 天龍寺 after it was partly destroyed in a fire. Chūgan again refused, this time explicitly on account of age. He continued writing well into the next year, composing two commemorative funerary addresses (祭) for fellow Zen monks Mugan Soō 夢巖祖應 (d. 1374) and Jōzan Sozen 定山祖禪 (1298-1374).¹⁷ That winter, he is reported to have developed a "slight ailment" 微恙. Whether the description was genuine or meiotic, Chūgan died early the following year, his recorded age seventy-six by the Japanese count. According to a supplementary account in his *Jirekifu*, when he became delirious and death was clearly at hand, the attendant priests asked their master for a final poem. Chūgan mustered what

¹⁵ *JRF* Kōan 2 (1362). Note that beginning with the first year of Ryakuō 曆応, Chūgan dates his chronicle according to the regnal designations of the Northern Dynasty.

¹⁶ *JRF* Ōan 3 (1370).

¹⁷ *JRF* Ōan 6-8 (1373-75). These are no longer extant, and were apparently dictated by Chūgan but written down by someone else (see note 18 below).

strength he could and replied that he had already said too many baleful things throughout his life and that there was no point in saying anything more. After thus refusing the request, he died peacefully at noon that same day.¹⁸

¹⁸ Chūgan's final comments are transcribed as 吾平生口禍不少今尚何言去去, presumably spoken aloud as something like *Ware heizei kuchi no wazawai sukunakarazu, ima nao nani o ka iwan? Sare sare!* ("Over the course of my life my mouth has gotten me into trouble more than a few times; what more is there to say now? Be off!"). This was recorded by a disciple, Ken Dōshi 建幢志, in Chūgan's autobiographical chronicle. In a short postscript to the text, he informs the reader that because Chūgan had stopped writing at 68 years of age, he (Ken Dōshi) had taken it upon himself to supply additional information regarding the last years of his master's life. Presumably it was he or other attendant priests who actually transcribed the funerary addresses Chūgan composed for Mugan and Jōzan. The name Ken Dōshi is probably an inverted abbreviation of a name comprised of four characters. This was standard practice: the name Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月, for instance, is often given as 月中巖.

Chapter One

Political Suasion in a Time of Crisis: The Memorials of Chūgan Engetsu and Yoshida Sadafusa

國者天下之利用也、人主者天下之利勢也。

The state is the most efficacious instrument in the world, and to be ruler of men is the most efficacious power in the world.¹⁹

Xunzi

In the early fourteenth century, Japanese intellectuals and aristocrats (the former not always a subset of the latter) began devoting substantial attention to questions that, until then, had figured only minimally in Japanese political discourse, such as whether or not the legitimacy and perpetual continuity of the imperial institution was guaranteed by its purportedly divine origins; under what circumstances recourse to arms was morally acceptable; and to what extent concepts of legitimate sovereignty drawn from the Chinese political tradition might (or might not) usefully inform governance in Japan.²⁰ Chūgan Engetsu was among the brightest lights of the medieval intellectual milieu, and his contributions to questions such as these are both highly original and extensive; indeed, in terms of generic and thematic breadth, Chūgan's writing is unrivalled by any other medieval

¹⁹ Eric L. Hutton, *Xunzi* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), p. 99.

²⁰ See Andrew Edmund Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996), pp. 20-29 and Tamakake Hiroyuki, *Nihon chūsei shisōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1998), passim.

Japanese figure, ranging freely across political and natural philosophy, Buddhist doctrine, and multiple styles of Chinese poetry. This chapter will examine his views on society and statecraft during the tumultuous years of the Kenmu Restoration (1333-36), a watershed moment of institutional rupture and intellectual creativity. As noted in the introduction, Chūgan's abilities earned him the patronage of the powerful provincial leader Ōtomo Sadamune, and upon returning to Japan in 1332 from an eight-year sojourn in China, he quickly became an active partisan in Emperor Go-Daigo's struggle for a new national order. He drew upon a varied mix of Chinese texts bearing upon the establishment, maintenance, and breakdown of political authority in an effort to influence Go-Daigo's policies. That a 33 year-old prelate with no aristocratic heritage would have such an opportunity in the first place is indicative of both the newfound status of Zen and the possibilities offered by the unique circumstances of the 1330s. Though turbulent, the years preceding and immediately following the Kenmu Restoration were highly productive intellectually, not only for Chūgan but also for fellow Zen luminary Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275-1351),²¹ the early theorist of Shinto (and Tendai priest) Jihen 慈遍 (fl. mid 14th c.),²²

²¹ See, for instance, Musō's reflections on Go-Daigo's rise and fall as recorded in *Musō Kokushi goroku* 夢窓国師語録 (*Taishō daizōkyō*, vol. 80, pp. 463c24-464b21). A translation of the relevant section may be found in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 265-58.

²² Jihen was one of several early medieval figures involved in articulating Shinto through the concepts and nomenclature of esoteric Buddhism. His primary works include *Kuji hongji gengi* 旧事本紀玄義 (*The Profound Meaning of the Sendai kuji hongji*, 1332) and *Toyoashihara jinpū waki* 豊葦原神風和記 (*Harmonious Record of the Divine Ways of Japan*, 1340). These have yet to be translated into English. Jihen's thought is treated in some detail in Tamakake, *Nihon chūsei shisōshi kenkyū*, pp. 200-227.

and the nativist scholar and proponent of Ise Shinto Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293-1354). Chikafusa's lengthy and influential treatise on Japanese imperial succession, *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記 (1343), treats some of the same concerns that Chūgan addresses, albeit from within a substantially different conceptual and ideological framework.

The writings examined in this chapter were all composed during the formative months of Go-Daigo's restoration government, from the autumn of 1333 to the spring of 1334, and were either submitted directly to the emperor or written with him in mind as the implied reader. They permit an edifying glimpse into Chūgan's rhetorical style and political orientation, which was eclectic but thoroughly "Confucian" in one important sense, namely in his conviction that the existence of an autonomous military elite constituted a gross distortion of the ideal social order. To Chūgan, the military was – or should properly be – nothing more than an arm of royal authority to be employed at the exclusive discretion of the sovereign, and he ascribed many of the ills of his day to Japan's deviation from this ideal. Fittingly for the age, he was also committed to the position that certain historical moments are so fraught as to be negotiable only through radical action that "revolutionizes" or transforms (革) existing sociopolitical arrangements.

Chūgan's views on revolution would come to differ from Go-Daigo's as the Kenmu regime took shape, but in broad measure they were nicely consonant with the emperor's grand political ambitions and beliefs about sovereignty. Throughout 1333, at least, Chūgan seems to have thoroughly embraced Go-Daigo's cause. In December of that year, he submitted to the emperor a memorial (J. *hyō*, C. *biao* 表),

along with two short essays, in which he outlined the crisis facing Japan and presented his ideas for reform. The first piece to be considered below is an essay entitled *Genmin* 原民, “Establishing the Fundamentals of the People,” which treats the ideal social order and the dangers rampant militarization poses to it.²³ Stylistically, the piece was heavily influenced by the writings of Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), author of the similarly titled *Yuandao* 原道, one of the most influential critical essays in Chinese literary history.²⁴ Han Yu was among the earliest champions of the classical *guwen* 古文 (J. *kobun*) style in lieu of the *pianliwen* 駢儷文 (J. *benreibun*) style of rhymed parallel prose. Critics of *pianliwen* argued that it had become vacuous and overwrought, and they sought in its place a medium shorn of ornamentation and easier to understand. The linguistic clarity that characterized the *guwen* style was less an end unto itself than an aesthetic manifestation of the ideology driving the whole of the *fugu* 復古 or “return to antiquity” movement, and to Han Yu and other *guwen* authors, classicism in language comprised an important element in a broader cultural traditionalism, one that provided an apt vehicle for the Confucian revival they sought to bring about in the political sphere.²⁵ By Chūgan’s day, the debate over the relative merits of *pianliwen* and *guwen* was an old one, and the literary

²³ The word *gen* 原 in the title is a verb (usually read *motozuku* or *tazunu* in Japanese), which is used in the sense of originating or basing oneself *in* something, or investigating something down to its origins. The meaning of the phrase 原民 thus subsumes the ideas of “basing oneself or one’s policies in the people,” “making the people fundamental,” and also of “getting to the bottom” of how *min* 民, as a social concept, is to be understood.

²⁴ See Peter K. Bol, “*This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T’ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 128-31. Bol renders the title of the essay “Finding the Source for Tao.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

history of the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song periods was replete with fine practitioners of both styles. The Song era witnessed the eventual acceptance of *guwen* prose for use on the *jinshi* 進士 examinations, a development indicative of the esteem the style had gained in the eyes of leading scholar-officials.²⁶ And while its importance to the world of Japanese *kanbun* was comparatively minor, evidence suggests that the *guwen-pianliwen* debate was known to Japanese literati from at least the mid-Heian period.²⁷ Generally speaking, medieval Japanese writers drew stylistic inspiration from a substantially larger and more diverse body of Chinese texts than their Heian predecessors had: works such as *Wenxuan*, which had so heavily influenced Heian *kanbun*, now existed alongside *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (*Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*, 1084), *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (*New History of the Tang*, 1060), and many other texts reflective of Song-era aesthetic and intellectual developments. Chūgan probably used the *guwen* style more adroitly than any of his contemporaries; his models in expository prose appear to have been drawn predominantly from the Tang and early Song, with Han Yu's writing exerting particular stylistic influence. Even Chūgan's high appraisal of the Song polymath Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-72), author of *Xin Tang shu*, has been ascribed by one pioneering scholar of Gozan literature to Ouyang's noted devotion to Han Yu.²⁸

That Chūgan would so admire and ultimately imitate Han Yu's rhetoric bespeaks his willingness to separate form from ideological content, and reflects the

²⁶ Dieter Kuhn, *The Age of Confucian Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 2009), p. 130.

²⁷ Kawaguchi Hisao, *Heianchō no kanbungaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 129-36.

²⁸ Kitamura Sawakichi, *Gozan bungaku shikō* (Tokyo: Fūzanbō, 1941), p. 219.

comparatively liberal approach to Chinese high culture taken by the medieval Zen establishment. Every bit the nativist intellectual, Han Yu was a contumelious critic of Buddhism and a staunch supporter of Confucian orthodoxy, positions he articulated pithily (and with no small measure of vitriol) in *Yuandao*. Chūgan, too, was an avid proponent of Confucianism; it might even be suggested that his wide-ranging philosophical oeuvre is broadly unified by the pursuit of a Confucian-Buddhist synthesis,²⁹ or at least that such a pursuit guided his most notable works.³⁰ But where Han Yu employed *guwen* to indict Buddhism as an adulterant to Chinese culture, Chūgan used it to affirm Buddhism's value to state and society in Japan. Inasmuch as modernist expository writing tends to proceed from the assumption that language is, or should be, a transparent, value-neutral medium for conveying ideas, Chūgan's adoption of Han Yu's lucid language to make pro-Buddhist arguments is, in a certain sense, quite modern. To Chūgan, Buddhism, no less than Confucianism, was beneficial in part because of its salubrious effects upon morality. But Buddhism also addressed itself to phenomena that lay outside Confucianism's traditional purview, and in medieval Japan, the concept of karma and its corollaries provided by far the most comprehensive and influential epistemic basis for understanding the human condition.³¹ As is made clear in the very short piece

²⁹ This argument seems to have been made first by Ashikaga Enjutsu; see his *Kamakura, Muromachi jidai no jukyō* (Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshū Kankōkai, 1932), pp. 211, 255.

³⁰ Inoue Masamichi, *Honpō chūsei made ni okeru Mōshi juyōshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1972), pp. 261-62.

³¹ Buddhism's role as the preeminent paradigm shaping the medieval episteme is treated in William R. LaFleur, *The Karma of Words* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983).

Gensō 原僧, a companion essay submitted to Emperor Go-Daigo alongside *Genmin*, Chūgan does believe that when farmers or merchants abandon their livelihoods and nominally become monks the effect is detrimental not only to the priesthood but also to national economic welfare.³² Still, some knowledge of Buddhist principles among the populace is held to bring benefits to state and society as substantial as those brought by knowledge of the Four Books, reliable weights and measures, and an adequate military, all of which he cites approvingly at the beginning of *Genmin*.

The main thesis of *Genmin* is that excessive militarization and a burgeoning interest in martial pursuits across all segments of society is the key sociopolitical crisis confronting Japan in the 1330s. Though he will later lay much of the blame for this phenomenon upon Go-Daigo himself, here he simply recommends that the four Confucian “classes” and members of the clergy be guided back to their proper social roles, and that only persons with a specific government mandate to bear arms be permitted to do so. Ardently opposed to both popular militancy and the existence of an autonomous warrior elite, Chūgan asks rhetorically whether the country even has a “military” at all, which to him denotes a branch of government that provides for the national defense but is always and everywhere subordinate to the throne. Chūgan will develop this line of critique further in his memorial to Go-Daigo, and he will advance it with greater conceptual sophistication in his famous philosophical treatise *Chūseishi* 中正子 (*The Master of Balance and Rectitude*, 1334), where it is repurposed to criticize the emperor directly. Insofar as *Genmin* was intended simply to provide Go-Daigo with a succinct overview of Japan’s problems as Chūgan

³² A translation of this essay is given in the appendix to this chapter.

saw them, it is of somewhat less conceptual and rhetorical interest than either *Chūseishi* or the memorial. Nonetheless, its clarity and relative simplicity make it a useful introduction to those texts and an ideal point from which to approach Chūgan's worldview during the initial months of Go-Daigo's restoration government.

Establishing the Fundamentals of the People³³

Across the wide world, people attend to their basic duties and perfect their crafts, and their countries become prosperous and strong. Farmers sow crops and plant vegetables and fruiting trees. Artisans manage their establishments and produce various wares. Merchants facilitate the distribution of goods from where they are plentiful to where they are scarce. Officials draft government regulations. The credibility of the Imperial seal and the reliability of weights and measures help prevent fraud and deception. The teachings culled from the Book of Songs, the Book of History, the Classic of Rites, and the Classic of Music serve to reform cruelty and greed. Arms and fortifications serve to forestall invasion and plunder. Thus it is that if the masses pursue their livelihoods and support those above them, there will be no instances of people resorting to unprincipled means to keep themselves fed, and the country will be prosperous and strong. This is how things ought to be!

³³ The translation is based on the text found in Tamamura Takeji's *Gozan bungaku shinshū* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1970), p. 393. Also consulted was Kamimura Kankō's *Gozan bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Gozan Bungaku Zenshū Kankōkai, 1936), vol. 2, pp. 104-5. Tamamura's edition of Chūgan's works is the most complete currently available; its principal source, like Kamimura's, is the 1764 woodblock edition of the collectanea of Chūgan's works *Tōkai ichiōshū* 東海一漚集 (*A Bubble on the Eastern Sea*). This edition was collated and prepared for publication by the priest Daige Sōdatsu 大解宗脱 (1706-62) at the Harima Daizōin monastery, and while it is generally regarded as the vulgate (*rufubon* 流布本), it omits much, and Tamamura has therefore supplemented it with additional manuscript copies of *Tōkai ichiōshū* housed at the temple Hōjōji 法常寺 and the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo.

Buddhism was introduced (to China) in the Han era, and ever since it has enabled people to gain a profound understanding of the principles governing nature, fate, life, and death, and it has also illuminated the karmic roots of good and ill fortune. Thus the people loved goodness and trusted they would be rewarded; they eschewed what was not good and avoided calamity. Something that benefits the country without harming the people can only enhance the prosperity and strength of the former. Looking at our own country today, among the people there are none who do not don armor and take up weapons. The commoners are negligent in attending to their proper livelihoods and they attack and rob one another in the pursuit of gain. And as to those who cut their hair and enter the priesthood, they too vie with one another through force of arms and abandon their proper calling. Of all the disasters that may befall a country, none surpasses this. The purpose of a military is to suppress disturbances; the very character for “military” (武) is composed of “stop” (止) and “weapon” (戈)! Yet the disturbances we face today cannot be suppressed. Can we say that our country even *has* a military? One side has stout shields and sharp spears, but so does the other side. Hardness is pitted against hardness and sharpness against sharpness, with both sides having comparable strength. Since the strength of both sides is equal, each remains unchecked. These are the facts. The Discourses of Zhou relate the following:

“The kings of old glorified virtue and were not quick to flaunt their military power. Flaunting military power leads to its irresponsible use, and if military power is used irresponsibly, then royal authority will not be respected.”³⁴

³⁴ The “Discourses of Zhou” (周語) comprise the first section of the *Guoyu* 國語. The passage upon which Chuguan draws reads as follows: 穆王將征犬戎、祭公謀父諫曰「不可。先王耀德不觀兵。夫兵戢而時動、動則威；觀則玩、玩則無震」 “King Mu was about to attack the Quanrong tribe, but Moufu, Duke of Zhai, remonstrated with him, saying, “The kings of old glorified virtue and were not quick to flaunt their military power. If military power is held back and deployed only at the appropriate times, then (royal authority) will be feared; if military power is flaunted, then it will be used irresponsibly, and if it is used irresponsibly, none will respect (royal authority).”

Since this is already the case (in Japan), what should be done? It would be best for your majesty to decree that anyone who is not a soldier of the imperial government shall be punished for bearing arms, and that officials, farmers, artisans, merchants, as well as members of the clergy must devote themselves to the perfection of their respective callings. If this is done, it will strengthen and enrich the country, and there is perhaps hope after all.

淳世之民，各務本修業。故國富且強矣。所以農者播禾穀種菜果。工者營棟宇造器皿。賈者通其有無。士者布其政令。符璽秤斛之信，以防其欺負。詩書禮樂之教，以正其狠戾。甲兵干城之威，以禁其侵奪。然而百姓各修其業而奉其上，則國無有徒為苟食者，故富強也。宜矣。漢氏以降，加以佛法使民精通性命死生之理，且知禍福因果之道。然而百姓好善賴慶，忌不善而避殃。故有利于國，無害于民。是以國益富且強矣。今觀國朝，民無不衣甲手兵者。百姓皆怠其業，互相侵奪以為利也。若夫出家斷髮者，亦以堅甲利兵相誇而廢其本業也。禍亂之大，莫之過焉。武也者，戡定禍亂也。其為文也止戈也。然今有如斯禍亂而不能勘定者，可言國有武乎？彼亦堅甲利兵也。以堅敵堅，以利敵利，其勢均矣。勢均，則不可制止也。宜矣。周語有之，先王耀德不觀兵。夫兵觀則翫；翫則無震。既然今宜奈之何？宜當 敕差有司：如非官軍者，衣甲手兵則誅之。使彼士農工賈及釋氏之流各務本修業，則富強之國，其庶幾乎。

The political order of the fourteenth century and beyond would develop in precisely the direction Chūgan feared, and for reasons that seem in retrospect far beyond the reach of court policy. A modern reader, particularly one insensitive to the stylistic conventions governing works of counsel submitted directly to the throne, could be forgiven for seeing in Chūgan's recommendations a naïve and simplistic faith in the power of imperial legislation. Yet the Kamakura shogunate, once the preeminent power in the country, had been effectively destroyed six months before *Genmin* was written, and in terms of military resources and the ability to project power, Go-Daigo's incipient regime now stood unrivalled. And while developmental narratives of medieval Japanese history tend to posit an

inexorable rise of the warriors and concomitant inevitability of autonomous warrior government, there is very little evidence that fighting men of the fourteenth century saw their collective position as dependent upon the continued existence of a shogunate.³⁵ Moreover, while Chūgan's age was certainly one of change and tribulation, it was not yet one of endemic violence and irreparable fragmentation, even if certain sociopolitical trends suggested to keen observers that such a fate was drawing near. Hence, to an intellectual who was disinclined to support warrior government and deeply concerned with the spread of soldiery among the populace, the throne offered the best and most logical hope for stemming these trends and restoring the proper social order. The imperial court was, after all, the most enduring locus of authority on the archipelago, providing social legibility through offices, ranks, and the dissemination of high culture even to the very institutions most responsible for eroding its military might and material prerogatives, viz. shogunal governments and influential warrior houses.

Chūgan expands upon the crisis of militarism and the role of the court in addressing it in his memorial to Go-Daigo, a text that expounds the same basic worldview as *Genmin* though far more stridently. It is both unusually lengthy and, in places, exceptionally blunt by the standards of extant Japanese memorials, which date predominantly from the Heian period and tend neither to utilize the *guwen* style nor treat sociopolitical issues as serious as those taken up by Chūgan. These and other aspects of the work will be analyzed in detail below; it is worth emphasizing at the outset, however, that Chūgan's memorial constitutes a rare and

³⁵ Goble, *Kenmu*, pp. xvi, 136, 266-67.

valuable example of a genre that, while esteemed in the Chinese tradition and long practiced by Japanese aristocrats, has received minimal attention in studies of Japanese *kanshibun*. Moreover, it illustrates the ways in which the Chinese historical experience could be marshaled for political suasion during a transitional moment in Japanese history, one whose epochal significance was difficult to appreciate in reference to the domestic record alone.

On this the eleventh day of the eleventh month, I, Engetsu, Transmitter of the Dharma, do humbly and respectfully offer this memorial.³⁶

Your majesty, it is my humble contention that among kings, there are those who succeed a human predecessor, continue his line and keep things unchanged, and there are those who receive Heaven's mandate, adapt skillfully to the exigencies of the moment (通變), and bring about revolution (革). Examples of the former include the rulers who continued their lines during the Xia, Yin, and Zhou dynasties. Examples of the latter include Tang, who deposed Jie, and King Wu, who vanquished Zhou.³⁷ Thus does *Yijing* say: "The revolutions of Tang and Wu were in accordance with Heaven and in response to the people."³⁸ But why simply stop at Tang and Wu? Gaozu and Shizu of Han, Taizong of Tang, and Taizu of Song were all men of this sort. As Wen Zhongzi opined: "if one adapts skillfully to changing circumstances, the realm will be free of bad

³⁶ The date corresponds to December 19, 1333 in the Julian calendar. The text may be found in *Gozan bungaku shinshū*, vol. 4, pp. 380-81 and *Gozan bungaku taikai*, vol. 2, pp. 86-87.

³⁷ Cheng Tang 成湯 was the first ruler of the Yin (Shang) Dynasty and deposed Jie 桀, the last ruler of the Xia. Wu 武 was the first ruler of the Zhou Dynasty and deposed Zhou 紂, the last ruler of the Shang.

³⁸ 湯武革命、順乎天而應於人. This famous line from *Yijing* is still often cited in dictionaries and encyclopedias as the locus classicus for the term *geming/kakumei* 革命, "revolution."

laws, but if one cleaves stubbornly to fixed norms, then the realm will be bereft of beneficent teachings.”³⁹

In their perfection of transformative teachings (教化) and regulative norms (法度), the Three Dynasties (Xia, Shang, and Zhou) were surpassed by none. Yet after the regulations had been in effect for a long period of time, they became corrupted; once it was understood the regulations had indeed become corrupted, they were reformed (革). This is the means by which (the reformers) adapted to circumstance. Thus it was that when the regulations of the Xia became corrupted, Tang of Yin reformed them, and when the regulations of the Yin became corrupted, Wu of Zhou reformed them. After the Zhou had fallen into decline, its regulations slipped into extreme corruption, and it was then that Wei Yang entered the state of Qin and reformed its regulations.⁴⁰ One year after the reforms were enacted, the number of people in the capital decrying the new laws reached into the thousands, and the prince even violated them. Wei Yang opined that the reason the regulations were not being successfully implemented was that the prince himself did not abide by them. As the ruler’s heir, the prince could not be punished, but his chief adviser was punished corporally and his tutor was tattooed.⁴¹ Almost overnight, all the people of Qin submitted to the new laws. Ten years later, none dared to even pick up valuables dropped on the roads, and the mountains were free of bandits. The people were brave in fighting wars that were in the public interest (公), but reticent to indulge private (私) quarrels. Those who had once called the new laws unsuitable now thought them most expedient. Yet after Qin unified the realm, it

³⁹ 通其變天下無弊法、執其方天下無善教。Wen Zhongzi 文中子 is the posthumous name of the philosopher Wang Tong 王通 (584-617), and it is also the title of the work *Wenzhongzi*, alternatively known as *Zhong shuo* 中說 (*Discourses on the Mean*), which records his responses to questions asked by disciples. The quote comes from the fourth chapter, “Zhou Gong” 周公. Wang Tong’s importance to Chūgan is discussed below.

⁴⁰ Wei Yang 衛鞅 (390-338 B.C.E), better known as Shang Yang 商鞅, was the architect of numerous important reforms in the state of Qin. Along with Shen Buhai and Han Feizi, he contributed significantly to the development of what would come to be known as legalism.

⁴¹ The adviser was punished by having his nose cut off.

lost sight of the need to make periodic changes to its laws; the evils that resulted were extreme, and violence and cruelty prevailed.

Hence, the Qin lasted just two generations before being destroyed. The Han then assumed suzerainty, but for over seventy years they found that despite their efforts to bring the situation under control, no method seemed viable. When laws were promulgated, wickedness only grew; when decrees were issued, fraud and deceit followed. Alas, it could not have been otherwise. The remnants of the Qin were a people whose customs were heartless and perverse, which is why they resisted (the imposition of laws by the Han). It was for this reason than Dong Zhongshu said the following in his rescript:

“If one uses boiling water to calm boiling water, the water will only froth and bubble more, and when a zither has fallen irreparably out of tune, one has no choice but to remove the strings and replace them; only then will it be made playable. When a government has utterly lost its authority, there is no choice but to transform it; only then may order be reestablished.”⁴²

Dong Zhongshu’s words are right on the mark! It is my contention, if I may be so bold, that Your Majesty has inherited his perspicacity (明) from Wen of Zhou and received his virtue (德) from Jimmu.⁴³ You have revived the kingly way and abolished military hegemony (霸).⁴⁴ You bring comfort to the farthest corners of the realm and

⁴² 如以湯止湯湯愈甚。琴瑟不調甚者必解而更張之、乃可鼓也。為政而不行甚者必變而更化之、乃可理也。 The quote is from Dong Zhongshu’s first rescript (*ce* 冊). See *Han shu* 56.2504-05.

⁴³ Virtue is the most common English translation of 德, but it fails to sufficiently convey the sense of suasive, transformative power inherent in the term. Arthur Waley has used “power” to render 德, which is quite accurate if the power in question is understood to arise from moral excellence. Though “virtue” will be used here for clarity, something like “moral charisma” might be more appropriate, particularly when applied to a ruler. See Jonathan W. Schofer, “Virtues in Xunzi’s Thought,” in T.C. Kline and Philip J. Ivanhoe, eds., *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000), pp. 69-88; John S. Mayor, et al., eds. and trans., *The Huainanzi* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 872-73.

⁴⁴ The concept of hegemony and the figure of the hegemon are treated further below. Chūgan uses the term to pejoratively characterize warrior power in general and the Kamakura shogunate in particular.

embrace the rudest of your people. All the denizens of this land rightly pay you humble obeisance. Who but an enlightened, sagacious ruler – one who has received Heaven’s mandate – could accomplish such a thing? Sadly, the realm is today beset by the evils of the Kantō suzerains, whose polity has stood for over a hundred years. The people have gradually sunk into vice, becoming avaricious and wayward in their habits. This is why lawsuits fill the courts from morning to night. Worse still, the number of those who would conspire in rebellion has grown large. In other words, things here are now as they were in China when the Han succeeded the Qin; it is a time when order may be restored only through revolution. I have no knowledge regarding the earliest beginning of Heaven and Earth. But if your majesty were to abolish military hegemony and revive the way of the king, would this not be the beginning of an achievement – here, in our time – that would ring out for ten thousand generations? How can we afford *not* to reform the baneful scourge of outmoded ways?!⁴⁵

Alas, I am but a lone mustard weed in a mountain forest, and I will ultimately decay to nothing alongside the grasses and the trees. I am not bound by worldly interests, and one may wonder why I have offered these words, courting trouble through my impertinence. In point of fact, I do so only for the benefit of the realm (天下), not for myself (身). Truly, I do so for posterity, not to bask in the glory of a moment’s fame. It is my humble contention that if your majesty will take to heart the great words of Dong Zhongshu and Wang Tong, and accept the sincerity of my counsel, then the realm will prosper for myriad ages to come. I myself have no authority to act, so I have composed two essays, *Genmin* and *Gensō*, for your majesty’s perusal. If you find any of the ideas espoused therein to be of use, please issue a royal edict commanding your officials to see that they are put into effect. The foregoing is offered most humbly, with utmost reverence and trepidation.

⁴⁵ 陛下除霸興王、不乃萬世鴻業之始、固在斯時乎？舊法之弊不可革耶。If the referent of 霸 is taken specifically to be the Kamakura regime, which was destroyed approximately six months earlier, the first part might be rendered “does not your majesty’s abolition of military hegemony and revival of the way of the king constitute the beginning of an achievement – here in our time – that will ring out for ten thousand generations?”

上 建武天子表

十一月日傳法臣僧圓月謹昧死上書

皇帝陛下，竊以，王者受禪於人者，襲其統而沿之，得命於天者，通其變而革之。受禪於人者，如夏后殷周之克繼者也。得命於天者，湯放桀，武王伐紂之類皆是也。故易曰，湯武革命，順乎天而應於人，豈止湯武而已，漢高祖世祖，唐太宗，宋太祖皆其人也。文中子曰，通其變天下無弊法，執其方天下無善教，教化法度之成，三代莫之踰者，然久則其法又弊，法弊則革之，所以通其變也。所以夏法弊則殷湯革之，殷法弊則周武革之，周之衰時，法之弊甚，時衛鞅入秦，變其法，行之期年，國都言新法之不便者，以千數，於是太子犯法，鞅言法之不行，自上犯之，太子君嗣也，不可施刑，輒刑其傅，黥其師，明日秦人皆趨令，行之十年，秦國道不拾遺，山無盜賊，民勇於公戰，怯於私鬪。然後其初言不便者，來言令便也。然而秦得天下之後，弗能知復變其法之理。故弊甚極至暴酷，是以二世而亡。

漢繼秦之後七十餘歲，雖欲理之，無可奈何？法出而奸生，令下而詐起。則無它。以秦之遺民，習俗薄惡，民人抵冒也。是故董仲舒對策曰，如以湯止湯，湯愈甚。琴瑟不調，甚者必解而更張之，乃可鼓也；為政而不行，甚者必變而更化之，乃可理也。仲舒之言至矣哉。恭惟，陛下明繼周文，德承神武。興王除霸，柔遠包荒，高田之下，厚地之上，莫不賓順，非聰明睿，知得命於天者，孰能與於此哉。然今天下為關東所伯，百數十歲之弊積焉。斯民漸漬惡俗，貪饕諛諂。故自朝至暮獄訟滿庭，又沙上偶語者亦多矣。乃與漢繼秦之時，偶相同也。更化則可理之時也。天地之初，臣不得而知之，陛下除霸興王，不乃萬世鴻業之始，固在斯時乎，舊法之弊可不革耶？

臣是山林一芥，宜當與草木共朽也。實為天下不為身也。實為萬世不為一時名望之榮也。伏望陛下，感董生王通之至言，而收臣懇誠，則天下萬世之幸矣。臣不自揆，輒撰原民，原僧二篇，以塵睿覽，如有可采，敕有司施行之，謹奉書以聞，某誠惶誠恐。

Chūgan designates this piece a *hyō* 表 (*C. biao*), a particular type of memorial understood to convey opinions and policy views, unlike the more explicitly admonitory *sō* 奏 (*zou*).⁴⁶ As he does in *Genmin*, Chūgan details the malaise afflicting

⁴⁶ An extended discussion of the history and literary qualities of royal memorials may be found in chapters 22 and 23 of *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍, a seminal work of literary theory by the Liang-era scholar Liu Xie 劉勰 (465-522 A.D.). The *biao* is treated in chapter 22.

contemporary Japanese society, placing the onus squarely upon the recently toppled Kamakura regime and buttressing his position with examples drawn from the Chinese experience. Go-Daigo's revolutionary moment is cast in the most elevated terms imaginable within the grand sweep of East Asian history, likened to the epochal transitions from the Shang Dynasty to the Zhou and the Qin to the Han. Such rhetoric immediately suggests that the recent upheavals besetting both the shogunate, an institution with no close analogue in China, and the Japanese court, which in form and function had come to differ dramatically from China's, might nonetheless be understood in broadly "Chinese" terms, auguring the fall of one national order and the rise of another. Inasmuch as this reading flatters Emperor Go-Daigo and underscores the gravity of his historical situation, it serves Chūgan's purpose well.

An even more accurate, if less dramatic, application of the Chinese historical experience to fourteenth century Japan is suggested by Chūgan's use of the term "hegemon" (霸) in contradistinction to "king" (王). As noted above, the primary referents for the former are the Kamakura regime and the model of independent warrior governance it represented. The hegemons of classical Confucian historiography refer to rulers in pre-imperial China who, while politically and militarily successful, did not conform to the moral ideals of rulership espoused by the *ru* 儒 classicists.⁴⁷ The hegemons are mentioned in numerous canonical texts,

⁴⁷ See Hutton, *Xunzi*, pp. xxiv-xxv. The usual translation for *ru* in English is "Confucian," though in the treatment of early texts, this is sometimes replaced by terms such as "classicist," "classical studies scholar," or simply left untranslated. The *ru* were experts in Zhou period ritual and versed in the texts and traditions

including *Lunyu*, *Mengzi*, and especially *Xunzi*, which devotes an entire chapter to clarifying the difference between them and true kings. For the philosopher Xunzi 荀子 (Xun Kuang 荀况, 313-238 B.C.), the hegemon was better than a tyrant king but still far from ideal. Mengzi 孟子 (Meng Ke 孟軻, 372-289 B.C.), perhaps the most influential *ru* thinker besides Confucius himself, emphasized their reliance on brute power (力) over moral capacity or “virtue” (德), and appraised them in the following terms:

One who uses power as a substitute for benevolence is a Hegemon, and a Hegemon needs to have a large state. One who uses virtue to effect benevolence is a King, and a King does not depend (for his success) on the size of his state.⁴⁸

以力假仁者霸、霸必有大國。以德行仁者王、王不待大。

By the time of texts such as *Mengzi* and *Xunzi*, the hegemon was an established figure of rule-by-might, and although they arose almost two thousand years before the Kamakura shogunate, their development during the Zhou era is similar enough to that of warrior power in Japan to sustain a comparison that is not only rhetorically effective, but logically compelling as well. As explained by Edward Slingerland, the hegemon was a position first recognized by the Zhou kings in 681 B.C., when Duke Huan of Qi was given this appointment in order to lead the Chinese defense against barbarian invasion; while they were theoretically regents of the Zhou monarch, the hegemon in fact ruled independently, and the post itself

associated with Confucius. See Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Readings in Han Chinese Thought* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), p. 184.

⁴⁸ *Mengzi* 2A3.

represented an important erosion of Zhou royal authority.⁴⁹ As Chūgan was well aware, something quite similar might be said about the shogunate, an institution nominally captained by a military dictator bearing the title *Sei-i taishōgun* 征夷大將軍, “Generalissimo of the Expeditionary Force Against the Barbarians,” a commission originally granted in the Nara and early Heian periods to commanders leading Japanese forces against unassimilated peoples in northern Honshu. For Chūgan, the Kamakura shogunate was not like a dynasty that had *lost* the legitimate right to govern; rather it was akin to the polities of Zhou-era hegemonies, morally illegitimate in this capacity from the beginning. Moreover, it is clear that the term “hegemon” (or “hegemony”) as used in the memorial would apply in principle to any system of rule by autonomous warrior suzerains, and that Chūgan’s discussion of Go-Daigo’s central accomplishment – reviving the kingly way and abolishing military hegemony – was intended both as a celebration of the emperor’s achievements and as a prescription for the state of affairs he hoped would obtain in perpetuity under the new order.

Another notable and, in the context of Japanese thought, fairly unusual feature of the memorial is the prominence Chūgan accords to the Western Han thinker Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 B.C.). As adviser to the illustrious Emperor Wu 武 (r. 141-87 B.C.), Dong advanced a vision of Confucianism that quickly became a central pillar of Han political theory and statecraft. At the heart of his syncretic philosophy was an active Heaven whose laws govern not only the natural world but human affairs as well, along with an abiding belief in the dynamic

⁴⁹ Edward Slingerland, *Analects* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003), p. 239.

interrelatedness of seemingly disparate social and natural phenomena.⁵⁰ Not unlike Dong, Chūgan hoped to shape the decisions of a mature and vigorous sovereign who was willing to embrace coercion in order to remake the political landscape. The aim of his memorial to Go-Daigo was to offer intellectual justification for revolution, an end to which *Yijing* studies and Dong's perspective on historical change was nicely suited. In particular, Dong had argued that sovereigns who accede during periods when the world is well governed do not alter the way of their forebears, but those who come to power during times of disorder do.⁵¹ The Han, according to Dong, "succeeded after great disorder" (漢繼大亂之後), and it is therefore right and proper that they should alter some of the norms that had prevailed during the Zhou, just as the Zhou, a dynasty also born of disorder, had done a millennium before.⁵²

Although Chūgan does not explicitly apply Dong's theory of historical cyclicity to Japan, it seems clear that in matters of theme and diction, he was strongly inspired by the famous triptych of "responses" (對策) in which Dong

⁵⁰ See Michael Loewe, *Divination, Mythology, and Monarchy in Han China* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 134-41, and "Imperial Sovereignty: Dong Zhongshu's Contribution and His Predecessors," in S.R. Schram, ed., *Foundations and Limits of State Power in China* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, Univ. of London, 1987), pp. 33-57.

⁵¹ See Gary Arbuckle, "Inevitable Treason: Dong Zhongshu's Theory of Historical Cycles and Early Attempts to Invalidate the Han Mandate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115.4 (1995), pp. 585-97.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 591-92. Dong effectively ignores the Qin, seemingly regarding it, in Arbuckle's words, as an "historical miscarriage." The peaceful successions were from Yao to Shun, Shun to Yu, and Yu to his son, construed in this schema as the first formal ruler of the Xia; the dynasties to succeed by conquest were the Shang, Zhou, and Han.

outlined his cyclical theory to Emperor Wu.⁵³ The questions and responses are preserved in *Hanshu* 漢書 (*The History of the Han*), a foundational text long studied by Japanese intellectuals and one to which Chūgan would undoubtedly have had ample access long before his journey to China. Other works by Dong Zhongshu also seem to have been known in Japan since at least the late ninth century, as one text attributed to him is mentioned in the bibliographic resource *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* 日本国見在書目録, a catalogue of Chinese texts held in Japan.⁵⁴ Overall, however, Dong does not appear to have enjoyed particular prominence in Japanese political thought, this despite widespread interest among Japanese literati in both the interpretation of omens and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, a work central to Dong's scholarship and policy positions.⁵⁵ In no other text of which I have knowledge does Dong Zhongshu feature more centrally than he does in Chūgan's

⁵³ An analysis of these texts is given in Michael Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu: A 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu Fanlu* (Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 83-101.

⁵⁴ Compiled ca. 891 by Fujiwara no Sukeyo 藤原佐世, the work lists 1,579 separate Chinese works that total almost 17,000 fascicles. Curiously, the most famous tract traditionally ascribed to Dong, *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant Dew of The Spring and Autumn Annals*) is not among them; the one work bearing his name is titled *Chunqiu zaiyi Dong Zhongshu zhan* 春秋灾異董仲舒占, which I have not found elsewhere. A tentative translation might be *Prognostications of Dong Zhongshu Concerning Disasters and Anomalies Appearing in The Spring and Autumn Annals*.

⁵⁵ In Japan, *The Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋) and the *Zuo Commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳) had been a formal part of the state university curriculum since its inception, each mentioned explicitly as such in the *Regulations of the Yōrō Era* (養老令, 718). The mid-ninth century legal text *Ryō no shūge* 令集解, a compilation of expansions and explanatory glosses on the Yōrō regulations, notes that the *Gongyang* 公羊 and *Guliang* 穀梁 commentaries had also become de rigueur. *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* lists no less than 33 separate works on *Chunqiu* and its commentaries.

memorial, and in few other periods of Japanese history could his thought have been more readily applied.

While the work of Dong Zhongshu was quite clearly known in Japan, even if seldom studied in depth, Wang Tong has left almost no trace whatsoever in the world of Japanese *kanshibun* outside of Chūgan's writing. *Wenzhongzi* is absent altogether from *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku*, and a computer search of the vast body of official documents and courtier diaries digitized in recent years reveals not a single explicit mention of it except in Chūgan's memorial.⁵⁶ The only other reference to *Wenzhongzi* of which I am aware occurs in the diary of the inimitable Emperor Hanazono 花園 (1297-1348; r. 1308-18), who after perusing it in the summer of 1324 assessed Wang Tong as being on par with Xunzi and Yang Xiong.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Dong Zhongshu does not fare dramatically better in this regard than Wang Tong, but his *Chunqiu fanlu*, while not listed in *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku*, is quoted once in *Minkeiki* 民經記, the diary of the high-ranking official Kadenokōji Tsunemitsu 勘解由小路經光 (1212-74), and also in a special report (*kanjin* 勘申) submitted by Fujiwara no Atsumitsu 藤原敦光 (1063-1144) to Emperor Sutoku 崇徳 in 1135, apparently in response to the latter's questions regarding portents of famine and sickness. This report was included in the mid-twelfth century *Honchō zoku monzui* 本朝続文粹; a thoroughly annotated version of it may be found in Yamagishi et al., eds., *Kodai seiji shakai shisō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001), pp. 169-84. The Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo maintains a searchable database that includes the document collections *Heian ibun*, *Kamakura ibun*, and *Dai Nihon komonjo*, along with digitized versions of dozens of diaries and records from the Nara, Heian and Kamakura periods. See <http://wwwap.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ships/shipscontroller>

⁵⁷ *Hanazono tennō shinki* 花園天皇宸記 Shōchū 1.4.12. See Andrew E. Goble, "Social Change, Knowledge, and History: Hanazono's Admonitions to the Crown Prince," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55.1 (1995), p. 103. It is of interest to note that comparisons of Wang Tong with Mengzi, Xunzi, and Yang Xiong became common in China during the Northern Song, when *Wenzhongzi* began to appear on the civil service examinations. On this see Wong Kwok-yiu, "Between Politics and Metaphysics: On the Changing Reception of Wang T'ung in the T'ang-Sung Intellectual Transitions," *Monumenta Serica*, vol. 55 (2007), pp. 61-97.

Like Dong Zhongshu, Wang Tong sought to unite multiple strands of classical Chinese thought under an essentially Confucian philosophical rubric, and he drew heavily on *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*The Doctrine of the Mean*), *Yijing*, *Chunqiu*, and the work of Dong Zhongshu himself. Yet Wang attempted something that a Western Han figure like Dong could not have, integrating into his system not only those particular texts and modes of discourse identified principally with Confucianism and Daoism, but also those associated with Buddhism. *Wenzhongzi* quotes directly from the Avatamsaka Sutra (C. *Huayan jing*, J. *Kegon kyō* 華嚴經), and the very chapter on which Chūgan draws in his memorial contains an exchange between Wang and one of his disciples in which Wang identified the Buddha 佛 as a sage 聖人.⁵⁸ The unification of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, collectively styled the “Three Creeds” (C. *Sanjiao*, J. *Sankyō* 三教), in the realms of aesthetics, metaphysics, ethics, and statecraft would become a recurring trope in medieval Japanese thought, and it is quite likely that *Wenzhongzi* was a signal work to a young Chūgan seeking a holistic understanding of the vicissitudes of his age.⁵⁹

More than this, Chūgan may have seen himself as an intellectual heir to Wang Tong and aspired to continue his legacy in Japan. Chūgan’s philosophical magnum opus, a portion of which will be considered below, is the aforementioned *Chūseishi*

⁵⁸ See Zhang Pei, *Zhong shuo jiao zhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2013), pp. 11 and 114. The context seems to suggest that the buddha in question is the historical Buddha, but the identification might be interpreted as simply being between a buddha and a sage.

⁵⁹ Not infrequently, Confucianism was replaced in the medieval Japanese version of the “Three Creeds” by recently developed notions of Shinto, the formulation of which owed much to esoteric Buddhism, mountain asceticism (Shugendō 修驗道), and older traditions of *kami* worship that had not previously been systematized.

中正子, which was composed several months after *Genmin* and the memorial to Go-Daigo. The work takes its title from a pseudonymous fictional character who represents Chūgan's own views in dialogic exchanges. Not only is the name Chūseishi, "The Master of Balance and Rectitude," immediately suggestive of Wang Tong's posthumous moniker Wenzhongzi 文中子, "The Master of Culture and Balance," Chūgan's work is also structured in precisely the manner of *Wenzhongzi* and covers similar material. In the opening chapter of *Chūseishi*, the Master of Balance and Rectitude even opines that Wang Tong was "remarkably similar" to Confucius.⁶⁰ It is probably not unreasonable to assume that Chūgan, who was 34 at the time and in the beginning of his most creative and experimental period, hoped that he too might someday be accorded comparable approbation.

A Note on Genre and Style: Chūgan's Memorial in the Context of Medieval Japanese *Kanbun*

Given the singular circumstances confronting Japanese elites and intellectuals in the 1330s, it is perhaps not surprising that in terms of content,

⁶⁰ 王氏後夫子千載而生、然甚俏焉。 See Iriya Yoshitaka, ed., "Chūseishi" in Ichikawa Hakugen et al., eds., *Chūsei Zenke no shisō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1972), pp. 128 and 172. Chūgan seems to have meant this as a genuine compliment, or at least as a neutral description of Wang Tong's approach to scholarship. Wang Tong was, however, infamous for his overt emulation of Confucius in seemingly every aspect of his lifestyle, something for which he was criticized by later scholars, particularly those associated with the *Daoxue* movement. See Howard J. Wechsler, "The Confucian Teacher Wang T'ung (584?-617): One Thousand Years of Controversy," *T'oung Pao*, LXIII (1977), pp. 225-272 and Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism: Ch'en Liang's Challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1982), pp. 106-7.

Chūgan's memorial stands well apart from most extant Japanese examples of the genre. Over 40 *hyō* by Japanese authors are preserved in the influential eleventh-century *kanshibun* anthology *Honchō monzui* 本朝文粹 (*The Literary Essence of Our Court*), and dozens more may be found in private collections such as *Kanke bunsō* 菅家文章 and *Toshi bunshū* 都氏文集, which record the writings of noted literati Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903) and Miyako no Yoshika 都良香 (c. 838-79), respectively. All of these memorials are by aristocrats, and the vast bulk are formal declinations (*ji, ci* 辭) of official appointments. Such declinations, frequently offered more as demonstrations of humility than as earnest refusals, represent a major traditional function of the *hyō*.⁶¹ Although Michizane did compose some very brief *hyō* that addressed issues of government policy – in one, he requests that an additional professor of literature (*monjō hakase* 文章博士) be appointed at the university – none speak to fundamental political reform or bear upon the totality of state, society, and kingship in Japan. Were one to search for texts by Japanese authors similar in both intent and content to Chūgan's memorial, the likeliest candidates would not be Heian-era *hyō*, but rather works of political counsel offered by contemporaries such as Yoshida Sadafusa 吉田定房 (1274-1338). A member of the high nobility (*kugyō* 公卿), Sadafusa was among the most educated men of his generation and served as royal vizier and tutor in the Chinese classics to Emperor

⁶¹ Sometimes, appointees would offer not one but three declinations, following the example of Duke Wen of Jin (c. 771-476 B.C.), who thrice refused an offer of enfeoffment (册) before eventually accepting it. This practice was apparently followed faithfully by some Japanese officials, as memorials of declination labeled “first,” “second” and “third” are not uncommon in *Honchō monzui*.

Go-Daigo. In 1324, he drafted a ten-point “*kotogaki*-style” memorial (*sōjō* 奏狀), analyzed in detail below, in which he warned Go-Daigo *against* challenging the bakufu militarily.⁶² The piece is thoughtful and learned, exemplifying well the tradition of Chinese learning within the aristocracy and illustrating the importance of the Chinese historical legacy to political suasion in Japan. Older analogues might also be sought in *kanmon* (勘文), a genre without the literary patina of the *hyō* but used frequently by Japanese aristocrats to offer opinions and recommendations on matters of court policy.

Altogether, the *hyō* seems to have been a genre far more commonly composed by Heian-period (794-1185) courtiers than by medieval literati, and predominantly for purposes other than remonstrance or policy proposal. To a much greater extent than other esteemed Chinese literary forms (e.g. *shi* 詩, *ron* (論) 論, *sho* (書) 書, *san* (贊) 贊, and *fu* 賦), memorials, and perhaps the *hyō* most especially, seem to have remained in Japan a niche genre tied closely to a continental culture of officialdom, one in which educated ministers plied their services within a singular, statist authority structure at whose apex stood the office and persona of the emperor. This model of governance met with respectable success in Japan during the Nara (710-94) and early Heian eras, and was in a very

⁶² See Kasamatsu Hiroshi et al., eds., *Chūsei seiji shakai shisō*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981), pp. 149-154. In the so-called *kotogaki* 事書き or *kajōgaki* 箇条書き format, each entry begins *hitotsu... no koto* 一…事, “Item: In the Matter of...” or, in legal preambles, “Item: Whereas...” For example, the first entry in Sadafusa’s memorial opens with the caption 一王者以仁勝暴事, which might be read aloud in Japanese as *Hitotsu, ō wa jin wo motte bō ni katsu koto*, “Item: That a King Overcomes Violence with Benevolence.” Not all Japanese memorials bearing the *sō/zhuang* designation are structured like this.

basic sense the model to which Chūgan and Go-Daigo were most attracted. But by the time Chūgan was writing, such a polity had long since been transformed by both a uniquely Japanese apparatus of statist authority – the *bakufu* 幕府 or “shogunate” – and numerous sources of more localized “lordly” authority such as wealthy families and religious institutions.⁶³ During the Muromachi period (1338-1573), even the shogunate could make no pretense to anything resembling absolute national suzerainty, and functioned instead as an interdependent part (albeit a very powerful one) in what has been termed a “system of lordly corporations.”⁶⁴ This is not to say that educated aristocratic ministers ceased discharging the functions of their Heian predecessors; they certainly did not. But the court was no longer at the center of textual production, and its relative retreat from leadership in this area roughly tracks the trajectory of its fortunes as an institution, which, excepting the brief revival in court authority between 1321 and 1336, declined markedly over the course of the Kamakura period and fell still further in the centuries that followed.⁶⁵

Throughout the Muromachi period, highly trained Buddhist scholar-priests grew not only to outnumber aristocratic ministers and members of the hereditary *hakase* 博士 scholar families, but also to outpace them in the production of poetry

⁶³ Use of the terms lordly and statist follow Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

⁶⁵ See G. Cameron Hurst III, “The *Kōbu* Polity: Court-Bakufu Relations in Kamakura Japan,” in Jeffery P. Mass, ed., *Court and Bakufu in Japan: Essays in Kamakura History* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 3-28. Germane to Go-Daigo’s political orientation was the Kamakura shogunate’s role in effectively splitting the imperial family into two rival lines, each depending for income on their own diminished portfolios of estates.

and expository prose in Chinese.⁶⁶ Work in these areas by figures like Chūgan, Zekkai Chūshin, Musō Soseki, Gidō Shūshin 義堂周信 (1325-88), Hanazono and many others reached heights of artistry and intellectual sophistication unexcelled by even the greatest of Heian literati. On a more mundane level, *kanbun* remained the medium of choice in a wide variety of practical contexts, and the characteristic social trends of the age, most notably the decentralization of authority and expansion of the commercial economy, motivated an impressive efflorescence of family precepts (*kakun* 家訓), private statutory codes for the management of family properties (e.g. the masterful *Munakata kotogaki jōjō* 宗像事書条々 of 1312), along with a galaxy of legal records, contracts, bills of sale, and other document types seen either less frequently or not at all in earlier epochs.

Moreover, inasmuch as the literary *kanshibun* tradition during the medieval era was shaped less by aristocrats than by members of the clergy, some of whom had spent extended periods of time in China and were proficient in both “classical” Chinese and the Song vernacular, there is probably more stylistic diversity in literary *kanshibun* of this time than in that of the Heian period. The prose style of Chūgan’s memorial, no less than its bold subject matter, distinguishes it from its Heian predecessors. As already noted, Chūgan preferred to write in a direct, *guwen*-inspired style; although some of Michizane’s *hyō* are relatively straightforward, they all far briefer than Chūgan’s, and the examples of the genre in *Honchō monzui* tend to exemplify the highly wrought *pianwen* style of parallel prose. By contrast,

⁶⁶ Kurozumi Makoto, David Lurie, trans., “*Kangaku: Writing and Institutional Authority*,” in Haruo Shirane, ed., *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000), p. 210.

Chūgan’s memorial is not only direct, but seems almost colloquial in places, as in the portion cited above where he tells Go-Daigo that restoring the kingly way in *this* era would (or did) constitute a particularly grand achievement. In this example, the phrase “especially in this time” 固在斯時, is inserted into the rhetorical question in a way that suggests the urgency of a spoken utterance:

陛下除霸興王不乃萬世鴻業之始、固在斯時乎。舊法之弊可不革耶？

If your majesty abolishes military hegemony and revives the way of the king, would this not be the beginning of an achievement – **here, in our time** – that would ring out for a thousand generations? How can we afford *not* to reform the baneful scourge of our outmoded ways?!⁶⁷

Today, Chūgan’s memorial stands as a singular example of political argumentation in medieval Japan, and testifies implicitly to the opportunities for both social advancement and ideological experimentation presented by Go-Daigo’s ambitions. Artistically, it illustrates the conventions of a genre that was practiced almost exclusively by members of the aristocracy, and which seems to have become less common in the medieval era than it had been in Heian times, when the imperial court was at its cultural apogee. While upholding certain conventions common to

⁶⁷ Read according to Japanese *kundoku* conventions, the phrase 固在斯時 is seemingly quite simple (*makoto ni kono toki ni ari*), but in reading the entire locution the situation is complicated by the need to adjust the conjugation of 在 (*ari*) when rendering the negative structure 不乃...乎, which would result in something like *Heika, ha o nozoki, ō o okosu wa sunawachi bansei kōgyō no hajime makoto ni kono toki ni aran ka*. Japanese readers untrained in “Chinese” as such relied largely upon *kundoku* rules to construe *kanbun* texts; despite the often stilted quality of such renderings, most were aurally comprehensible to those familiar with the conventions. For an extended investigation of *kundoku* and related matters, see the appendix at the end of this study.

earlier Japanese memorials, it also demonstrates economy of diction and clarity of expression, stylistic sensibilities that are perhaps better suited to providing actual policy advice than the elliptical flourishes frequently found in Heian-era parallel prose. Significantly, no similar memorials by other Japanese figures in the Gozan milieu survive. The renowned Chinese émigré monk Mingji Chujun (Minki Soshun 明極楚俊, 1262-1336) did offer a congratulatory *hyō* to Go-Daigo upon his re-acquisition of power in 1333, but this was a celebratory piece not intended to advance a program of reform.⁶⁸ That Chūgan was seemingly the only Gozan figure to have composed such a lengthy and ideologically insistent memorial speaks to both his own political convictions, unusually strong by the standards of his era, and to the unique circumstances of the 1330s. Yet while Chūgan's memorial undeniably evinces the idiosyncrasies of both its author and its historical moment, idiosyncrasy is only legible in reference to what is customary. Whatever powers of perlocution the memorial might be seen to possess arise principally from citations and rhetorical conventions that situate it squarely within an esteemed generic lineage embracing countless texts of similar import written by principled councilors, both Chinese and Japanese, in ages past.

⁶⁸ See Sun Rongcheng, "Chūgan Engetsu no shisō to bungaku" (Ph.D. Diss., Beijing Foreign Studies University, 2012), p. 98. This is not to say that Mingji had no political agenda; it is known that he gave lectures, which Go-Daigo attended, in which he advocated for military preparedness (if not militancy) among the Buddhist monastic community. As Sun notes, Go-Daigo may have welcomed the material support that armed monks friendly to his cause could provide, but the idea does represent an ideological difference between Mingji and Chūgan, who opposed soldiery among monks.

Violence, Virtue, and Royal Legitimacy: The Memorial of Yoshida Sadafusa

An illustrative complement to the suasive strategies employed in Chūgan's *hyō*, which provided real advice on matters of policy but was not remonstrative or critical of Go-Daigo, is provided by the aforementioned memorial (*sōjō*) of Yoshida Sadafusa. Written in 1324 in opposition to Go-Daigo's plan to move militarily against the shogunate, this text sought not to flatter the emperor's historical position but to relativize it. Traditionally, the *sō* (奏, C. *zou*) was an admonitory genre that was employed occasionally by Nara and Heian-period officials but for purposes typically unrelated to remonstrations. Its history in China reaches back at least a millennium before its appearance in Japan; according to Liu Xie, "the *zou*'s function in accusation and impeachment is to clarify the law and rid the state of evil... since it is its purpose to expose evil, an impeachment memorial cannot help but be severe and harsh" (若乃按劾之奏、所以明憲清國 … 術在糾惡、勢必深峭).⁶⁹

The evils that Sadafusa wished to expose were principally those that result from misguided military adventures. His views on Japanese kingship and the responsibilities of sovereignty were heavily influenced by the Chinese philosophical and historiographical tradition, which to him offered both historical data and

⁶⁹ See Vincent Yu-chung Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983), pp. 256-57. It is worth noting here that generic terminology is not always applied rigidly and should not be taken as determinative of content: in Heian Japan, works designated *sōjō* are apt to be elegantly worded petitions for court promotion, not strident memorials of impeachment. In this regard, Sadafusa's *sōjō* is somewhat unique and closer in spirit to Liu Xie's notion of the *zou*.

philosophical first principles that were applicable to contemporary Japan. Two works in particular, *Mengzi* and *Shiji*, loom especially large. This, of course, is something he has in common with Chūgan. Altogether, his memorial offers a valuable glimpse into political suasion *within* the royal circle, and illustrates how at least one educated minister understood both the strategic and the ethical implications of making war with the shogunate.⁷⁰

Though it would seem that disagreements persist regarding Your Majesty's intention to found a new state, I submit that the will of Heaven remains unknown and the most opportune moment for action is impossible to ascertain. Retracing the history of both China and Japan, I shall answer Your Majesty's request for counsel with my own humble observations. There is little to gain and much to lose, and so I venture to present my earnest suggestions, daring to incur therefrom the full measure of Your Majesty's displeasure.

国家草創事、叡念雖似有議、天命未知、時機難測。和漢兩朝先蹤、今就 勅命粗愚管、小益多損。試獻數箇之鯁議、敢犯十分之逆鱗矣。

1. That a King Overcomes Violence with Humanity

⁷⁰ The translation that follows is based upon the text in Kasamatsu, et al., eds, *Chūsei seiji shakai shisō*, pt. 2 (*Nihon shisō taikei* 22, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981), pp. 148-54. Kasamatsu and Satō Shin'ichi have provided helpful annotations, which have been reproduced here; additional notes have been appended to terms or passages that present particular interpretive challenges. The text is also included in *Zoku gunsho ruijū* (see "Jōshūbō zōnikki 淨修坊雜日記," *ZGSRJ* 925:31, pt. 2), but no author is specified. It was not until 1940 that scholars Matsumoto Shūji 松本周二 and Murata Masashi 村田正志 identified the work as Sadafusa's, a conclusion that remains widely accepted today. On this see Satō Shin'ichi's explanatory introduction to the work in *CSSS*, pt. 2, 391-92.

In the way of the accomplished person (*shijin* 至人), it is humanity (*jin* 仁) that comes first. In manifesting humanity concretely, the most fundamental thing is to not kill. This is what is meant in *Mengzi* by the notion that the realm may be pacified by being unified.⁷¹ The first emperor of Qin mobilized all the people within his borders and set them upon the Six Kingdoms. Taking advantage of the unrest in Shandong, he was ultimately able to consume the whole of China. And yet his regime perished in two generations. Cao Cao of Wei, Sima Yi of Jin, Liu Yu of Liu Song, Xiao Daocheng of Southern Qi, Xiao Yan of Liang, Yang Jian of Sui – all of these men founded dynasties, but their descendants would not be performing the ancestral sacrifices for long. This is because they relied on force of arms to solidify their position, and made tyranny and violence their foundation. Gaozu of Han, Guangwu of Latter Han, and Taizong of Tang all followed the way of the Former Kings and possessed hearts of humanity and love. As the states they established each endured for centuries, can there be any doubt that Mencius was right?

一、王者以仁勝暴事

至人之道只仁為先、仁之為躰、不殺為基。孟子所謂天下定于一是也。秦始皇駢境內之民、當六國之役。乘于山東之擾亂、暫雖吞海內、二世兮滅。魏曹操、晉司馬懿、宋劉裕、齊蕭道成、梁蕭衍、隨楊堅、皆雖為草創之主、子孫永不血食、是皆以兵革為固、以暴虐為基之故也。漢高祖、後漢光武、唐太宗、皆遵先王之道、抱仁愛之心、社稷各數百年、孟子之言豈徒然乎。

This first article implicitly presents Go-Daigo with a choice: be a martial ruler whose success will be short lived, or be a virtuous ruler whose polity will endure for

⁷¹ The reference is to *Mengzi* 1A7: “Mengzi had an audience with King Xiang of Liang. When Mengzi left, he said to some others, ‘When I looked up at him, he did not seem like a ruler of people. When I approached him, I did not see anything awe-inspiring in him. He simply blurted out, ‘How can the world be pacified?’ I responded, ‘It can be pacified by being unified.’ The king asked, ‘Who can unify it?’ I replied, ‘One who does not have a taste for killing people can unify it...’” See Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, p. 7.

generations. Noteworthy is the pride of place given to Mencius, a thinker who is typically associated with the view that political legitimacy is contingent upon the moral fitness of the ruler; that Sadafusa foregrounds Mencius in the first article of his memorial implies unmistakably that he sees Go-Daigo's rule, and probably Japanese kingship in general, as subject to the same forces that bear upon kingship elsewhere. Even the *Mengzi* entry he cites presents a ruler that, while not tyrannical, is not particularly prescient either. Sadafusa is certainly romanticizing the legacies of Han Gaozu, Han Guangwu, and Tang Taizong, but such was standard practice in tracts of political suasion.

2. That the Manpower of the Populace Must Not be Wasted

The Qin emperor built lavishly on Mount Li, and the Sui emperor debauched in Jiangdu.⁷² These alone exemplify arrogance and dissolution; how much more do their military adventures!

一、不費民力役事

秦皇營驪山之侈、隨帝專江都之遊、尚是驕逸之甚也。何況於軍旅之事乎。

3. That Undertakings Which Imperil People's Lives Must Be Treated Solemnly

⁷² The references are to the enormous mausoleum Qin Shihuang had constructed for himself, famous today for the 1974 discovery of an army of terra cotta statues interred on its grounds, and to a luxurious detached palace built at Yangzhou by Emperor Yang of Sui.

A king is the mother and father of the entire populace; he makes the whole of the realm his house, and the people his children. How could a loving father possibly wish to send his own innocent progeny to die upon the tips of spears? How many people will be sent to their deaths before order is returned to the realm? Oh how I grieve to think of it!

一、重人死命事

王者萬民之父母也。以天下為家、以民庶為子。使無罪之子孫死鋒鏑之下、豈慈父之意乎。天下草昧之間、萬民役死幾多乎。嗟呼哀哉。

In these short articles, Sadafusa cites two well-known examples of waste and immorality in order to make the point that even these bad acts pale in comparison to misguided military ventures. He then offers an emotionally charged exhortation that altogether bypasses the “strategic” question of whether or not war against Kamakura might actually succeed, and instead points to the human cost of waging such a war.

4. That “Heavenly omens are not as good as advantages of terrain, and advantages of terrain are not as good as harmony with the people.”⁷³

These are words that Mencius wrote. In recent times, the order of the realm is such that of a hundred parts, ninety are controlled by warrior houses (武家). In terms of martial courage, the people in our Shandong are each worth a thousand men; how could the delicate babies of the Kinai be pitted against those mighty Kanto barbarians?!⁷⁴ The utter impossibility of this needs no further comment.

⁷³ *Mengzi* 2.B1. Translation given in Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, p. 50.

⁷⁴ “Our Shandong” is a somewhat speculative translation based on the assumption that Sadafusa is using Shandong (“East of the Mountains” 山東), which became the territorial base of the Qin empire following its conquest of Qi, as an analogue for

一、天時不如地利々々不如人和事

孟子書有此言矣。頃年天下之躰、百分兮九十者武家之有也。戰士勇山東之民一兮當千、豈以皇畿近州之嬰兒對東關蠻夷之勇健乎。此事之不可亦叵言矣。

5. Concerning the Yellow Emperor's Punitive Expedition

Chiyou would not obey imperial commands, so the Yellow Emperor mounted an expedition against him.⁷⁵ Today, can the warriors of the Kanto be counted on not to contravene Heavenly principle? (No, of course not). This is the first reason for the impossibility (of mounting a similar expedition against the Kamakura Bakufu).

一、皇帝征伐事

蚩尤不用帝命、故征伐之。今時關東之武士無逆天理之志歟。其不可一也。

In this article, and in the three that follow, Sadafusa appeals to examples from Chinese history to characterize Go-Daigo's tenuous position. He does so rather tersely, presumably because his message is entirely clear to Go-Daigo. The issue in Article Five seems to be that while the Yellow Emperor needed to enlist the aid of the "feudal lords" (諸侯) – and successfully did so – in order to effect his subjugation of Chiyou, Go-Daigo could not count on receiving similar support from eastern

eastern Japan, which by Sadafusa's time was already long renowned for the strength of its fighting men.

⁷⁵ Chiyou 蚩尤, "The Wounder," was a powerful local leader who would not submit to the nascent political order led by the Yellow Emperor. Sadafusa is likely drawing upon the information at the beginning of the Five Emperors (五帝紀) section of *Shiji* 史記: "Chiyou fomented rebellion and would not obey imperial commands. Thus the Yellow Emperor proceeded to call up troops from among the feudal lords and did battle with Chiyou in the wilds of Zhulu, eventually capturing and killing him" (*Shiji* 1:3).

warriors were he to challenge Kamakura. That is, even though there exist in the historical record examples of successful (and morally justifiable) acts of military conquest, present circumstances will not permit Go-Daigo to enjoy similar results.

6. Concerning Shun's Pacification of The San Miao

The Miao peoples would not submit, and so Shun conquered them. However his conquest was unsuccessful. Hence he put into effect the Plan of Yu, fostering culture and virtue, and thereby getting the Miao to yield: this is what “dancing under feathered banners on the palace steps” refers to.⁷⁶ This is the second reason for the impossibility (of challenging the Bakufu).

一、舜服其三苗事

苗民不服、故舜征之。而無成功、遂用禹之謀、修文德服苗民。舞于羽於兩階是也。其不可二也。

7. Concerning Cheng Depositing Jie

Dragons descended into the Xia court, and ghosts wept on the frontier.⁷⁷ (Jie) imprisoned Tang at Xiatai, and (Tang) drove the people away from vice.⁷⁸ Cheng Tang

⁷⁶ “The emperor then spread wide culture and virtue, and they danced under feathered banners on the palace steps” 帝乃誕敷文德、舞于羽于兩階 (*Shujing*, “Da Yu Mo” 大禹謨). The terms “culture” 文 and “virtue” 德 are vastly more complex than either of these translations convey; for present purposes, it is not unreasonable to think of 文德 as a compound, used by Sadafusa to mean something like “civil virtue,” i.e. the sort of virtue associated with governance through moral probity, not through force. In a section of *Chūseishi* to be considered in the next chapter, Chūgan sets 文德 explicitly opposite of “military strategy” 武略, with the former constituting a guiding principle of good government and the latter a mere expedient.

⁷⁷ This article draws upon *Shiji* and possibly *Shujing* 書經, and while its general thrust is clear, some lines are difficult to parse. The first clause in the opening line refers to the appearance of a male and female dragon during the time of Emperor Kongjia, a dissolute and incompetent sovereign whose reign as described in *Shiji*

received the Mandate from Heaven and banished Jie to Mingtiao, and in this way was able to buttress his virtue.⁷⁹ At present, signs portending the Kantō's fall have yet to appear, and we have yet to hear of widespread anxiety and suffering among the populace. How could Your Majesty's delicate subjects be made ready to strike at a power still favored by fortune? This is the third reason (that challenging the shogunate is impossible).

一、湯取桀事

marks the beginning of the end for the Xia Dynasty. Kongjia reportedly “delighted in following ghosts and spirits and engaging in licentious and disorderly actions” (好方鬼神事淫亂); he was unable to care for the dragons and lost the support of the Huanlong 豢龍 (“Dragon Raising”) Clan. See William H. Nienhauser, Jr., et al., eds., *The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1994), p. 37. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate the reference for Sadafusa's mention of ghosts weeping on the frontier, and Sato and Kasamatsu offer no explanatory gloss.⁷⁸ 囚湯於夏臺、驅民於無罪。Although parallelism would seem to suggest that the implied subject of the second sentence is also Jie, such an interpretation is difficult to justify on historical grounds. Though the specific locution 驅民於無罪 seems to be unique to this memorial, Sadafusa was probably remembering the “Declaration of Tang” (湯誓), a speech in *Shujing* whose content is summarized in the *Shiji* section upon which he draws in this and the following article. Tang accuses Jie of having committed many crimes, and tries to persuade a skeptical people that his overthrow of the Xia is thus justifiable. Sadafusa's claim that the people were “driven” to a state of “innocence” is probably best understood to mean that they were impelled to support Tang in his quest for a new order. The phrase 無罪 might plausibly be construed as meaning *the one* who is without offense, i.e. Tang. This does allow a somewhat stronger case to be made for taking Jie as the implied subject, who through his tyranny (inadvertently) “drove” the people toward Tang.

⁷⁹ 成湯受命於天、放桀於鳴條、而有輔德。Sato and Kasamatsu construe 而有 as contrastive, and thus read the phrase 而有輔德 as meaning something like “but *he* possessed buttressing virtue” (their *kundoku* gloss reads しかるに輔德あり). By itself, the phrase 有輔德 could mean “to have the means of buttressing one's virtue” or “to have that which buttresses one's virtue” (in either case an abbreviation of 有所輔德), or “to have ‘buttressing virtue,’” taking 輔德 as a compound object of 有. Sato and Kasamatsu's rendition actually makes Sadafusa's rebuke of Go-Daigo even sharper: unlike Tang, who had the mandate from Heaven and the support of the people, Go-Daigo possesses no comparable “buttressing virtue” for his cause.

龍降于夏庭、鬼泣于國境。囚湯於夏台、馱民於無罪。成湯受命於天、放桀於鳴条而有輔德。今時關東之妖孽未見、萬民之愁苦未聞、豈以微弱之王民伺天縱之武運哉。其不可三也。

8. Concerning King Wu Deposing Zhou⁸⁰

He made the Marquis of Jiu into dried strips of meat, and the Marquis of E into mincemeat; he debauched in a pool filled with wine and hung meat in such abundance it resembled trees in a forest. He was especially preferential towards his consort Da Ji and enjoyed long nights of music and merriment. He instituted cruel penal laws, including immolation in the fire pit (*paoluo*, *hōraku* 炮烙).⁸¹ But there was King Wen, a leader who had received the Mandate and who had pent up his grievances while interned at Youli.⁸² Next came the sagacious ruler King Wu, who swore his oath of command at

⁸⁰ Following convention, the name of the last tyrant king of the Shang Dynasty, Zhou 紂, will be romanized with a 'w' instead of the otherwise expected 'u' to distinguish it from Zhou 周.

⁸¹ A bronze pillar was laid across a fire pit and the condemned were made to walk across it until they fell into the fire. See *The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. 1, p. 50, n. 111. The acts Sadafusa mentions are described in *Shiji* 3:105-106: 百姓怨望而諸侯有畔者、於是紂乃重刑辟、有炮烙之法…。九侯有好女、入之紂、九侯女不喜淫、肘怒、殺之、而醢九侯。鄂侯爭之疆、辨之疾、并脯鄂侯, "The families of the hundred cognomens were filled with resentment and hatred, and among the feudal lords there were those who were against him. Zhou then increased the severity of his punishments and had a method of roasting people on a rack... The Marquis of Jiu had a fit daughter, who he put in Zhou's service. The Marquis of Jiu's daughter was not interested in debauchery. Zhou became angry and killed her. He made the Marquis of Jiu into mincemeat. The Marquis of E remonstrated strongly and argued forcefully so Zhou also had him made into dried meat strips" (*The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. 1, p. 50).

⁸² Fearing the support King Wen was receiving from the feudal lords, Zhou imprisoned him in an area called Youli, located in modern Henan. In an attempt to secure their master's freedom, King Wen's vassals collected various treasures (and attractive women) to present to Zhou, who was so impressed with the gifts that he pardoned Wen. King Wen, then known simply as Lord of the West 西伯, became one of the most respected leaders of his day, and even convinced Zhou to abolish immolation. In time, most of the other feudal lords switched their allegiance from Zhou to Wen, whose son, King Wu 武, would deal the final blow to Zhou and bring

Mengjin.⁸³ But in our present Mandate-altering year, no signs portending the Kanto's demise have appeared, a fact which I have already stated above.⁸⁴ This is the fourth reason (that the shogunate should not be challenged).⁸⁵

一、武王放肘事

脯九侯醢鄂侯、瀝酒池掛肉林。嬖愛妲己成長夜之樂。以苛酷之刑法修炮烙之命。爰有文王受命之君、績憂於牖里。繼以武王聖明之主、發蹤於孟津。革命之今時關東無妖、其議聞上。其不可四也。

9. Concerning the Historical Vicissitudes of Our Imperial Court

In China, the fortunes of the throne have time and again been subject to decline and resurgence. This is likely due simply to the fact that different families keep appearing (to claim power). In our country, kings (*setsuri* 刹利) come from just one line; as a result, even though the throne may grow weaker with each passing day, no resurgence can be expected. This is something that Your Majesty must surely perceive.⁸⁶ Particularly after the Hōgen era (1156-58), the Minamoto and Taira families each monopolized power and the authority of the throne gradually declined. During the Genryaku era, the captain of the Right Palace Guards, Lord Yoritomo, pacified the realm and swallowed up territories

the Shang Dynasty to an end. King Wen is thus often considered the honorary founder of the succeeding Zhou 周 Dynasty.

⁸³ 發蹤於孟津. Mengjin 盟津 (alt. 孟津) was where King Wu gathered an army, proclaimed himself heir to Wen, and made a speech before the assembled lords.

⁸⁴ 革命之今時關東無妖、其儀聞上. The notion of a “Mandate-altering” year refers to the *kōshi* or *kinoe-ne* 甲子 year, the first in the sexagenary cycle, which in this case corresponds to the first year of Shōchū or 1324.

⁸⁵ After proclaiming himself heir and announcing his willingness to depose Zhou, the assembled lords all said “Zhou can be chastised!” But Wu still refused to launch his campaign, waiting two more years to do so, by which time Zhou’s rule had become even worse. Sadafusa’s point seems to be that even King Wu waited for the opportunity to strike, attacking Zhou only when victory was certain.

⁸⁶ 是聖德之所觀見也. Here 聖德 means something like “sagely (intellectual) capacity,” similar in usage and meaning to 叡念, which Sadafusa uses elsewhere. In essence, he is saying “your own intelligence should tell you that a resurgence of imperial power is unrealistic.”

large and small. After the Shōkyū era (1219-21), Lord Yoshitoki took sole control of the reins of government.

The ability to remove a sovereign (三通) or his heir (儲貳) and to demote or promote grand ministers (高槐) and supreme generals (大樹) are all things that arise from military power. At present, if Your Majesty's ambitions are not in accordance with the pattern of the times, can there be any doubt of a swift and resounding defeat? The imperial line will be nearly wiped out! The very safety of the court itself is now at stake; how can Your Majesty not reflect on this?

一、本朝時運興衰事

異朝紹運之躰頗多中興、蓋是異姓更出故而已。本朝剝利天祚一種故、陵遲日甚中興無期、是聖德之所觀見也。就中保元之後、源平遞專國權、皇威漸損。元曆年中、右大將賴朝卿平定天下、并吞國邦。承久之後、義時朝臣專持國柄、通三儲貳之廢立、高槐大樹之黜陟、事皆出自武威。今時草創之 叡念若不叶時機者、忽有敗北之憂歟。天嗣殆盡此乎。本朝安否在于此時、豈不迴 聖慮哉。

Departing from the thrust of previous articles, Sadafusa makes no appeal here to Confucian morality or to famous rulers of Chinese antiquity. Among the notable features of this article is its unusual nomenclature of kingship. Sadafusa first uses the somewhat unusual word *setsuri*, a term that refers specifically to the Kshatriya caste from which Indian monarchs are drawn, to describe Japanese rulers. Inasmuch as Japanese lexical items of Indic origin tend to carry Buddhist overtones, the term may be seen to inscribe Japanese kingship within a political cosmology different from that which underpins domestic notions of imperial divinity. *Setsuri* is followed by another comparatively exotic word of similar import, *tsūsan* 通三 (C. *tongsan*), which occurs in *Hanshu*. It refers literally to the three fundamental activities of sound rule – selecting men of talent, harmonizing with the will of the

people, and adapting to the exigencies of the times; by a kind of metonymic extension, it also denotes the sovereign himself. Again, the implication seems to be that Go-Daigo in particular, and Japanese sovereigns more generally, occupy a fully historical (and historicizable) realm in which good judgment and decision making matter.

10. That the Holy Fortunes of Retired Sovereigns and the Power of Warrior Houses Must Each Run their Course

After Emperor Kōnin assumed power, the royal line was again unified.⁸⁷ And although Emperor Heizei, Emperor Saga, and Emperor Junna were brothers, rule of the realm eventually returned to the descendants of Emperor Ninmei. The sons of the Tenryaku Emperor (Emperor Murakami), Reizei and En'yū, each practiced abdication in favor of a non-lineal descendant, but in time the realm returned once again to En'yū's line.⁸⁸ From then until now, royal lines spawned from brothers have occasionally emerged, but ultimately everything has stayed within the same family.⁸⁹ This is characteristic of the

⁸⁷ After the death of Emperor Tenchi (r. 668-72), a succession dispute arose involving his son, Prince Ōtomo, and his younger brother, Prince Ōama. Prince Ōama was victorious and took the throne as Emperor Tenmu (r. 673-86); several of the sovereigns who reigned during the eighth century were his lineal descendants. Emperor Kōnin (r. 770-81) was a grandson of Tenchi, and all the sovereigns who followed him were his (and hence Tenchi's) lineal descendants. Traditional commentators, including Kitabatake Chikafusa, have seen Kōnin's ascension as a return to the correct line of succession.

⁸⁸ "Abdication in favor of a non-lineal descendant" renders *yūjō* 揖讓. Here Sadafusa highlights the fact that Reizei abdicated in favor of his brother En'yū, who in turn abdicated in favor of his nephew Kazan. *Yūjō* is close in meaning to *zenjō* 禪讓, a concept in early Chinese political thought describing a transfer of rule in which the king yields the throne voluntarily to the most virtuous person in the realm.

⁸⁹ 或舅姨或兄弟之皇統時々雖出、始終遂入于一家. Here Sadafusa mentions not only royal lines issuing from brothers (兄弟) but from affinal relatives (*kyūi* 舅姨) as well. The basic sense of 舅 is either a maternal uncle or one's wife's brother; 姨 indicates either a maternal aunt or one's wife's sister, and the compound 舅姨 refers to uncles and aunts on the mother's side. Sato and Kasamatsu offer no gloss on this, but if taken literally a royal line issuing from affinal relatives would seem to imply a

Japanese court alone. As regards the august lineage established by the Kangen Emperor (Go-Saga), it was his decision to establish (the line of) Emperor Kameyama as the orthodox line; this is something understood throughout the realm.⁹⁰ Even if Emperor Go-Fukakusa's line should unexpectedly hold sway for three or four reigns, in the end rule will return assuredly to Your Majesty's imperial line.⁹¹ This is no doubt because the Earth cannot have two sovereigns any more than Heaven can have two suns.⁹²

violation of the principle of patrilineal descent. The complexity of royal filiation and general acceptance of endogamy within the extended royal family makes many things possible, but at present it is unclear to me which sovereigns Sadafusa might have in mind, or if the notion of a "royal lineage" 皇統 issuing from "affinal relatives" (assuming this is what is meant by 舅姨) is even tenable, and I have thus avoided the matter in the translation pending more information.

⁹⁰ Kameyama and Go-Fukakusa were scions of Go-Saga and full brothers. Chikafusa too reports that Go-Saga intended to have Kameyama's line inherit the throne.

⁹¹ 後深草院不慮雖及三四代、始終定歸當代之皇胤歟。 Rhetorical questions are common in hortatory writing; here, the implied answer is affirmative: *yes*, (rule) will assuredly return to your royal line. The term *tōdai* 當代 may indicate either the present age or the current head of a family, synonymous in the latter sense with *tōshu* 當主. Whichever is emphasized in translation, the gist is unchanged (since Go-Daigo *currently* occupies the throne). I have taken the first clause as conditional because doing so reconciles it nicely with the next sentence. However, it might also be taken as a declarative statement about past history, which would be more in keeping with the preceding comments Sadafusa made about Japanese sovereigns. In this reading, the clause might be construed as a reference to the fact that prior to Go-Daigo's accession, three out of four sovereigns (Fushimi, Go-Fushimi, and Hanazono) were sons or grandsons of Go-Fukakusa. This reading does, however, change the sense of the sentence that follows (see below).

⁹² 蓋天無二日、地無二主之故也。 The significance of this depends on whether we understand the previous line to mean that rule will *eventually* return to the legitimate line (i.e. that of Kameyama and thus Go-Daigo), or that rule already *has* returned to that line. The former works well if 後深草院不慮雖及三四代 is taken as a conditional clause, while the latter is better if that clause is taken as a statement of fact: "Though (the line of) Go-Fukakusa unexpectedly enjoyed a run of three or four reigns, (rule) has now definitively returned to Your Majesty's line." This seems a straightforward reading, but it bears upon the interpretation of the next sentence. In saying that rule has definitively returned to the legitimate line "because Earth can no more have two sovereigns than Heaven can have two suns," Sadafusa might be claiming that the Bunpō Compromise and the practice of alternating rule is, or ought to be, a thing of the past. While such a message would be congenial to Go-Daigo's ambitions, it seems out of step with the conservative tack Sadafusa takes

Moreover, the Daoists warn against three successive generations holding the position of general.⁹³ The Kantō has commanded the military might of the realm for seven or eight generations already, but just as it waxes, must it not also wane? Make no use of arms now, and instead wait patiently for the opportune moment. This, above all, is the essential point I wish to convey.

一、仙洞聖運武家權威可有其期事

光仁馭俗之後、皇胤既一統、平城嵯峨淳和皆三人、雖履皇位、天下歸于仁明之余裔。天曆皇胤冷泉円融各兩三代、遞雖有揖讓之義、天下歸円融、自余以降、或舅姨或兄弟之皇統、時時雖出、始終遂入于一家。是本朝之故實而已。寬元之聖統、以龜山院為正統之條、天下知之。而後深草院不慮雖及三世代、始終定歸當代之皇胤歟。蓋天無二日、地無二主之故也。兼又三世之將道家所肆也。關東天下兵馬元帥之權、既七八代、定有日月盈蝕之期歟。不用兵革、暫俟時運、是大義而已。

The preceding articles are clear enough in general terms, though there are surely omissions (漏脱) and ambiguities (依違). These views (意見) were written and

everywhere else. Hence, a different reading, also based on the assumption that the clause 後深草院不慮雖及三世代 expresses a historical fact, might understand Sadafusa's message to be that rule has rightfully returned to the legitimate line, and now it is the head of that line, not Go-Fukakusa's, who reigns unchallenged at the center of the political cosmos: "you're already in charge, Your Majesty; don't go looking for a war you don't need."

⁹³ 三世之將、道家所肆. Sato and Kasamatsu suggest this derives from a passage in *Hou Han shu* that is identical in meaning: 三世為將、到家所忌. The notion itself is related in many classical Chinese sources; the biography of Wang Jian 王翦 in *Shiji* ascribes the taboo to the accumulated "inauspiciousness" (不祥) that results from multiple generations being involved in killing: "... Someone said, 'Wang Li (Wang Jian's grandson) is a famous general of Qin. Leading troops of mighty Qin to attack the newly created Zhao, he is certain to take them.' A stranger said, 'Not so. Those who serve as generals for the third generation are certain to go down in defeat. Why are they certain to go down? Because they killed and attacked many and their descendants will suffer the evil fortune that comes from this.' ... 或曰「王離，秦之名將也。今將彊秦之兵，攻新造之趙，舉之必矣。」客曰「不然。夫為將三世者必敗。必敗者何也？必其所殺伐多矣。其後受其不祥。今王離已三世將矣」(*Shiji* 73:13. Translation given in *The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. 1, p. 50).

submitted last year on the twenty-first day of the sixth month. That document was kept inside the palace; I have heard a rumor to the effect that the retired sovereign took it for himself. Surely it will surface again someday. While it is certain that some sentences have been added and others subtracted, and that things said in the beginning (of the first document) might now be at the end (of this one), there is no discrepancy (between the two pieces) as concerns their basic thrust. Having written all this down carelessly in traveler's lodgings, I am chagrined at what others might think.⁹⁴

以前條々、大概取意、定有漏脱依違歟。此意見去年六月廿一日狀也。件狀者在禁中御調度之内、仙洞被取置之由風聞。定有出現之期歟。文章増減首尾錯亂、雖為勿論、粗肝要旨趣者更不可有相違者也。旅宿楚忽馳筆之間、外見旁有憚矣。



The last article of Sadafusa's memorial concludes with a rather lengthy meditation on the recent history of the imperium and the shogunate. The lesson is by now a familiar one: everything that waxes must also wane, and patience is everywhere preferable to impulsiveness. Where previous articles appealed to morality, this one appeals to two politico-cosmological ideas in an effort to stay Go-Daigo's hand. The first is that Japanese imperial rule, despite occasional deviations, *always* returns to the sole rightful line – such is the defining feature of the Japanese imperium. Sadafusa exhibits none of the skepticism that some other contemporary

⁹⁴ This admission by Sadafusa that the present text is in fact a copy, apparently from memory, of an earlier document that he no longer possesses, might be seen to compromise its historical veracity. The counterpoint to this concern is that if this document really was significantly different than an original, which was still extant and possibly in the possession of the retired sovereign, then there would be no point in asserting a similitude that could be easily disproven. Likewise, if Sadafusa is dissembling and had for some reason *destroyed* the original or knew of its destruction, there would be no point in even broaching its existence; it would be easier to simply pass this one off to posterity as the authentic original.

thinkers, most notably Emperor Hanazono, had expressed concern concerning the perpetual continuity of the imperial family. If such a position seems naïve, it should be remembered that Sadafusa's objective was entirely perlocutionary: he sought to dissuade Go-Daigo from challenging the shogunate militarily, and may have emphasized the vaunted continuity of the Japanese royal family in order to convince Go-Daigo that his line, the legitimate line, would ultimately win out *regardless*, making bloodshed in the present entirely unnecessary. The second major concept is that military power itself is inherently polluting. Sadafusa cites the "Daoist" belief that when the rank of general (將) is held by the same family for three or more generations, the result is misfortune and defeat, a fact that suggests the Kanto is overdue for a fall. The overall argument seems to be that imperial power will once again rise and warrior power will inevitably recede. To the extent that such processes, even those with an almost "karmic" inevitability, are shaped by human decision making, Sadafusa is surely well aware that armed conflict might play a pivotal role in bringing about political change. But he is also adamant throughout that under present circumstances, war with the shogunate would be a disaster for both the court and the populace at large, and thus counsels Go-Daigo to wait until conditions are more favorable.

In the end, Go-Daigo would not be denied, and in early 1331, Sadafusa, steadfast in his own convictions, would betray the emperor's plot to the shogunate. It is possible that Sadafusa had decided that loyalty to the system – including even the shogunate – must outweigh personal loyalty to the emperor; alternatively, he may simply have wanted no part of what he felt was a rash and destructive cause. In

one of the more striking turnabouts in the history of Japanese court politics, a victorious Go-Daigo would not only forgive Sadafusa but, in 1333, would reinstate him as a major figure in his new regime.⁹⁵ No subsequent writings attest to what Sadafusa, then almost 60, thought awaited the realm under Go-Daigo's uncontested rule. Yet among those close to the emperor, the prevailing mood in 1333 seems to have been one of confidence, and the initial steps Go-Daigo took towards consolidating his power were marked mostly by conciliation, not retribution. To Chūgan, certainly, 1333 was a year of possibilities. Go-Daigo's revolution had, for the moment, succeeded spectacularly; for a Confucian monarchist like Chūgan, and probably for Sadafusa too, an imperial restoration promised opportunities for social and institutional reform undreamt of just a decade before. The challenges in placing the nascent polity on a firm footing would prove immense, however, and things would not turn out as the restorationists had hoped. Less than a year later, a frustrated Chūgan would hold Go-Daigo responsible for mismanaging his own revolution. He articulated his criticisms in a fictionalized dialogue modeled on those in *Mengzi*; it is to this work, which is a world apart from royal memorials and unlike anything known previously in Japanese *kanshibun*, that we now turn.

⁹⁵ See Goble, *Kenmu*, p. 139.

Appendix: *Establishing the Fundaments of Monkhood*

Along with *Genmin*, Chūgan submitted to Go-Daigo a companion essay titled *Gensō* 原僧 (*Establishing the Fundaments of Monkhood*). The piece addresses the problems that arise when boundaries between monks and laypersons become blurred, and it offers a defense of the Buddhist practice of tonsuring and shaving, which had long been the object of criticism by certain orthodox Confucians who viewed it as a desecration of the natural body. It also takes up the old issue of members of the four traditional classes abandoning their vocations for the priesthood, a matter of concern to both ecclesiastical authorities and government policymakers:

Establishing the Fundaments of Monkhood⁹⁶

Is the concept of *shukke* (出家) simply synonymous with the cutting of one's hair? No, of course not. *Shukke* involves leaving behind one's abode in this defiled world, renouncing worldly sentiments, and embracing the (Buddhist) Way. The Confucians (儒) say that one must never dare injure any part of the body, do they not?⁹⁷ Yet Buddhist teaching stipulates that one must be tonsured and shaven; is there really no good reason for this? If we imagine a situation where a monk's outer appearance were the same as that of the laity, then ordinary people would be unable to distinguish the monks and pay them the appropriate respect. For their part, monks who looked no

⁹⁶ Text in *Gozan bungaku shinshū*, pp. 394-5; *Gozan bungaku zenshū* vol. 2, pp. 105-6.

⁹⁷ Deliberately harming the body could be construed as a violation of one's filial obligations, since the body was a gift from one's parents; taken to the extreme, this view was the basis for proscriptions against shaving and cutting the hair.

different from the laity would be able to conceal themselves among the general population and act without shame in ways contrary to their vows. Hence, we Buddhists move about the world tonsured and shaven. When ordinary people see a monk with that estimably round head (圓顱之士), they are inspired with a sense of respect, and the monk, thanks to his different appearance, cannot conceal himself in the crowd, and he therefore dares not act in ways contrary to his vows. When monks do not act against their vows, the way of Buddhism flourishes, and when ordinary people harbor feelings of respect for the monks, their own fortunes brighten.

The teachings of the Buddha (釋氏之教) most definitely possess a rationale (由). Yet today there are those who take religious orders (出家) but do not fully base themselves in this rationale; they simply chop off their hair and call themselves monks. The four classes of officials, farmers, artisans, and merchants have all seen some of their number cast aside their rightful occupations and, lacking any understanding of *why* one becomes a monk, make vacuous claims to have taken orders. Such unscrupulous head-shavers can be found in every household! These impostors are not only miscreants in the eyes of the Confucians,⁹⁸ they are a wicked lot doing nefarious harm to the Buddhist Law as well. The result of this trend is the inability to distinguish monks from laypersons and, moreover, the diminution of officials, farmers, artisans, and merchants, and a corresponding increase in the number of idle persons, which is surely damaging to the state (國家).

出家也者，斷髮云乎哉。出離俗塵之家，疎于世情，親于道情之稱也。儒不云乎，身體髮膚不敢毀傷。然則佛之教，剃髮除鬚，其無由乎？曰，若使爾形質同彼在俗之人，則俗不知所以擇而敬之。僧亦以爾形質不與俗異。故藏身於俗中，以行非法之事而無所羞也。是以吾佛教剃除鬚髮表而出之。是故俗見彼圓顱之士殊生恭敬之心。僧以爾形質異諸人而不可藏身。故不敢行非法之事。僧不行非法之事，則其道愈隆焉。俗生恭敬之心，則其福愈昌焉。釋氏之教固有由也。今稱出家者不本其由而止斷髮而已。士農工賈之民皆廢其業，不知所以為僧。偷空名於出家，縱意斷髮者戶有諸。非唯為儒者罪人而已，抑又為弊佛法之魔族也。僧亦斷髮俗亦斷髮何異之有？且夫士農工賈之民漸少，而徒爾不用之人愈多。亦為國家之害矣。

⁹⁸ Presumably because they abandon their proper social roles.

Unlike *Genmin*, *Gensō* makes no explicit policy recommendations, but simply points out a problem. Although the Confucian opponents of tonsuring come off as shortsighted, Chūgan's harshest criticism is not directed at them but at the opportunists who try to join the priesthood *simply* by shaving their heads and proclaiming themselves monks. It is a critique couched in terms that are ultimately quite Confucian: the tonsure is defended by reference to its positive effects upon the morality of monks and its ability to engender a "sense of reverence" (恭敬之心) among the populace; in turn, the phenomenon of faithless persons nominally joining the clergy is criticized by reference to its economic costs to the country as a whole. Chūgan is, however, careful not to impugn the value of priests or the priesthood as such, and his language always makes clear that the objects of his criticism are those who "fail to base themselves in the rationale" (不本其由) for shaving the head, those who "do not understand why one becomes a monk" (不知所以為僧), and those who "unscrupulously chop off their hair" (縱意斷髮). In other words, ample room is left for persons of sincere religious inclination to enter the priesthood legitimately.

Chapter Two

Figuring Moral Kingship: Constant Norms and Expedient Policies in Chūgan's *Chūseishi*

Chūgan's memorial, along with the essays *Genmin* and *Gensō*, were composed in late 1333, following the destruction of the Kamakura shogunate and the triumphal return of Go-Daigo to Kyoto. At this point, the institutional outlines of Go-Daigo's new regime had yet to be fully articulated, and managing the multiplicity of conflicting interests and overlapping claims was already proving difficult, particularly as concerned the disposition of land rights.⁹⁹ Chūgan's foregrounding of the concept of *tsūhen* 通變 (C. *tongbian*), "skillful adaption to the exigencies of the moment," could not have been more apposite. For his part, Go-Daigo seems to have embodied the principle well, remaining flexible and willing to compromise when particular policies were not working as expected. Though Chūgan was not one of Go-Daigo's closest advisors, his presence at the prominent Kyoto temple Nanzenji afforded him a close-up view of things as the nascent order took shape. However in January of 1334, Ōtomo Sadamune, Chūgan's principal patron, died unexpectedly. Chūgan left Kyoto almost immediately and took up residence at Engakuji in Kamakura. Here he would write what is today his best known work, *The Master of*

⁹⁹ See Goble, *Kenmu*, pp. 145-172 and passim.

Balance and Rectitude (*Chūseishi* 中正子), an eclectic treatise comprised of ten chapters that cover topics ranging from Confucian ethics to horology and Buddhist doctrine. Of particular interest to the present discussion is the second chapter, “Keiken” 經權 or “The Constant and the Expedient.” The chapter begins with the Master of Balance and Rectitude, a dramatization of Chūgan himself, traveling to the fictional “Land of Mob” (*Uka no kuni* 烏何之國) and instructing its benighted ruler, Enduring Mulberry (*Hōsōshi* 包桑氏), on the importance of distinguishing between established norms of morality (*J. kei, C. jing* 經) and expedient policies or stratagems (*J. ken, C. quan* 權).¹⁰⁰ The episode is meant as a simple allegory for the situation at Go-Daigo’s court as Chūgan perceived it, with Enduring Mulberry representing Go-Daigo; on the whole, the “Keiken” chapter is more theoretical than *Genmin*, *Gensō*, or the memorial, and unlike those texts, it makes greater use of allusion and less of direct citation. It also provides the first inkling that Chūgan was no longer sanguine about the prospects for Go-Daigo’s regime.

The Constant and the Expedient¹⁰¹

The Master of Balance and Rectitude went to the Land of Mob. Its ruler, Enduring Mulberry, welcomed him and inquired thusly: “Disturbances of the realm can only be stopped by force of arms. Hence, I have been fond of arms since I was young,

¹⁰⁰ The name “Land of Mob” was intended by Chūgan as a pun on the Chinese term *wuhe* 烏合, which has the same pronunciation as 烏何; it denotes literally a murder of crows and is used metaphorically to describe an unruly mob or rabble. The name Enduring Mulberry derives from *Yijing* and will be analyzed below.

¹⁰¹ The translation is based on Iriya Yoshitaka’s annotated edition of *Chūseishi* in Ichikawa Hakugen et al., eds., *Chūsei Zenke no shisō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1972), pp. 123-70.

and the people of my country are fond of them too. By seven years of age, my people are able to wield swords, and by age ten, thanks to this skill, they can be sent into battle. When it comes to military matters, I can say simply that I have poured my whole heart into them!¹⁰² And yet, our bandits and robbers have not yet been chased away, and in every corner, arms cannot be laid down. Why is this so?”

The Master of Balance and Rectitude responded, saying: “Does Your Majesty know about the way of the constant and the way of the expedient? The king replied: “No, I do not, but I would like to hear what you have to say.” The Master of Balance and Rectitude then responded as follows: “The way of the constant and the expedient (經權之道) is the key to governing a country. The constant (經) refers to that which is enduring (常); it is what cannot be altered. The expedient is not fixed, and it cannot last for long. The way of the constant must not be held jealously, but must be made manifest to all the people of the realm. By the expedient is meant that which runs counter to the constant but, in so doing, completes the Way. Something that contravenes the constant but does *not* complete the Way cannot be the expedient.

The constant is civil virtue (文德); the expedient is military stratagems (武略). The inception of military stratagems was not the ultimate intent (意) of the sages; the sages only put them into effect because they could not but do otherwise. Something that is put into effect but *never* discontinued cannot be the way of military stratagems.¹⁰³ If (military stratagems) are put into effect and then discontinued, the order reverts back to that of civil virtue. This is precisely the merit of the expedient. When the way of civil virtue and constant norms (經常) is spread widely throughout the realm, and measures such as military stratagems and other expediencies are not undertaken, then the order of Yao and Shun will obtain automatically. I will try to explain this further; I beseech Your Highness to listen carefully.”

¹⁰² This sentence directly parallels King Hui’s comment to Mengzi that, with respect to (the governance of) his country, he has “poured his whole heart into it:” 梁惠王曰、寡人之於國也、盡心焉耳矣 (*Mengzi* 1A3.1).

¹⁰³ In other words, legitimate “military stratagems” 武略 are employed when necessary but discontinued thereafter.

The king replied: “You have my full attention.”

The Master of Balance and Rectitude continued: “Broadly speaking, human beings are born into this world fundamentally different from the birds and beasts: they have not talons and teeth with which to catch the things they want, nor have they feathers and fur with which to ward off the cold. Of necessity, they must rely on other things to nourish their life. They form communities and pursue their livelihoods, but when their pursuits cannot be satisfied, a mindset of competitive strife will begin to set in. The sages of old, in their lofty perspicacity, acted by means of the civil virtues of humaneness (仁), love (愛), propriety (禮), and deference (讓). The masses responded to them, were transformed and submitted to them; in submitting to them, the masses flocked together (群) and called them ‘rulers’ (君). The rulers took the aforementioned civil virtues and applied them universally to the whole of the realm; the people of the realm gravitated (往) to them, and called these rulers ‘kings’ (王). The kings were those who devoted themselves to the cultivation of civil virtue and effulgently transformed (旺化) the common people.¹⁰⁴

Hence, that which is enduring and unalterable is the way of the constant. If the kings were to fall into laxity and lose what is enduring, then the people would also become lax and cease holding to what is right. If the degree of their laxity were small, they would be punished with whips and canes; if large, they would be brought to heel

¹⁰⁴ In these sentences, Chūgan suggests etymological connections between words based on homophonies: “ruler” 君 (C. *jun*, J. *kun*) is implied to be cognate with “flock” 群 (*qun*, *gun*), and “king” 王 (*wang*, *ō*) is implied to be cognate with both “to go towards” 往 (*wang*, *ō*) and “radiant” 旺 (*wang*, *ō*). The etymological association of “ruler” 君 with “flock” 群 occurs in *Baihutong* 白虎通 (*Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, c. 97 A.D.), and the seminal second-century dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 glosses “king” 王 as “he to whom the realm returns” (王、天下所歸往也). The additional association of 王 with 旺 does not seem to be traditional, and may simply be a display of verbal dexterity by Chūgan: 旺 is not only homophonous with 王, but also synonymous (and homophonous) with the comparatively rare character 往 (*wang*, *ō*), whose graphic structure obviously resembles 往.

by punitive military action.¹⁰⁵ This is the way of expedient measures (權謀之道). Hence, it is desirable that the way of the constant be elevated and the way of the expedient be held in abeyance. The way that ought to be elevated is (what is) implemented during times of political stability; the way that ought to be held in abeyance is (what is) put into effect during times of disorder.

Now, the political order of Yao and Shun cannot always obtain, and, as a result, the way of the expedient cannot always be held in abeyance. Thus it is that punishments may come to be carried out, and force of arms may rise to the fore. Disorder is suppressed by force of arms in order to complete the way of constant norms; as such, military power is maintained in order that it inspire awe and trepidation. But displaying it to the realm overtly is unacceptable. In the words of Master Zuo: “If (military power) is displayed overtly, it will be used irresponsibly, and if it is used irresponsibly, it will lose its awesomeness.”¹⁰⁶ Now, Your Majesty fails to practice the way of culture (文道) and blithely dispatches troops out amongst the people of your country – people who, for their part, feel no particular sense of awe and trepidation. *This* is the reason the bandits and robbers have not been chased away, and why the four corners remain unsettled. And if things remain like this, you will lose not only the way of the constant, but the way of the expedient as well.

Losing the way of the expedient, you speak of having “poured your whole heart into military matters.” With due humility, I must confess that I truly pity your majesty! In general, if one wishes to see the way of constant norms put into effect throughout the whole realm, one ought not be secretive about it; if one does not wish to see expedient measures exercised overtly, one cannot *but* be secretive about them. Nowadays, those who cultivate the civil virtues are few, and those who talk about military matters are many. The ones talking about military matters meet with success in

¹⁰⁵ 大則甲兵之威征之. The idea seems to be that if laxity or resistance to government control were widespread throughout an entire community, soldiers would be dispatched to force the population back into compliance.

¹⁰⁶ 左氏之語曰、示則翫、々則無威. I have not been able to locate this quote in *Zuozhuan* or in any other text, but its basic thrust is identical to the quote from *Guoyu* that appeared in *Genmin*.

the world, while the ones cultivating civil virtues find themselves in straightened estate. If high ranking courtiers, state officials, and common folk such as farmers and merchants all engage in martial pursuits, none will be satisfied until they have won all for themselves (不奪不厭), and the country will be imperiled.¹⁰⁷

To use an example, suppose we have a household in which all the children and servants are thoroughly instructed in the constant virtues of benevolence and righteousness. Should one of the children or servants act disobediently, the task of censuring them or meting out corporal punishment may be delegated to a steward of the eldest son; this will instill awe and trepidation in them, and reflects the way of expedient strategies. But if the children and servants all wield whips and canes themselves and resist censure or punishment, what sense of awe and trepidation would they have? In this situation, to think (happily) to oneself, “my house is accomplished in martial pursuits” would be a path to complete disorder. Your Majesty, it would be most fitting if you were to take this illustration of governing a household, extrapolate from it and understand its relevance to individual provinces, and indeed to the entire realm.” The king was greatly pleased and offered lavish gifts; The Master of Balance and Rectitude would not accept them and took his leave.

中正子適烏何之國。其君包桑氏、為迎而問曰、夫天下之動、非武不止。是以寡人自幼好武。國中之民亦好武。民生而七歲能舞劍、十歲者可以出征。是寡人之於武、可言盡心焉耳矣。然國之盜賊未去、四邊甲兵未休、何如？對曰、大王且知夫經權之道乎？王曰、未也、願聞其說。對曰、經權之道、治國之大端也。經、常也、不可變者也。權者非常也、不可長者也。經之道不可秘吝也、示諸天下之民可也。權也者反經而合其道者也。反而不合、則非權也。

經者文德也、權者武略也。武略之設、非聖人意。聖人不獲已而作焉。作而不止、非武略之道也。作而止、則歸文德。是則權之功也。文德經常之道、誕敷天下、而武略權謀之備、不行於國、則堯舜之治、可以坐致。吾嘗論之、大王請聽之。王曰、寡人之望也。

¹⁰⁷ This line riffs once again on the famous opening chapter of *Mengzi*, which records Mengzi’s counsel to King Hui of Liang. Mengzi opines that if the king prizes profit or advantage (利) over righteousness (義), his people will do the same, and “none will be satisfied until they have won all for themselves.” See *Mengzi* 1A1.

凡人生天地之間、實與禽獸相異。無爪牙以供嗜好、無羽毛以禦寒暑、必假它物以養其生。於是聚而有求、求之不足、爭心將作。古之聖人、卓然而行以仁愛禮讓之文德。眾心感之、化而附之、附而成群、謂之君。君以斯文德普施天下。天下之人歸而往之、謂之王。王者專修文德、旺化諸人者也。是以為常而不可變者、經之道也。王者之心、苟怠而失常、則民心亦怠而不守常。繇是小則鞭扑之刑行之、大則甲兵之威征之。是則權謀之道也。是故經之道欲舉、權之道欲措。可舉之道、治世而施。可措之道、亂世而為。夫堯舜之治、不能常有。所以權之道、不能措之。由是刑罰行焉、甲兵興焉。然而戡定禍亂、以合經常之道。故甲兵之具、以有威懲也。然而示諸天下、則不可也。左氏之語曰、示則翫、々則無威、是也。

今王不修文道、而翫兵於國中之民、々無以威懲之心。故盜賊不去、四邊不安、宜也。如是則不惟無經之道而已、兼失權之道也。權之道失之、而謂於武盡心焉耳矣。月也竊為大王惜之。凡經常之道、欲普行之天下、不可秘也。權謀之事、不欲普示諸天下、不可不秘。今則修文者寡、講武者眾。講武者達、修文者窮。卿大夫士庶民、農工賈客、皆為武者、不奪不厭、而國危矣。假令有一家者、以仁義之經、普教諸兒及臧獲、其兒若臧獲、或有悖者、委其長子可用者、叱之鞭之、而威懲之、則權謀之道也。若其諸兒及臧獲、咸手鞭撻、而叱則抗鞭、何威懲之有？而自以為吾家能武、則大亂之道也。大王以治家之喻、推而知之於國且天下、則可也。大王喜、厚幣遣之。中正子不受而去。

In terms of content, the “Keiken” chapter covers familiar ground: Chūgan defends the use of force when circumstances require it but emphasizes the socially corrosive effects of excessive militarization. It departs from both *Genmin* and the memorial, however, in its explicit invocation of the *bun-bu* 文武 (C. *wen-wu*) binary, which is itself posited as a special case of the more general *kei-ken* 經權 (*jing-quan*) relation. It also differs in from those texts in more adamantly emphasizing the subordination of the martial to the civil. The adjustment may seem a minor one, but it is the first of several indications in *Chūseishi* that, by 1334, Chūgan had misgivings about the direction Go-Daigo’s revolution was taking. The view espoused in “Keiken” that the martial aspect of kingship should not be openly displayed might easily be read as an argument directed against any number of actions taken by Go-Daigo, not least of which was his decision to style his seventh regnal era “Kenmu” 建武 or

“Building the Military.” While the character *mu* 武 had appeared occasionally in the posthumous imperial titles (*shigō* 諡号, *tsuigō* 追号) of Japanese rulers, its use by a reigning Japanese sovereign in designating a new regnal era was unprecedented.¹⁰⁸ Not coincidentally, “Kenmu” (C. Jianwu) was also the name for the first regnal era of Emperor Guangwu 光武, the first sovereign of the Later Han dynasty. As Andrew Goble has observed, Go-Daigo would certainly have found the parallels with his own situation compelling: the founding of the Later Han by members of the Former Han ruling house constituted the only example in Chinese history of the reacquisition of national hegemony by a dynasty that had been previously overthrown.¹⁰⁹ In Japan, while the nominal supremacy of the imperial family had remained unquestioned, the roughly 100 years between the Jōkyū War of 1221 and Go-Daigo’s revolution might well be cast as an interregnum of sorts, albeit one characterized not by the destruction of the imperial institution as such, but by its increasing subordination to an autonomous military government.¹¹⁰ Go-Daigo would rescue the throne from this predicament, and he would do so not by an anachronistic turn to an idealized imperial past in which an identifiable “warrior class” played no essential part, but by embracing warriors and actively integrating them into his new national polity.¹¹¹

To this extent, it might be argued that while Go-Daigo is often cast (inaccurately) as a backward-looking, quixotic sovereign unaware that the tide of

¹⁰⁸ While most posthumous titles were selected retrospectively, Go-Daigo, true to his personality, explicitly requested his appellation in his royal will (*go-ishō* 御遺詔).

¹⁰⁹ Goble, *Kenmu*, p. 176.

¹¹⁰ The Jōkyū War was a brief internecine disturbance precipitated by the rebellion of the retired emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽 (r. 1183-98) against the Kamakura regime.

¹¹¹ Goble, *Kenmu*, pp. 264-70 and passim.

history favored warrior hegemony, he was probably more at peace with armed men and their interests than Chūgan was. Yet care is in order when interpreting the positions Chūgan espouses regarding warriors and military affairs. His patron, Ōtomo Sadamune, was a supporter of Go-Daigo and a powerful warrior leader, holding the post of *shugo* (military constable) for the southern province of Bungo. He was also among the few men of his station to formally take Zen precepts, doing so under the Chinese émigré monk Qingchuo Zhengcheng 清拙正澄, 1274-1339, and his son Ujijasu 氏泰 (1321-62) eventually became a Zen monk.¹¹² Many warrior families, often at the urging of the Hōjō 北条, the preeminent warrior house in the realm throughout most of the Kamakura period, came in varying degrees to patronize Zen. Typically, they supported the new faith by financing temple construction, funding the travels of Japanese monks, and hosting monks from China. It is thus difficult to believe that Chūgan's concerns over the role of military men or martial symbolism in Go-Daigo's regime was motivated by any special prejudice against warriors as such. Nor is it likely that Chūgan was simply quixotic in his own right, offering advice grounded in the hopeless premise that the new polity could ignore outright the interests of innumerable individuals and families connected in some way to sources of warrior power, whether through appointments to *jitō* (estate steward) or *shugo* posts, or by having been *gokenin* (retainers) of the recently vanquished Kamakura shogunate. Instead, the "Keiken" chapter is probably best understood as an attempt to offer a conceptually compelling

¹¹² Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1981), p. 82.

argument for a less militarized sociopolitical order to a sovereign whose recent successes have underscored to him the extraordinary political usefulness of precisely those individuals and families.

The fact that “Keiken” is more insistent than *Genmin*, conveying a sense of crisis without the countervailing optimism regarding royal leadership, clearly seems to reflect a loss of faith in Go-Daigo’s enterprise.¹¹³ Yet other than the choice of Kenmu for the name of the regime’s inaugural era – to be sure, a serious matter – it is difficult to identify specific policies undertaken by Go-Daigo between December of 1333 and the spring of 1334 that seem likely to have given Chūgan a drastic change of heart.¹¹⁴ One possibility is that with the death of Sadamune, who had been a supporter of Go-Daigo, Chūgan was simply more able to express criticisms that he had withheld earlier out of concern for Sadamune’s interests (and by extension his own). Generic conventions, too, might be adduced to explain at least some of the difference in tone between “Keiken” and *Genmin*; while “Keiken” was clearly written with Go-Daigo in mind, it was not delivered to him in the manner of a formal memorial. Chūgan was thus freer to exercise his own stylistic discretion, choosing Wang Tong’s *Wenzhongzi* as his overarching template for *Chūseishi*, and patterning the hypothetical remonstrance with Enduring Mulberry in the “Keiken” chapter directly after Mengzi’s wise, yet pointed, counsel to King Hui of Liang.

¹¹³ Sun, “Chūgan Engetsu no shisō to bungaku,” p. 100.

¹¹⁴ Regnal eras were changed frequently in premodern Japan; their binomial designations were carefully chosen for specific purposes by a select cadre of court scholars, typically on the basis of portentological investigations into natural or societal phenomena. Between 930 and 1336, there were 36 emperors and 124 regnal eras, meaning most emperors presided over three to four. Go-Daigo’s reign comprised eight.

Insofar as the fictional Enduring Mulberry comes off as woefully misguided, or at least as someone who does not appear to have “inherited the perspicacity of King Wen of Zhou,” the chapter seemingly does no favors to Go-Daigo’s image. Chūgan’s use of the family (家) as a microcosm of larger sociopolitical constructs, such as the province (國) or the whole of the realm (天下), was entirely traditional, but as a criticism of the Kenmu polity, it carried particular force. Multiple of Go-Daigo’s sons were personally involved in warfare, and three of them, Moriyoshi, Takayoshi, and the crown prince Tsuneyoshi, would all meet violent ends over the 1330s as the Kenmu regime fell apart.¹¹⁵ It was highly unusual for members of the imperial family to receive substantial military training, and downright shocking that they should, in defeat, be killed by their opponents as opposed to simply being apprehended and exiled.¹¹⁶ It is difficult to know whether Chūgan intended specifically to criticize the way Go-Daigo was leading the royal family, but there can be little doubt that he took exception to what he perceived as the emperor’s fondness for all things martial. Nonetheless, the chapter as a whole does still offer hope for the future, and it ultimately positions Enduring Mulberry, and hence Go-Daigo, in a more positive light than might be apparent at first glance.

This is most evident in the name “Enduring Mulberry” (Hōsō 包桑) itself, which is a deft reference to *Yijing* and not at all unflattering. The term *hōsō* (C. *baosang*) appears in the twelfth chapter, “Pi” 否 or “Standstill,” where it denotes rapidly growing mulberry shoots. The relevant passage reads as follows:

¹¹⁵ Goble, *Kenmu*, pp. 269-70.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Nine in the fifth place means: Standstill is giving way. Good fortune for the great man. “What if it should fail, what if it should fail?” In this way, he ties it to a cluster of mulberry shoots.¹¹⁷

九五、休否。大人吉。其亡其亡。繫于苞桑。

The *Commentary on the Appended Phrases* (*Xicizhuan* 繫辭傳) expatiates on the enigmatic passage thusly:

The Master says: “Danger arises when a man feels secure in his position. Destruction threatens when a man seeks to preserve his worldly estate. Confusion develops when a man has put everything in order. Therefore the superior man does not forget danger in his security, nor ruin when he is well established, nor confusion when his affairs are in order. In this way he gains personal safety and is able to protect the empire.”¹¹⁸

The relevance of the foregoing to Go-Daigo’s position is clear: the emperor is in a position of strength, but must still negotiate his fortuitous circumstances with skill lest he lose what he has gained. There is evidence here and elsewhere that Chūgan thought the new regime was rushing ahead without sufficient discretion and, quite beyond his specific concerns over the recrudescence of warrior power, wanted Go-Daigo to be more cautious and deliberate. The phrase “what if it should fail, what if it should fail?” (其亡其亡) refers to the concern that the “superior man” (君子) has for the fragility of his enterprise, whose continued success is contingent upon his ongoing care and vigilance. The mulberry shoots figure vigor and endurance, hence

¹¹⁷ Richard Wilhelm, Cary F. Baynes, trans., *The I Ching or Book of Changes* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), p. 55. The phrase “nine in the fifth place” refers to a particular arrangement of yarrow stalks resulting from a complex divinatory procedure outlined on pp. 721-23.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

the great man's use of them to serve as both anchor and guide (as the shoots grow) for his endeavor. Chūgan's point seems to be that the Kenmu revolution needs a moral anchor if it is to be successful; needless to say, that anchor cannot simply be martial preeminence, which is only an expedient (*ken*) to the reestablishment of a well-ordered civil society. In the fifth chapter of *Chūseishi*, "Explicating Revolution" ("Kakukai" 革解), which treats the 49th chapter of *Yjing*, "Ge" 革 or "Revolution," The Master of Balance and Rectitude opines that the path of reform cannot be tread recklessly (改革之道、不可疾行也). Frustratingly, perhaps, Chūgan offers no specific proposals beyond that of deemphasizing the martial/expedient and emphasizing the civil/constant. Yet he probably felt that this alone would be sufficient to bring about other positive changes. Further, he also seems to have felt it inappropriate to reference specific actors in the current political drama by name; neither his memorial nor *Chūseishi* makes any explicit mention, critical or otherwise, of the major power players in the Kenmu polity save the sovereign himself.¹¹⁹

Altogether, "Keiken" does not represent a wholesale rejection of any of the basic points advanced in *Genmin*, though it does go much further than that piece does in implicating not just militarism in the abstract but the ruler himself in the

¹¹⁹ In addition to risking offense, greater specificity may not have been thought necessary, since *Chūseishi* was probably written less for posterity than for Go-Daigo and a relatively small audience of contemporary elites and intellectuals. A similar situation is observable in *Jinnō shōtōki*, which despite an otherwise lengthy and informative description of Go-Daigo's reign, has little of a critical or interpretive nature to say about its signal events: Chikafusa makes no remark about the controversial enthronement of Emperor Kōgon, whose legitimacy Go-Daigo would later deny, nor does he comment on Go-Daigo's exile to the Oki Islands after his initial plot against the Kamakura shogunate was brought to light. See Varley, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns*, p. 35.

country's troubles. Yet despite this, and despite the mildly satirical, parodic quality of Enduring Mulberry's boasts, the chapter should probably not be read as an insulting portrait of Go-Daigo: not only does the name Enduring Mulberry carry unambiguously positive connotations of growth and fortitude, but the entire exchange is highly reminiscent of the memorable exchanges in *Mengzi* between Mencius and King Hui. King Hui may appear less than sagacious in these episodes, but whatever his missteps, he demonstrates his intellectual maturity by soliciting, or at least tolerating, Mengzi's advice on matters of statecraft. In this connection, it should also be noted that there is little reason to believe that any Japanese sovereign, least of all Go-Daigo, would have taken particular umbrage at the notion that his rule might be usefully understood and critiqued through the concepts, nomenclature, and suasive strategies of the Chinese intellectual tradition, or that being a "good" sovereign entailed faithful conformity to a suite of ethical beliefs and normative behaviors drawn principally from that tradition. It is also worth noting that *Mengzi*, a work traditionally associated with the view that royal legitimacy is contingent upon a revocable "Mandate of Heaven" (C. *tianming*, J. *tenmei* 天命), appears to have had a far more extensive impact on the medieval Japanese intellectual landscape than is sometimes assumed. *Mengzi* features more centrally in *Chūseishi* than other Masters' Texts such as *Xunzi*, *Laozi*, or *Zhuangzi*, and it looms larger than any "classic" save possibly *Yijing*. Moreover, while *Mengzi* was probably more important to Chūgan's thought than to that of any other figure in the Gozan milieu, he was not

the only fourteenth-century scholar to value the work highly, as both Emperor Hanazono and Yoshida Sadafusa drew freely upon it as well.¹²⁰

Although *Mengzi* clearly inspired the style and structure of the “Keiken” chapter, it was probably not the primary inspiration for that chapter’s core concept, namely the dyadic relation between established moral norms and expedient policies, and the importance of each to good governance. The explicit juxtaposition of *kei* (*jing*) and *ken* (*quan*) is old, occurring as early as the second century B.C. *Gongyang* commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which, in its description of the political figure Ji Zhong 祭仲 (743-682 B.C.), defines *quan* as something that goes against *jing* but, in doing so, ultimately results in good.¹²¹ In *Mengzi*, a similar relation is propounded briefly when Mengzi opines that although ritual propriety (禮) dictates that men and women should not touch one another’s hands when

¹²⁰ See Inoue, *Honpō chūsei made ni okeru Mōshi juyōshi no kenkyū*, p. 252; Sun, “Chūgan Engetsu no shisō to bungaku,” p. 101. The importance of *Mengzi* to pre-Tokugawa Japanese thought seems uniformly underappreciated. Sun observes that Japanese scholars tend to focus primarily on the understandably large role *Mengzi* played in discussions of rulership, legitimacy, and revolution, but pay comparatively less attention to the other philosophical uses to which the work could be put. This is particularly unfortunate in Chūgan’s case, as his most sustained engagement with Mencian thought occurs in the second and seventh chapters of *Chūseishi*, which concern not revolution, but the virtues of humanity/benevolence and righteousness (仁義) and human nature, respectively.

To this we might also add that in Anglophone and Chinese scholarship, the problem can be quite the opposite, as it is often assumed that Mengzi’s views on legitimate rule were inherently anathema to the ideology of eternal divine kingship theoretically informing sovereignty in Japan. See, for instance, Chen Shuifeng, *Riben wenming kaihua shilüe* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1993), pp. 63-64; Conrad Schirokauer, *A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), p. 144. In emphasizing this point by itself, the authors risk implying that *Mengzi* was generally rejected by Japanese intellectuals, which it was not, and that Japanese intellectuals were everywhere beholden to a “nativist” royal orthodoxy, which they were not.

¹²¹ 權者何？權者反於經、然後有善者也 (*Gongyang zhuan*, “Huan Gong” 桓公 11).

exchanging objects, it would be expedient (*quan*) to grab your sister-in-law's hand if she were drowning.¹²² Here, *quan* is set opposite to "rites" or "ritual propriety," but the basic idea is the same: an established moral norm is violated because exigent circumstances are such that upholding the norm would do more harm than good. This conception of *quan* leads ultimately to the archetypal *jing-quan* binary of Han Confucianism, in which *quan* is construed as any discretionary action that "in violating *jing*, completes the Way" (反經合道).¹²³ Although later thinkers such as Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) and Zhu Xi 朱子 (1130-1200) would develop the *jing-quan* dyad in new directions, Chūgan's usage of the idea in *Chūseishi* accords most closely with that seen in Han texts and bears little trace of the Cheng-Zhu thought with which he, like most other Gozan literati, was otherwise quite well acquainted.¹²⁴

It is noteworthy that, contrary to the usual relationship found to obtain between pre-Tokugawa Japanese *kanbun* texts and their Chinese analogues, the "Keiken" chapter offers a much longer and more detailed expiation on the *jing-quan* relation than any of the works typically cited for comparison; this suggests either

¹²² 嫂溺不援、是豺狼也。男女授受不親、禮也。嫂溺、授之以手者、權也 (Mengzi 4A.17). "If your sister-in-law is drowning but you lend no aid, you are nothing but a beast. That men and women, when giving and receiving things, should not touch one another is a matter of ritual propriety; that when your sister-in-law is drowning you help her by extending your hand is a matter of expedience."

¹²³ See Yue Tianlei, "Zhu Xi lun 'quan,'" *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* No. 56 (Jan. 2013), p. 1.

¹²⁴ Specifically, Cheng Yi concluded that "*quan* are nothing but *jing*" (權即是經) – a move that would seem to undo the dynamic tension that Chūgan sees as essential to the *jing-quan* binary. Zhu Xi argued in an evolutionary vein that "*jing* are simply *quan* that have been fully established, while *quan* are as yet un-established *jing*" (經是已定之權、權是未定之經), which seems to adumbrate quite modern ideas about the formation and historical contingency of social norms.

that the relevant Chinese source text has yet to be identified, or that Chūgan independently chose to pursue an unusually detailed elaboration of the idea.¹²⁵ Either way, he must have thought it a useful conceptual frame in which to communicate his point to contemporary readers, and to Go-Daigo in particular. Inherent in the concept of *quan* as “expediency” or “discretion” is precisely the sort of flexibility that any ruler in Go-Daigo’s position would find congenial, possibly to a fault. Such flexibility is most necessary during times of social rupture, which present challenges that demand unconventional responses. As Chūgan says, the order of Yao and Shun cannot always obtain. Since such a point could well have been made without framing it entirely in terms of *jing* and *quan*, it is reasonable to assume that Go-Daigo was already quite familiar with the *jing-quan* dyad. Such an assumption is all the more plausible in light of Go-Daigo’s unusually extensive knowledge of Chinese texts, which as early as 1317 was appraised very highly by Hanazono, himself among the most learned sovereigns in Japanese history.¹²⁶ Texts in which Go-Daigo is known to have been versed include *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the*

¹²⁵ Sun Rongcheng notes that while the pairing of *jing* and *quan* is itself extremely common, he is not aware of any other work, either Chinese or Japanese, in which they are explicitly associated with *wen/bun* and *wu/bu* as they are in “Keiken.” *Jing* and *quan* do occur together in the “Viscount of Wei” 魏相 chapter of Wang Tong’s *Wenzhongzi*, a text whose importance to Chūgan has already been noted, but the dyad is not developed in detail; it is glossed by the Song-era commentator Ruan Yi 阮逸 (fl. mid 11th c.) by reference to the *Gongyang* commentary. See Sun, “Chūgan Engetsu no shisō to bungaku,” p. 100 and Iriya, *Chūsei Zenke no shisō*, p. 403.

¹²⁶ Goble, *Kenmu*, p. 11. Lest the reader think Hanazono was simply flattering the future occupant of the throne, it should be emphasized that he was of the Jimyōin branch of the imperial family, rival to Go-Daigo’s Daikakuji line, and an outspoken scholar unafraid to voice opinions at odds with imperial orthodoxy (see note 141 below). Hanazono set great store by the study of Chinese history and literature, and he would not have gone out of his way to deem Go-Daigo’s knowledge of Chinese texts exceptional had it been merely average.

Grand Historian), *Hanshu* (*History of the Han*) and *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Later Han*); *Zhongyong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*) and *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*); *Shangshu* 尚書 (*The Book of History*), *Yijing*, and *Liji* 禮記 (*The Record of Rites*); *Zuozhuan* and *Laozi* 老子 (known frequently as *Daodejing*); *Difan* 帝範 (*Models for an Emperor*), and *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (*Masters of Huainan*). Go-Daigo also sponsored academic discussions of works less commonly read in Japan, such as Yang Xiong's 楊雄 (53 B.C. – 18 A.D.) *Taixuanjing* 太玄經 or “*Classic of Great Mystery*.”¹²⁷

Of particular relevance to the present inquiry is *Huainanzi*, which contains numerous passages treating the moral and political significance of *quan*. While I am not aware of any current treatment of *Chūseishi* that explores thematic or rhetorical parallels with *Huainanzi*, the latter seems a far more likely touchstone for the views articulated in the “Keiken” chapter than does the *Gongyang* commentary, the responses of Dong Zhongshu, or *Wenzhongzi*. Altogether, *Huainanzi* probably offered more intellectual justification for radical political action than any other text Go-Daigo is known to have studied, a fact not likely to have been lost on Chūgan. The concept of *quan* as an expedient strategy features particularly prominently in chapter thirteen, “Fanlun” 汎論 or “Boundless Discourses,” whose central theme is the sage ruler’s adaptability to circumstance. As Sarah Queen and John Major observe, “Fanlun” provides the most comprehensive discussion of change in the entire *Huainanzi*; it is one of the work’s most overtly political chapters, emphasizing both the historical contingency of laws and rites and the necessity of adapting one’s

¹²⁷ Goble, *Kenmu*, pp. 21, 27-28.

policies to suit the needs of the age.¹²⁸ *Quan* provides the key to success in an inherently protean world, though it is not something just any ruler can grasp:

Expediency is something sages alone perceive. Thus, those who [first] disobey [ritual norms] but ultimately accord with them are said to understand expediency (*Huainanzi* 13.11).¹²⁹

權者、聖人之所獨見也。故忤而後合者、謂之知權。

In days of old, the *Documents of Zhou* had a saying that read: “[Sometimes] one elevates words and denigrates practicalities; [sometimes] one denigrates words and elevates practicalities. Elevating words is the norm; denigrating words is the expedient.” This is the technique for surviving in the face of destruction. But only a sage is capable of understanding expediency (13.11).¹³⁰

昔者周書有言曰：「上言者、下用也。下言者、上用也。上言者、常也。下言者、權也。」此存亡之術也、唯聖人為能知權。

It is important to note that the usage of the term “sage” (聖) in *Huainanzi* is somewhat less restrictive than that seen in prototypically “Confucian” classical texts. As in the Five Classics, the sages of high antiquity are credited with creating the moral and institutional underpinnings of human civilization. However *Huainanzi* does not locate the chief efficacy of the sage in the past; modern rulers not only *can* attain sagely wisdom, they *must* do so if they are to bring harmony to their present, disordered age.¹³¹ According to Andrew Meyer, the sage of *Huainanzi* is much closer to that of *Daodejing* (*Laozi*) than to that of the Confucian classics; he achieves sagehood not only through the study of classical texts and the phenomenal world,

¹²⁸ John S. Major, et al., eds., *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 483-89.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 508.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 506.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 887.

but also through “a program of apophatic personal cultivation centered on practices of contemplative meditation and yogic regimens.”¹³² One can easily imagine Go-Daigo, whose interest in esoteric religious rituals was legend,¹³³ finding much to like about the figure of the sage in *Huainanzi*. Master of his political cosmos, the sage regulates rites and music, but he is not regulated by them (聖人制禮樂而不制于禮樂).¹³⁴

In the “Keiken” chapter, Chūgan invokes the figure of the sage only to say that the “expediency” of formulating military stratagems is not his ultimate aim, but rather something he does because there is no other choice (武略之設、非聖人意。聖人不獲已而作焉). Such a position would seem to be somewhat different, at least in emphasis, from that articulated in *Huainanzi*, which is on the whole a good deal more positive than “Keiken” regarding the use of *quan*. Yet the hierarchical relationship Chūgan posits between *kei/jing* and *ken/quan*, with the latter clearly morally subordinate to the former, is visible in *Huainanzi* as well:

The way of the Five Thearchs and the Three Kings constitutes the warp and weft of the world and the rules and standards of order. Now, Shang Yang’s “Opening and Closing,” Shenzi’s “Three Tests,” Han Feizi’s “Solitary Indignation,” and Zhang Yi and Su Qin’s “Horizontal and Vertical [Alliance System] all were selective expediences, one slice of the arts [of governance]. They are not the great root of order or the constant norm of service that can be heard widely and transmitted through the ages (20.34).¹³⁵

¹³² Ibid., pp. 887-88.

¹³³ See Goble, *Kenmu*, pp. 96-97.

¹³⁴ *Huainanzi* 13.3.

¹³⁵ Major et al., eds., *Huainanzi*, p. 833.

五帝三王之道、天下之綱紀、治之儀錶也。今商鞅之啓塞、申子之三符、韓非之孤憤、張儀、蘇秦之從衡、皆掇取之權、一切之術也。非治之大本、事之恒常、可博聞而世傳者也。

For Chūgan, the most desirable state of affairs is one where *kei/jing* are promoted (舉) and devices classifiable as *ken/quan* are put aside (措) until disorder requires their use. The methods of legalist reformers such as Shang Yang, Shen Buhai, and Han Feizi are held in *Huainanzi* 20.34 to constitute such devices, the particularity and temporariness of which stands in contrast to the enduring quality of “constant norms” (恒常). In his memorial to Go-Daigo, Chūgan cites Shang Yang’s reforms approvingly, but criticizes the Qin for holding too long to the legalist course. There the point was to applaud and justify Go-Daigo’s willingness to violate the status quo in order to rectify current ills, an objective facilitated by the invocation of key moments in Chinese history at which radical action was warranted. In “Keiken,” the intent is quite the opposite: emphasis is placed on the inherently specific nature of “expedient measures” (權謀), which are limited in scope and duration and stand in contrast to the unchanging way of the constant (常而不可變者、經之道也), which in turn is identified with civil virtue.

In all, “Keiken” offers a lucid allegorical representation of Japanese sociopolitical conditions in 1334. Its thoughtful application of two dyadic relations, *jing-quan* and *wen-wu*, to Japanese politics was highly original, and its use of a dramatized dialogic exchange between ruler and minister patterned closely after those in *Mengzi* also appears to be unique among pre-Tokugawa works of political suasion. The distinction Chūgan draws between enduring norms and temporary

expediencies is straightforward, as is his belief, already stated forcefully in *Genmin*, that far too many people have become invested in martial pursuits. In utilizing a vocabulary of governance and kingship larger and more flexible than that of the Confucian classics, Chūgan was able to describe the events of his age in ways that were novel yet entirely legible within Chinese political discourse. Though he was by no means the only Japanese figure to seek an understanding of Japan in ostensibly “Chinese” terms – even contemporary articulations of Shinto often drew heavily on Chinese Buddhism and yin-yang theory – few of his compatriots could boast comparable knowledge of the broader corpus of Han political writing, and probably none shared his familiarity with the Sui-era text *Wenzhongzi*.

Chūseishi was Chūgan’s last major contribution to political theory during the Kenmu Restoration. The network of alliances on which Go-Daigo’s polity depended proved vulnerable to disruption, and in mid 1335, an unexpected (and unexpectedly successful) uprising by Hōjō remnants against the house of Ashikaga in eastern Japan set in motion a series of events that, within two years, would see the Ashikaga rise rapidly to martial preeminence and effectively displace the imperial court as the fulcrum of national governance.¹³⁶ It is not difficult to imagine Chūgan reacting with dismay to the political mutations and machinations that played out over the following year: Go-Daigo and his erstwhile ally Ashikaga Takauji each scrounging for support among dozens of regionally powerful families (and among different branches of the same families); bloody battles motivated more by personal or

¹³⁶ The Hōjō uprising was the most important event in what is known as the Nakasendai Disturbance (中先代の乱). Details may be found in Goble, *Kenmu*, pp. 244-61.

familial grievances than by political ideals; and the Jimyōin line of the imperial family throwing its support behind the upstart Takauji despite knowing full well that the imperial institution itself would be little more than a dependent junior partner within an Ashikaga-led confederacy. Before the end of 1336, Go-Daigo fled the city of Kyoto for a secure redoubt in the Yoshino mountains of Yamato province; with the Jimyōin prince Yutahito enthroned as Emperor Kōmyō by Takauji, Japan now had not just two rival imperial lines, but two imperial courts, and a new shogunate with more power over the prerogatives of the Kyoto aristocracy than ever before. It is hard to envision a situation more antithetical to the ideals of royal preeminence so energetically espoused in Chūgan's memorial. Unfortunately, the textual record does not permit a detailed reconstruction of Chūgan's post-Kenmu political thought, a fact which gives the inaccurate impression of a retreat from public intellectual life. In fact, the seeming paucity of explicitly political material from this period stems in large part from the loss of what, from a modern perspective, might have been Chūgan's most significant intellectual work had it survived. The work in question is his infamous historical treatise *Nihon sho* 日本書, *A Record of Japan*, a brief glimpse at what is known of which will conclude this chapter.

Written in 1341, *Nihon sho* seems to have been intended as a long-term study of Japanese history, and perhaps more specifically as a counterpoint to Kitabatake Chikafusa's recently completed *Jinnō shōtōki*. Its existence is only known today because it advanced an unusual theory regarding the origins of Japan's royal family. According to the fifteenth-century Gozan literatus Tōgen Zuisen 桃源瑞仙 (1430-

89), Chūgan proposed that the primordial Japanese deity Kunitokotachi no mikoto 國常立尊 was in actuality a (human) descendant of Prince Wu Taibo 吳太伯 (alt. 泰伯), a scion of King Tai of Zhou and the purported founder of the state of Wu.¹³⁷ The notion that the Japanese imperial family was ultimately descended from Wu Taibo was not in itself new; it appears in several Chinese sources, including *Wei lüe* 魏略 (*A Brief History of the Wei Dynasty*, mid 3rd century), *Liang shu* 梁書 (*A Record of the Liang Dynasty*, 635), and *Jin shu* 晉書 (*A Record of the Jin Dynasty*, 648), and it is explicitly mentioned – and summarily dismissed – in *Jinnō shōtōki*.¹³⁸ What does seem to have been original was Chūgan’s linking of Wu Taibo with Kunitokotachi, a deity of central importance to the medieval religio-cultural movement that came to be known as Ise Shinto. Beginning in the late Kamakura and early Muromachi periods, priests associated with Ise’s Outer Shrine (*gekū* 外宮), which traditionally venerated a goddess of foodstuffs and fecundity named Toyouke 豊受 (in contrast to the Inner Shrine, *naigū* 内宮, which venerated Amaterasu), undertook efforts to

¹³⁷ It might be noted that Tōgen was frank in his rejection of this idea: “Saying something like ‘the deity called Kunitokotachi no mikoto is a descendant of Wu Taibo’ is nonsense. Chūgan was a redoubtable man, but (this theory), while elegant, was nonsense” 國常立尊ト云ハ、吳太伯ノ后裔ヂヤナンドト云ハ合ワザル事ゾ。中巖ホドノ人ヂヤガ、ウツクシウモ合ワザル事ヲセラレタゾ。 See Inoue, *Honpō chūsei made ni okeru Mōshi juyōshi no kenkyū*, p. 263; Sun, “Chūgan Engetsu no shisō to bungaku,” pp. 107-110.

¹³⁸ The origin of the notion is unclear, though the Chinese sources all report that it was the Wa 倭 themselves who claimed descent from Taibo. *Wei lüe* no longer survives intact, but the passages concerning the Wa are preserved in the Tang-era work *Hanyuan* 翰苑. See Sun, “Chūgan Engetsu no shisō to bungaku,” p. 158, n. 321.

articulate and evangelize Shinto in newly coherent terms.¹³⁹ In matters of doctrine, the Inner and Outer shrines could of course be seen as complementary, but they were administered by two distinct, hereditary priestly families (the Arakida and Watarai, respectively), and the historically privileged position of the Inner Shrine, coupled with the growing need to secure material support in an era of dwindling court resources, made the relationship a competitive one. In order to enhance their position vis-à-vis the Arakida, the Watarai priests proposed that their deity, Toyouke, was in fact Kunitokotachi, who as one of the early creator deities occupied a place in the pantheon ostensibly “higher” than that of Amaterasu.

Ise Shinto had a major influence on elites and intellectuals of the fourteenth century, not least of whom was Chikafusa, whose *Gengenshū* 元々集 (*Collection of the Origin of Origins*, 1337) explicates the significance of various shrines and deities by reference to the teachings of Shinto theorist Watarai Ieyuki 渡来家行 (1256-1351), along with accounts drawn from Japanese mythohistorical chronicles. *Jinnō shōtōki* also reflects Ise doctrine, particularly in its memorable opening passage, which has been a touchstone polemic for nativist writers and ideologues down to the present day: “Great Japan is the divine country. It was founded by the Heavenly Ancestor (i.e. Kunitokotachi) and is transmitted in perpetuity through the lineage of the Sun Goddess (Amaterasu). This is something true of our country alone; there is nothing comparable in other lands.”¹⁴⁰ By identifying Kunitokotachi no mikoto,

¹³⁹ See Hagiwara Tatsuo, “Shintō: the Way of the *Kami*” in Kasahara Kazuo, ed., *A History of Japanese Religion* (Tokyo: Kōsei, 2001), pp. 299-314.

¹⁴⁰ 大日本は神國なり。天祖はじめて基をひらき、日神ながく統を傳え給う。我國のみ此事あり。異朝には其たぐひなし。

whose name probably meant something like “The August Deity Who Permanently Establishes the Country,” with Wu Taibo, Chūgan seems to offer a blunt repudiation of this newly burgeoning Japanese exceptionalism.¹⁴¹ Possibly he intended to do more than this: his theory might be read as an attempt to interpret mythical accounts of Japan’s founding euhemeristically, though without further evidence, such a reading must remain speculative.¹⁴² That the work has not survived is a great loss to current-day students of medieval Japanese history, historiography, and political thought, though it is perhaps not altogether surprising. Evidence suggests that even during Chūgan’s lifetime the work met with no small measure of disapproval, and with the emergence of Shinto as a doctrinally distinct (and distinctly “native”) faith tradition, its views probably appeared increasingly

¹⁴¹ It is of interest to note that Chūgan was not the only prominent intellectual to reject such exceptionalism: Emperor Hanazono is noted for his blunt dismissal of the notion that divine descent automatically ensured the perpetual continuity of the imperial institution. His *Kai Taishi sho* 戒太子書 (*Admonitions to the Crown Prince*, 1330), an essay on sovereignty and good government that he composed for his nephew, Prince Tokihito, indicates quite clearly that the nativist ideology within whose framework the Japanese imperial family was supposed to exist was not in itself something automatically championed by members of the imperial family. See Goble, “Social Change, Knowledge, and History,” p 119.

¹⁴² See Ueno Takeshi, “Wajin no kigen to Go no Taihaku densetsu,” in Mori Kōichi, ed., *Nihon no kodai*, vol. 1, “Wajin tōjō” (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1985), p. 327. Ueno sees in this possibility a “Confucian rationalism” (儒教的合理主義) that is set opposite to belief in divine or supernatural forces as agents of history. We might note that such a view is also reminiscent of Arai Hakuseki’s (1657-1725) bold but linguistically problematic argument that the Japanese word for “deity,” *kami* 神, simply denoted those who were socially “above” (*kami* 上) ordinary people. While the words are entirely homophonous in Modern (and Middle) Japanese, in Old Japanese the syllable *mi* in *kami* 神 would have been pronounced differently than the *mi* in *kami* 上.

subversive as the centuries passed.¹⁴³ The only direct evidence concerning the contemporary reception of the work is provided by Gidō Shūshin, who was among Chūgan's foremost intellectual disciples and is regarded today as one of the "Twin Pillars" (双璧) of Gozan literature, alongside Zekkai Chūshin. In a short address delivered in Chūgan's honor in 1367, Gidō makes deft reference to *Nihon sho* and the controversy surrounding it:

He (Chūgan) assiduously studied the country's history: "understand me by the *Spring and Autumn Annals*; condemn me by the *Spring and Autumn Annals*." His conduct was in keeping with the monastic rules; in walking he was as the Master, in rushing he was as the Master.¹⁴⁴

修國史兮、知我春秋、罪我春秋。行清規也、步亦夫子、趨亦夫子。

The line "understand me by the *Spring and Autumn Annals*; condemn me by the *Spring and Autumn Annals*" is adapted from a passage in *Mengzi*:

¹⁴³ It is difficult to determine whether the loss of the work was actually due to intentional suppression, or simply to the historical vicissitudes bearing upon manuscript copying and re-copying, without which very little from before the early modern era would be expected to survive. The great early modern Neo-Confucian thinker Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583-1657), who supported Chūgan's theory, reported in his *Jimmu tennō ron* 神武天皇論 that the imperial court took umbrage at the work and destroyed it. Chūgan was highly active in public religious life for the next two decades, and while he seems to have suffered no persecution or official censure for *Nihon sho*, it may be that he decided it would be better to abandon the project than to risk alienating influential backers, with the result that few if any copies of the work were ever made. Tōgen himself seems never to have possessed a copy of the work, noting in his *Shiki shō* 史記抄 (*Notes on Shiji*) that Chūgan's work "caused controversy and was never circulated." The *Jimmu tennō ron* may be found in Nakagawa Tarō, "Hayashi Razan," in Abe Yoshio, et al., eds., *Shushigaku taikei*, vol. 13, "Nihon no Shushigaku (2)" (Tokyo: Meitoku, 1975), pp. 163-67, with relevant portions translated in de Bary, et al., eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, pp. 357-60.

¹⁴⁴ *GZBT*, vol. 2, p. 982.

When the world fell into decline and the Way was obscured, pernicious doctrines and violent acts arose again; there were cases of ministers murdering their rulers, and cases of sons murdering their fathers. Confucius was frightened at this and so composed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. A work like the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is the business of the Son of Heaven.¹⁴⁵ It was for this reason that Confucius said: “Those who understand me will surely do so by way of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*; those who condemn me will surely do so by way of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*!”

世衰道微、邪說暴行有作、臣弑其君者有之、子弑其父者有之。孔子懼、作春秋。春秋、天子之事也。是故孔子曰：知我者其惟春秋乎、罪我者其惟春秋乎！
(*Mengzi* 3B9)

Gidō suggests that Chūgan, like Confucius, has been both appreciated and scorned for what he has written, and he implicitly accords Chūgan’s historical treatise a place in Japanese political thought analogous to that occupied by the *Spring and Autumn Annals* in China. The comparison of the two texts might simply have been Gidō’s way of according his mentor the loftiest possible praise. Yet it is by no means inconceivable that Chūgan had intended all along to advance *Nihon sho* as a Japanese *Spring and Autumn Annals*, a work meant for an age of division and “pernicious doctrines,” and one that most likely offered an essentially Confucian vision of Japanese cultural and institutional history. Whatever the case, in having his work compared to such an esteemed classic and his conduct likened directly to the Master’s, Chūgan seems ultimately to have earned both the accolades and the opprobrium befitting an outspoken scholar-monk and faithful admirer of that most controversial of Chinese Confucianists, Wang Tong.

¹⁴⁵ Because it offers moral judgments concerning rulers and ministers, which is the prerogative of the emperor alone.

Chapter Three

An Essay on the Kun and the Peng 鯤鵬論: Hermeneutics, Cosmology, and the Figural Reading of Fictional Characters

或問莊老。中正子曰、二子爰清爰靜。莊文甚奇、其於教化不可。

Someone asked about Laozi and Zhuangzi. The Master of Balance and Rectitude replied, “Those two masters exemplify tranquility and quiescence. Zhuangzi’s prose is particularly wondrous, though as such it is entirely unsuitable for moral education.”

Chūseishi (1334)

物者也、名言之迹也。非言非默之理。獨莊子能言而足盡其極而已。

What we call “things” are the traces of words and names; they are the principle of that which is neither speech nor silence. Only Zhuangzi was able to use words in a manner sufficient to exhaust their limits.

Konpōron (c. 1350?)

When Chūgan left Kyoto in early 1334 and began writing *Chūseishi*, moral suasion was still his foremost concern. Go-Daigo’s revolution was ongoing, and as suggested by the structure and content of the “Keiken” chapter, Chūgan still sought to influence the emperor’s thinking on matters of policy. Even the historical work *Nihon sho*, presented to the court in 1341, had among its ostensible objectives the repudiation of the “official” narrative regarding divine imperial descent. In so openly challenging nativist formulations of Japanese history and implicitly

repudiating the views of favored intellectuals such as Kitabatake Chikafusa, Chūgan was almost surely guided by the hope that his scholarship would prove meaningful in the public domain. As we have seen, his intervention was unwelcome and unsuccessful, and it probably added to the personal and professional difficulties he faced throughout the 1340s.¹⁴⁶ On the intellectual front, however, it was likely during this time that an embattled Chūgan began to venture beyond the Confucian tradition proper and reconsider texts that he had once dismissed. Foremost among these was *Zhuangzi*.

Though recognized by both Chinese and Japanese contemporaries for his exceptional acquaintance with multiple schools of Chinese thought, Chūgan's early work shows greater affinity with both classical Confucianism and the "Neo-Confucian" Cheng-Zhu school than with any text or tradition that might reasonably be labeled Daoist. As Chūgan saw it, the work of Confucian thinkers such as Mengzi, Xunzi, and Yang Xiong simply had greater relevance to practical learning and public policy than that of Laozi or Zhuangzi.¹⁴⁷ Exactly what sparked his mid-life interest in the latter is unclear, though in light of the vicissitudes he endured after his move from Sōtō to Rinzai Zen, one is tempted to posit a traditional, indeed almost

¹⁴⁶ As noted in the biographical introduction, the single most significant event in this regard was not Chūgan's authorship of *Nihon sho*, but rather his decision to switch sectarian affiliations from the Sōtō line of Dongming Huiji to the Rinzai line of Dongyang Dehui.

¹⁴⁷ This sentiment, though discernible in several places, is articulated most directly in the third chapter of *Chūseishi*, "Hōen" 方円: "The three masters Mengzi, Xunzi, and Yang Xiong are of the utmost value to learning. Although Zhuangzi is without value (to learning), (his thought) may be taken as a warning to check one's desires" 孟荀揚之三子最有益於學者也。惟莊無益、然可以為窒欲之警也。 See Iriya Yoshitaka et al., eds., *Nihon koten shisō taikēi*, v. 16, "Chūsei Zenke no shisō" (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972), pp. 134 and 173.

stereotypical, turn from the paradigmatically public realm of Confucianism to the private, anodyne realm of philosophical Daoism.¹⁴⁸ Whatever his motivations, sometime after 1340, Chūgan authored an extraordinary essay on the symbolic significance of two famous characters from the opening chapter of *Zhuangzi*, the gigantic Kun 鯤 fish and the enormous Peng 鵬 bird. This “Thesis on the Kun and the Peng” (*Konpōron* 鯤鵬論) offers an allegorical reading that integrates Buddhism, yin-yang theory, and numerology in a manner that is conceptually compelling and entirely without precedent in the Japanese exegetical tradition. It also invites productive questions regarding figuration and figural reading, the power and limitations of language, and the interplay of affect and discursive intellect.

Long before the post-Heian emergence of institutional Zen and the efflorescence of Chinese literary studies it fostered, several classical commentaries on *Zhuangzi* had enjoyed widespread favor among Japanese literati, including those by Guo Xiang 郭象 (c. 252-312), Sima Biao 司馬彪 (c. 243-c. 306) and Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (fl. mid seventh c.). Lin Xiyi’s 林希逸 (1193-1271) *Zhuangzi Yan Zhai kouyi* 莊子齋口義 may also have been available in Chūgan’s day, though the first Japanese scholar to make substantial use of this work seems to have been a slightly later Gozan writer, Ishō Tokugan 惟肖得巖 (1360-1437). The *Nihonkoku kenzaisho mokuroku* 日本國見在書目錄, a bibliographic resource from the early

¹⁴⁸ This intellectual trajectory is traditionally associated with ministers or literati who fall from political favor. In Heian Japan, learned men who found their chances for official preferment diminished do seem to have turned frequently to Daoism for solace; the famous statesman and poet Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 provides the historical archetype. On this see Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court* (Honolulu: Univ of Hawai’i Press, 1994), pp. 57 and 295.

Heian period, lists 21 *Zhuangzi* titles then extant in Japan, including Guo Xiang's commentary in thirty fascicles and Sima Biao's in twenty fascicles.¹⁴⁹ Newer works had likely been introduced by Japanese monks who traveled to China and Korea for religious purposes after the cessation of official, court-sponsored diplomatic relations in the ninth century. Still others might have been obtained by Japanese religious establishments via private transactions with the sizable expatriate community of Chinese merchants residing in the southern port city of Hakata.¹⁵⁰ Finally, throughout his eight-year stay in China, Chūgan was an active participant in the salon-like atmosphere that prevailed at some of the temples he visited, exchanging poems – and struggling, at least initially, to converse in vernacular Chinese – with such celebrated literati as the Central Asian poet and painter Sa Dula 薩都刺 (fl. 1320s).¹⁵¹ It is quite possible that during such interactions he was exposed to novel interpretations of *Zhuangzi*, though to my knowledge no specific attestations to this effect are found in his writings. It is also abundantly clear that he was deeply familiar with modes of interpretation associated with yin-yang theory and correlative cosmology, and was almost surely well acquainted with the post-Han Buddhist reception of the principal works of philosophical Daoism. A more thorough accounting of these potential influences upon his thought will be given

¹⁴⁹ See Yajima Genryō, *Nihonkoku kenzaisho mokuroku: shūshō to kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1984), pp. 122-4.

¹⁵⁰ For a history of Hakata city and its role in both official and private trade, see Bruce Batten, *Gateway to Japan* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2006). Contacts with prominent Chinese merchants could be highly profitable for fledgling Zen temples: in one famous case, a wealthy local notable known as Xie Guoming 謝國明 funded the construction of Jōtenji 承天寺, a temple that remains active to this day.

¹⁵¹ Kageki Hideo, *Gozan shi shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1977), p. 224-25.

below; it is enough to note here that he was working from a knowledge base that, while impossible to reconstruct with precision, was certainly extensive and possibly quite up-to-date.

Konpōron is both a serious work of hermeneutics and an exercise in imaginative allegoresis. In order to carry the project off, Chūgan first needed to perform a ground-clearing operation in which literal interpretations of *Zhuangzi* were rejected and the Kun and the Peng were construed as both allegorical and entirely fictional. In this they become purposive creations of the sort known in medieval Western hermeneutics as *allegoria in verbis*, the purely literary counterpart to the type of allegory most often associated with scriptural interpretation, *allegoria in factis*, wherein events are held to have symbolic significance yet also to be factually true.¹⁵² To a limited degree, this had been standard practice since at least Guo Xiang, who noted in his commentary that he could not attest to the existence of actual creatures fitting the description of the Kun and the Peng. Evidently content to let the matter rest, Guo Xiang opined no further after this disclaimer. He probably felt there was no need: in general, the traditional commentaries are not dedicated to the disclosure of an occult text from the received *Zhuangzi*, and they do not forcefully and systematically attempt to privilege latent over manifest sense. In the following passages, Chūgan sets the stage for his own symbolic interpretation of the Kun and the Peng by refuting the way in which credulous readers in general, and misguided Neo-Confucians in particular, might try to apprehend them:

¹⁵² See Simon Brittan, *Poetry, Symbol, and Allegory* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2003), p. 21.

Before Zhuangzi there was nobody who talked about the Kun and the Peng, and nothing about them is recorded in ancient texts such as *Shijing*, *Shujing*, *Yijing*, and *Chunqiu*. Only in *Zhuangzi* is mention made of them.¹⁵³ Later generations mistakenly believed that the Kun and the Peng were real. Their failure to consider reason (道理) and their fruitless clinging to words and traces is surely an extreme case of not thinking.¹⁵⁴

When I was young, I asked the various learned men in my village about this, but to a man, all they could do was hem and haw. When I reflect back on it now, it seems obvious that they couldn't hope to have known just what kind of fish (the Kun was) or what kind of bird (the Peng was). All they could do was stare at the sentences (文) comprising Zhuangzi's work or hear explanations about particular written characters (字) by later Confucians.¹⁵⁵ Having only the text itself (文字), they lost sight of the fact that its substance (實) was the stuff of pure fantasy.¹⁵⁶

莊子前無云鯤鵬之事。如詩書易春秋之古書所不載也。惟莊子一言之。後世以爲實有云鯤鵬之物。其不考之道理徒拘於言迹且不思之甚也。予幼年時問之鄉之諸先生。皆含糊而已。今反復而思之、固應不知夫果爲何等之魚耶何等之鳥耶。特以觀其文於莊子之書、又聞其字於後儒之言而已。徒有文字而亡其實者兔角龜毛是類焉。

Apparently feeling it insufficient to simply reject the assumption of literal referentiality out of hand, Chūgan goes on to argue in almost patronizingly explicit terms that a bird such as the Peng is a physical impossibility. While this is by far the least conceptually interesting portion of his essay, appearing at first to be little more than a simplistic foil for the more nuanced reading he will offer subsequently, its

¹⁵³ As will become clear later in his essay, Chūgan is not suggesting here that the actual words “kun” and “peng” did not exist prior to their appearance in *Zhuangzi*, only that the application of those designations to two fantastic creatures was novel.

¹⁵⁴ The connection between words (言), traces (迹), and things (物) is of fundamental importance to Chūgan's thesis and will be addressed in more detail below.

¹⁵⁵ “Later Confucians” renders the epithet *kōju* 後儒 (C. *houru*), which appears in both China and Japan as a broad reference to Confucian scholars of recent times and, during the Song era and thereafter, to adherents of the Cheng-Zhu 程朱 school in particular.

¹⁵⁶ Literally, “horns on a rabbit or hair on a turtle,” a common euphemism in Zen literature for something that doesn't exist in nature.

force and simplicity recalls his approach to homily – a genre in which Chūgan, like other Gozan literati, was extremely proficient. In its laboriousness, it is also wryly funny:

The nature of a bird is to fly. If there were a bird whose wings really beat the wind for 90,000 li and were like clouds suspended from the heavens, then they would cover all the land in China when spread. Travelling (from China) in the four directions, one need not even go 10,000 li to the east before passing the three Korean kingdoms, and going (10,000 li) to the west takes one beyond the Kunlun Mountains. Going (10,000 li) to the north takes one beyond the desert, and (10,000 li) to the south brings one to the edge of mountain and sea.¹⁵⁷ All of this would be under the Peng's wings, and for those affected, it would be like being underneath an overturned bowl: one would be unable to see the light from the sun or the moon, and there would be no difference between day and night. It would be perpetually dark! What's more, the force of the wind and waves (that the Peng would generate) would be so strong that every boat within the four seas would be quite beyond salvation.¹⁵⁸ Just one bird taking to the air would imperil the country; now imagine these birds flying in a flock, then the realm would be in real trouble! Yet I have never heard of such a strange occurrence in any epoch. The *Chunqiu* contains veritable records of the ages, and all of them mention natural calamities and unusual events. But (a Peng-induced disaster) is something that is not written down in any of the histories. Clearly, then, the story is simply one of Zhuangzi's allegories (寓言), couched in the most fanciful and far-fetched language.

鳥之性以飛爲常。且如九萬里搏風之翼、若垂天雲者、一展其翅亦縣神州之地。四方不過萬餘里、東及三韓、西過昆崙、北踰沙漠、南際嶺海。皆在翼下。如覆盆中不見日月之照、無晝夜之分。永爲暗昧也。且夫風濤之勢四海舟楫之利不可濟也。一鳥一飛尚難爲國土、況此鳥飛以群、則國土奈之何？未聞何代何時而有如斯之怪乎。春秋歷世有實錄皆記災異。然諸史所不載也。是乃莊子寓言、荒唐開誕之語耳。

¹⁵⁷ The term “mountain and sea” renders 嶺海, which seemingly refers to the Five Ridges of southern China (Dayu 大庾, Qitian 騎田, Mengzhu 萌渚, Dupang 都龐, and Yuecheng 越城) and the sea off the coast of what is today Guangdong and Guangxi provinces.

¹⁵⁸ The phrase 四海舟楫之利不可濟也 seems to mean something like “even the benefit (利) gained from the supplications (楫) of every boat in the four seas would not be enough to save them.”

Having thus denied simple referential interpretations of Zhuangzi's Peng on the basis of history and common zoological sense, Chūgan turns to philology in rejecting the oft encountered association of the Peng with another legendary bird, the feng 鳳, commonly rendered in English as "phoenix."¹⁵⁹ He argues that this erroneous identification stems from confusion with yet another quasi-mythical bird, the so-called "blazing firebird" (jiaoming 焦明) of Sima Xiangru's famous Rhapsody on Shanglin Imperial Park (*Shanglin fu* 上林賦). The blazing firebird was explained by the noted fifth-century scholar Pei Yin as a bird that "resembles the phoenix" 似鳳; this gloss seems to have taken root very early, as it is also given by the third-century lexicographer Zhang Yi.¹⁶⁰ To make matters worse, Sima Xiangru's biography in *Han shu* calls this bird not *jiaoming* but *jiaopeng* 焦朋, and Chūgan focuses on semantic correspondences between the three characters *feng* 鳳, *peng* 朋, and *peng* 鵬 as central factors contributing to the misinterpretation of Zhuangzi's allegorical bird:

The character 鵬 was originally written 朋 (*peng*) and was synonymous with the character 鳳 (*feng*). The traditional explanation for this is that when the feng bird flies, flocks of other birds follow it en masse, thereby earning it the style "peng" 鵬...¹⁶¹ Zhuangzi was fond of allegories, and so he simply borrowed the word "peng" 朋 and

¹⁵⁹ He also rejects out of hand the still more exotic association of the Peng with the golden-winged garuda (金翅鳥) of Buddhist lore.

¹⁶⁰ Zhang Yi is noted for compiling the dictionary *Guangya* 廣雅, which contains over 17,000 characters. Somewhat unusually, his gloss on the *jiaopeng* associates it with the west, as opposed to the south. See Takahashi Tadahiko, *Shinshaku kanbun taikei*, v. 80, "Monzen, *fu* hen," pt. 2, (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1977), p. 104.

¹⁶¹ This line is a near quote from the second-century dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字. Chūgan adds that the term "peng" 朋 is used predominantly a signifier for a pair (相偶), suggesting that it is the sense of birds coming together or "pairing up" that is behind the use of the graph 鵬 to denote the bird called "feng."

used it as the name of a giant bird. It was later Confucians who, on the basis of the bird radical in the character 鵬, assumed that there really was such a bird.

鵬本爲朋，與鳳字同。說者曰鳳飛則群鳥相從以萬數，故爲鵬… 莊子好寓言，故假朋字爲大鳥之名而已。後儒從鳥成鵬以為實有斯鳥也。

That Chūgan would muster such lengthy, sober appeals to philology and recorded history to advance the seemingly obvious point that there is no such thing as the Peng is consistent with his penchant for dramatic and polemical arguments. It is also possible that the high cultural status accorded to the Chinese classics would, for at least some medieval Japanese readers, have effectively guaranteed the historicity of the stories they relate, making such a thoroughgoing rebuttal a useful propaedeutic to the type of symbolic reading that he intended to offer.¹⁶² The foremost goal of Chūgan's reading was to elucidate the principle of "transformation" (物化), an idea of fundamental importance in both Buddhist and Daoist philosophical discourse, and one which Chūgan believed was aptly figured by the physical metamorphosis of the Kun into the Peng.

¹⁶² Here it might be noted that the Kun was apparently less controversial. Its name was construable as denoting either a single gigantic fish or, somewhat paradoxically, miniscule fish eggs – a basic meaning of the word "kun." As will be seen below, Chūgan believed the latter sense was actually the more important, but perhaps because gigantic sea creatures such as whales were known to exist, he offered no explicit critique of the gargantuan proportions ascribed to the Kun in the story.

Fig. 1

He begins his interpretation by explaining the significance of the term Northern Darkness (北冥), the body of water in which the Kun is held to reside. According to Chūgan, north is the direction where yang energy lies dormant, and where the “One of Heaven” (天一) brings water into being. Here he draws explicitly on the “Yellow River Chart” or *Hetu* (河圖), a famous diagram in which a symmetric arrangement of groups of dots represent correspondences between the natural numbers from one to ten, the cardinal directions, and the five phases (fig. 1). He further explains that the direction north is associated with the divinatory trigram *kan* (坎, ☵), which shows one yang line trapped in between two yin lines and symbolizes water. Finally, he notes that the character *ming* 冥 (J. *mei*) can be used to denote the sea, and that the closely related, homophonous character 溟 connotes a particularly *dark* sea, making 北冥 suggestive of that which is “hidden, dark, mysterious, and at rest” (幽晦玄冥). To Chūgan, Zhuangzi’s Northern Darkness represents “a place where the myriad things lie dormant and concealed” (萬物潛藏之地耳).

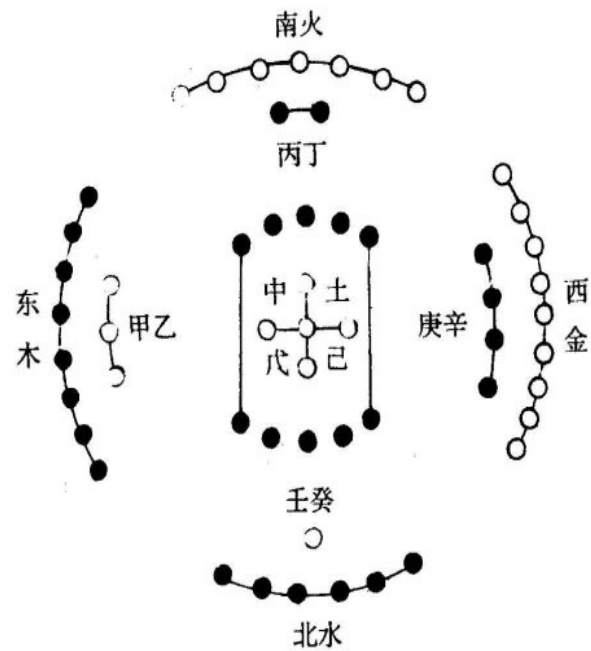


图1 河图

This interpretation of the Northern Darkness buttressed, and perhaps even helped motivate, his decision to focus not on the manifest sense of the Kun as a

gigantic fish, but rather on the meaning of the word “kun” as fish eggs (魚卵), which may be seen to embody the same qualities of latency, inchoateness, and hidden potential associated with the *kan* trigram. Philologically speaking, this reading is well supported: the great pre-Qin lexicographical work *Erya* 爾雅 defines “kun” as roe, which is also how the word appears in *Guoyu* 國語, a text compiled between the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.¹⁶³ Historically, *Zhuangzi* scholarship has been divided on the matter, with some early scholars such as Wei Zhao 韋昭 (204-73) noting, at least, that the term “kun” properly means roe, while other commentators avoided this complication altogether and adhered in their interpretations to the manifest qualities of *Zhuangzi*’s Kun: the Eastern Jin scholar Cui Zhuan 崔譔, for instance, proposed that the Kun was in fact a whale (鯨).¹⁶⁴ Chūgan’s reading was probably motivated less by a general concern for philological rigor than by the need to establish the logical groundwork for his symbolic interpretation of the passage as a whole. Construing the Kun to be a whale or other such creature saps the anecdote of the humor and ironic wit characteristic of so much of *Zhuangzi*, and obviously rules out fictional allegory as an interpretive mode. By contrast, foregrounding the basic sense of the word “kun” creates a rather stark, but extremely productive, terminological disjunction between the name and the character that bears it. To the extent that it plainly subverts categorical judgments concerning size – kun are tiny

¹⁶³ See Wang Shumin, *Zhuangzi jiaquan*, vol. 1, pp. 4-5.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. English translations of *Zhuangzi* also frequently understand the Kun simply as an enormous fish (Herbert Giles famously rendered it Leviathan), with no reference to the fact that the word “kun” meant roe. Many modern Chinese and Japanese editions do so as well, apparently wishing to avoid an interpretive scheme that would require too long a detour into philology or symbolism.

but the Kun is enormous – this disjunction is highly consistent with Zhuangzian rhetoric in general, and it is what will later allow Chūgan to place philology in the service of philosophy:

A “kun” is an egg whose body is amorphous and has yet to assume the full form of a fish.¹⁶⁵ It lies latent and concealed and is extremely miniscule. Yet the ambition it nurtures is vast, stretching for who knows how many thousand *li*. Although one might say that it is tiny and hidden, it nonetheless represents the seed of a dragon (i.e. something with the potential for greatness).

鯤、體渾渾然而未具魚體之卵也。潛伏而微小之甚也。然所養之志氣浩大、不知其幾千里也。雖云微潛、亦龍種耳。

Here, Chūgan understands the phrase “who knows how many thousand *li*?” 不知其幾千里, which in the text ostensibly describes the *actual* physical size of the Kun, as an entirely figurative expression. The defining characteristic of Zhuangzi’s Kun is thus its immense potential, the ultimate realization of which is its transformation into the Peng. And just as the initial location of the Kun in the cold water of the Northern Darkness can, by way of *Yijing* symbolism, be understood to adumbrate the creature’s central qualities – latent yang energy, concealed but ready to burst forth – so the direction into which the Peng flies can be seen as a marker of its significance as a symbol of newly liberated radiance. Chūgan notes that the south is associated with the trigram *li* (離, ☲), which shows one yin line between two yang

¹⁶⁵ It is impossible to convey in English the double entendre that Chūgan creates every time he writes “kun” 鯤, which both denotes (or connotes) the gargantuan character named Kun and, conversely, connotes (or denotes) the word that means roe. The description given in this passage is manifestly about the word, but the reader is meant to hold Zhuangzi’s Kun in mind as well, as its symbolic connection to roe is what drives Chūgan’s entire interpretation.

lines and represents fire and, by extension, brightness and clear-sightedness.¹⁶⁶ He observes further that fire has the ability to “transform things” (化物), and that according to the elemental correspondences in the *Hetu* diagram, it is begotten by the yin number 2. Water, as already noted, is begotten by the yang number 1. To Chūgan, this correlation between numerology and five-phases theory is reflected in the physical forms of the Kun and the Peng: just as the number 1 precedes the number 2, so the Kun, which is unitary (單) and odd (奇), precedes the Peng as its “elder brother” (*kun* 昆, to add to an already multilayered wordplay). The Peng, by contrast, is even (偶), a fact reflected in the bilateral symmetry of its wings, which form a pair (*peng* 朋). And whereas the body of the Kun is whole and undifferentiated (一合昆侖) as it lays submerged in the Northern Darkness, the Peng’s two wings work in unison (二張朋會) as it soars into the southern sky.¹⁶⁷

The strategy of explicating a particular word via reference to a homophonous word written with a cognate character features prominently in Chūgan’s essay.¹⁶⁸ It

¹⁶⁶ Commenting on their hexagrammatic forms, which subsume the symbolic content of the trigrams, Richard Wilhelm (translated by Cary F. Banes) puts it evocatively: “While Kan means the soul shut within the body, Li stands for nature in its radiance” (*The I Ching*, p. 118).

¹⁶⁷ These are difficult lines to parse, and I suspect there may be a wordplay at work involving 昆侖 and 朋會 that enriches an otherwise simple parallelism. In full, the lines read as follows: 鯤體一合昆侖而伏于溟北、鵬翼二張朋會而騫于天南. In *Yijing*, the first divinatory judgment pertaining to the second hexagram – which happens to be pronounced *kun* (坤) – says that the superior man (君子) will gain friends in the south or west and lose them if he goes north or east: 西南得朋、東北喪朋. See Suzuki (1974), pp. 100-1 and Wilhelm and Baynes (1976), p. 11.

¹⁶⁸ Recall also the various phono-semantic links Chūgan emphasized between the characters 君 and 群, and between 王, 往, 旺, and 唯 in the “Keiken” chapter of *Chūseishi* (see Chapter Two of the present study).

drives his final act of correlative reasoning, which begins with the straightforward association of north with the celestial stem *ren* 壬 (J. *nin*) and south with the celestial stem *bing* 丙 (J. *hei*). There is nothing particularly novel about this, since *ren* and *bing* are traditionally associated with water and fire, respectively, and the *Hetu*, as we have seen, associates those elements with north and south. But Chūgan proposes a further phonetic and semantic connection to the *Zhuangzi* story, arguing that the north, being *ren*, symbolizes a state of pregnancy (C. *renyun*, J. *nin'yō* 妊孕) and the south, being *bing*, a state of brightness (C. *bingyao*, J. *heiyō* 炳曜).¹⁶⁹ Even these compounds seem carefully chosen, as the second character in each contains radical elements suggestive of the Kun and the Peng: 子 (child, progeny), 羽 (wings), 隹 (bird). Rhetorically speaking, the terms also conclude this portion of the essay nicely, as each encapsulates and restates key motifs of the *Zhuangzi* story: where the Kun is pregnant with potential, hidden in the Northern Darkness, the Peng, as its transfiguration, escapes this darkness and ascends into the light.¹⁷⁰

To return to an issue broached briefly above, such a meticulous figural reading of a Chinese text by a Japanese scholar will naturally lead the genetic critic (and the intellectual historian) to one intriguing question: how much of this reading was original to Chūgan, and how much is traceable to known Chinese sources?

¹⁶⁹ These phonetic correlations hold in both Late Old Chinese, the language of *Zhuangzi*, and Middle Mandarin (Pulleyblank's Early Mandarin), which refers to the language of the *Zhongyuan yinyun* 中原音韻, compiled circa 1300, which is also around the time Chūgan was in China. Not surprisingly, they also hold in Japanese, so long as one uses the *go'on* 呉音 reading "*nin*" for 壬.

¹⁷⁰ As a whole, the passage in which these ideas are articulated is dense and significantly more difficult than the portions translated earlier. A complete translation is ventured in the appendix to this chapter.

While I have yet to discover anything directly paralleling *Konpōron* in the commentarial tradition, it is clear that interpretations of the Kun and the Peng in terms of yin-yang theory did exist. In his *Zhuangzi Yan Zhai kouyi* 莊子齋口義, the aforementioned Lin Xiyi rejected such readings on the grounds that they were overwrought; unfortunately, his comments are terse and do not give a sense of how the interpretations he had in mind were constructed philosophically or rhetorically.¹⁷¹ More generally, a well-established poetics of nature in which fish embodied yin and birds embodied yang was seemingly common knowledge, and the juxtaposition of the two animals in literature predates even *Zhuangzi*.¹⁷² Moreover, the *Yijing* symbolism informing Chūgan's *Konpōron* is closely consonant with several important trends in Song-era *Yijing* exegesis. The intellectual culture of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1126) evinced extraordinary fascination with divinatory charts and diagrams, and *Yijing* interpretation during the era reflected a resurgent interest in the *Xiangshu* 象數 ("Images and Numbers") and *Chenwei* 讖緯 ("Prognostica") traditions that first emerged during the Han.¹⁷³ The Daoist priest Chen Tuan 陳搏 (d. 989), an eclectic and apparently quite popular figure conversant

¹⁷¹ Lin remarks, "The names Kun and Peng are simply allegorical. Some have explicated them by means of yin and yang, but all such interpretations are forced and introduce unnecessary complexities" (鯤鵬之名亦寓言耳。或以陰陽論之、皆是強生節目). See *Zhuangzi kouyi* (Taipei: Hongdao wenhua shiye, 1971), pp. 2-3.

¹⁷² See Akatsuka Kiyoshi, *Zenshaku kanbun taikai*, v. 16, "Sōshi" (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1974), pp. 26-7. For an early example of the literary juxtaposition of birds with fish, Akatsuka cites the poem "Han Lu" 早麓 ("The Foothills of Mount Han") from *Shijing* 詩經 (Mao no. 239), which contains a couplet that reads 鳶飛戾天、魚躍于淵, "The kite takes flight and reaches (戾 = 至) the heavens, and the fish frolic in the deep."

¹⁷³ See Richard J. Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World: The Yijing (I-Ching, or Classic of Changes) and Its Evolution in China* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2008), p. 114.

with both Buddhism and the Confucian classics, taught *Xiangshu* ideas widely and is often credited with promulgating the *Hetu* and *Luoshu* diagrams.¹⁷⁴ Connections between *Yijing* and *Zhuangzi* were also deep and longstanding: centuries earlier, the famed scholar and exegete Wang Bi 王弼 (226-49) had drawn heavily on *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* in developing an approach to *Yijing* studies that eventually became the school of “Meanings and Principles” (*Yili* 義理), an influential alternative to the *Xiangshu* school. Nearer to Chūgan’s own time, the poet Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077-1148) even opined that the essence of *Yijing* is entirely contained in *Zhuangzi* and another Daoist classic, *Liezi* 列子.¹⁷⁵ Beginning in the Six Dynasties era (220-589), Buddhist writers, too, made fruitful use of *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, few more extensively than Sengzhao 僧肇 (384-414).¹⁷⁶ As will be seen below, the enigmatic opening passage of *Konpōron* closely parallels portions of Sengzhao’s famous collection of essays, *Zhaolun* 肇論. During the Tang Dynasty, the Buddhist scholastic footprint in *Yijing* studies grew dramatically, with notable contributions made by Huayan 華嚴 (Kegon) exegetes such as Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635-730), who creatively invoked both *Yijing* itself and the “*Yijing* apocrypha” (易緯) in order to explicate certain aspects of Huayan philosophy.¹⁷⁷ Lest this accounting of plausible influences upon Chūgan’s thought grow unmanageably long, we may conclude by noting that the eminent dual master of Huayan and Chan, Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780-841),

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 114-15. The *Luoshu* 洛書 was a diagram similar to the *Hetu* but used a different arrangement of correspondences.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 133.

¹⁷⁶ See Wang Zhongyao, *Zhongguo Fojiao yu Zhouyi* (Taipei: Dazhan, 2003), p. 100.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 256-68.

perhaps the most famous Buddhist thinker of his era, deftly glossed various doctrinal concepts fundamental to Mahayana Buddhism by way of reference to *Yijing*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Laozi*.¹⁷⁸

The foundations laid by Six Dynasties and Tang theorists would continue to inspire syncretically minded writers of the Song and Yuan eras, which were characterized by the increasingly widespread participation of ostensibly “Confucian” scholars in Chan Buddhism, and the participation of Chan prelates in the academic study of “exterior” (i.e. non-Buddhist) classical texts. Hence, like any well-placed Buddhist scholar of the fourteenth century, Chūgan was heir to a long and fertile intellectual tradition that included elements of Indic philosophy, notably Yogācāra and Mādhyamika, philosophical (and even alchemical) Daoism,¹⁷⁹ numerology, yin-yang theory, and Confucian ethics. It was a tradition of immense breadth that could be marshaled in support of an extraordinary variety of interpretive approaches, not least of which was allegoresis.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 343-67. See also Peter N. Gregory, *An Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity: An Annotated Translation of Tsung-mi’s Yüan jen lun with a Modern Commentary* (Kuroda Institute Classics in East Asian Buddhism. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 1995), passim.

¹⁷⁹ Famous alchemical texts such as the Han-era *Zhouyi cantong qi* 周易參同契 (*Token for the Agreement of the Three According to the Zhou Changes*) attest to the longstanding connection between *Yijing* scholarship and alchemical Daoism, and Chen Tuan was a key figure in the development of the Song-era “inner alchemy” (*neidan* 內丹) tradition. See Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos*, 106-7 and 115.

Interpretation and Authorial Genius

In the Chinese commentarial tradition, a type of reading that can justifiably be termed “allegorical” was encouraged by multiple factors, the most basic of which was the persistent tendency of commentators to make even an ostensibly simple text, such as a poem from *Shijing*, mean something other than its manifest sense. The approach was well known to Japanese scholars of the Nara and Heian periods, and is commonly associated in both China and Japan with Confucian moral imperatives to discover (and ultimately privilege) political messages in classical prose and poetry. From a linguistic standpoint, allegoresis was further abetted by a process of terminological sedimentation, whereby certain terms of art gradually accreted many layers of meaning through centuries of use in changing conceptual environments. The words were thus strongly palimpsestic, and it was relatively easy for philologically inclined commentators to bring to light latent meanings of specific words and phrases. The effect was thus to multiply the number of possible new “texts” – understood, following McGann, as “laced networks of linguistic and bibliographic codes” – that could be wrought from the words of an existing work.¹⁸⁰ Yet another significant factor was the enduring (post-Han) influence of what has been called by Western scholars “correlative cosmology,” a mode of taxonomic thinking conducive to the proliferation of connections between seemingly disparate

¹⁸⁰ Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991) p. 13.

phenomena.¹⁸¹ Needless to say, *Konpōron* makes extensive use of this paradigm, forging geographic, elemental, and numerical relationships between various key words in the *Zhuangzi* passage it explicates.

While symbolic representation and figural reading were integral to the Chinese interpretive tradition, questions were raised several decades ago regarding the specific nature of the symbols and figures themselves. The type of allegory commonly encountered in Chinese literature has been held by many scholars to differ fundamentally from that which predominates in the literatures of the West. The former, as analyzed by Andrew Plaks, is synecdochic: things may represent other things, but as a rule, both the vehicle and the tenor in any metaphoric substitution are of the same ontological order; where Western allegory “looks upward” towards a privileged metaphysical plane, Chinese allegory “looks outward.”¹⁸² Quite unlike his Western counterpart, the Chinese poet has thus been judged to inhabit an essentially monistic cosmos in which no absolute separation was posited between the “human” and the “divine,” between phenomena and noumena. To the extent that such a description is accurate, figures and symbols in Chinese literary texts necessarily work metonymically; there is, as Pauline Yu put it, no movement towards “a transcendent realm that is autonomous and different in kind from the sensory world of the poet and his readers, simply because such a

¹⁸¹ The phrase “correlative cosmology” is not a translation of a traditional term, but a relatively recent neologism. The complex of ideas it attempts to capture is denoted in historical sources such as *Han shu* 漢書 (111 A.D.) and *Wen xuan* 文選 (ca. 530) by phrases such as “the juncture of Heaven and Man” 天人之際.

¹⁸² See Andrew Plaks, *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p. 180.

realm was not held to exist.”¹⁸³ The poet, moreover, was not a creator as such, but an organizer or excavator of established tropes and figures that embodied pre-existing relationships.¹⁸⁴ Yu has even applied this position to the symbolism found in Buddhist-inspired poetry, citing the non-dualism of form and emptiness articulated in the *Heart Sutra* and noting that “the apparent dichotomy between this world and another, samsara and nirvana, the illusory and the real, could be explained by Buddhist dialecticians, within their system of ‘double truth,’ as merely conventional truth.”¹⁸⁵ The result, predictably, is that the Buddhist poet, like his “Confucian” counterpart, is held not to have been alluding to a realm that was fundamentally other. The point is elegant and powerfully germane to our understanding of a work like *Konpōron*, though it might be hedged with the obvious proviso that the metaphysical perspectives of the *Heart Sutra* and other Prajñāpāramitā sutras need not be automatically mapped onto every Buddhist poet or every poetic invocation of “emptiness” (空). More fundamentally, the broad metaphysical commitment to a non-dual, organismic cosmos among East Asian intellectuals did not in itself mean the absence of discourses of transcendence, which at the very least served heuristic and rhetorical purposes, even if they might be shown by an extended journey on the *via philosophica* to differ from similar discourses in the West.

¹⁸³ Pauline Yu, “Metaphor and Chinese Poetry,” *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 3:2 (Jul. 1981), p. 220.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 220, 223 and *passim*.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-24.

Nonetheless, even as Chūgan’s allegoresis implies the possibility of transcendence, the metaphysics behind it may still be labeled non-dualistic: all that the Kun will become is contained germinally within it – an almost too obvious implication of the name Kun (“Roe”) – and nowhere does Chūgan’s discussion depend explicitly on the presumed existence of “higher” or otherwise incommensurable orders of reality. By and large, then, *Konpōron* may be said to look “outward” in precisely the ways characteristic of correlationist exegeses, revealing a unified socio-cosmic order governed by natural laws and pre-existing correspondences. There is, however, one significant respect in which Chūgan’s account of the Kun and the Peng does depart from both purely yin-yang correlationist and Confucianist allegorical readings. While he holds the overarching purpose of the story to be the symbolic illustration of the principle of transformation, he also holds the Kun and the Peng themselves to be ingenious, and entirely fictitious, literary creations of the historical Zhuangzi:

It seems Master Zhuang was able to perceive the process of change driving the transformation of things and elucidate their essential nature.¹⁸⁶ This is why he left his

¹⁸⁶ “Essential nature” renders *seishō* 精性 (C. *jingxing*); 精 seems analogous to its use in terms such as *seiki* 精氣 (*jingqi*), “essential pneuma,” and *seishin* 精神 (*jingshen*), “quintessential spirit” (these translations follow Csikszentmihalyi, ed. *Readings in Han Chinese Thought* and Major et al., *The Huainanzi*, respectively). *Seishō* is not a particularly common compound, though it does occur in Buddhist texts, and with especially high frequency in the Heroic Valor Sutra (首楞嚴經). It is reminiscent of other Buddhist terms treating various types of “nature,” such as *taishō* 體性 (*tixing*), which has also been translated as “essential nature” (see Swanson, *Foundations of T’ien T’ai Philosophy*, p. 77). Chūgan seems to believe that *seishō* is difficult but not impossible to understand through language; presumably other, baser forms of nature are more readily accessible. And although he does not offer an explicit counterpart to “essential nature,” one is reminded of the distinction between “original nature” (本然之性) and “physical nature” (氣質之性) made by Zhu Xi.

trace in a thing that was not a thing, which was sufficient to enable him to leave traces where none could otherwise be left.¹⁸⁷ He was also able to take account of the vast number of names and norms and discern their mysterious principles. This is the reason he grounded his words in a nameless name, and it is precisely how he was able to say that which could not be said.

蓋夫莊生能觀物化之變而明其精性。故遺迹於無物之物、足能迹所不能迹之迹也。又籌名數之量而分其玄理。故立言於無名之名是能言所不能言之言也。

To Chūgan, Zhuangzi was a master symbolist who used fictionalized creatures, which is to say creatures whose names (名) as deployed within the text did not have direct referents outside it, in order to “say what could not be said.” Fictionality itself was fundamental to this endeavor, since to use names in a manner that simply denoted well known, real-world referents would be to remain entirely within the associational paradigm typical of traditional Confucian allegory. By employing signifiers in a way that was at once denotatively new – prior to Zhuangzi, the words “kun” and “peng” hadn’t been used in paradoxical fashion to name a gargantuan fish and a continent-sized bird – yet which simultaneously preserved and played deftly upon the referents the terms originally did possess, Zhuangzi achieved something both stylistically and conceptually novel.

On this account, at least, Chūgan’s reading of the episode comes remarkably close to Pauline Yu’s conception of the prototypical *Western* allegory, which “cannot be taken at face value as a literal record of actual events,” but is rather “a system of signs whose very meaning consists in asserting their fictiveness and their function

¹⁸⁷ The noun phrase 迹所不能迹之迹 may be rendered more literally as “to leave [as trace] (迹) the sort of trace that cannot be left as trace (所不能迹之迹),” or “to leave [as trace] traces in a place where no traces may be left,” depending on how one chooses to construe 所不能迹.

as signifiers for something beyond the text.”¹⁸⁸ This last qualification, of course, returns us to the issue of metaphysics, and the question at hand becomes whether or not, or to what extent, the principle of transformation might meaningfully be construed as lying “beyond” the text. A longstanding problem facing exegetes working on the texts of philosophical Daoism was the fact that the Dao was both immanent and transcendent; it was approachable, via language, in its effects or “functions” (C. *yong*, J. *yō* 用), but not in its undifferentiated totality, a state that precedes and, by definition, precludes “names” of any sort. Yet in the work of renowned *Laozi* commentator Lu Xisheng 陸希聲 (fl. 9th c.), names “are accorded value in an anagogic way: they are the *yong* of Dao, they rely on it and permit the search for the ‘foundation’ (C. *ti*, J. *tai* 體).”¹⁸⁹ To this extent, names are part of a metaphysical order that does not admit of an ontological duality in the manner of Abrahamic or Platonic thought, but which in most formulations is nonetheless *hierarchical*. Chūgan too posits a clear hierarchy between the Dao and the phenomenal world, of which language is one particular constituent. As the condition of possibility for both sensory experience and discursive reason, the Dao cannot be entirely captured – “exhausted” (盡) – by any ordinary device, linguistic or otherwise.¹⁹⁰ Yet “things” (物), which are specific instantiations of the Dao and

¹⁸⁸ Pauline R. Yu, “Allegory, Allegoresis, and the Classic of Poetry,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43:2 (Dec. 1983), pp. 377-412.

¹⁸⁹ Robinet, “The Diverse Interpretations of the *Laozi*,” p. 147.

¹⁹⁰ In the interest of completeness, it might be noted that Chūgan does not comment on the possibility of experiencing the Dao through mystical union.

thus gesture towards it, *are* amenable to verbal explication, at least by someone as skilled as Zhuangzi:

Those who can say, say what cannot be said; those able to leave traces leave traces where no traces may be left. Now, the Dao is the principle of spontaneous order. It cannot, either with words or with silence, be willfully made into something with determinate existence or willfully denied determinate existence. Zhuangzi said “if speaking were enough, then one could spend all day speaking and thereby exhaustively describe the Dao; if speaking were insufficient, then to spend all day speaking would yield an exhaustive description of things.”¹⁹¹ Things refer to the traces of names and words. They embody the principle of neither speaking nor remaining silent. Only Zhuangzi was able to speak about them and fully probe their limits.

能言者言其所不能言、能迹者迹其所不能迹。夫道也者、自然之理也。不可使言之與默強有之強無之耳。莊子曰言而足則終日言而盡道、言而不足則終日言而盡物。物也者名言之迹也。非言非默之理。獨莊子能言而足盡其極而已。

These are the memorable opening lines of *Konpōron*. They feature several of the most potent and polysemous terms of the Daoist commentarial tradition: *shizen* 自然 (C. *ziran*), *ri* 理 (*li*), *u* 有 (*you*), *mu* 無 (*wu*) and *butsu* 物 (*wu*), while unambiguously affirming of the power of language and Zhuangzi’s singular use thereof. The phrase “neither speaking nor remaining silent” (非言非默) is seen in *Zhuangzi* 25.10. As rendered by Victor Mair (1994), that passage ends with the following statement about the nature of the Dao: “The Way is the delimitation of things. Neither words nor silence are satisfactory for conveying it. Without words and without silence, our deliberations reach their utmost limits” (道物之極、言默不

¹⁹¹ *Zhuangzi* 25.10.

足以載。非言非默、議有所極).¹⁹² There is evidently some disagreement among scholars over whether to interpret the statement “the Way is the delimitation of things” 道物之極 as Mair does or whether to take 道 as being parallel to the noun phrase 物之極, i.e. “the Dao *and* the limit of things,” but in any event the message is that neither speaking nor remaining silent – both of which are ultimately discursive strategies – can do the job. Chūgan, however, seems not to regard defiance of discursive explication as an *intrinsic* property of things, but rather a result of human limitations, which Zhuangzi was able to overcome. In the translation above, “the principle of neither speaking nor remaining silent” (非言非默之理) was construed as the operative principle of things. It is also possible to construe that phrase as a topic on which the ensuing sentence is a comment, i.e. “(With respect to) the principle that is neither one of speech nor of silence, only Zhuangzi was able to speak about *it* and fully probe *its* limits.” In either case, the claim is that Zhuangzi stood alone in his ability to use language to reveal something about the hidden order informing phenomenal reality. A complete understanding of this order or “principle” would seem to afford the most complete discursive knowledge of the Dao possible, since such an understanding would represent a more general, “meta”-physical grasp of physical (and social) phenomena.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Victor H. Mair, *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), p. 267.

¹⁹³ In this and similar contexts, “principle” is an occult, though still immanent, aspect of the Dao. As Robinet explains, the Dao “acts through a natural order, which some call *li* 理, and which is also one of its aspects” (“The Diverse Interpretations of the *Laozi*,” p. 149).

Another concept central to Chūgan's essay is that of the "trace" 迹 (*J. seki*, C. *ji*), a vestigial relation through which things and words remain commensurable. The term is particularly redolent of Buddhist philosophical discourse, where it denotes external indications or empirical evidence, a straightforward extension of its basic meaning of tracks or footprints. Chūgan holds things (物) to be the "traces of names and words" (物也者、名言之迹也). This provocative formulation appears to invert the relationship that might ordinarily be expected to obtain between language and things, whose existence would otherwise seem both logically and temporally prior to that of the names and words devised to identify them. Unfortunately, he does not expand upon the claim or return to it elsewhere in the essay; absent further evidence, a conservative reading of Chūgan's position would simply be that he holds "things" to be the outwardly sensible side of a dipartite idiographic relation: words and things are coeval insofar as any given "thing" isn't perceived as such until it is identified, and identification is necessarily a linguistic act. The trace relation provides the key link between words and observable phenomena that enables the former to "exhaust" the latter; with respect to the Peng passage, it is this link that ultimately makes possible Zhuangzi's elucidation of the principle of transformation.

Chūgan inscribes this thesis within a large and longstanding discourse on language and epistemology that, at least in part, finds its origin in the work of the aforementioned Sengzhao. Sengzhao was an eclectic Buddhist thinker and a talented rhetorician, and Chūgan draws explicitly on his style of exposition in the very first line of *Konpōron*. As rendered above, this line proclaims "those who can say, say what that cannot be said; those able to leave traces leave traces where no

traces may be left” (能言者言其所不能言、能迹者迹其所不能迹). The enigmatic wording closely parallels a passage from a letter, traditionally included among the four essays comprising *Zhaolun*, in which Sengzhao replies to questions posed to him by an educated and pious aspirant.¹⁹⁴ The relevant portion reads “Hence, one who is skilled at speaking words seeks to say that which cannot be said; one who is skilled at leaving traces investigates how to leave traces where no traces may be left” (是以善言言者、求言所不能言、善迹迹者、尋迹所不能迹).¹⁹⁵ Yet the close similarities in diction belie a subtle difference in philosophical focus: whereas Sengzhao’s discussion of names and things sought to highlight the arbitrary and contingent nature of the signifying process itself, Chūgan’s sought to position Zhuangzi as the ultimate master of language, someone – indeed, the only one – who was able to exhaust the mysteries of things through words. The goal of *Konpōron* was thus not to deconstruct a spurious homology between names and phenomenal reality, but to reconstruct the path by which Zhuangzi got from the former to an otherwise inscrutable aspect of the latter: transformation as such is not a thing, but

¹⁹⁴ For a complete translation, see Rafal Felbur, “Essays of Sengzhao,” in *Three Short Treatises by Vasubandhu, Sengzhao, and Zongmi* (Moraga: BDK America, 2017), pp. 47-135; Walter Liebenthal, *Chao Lun: The Treatises of Seng-chao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 81-100.

¹⁹⁵ The phrase 迹所不能迹 might be taken as 迹之所不能迹, a partitive structure in which the first 迹 is a noun, the second is a verb, and the whole thing means something like “traces of the sort that cannot be left as traces,” similar in meaning (though not in syntax) to 所不能迹之迹 above. Alternatively, it may be read simply as a verb phrase in which the first 迹 is a transitive verb, “to leave as trace,” taking the noun phrase 所不能迹, “that which cannot be left as trace” or perhaps “the place where no trace may be left,” as its direct object. The latter results in the translation given above, “to leave traces where no traces may be left.”

a principle that acts through and upon things, and one whose operation may be communicated given sufficient mastery of language.

Thus far, the analysis undertaken in the present study has not addressed what is surely among the most obvious and enduring problems of hermeneutics, namely that the exegesis of any parable places the form itself in question: if something is *meant* to be understood, and may in fact be explained, why offer only a symbolic or elliptical illustration of it? If Zhuangzi's purpose had been to elucidate the principle of transformation, as Chūgan claims, why did he not do so directly via the sort of correlative exposition Chūgan himself employs to “decode” the Kun and the Peng? Chūgan provides no explicit answers to these questions, though his comments suggest at least two intriguing possibilities.¹⁹⁶ The first and perhaps most compelling point he raises regarding Zhuangzi's use of symbolism is that it simply makes his work more enjoyable than a purely expository text of similar import would be, and that this property enables a qualitatively different kind of reading experience, one in which delight seems both an end unto itself and an aid to the acquisition of knowledge:

... Clearly, then, it was simply one of Zhuangzi's allegories, couched in the most fanciful and far-fetched language. Stupid Confucians adhered in vain to the traces and failed to glimpse the real principle. Are they not offenders against Zhuangzi?! What could match

¹⁹⁶ It is worth pausing here to emphasize that Chūgan would never have entertained the possibility that Zhuangzi did not offer a purely expository account because he wasn't *able* to do so. As such, the fact that much of what constitutes “correlative cosmology” postdates Zhuangzi by several centuries is not especially relevant: the various correlations and correspondences Chūgan purports to reveal in the Peng passage were, to him, fundamental aspects of nature, and there can be little doubt that Chūgan would have assumed as a matter of course that the historical Zhuangzi was perfectly aware of all of them.

transforming oneself into a person without a name, riding upon this bird, befriending Zhuangzi in the boundless wilds and following him as he roams unto the ends of the Earth? Is this not delightful?!

… 是乃莊子寓言、荒唐開誕之語耳。愚儒徒泥乎言迹而不見真理。不亦為莊子罪人耶？何當吾化成無名人而乘是鳥拍莊子肩於壙垠之野、從遊於八極之表？不亦快哉？！

Chūgan had already criticized “later Confucians” 後儒 for failing to look beyond the manifest sense of the text, and here he treats with even greater condescension those Confucians who fail to appreciate the pleasure of identificatory experience. It is unfortunate that he does not develop this point further, as it represents an uncommonly strong affirmation of the value of delight to education: *Zhuangzi*, it would seem, surpasses other works of philosophy because it encourages the dynamic interplay of both cognitive and affective faculties. That said, perhaps Chūgan didn’t belabor the point because to do so would have weakened the *raison d’être* of his own project: one need harbor no Romantic prejudices against allegory to concede that the habits of mind driving a finely wrought, correlationist allegoresis are rather different from those that permit a reader the paidic joy of “riding upon the Peng bird” and “befriending Zhuangzi in the boundless wilds.”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ In this connection, it might be observed that there are, per Roger Caillois’ definitions of *ludus* (controlled, rule-bound play) and *paidia* (uncontrolled fantasy), strongly ludic elements to the application of yin-yang correlative thinking to textual interpretation. In formulating a reading based on yin-yang theory, a large and well established body of conventions act as rules that structure and delimit the range of permissible interpretations; a satisfying interpretation is one that successfully connects together as many elements as possible without violating the conventions. See Meyer Barash, tr., Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2001), p. 13.

An additional point of interest is Chūgan’s assertion that in creating the Kun and the Peng as fictional characters, Zhuangzi “grounded his words in a nameless name” (立言無名之名). The “names” referenced here are Kun and Peng, and the locution suggests something akin to a strategy of defamiliarization. As we have seen, the words “kun” and “peng” already possessed referents whose qualities were different from, and in the case of “kun” very nearly opposite to, those ascribed to the fictional Kun fish and Peng bird. The conceptual connotations of both terms, along with the numerous associations each had with the other, fires the imagination in a way that Chūgan clearly believes is productive of greater understanding: Zhuangzi’s carefully crafted symbolism is effective because it encourages readers to make conceptual leaps. It is worth noting that such a position is broadly consistent with views of parable espoused in other hermeneutical traditions: early Chan theorists associated with the Northern School, for instance, rejected the literal readings of important technical terms in favor of allegorical glosses designed to support doctrinal positions that were, in many ways, at variance with those of Indian Buddhism.¹⁹⁸ Further afield of Chūgan, Thomas Aquinas opined that spiritual truths are usefully veiled in symbol and metaphor because doing so “does not let the minds of those to whom the revelation has been made rest in the metaphors, but raises

¹⁹⁸ See John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch’an Buddhism* (Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 3, Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 1986), p. 198-99. According to McRae, while metaphor was utilized by all schools of Buddhism, the device played an especially large role in Northern School Chan, with most of the metaphors found in Northern School texts aimed at transforming all of Buddhism into “an allegory for the practice of ‘contemplation of the mind’” (J. *kanshin*, C. *guanxin* 觀心).

them to the knowledge of truths.”¹⁹⁹ Aquinas’ handling of the issue reflects, of course, an approach to scriptural allegory that is rooted in an ontology different from that of Buddhism and Daoism. Still, exegetes in each tradition shared the basic need to determine orthodoxy, construe parables “correctly,” assert their pedagogical value, and attempt to explain how words and worldly things could figure truths whose value *as* truths transcended any particular manifestation or instantiation thereof in the realm of ordinary experience.

To return to a point raised at the beginning of this inquiry, it is notable, though not especially surprising, that Chūgan’s academic appreciation of *Zhuangzi* seems to have arisen later in life, after his initial period of scholarly productivity during the 1330s. There can be little doubt that Chūgan viewed *Zhuangzi* as a serious work of philosophy, at least if by that is meant a work whose chief aim was the investigation and advancement of human knowledge. There is also little doubt that he was deeply impressed with what he took to be the singular intellect and rhetorical panache of the historical Zhuangzi. Conveniently, the parable of the Kun and the Peng is held in *Konpōron* to demonstrate that worldly learning and literary skill of precisely the sort prized by the Gozan intelligentsia was the key to achieving uncommon insight into a complex natural order:

Ah, Master Zhuang! He perceived the transformations, exhausted the essences, accounted for the norms, probed the mysteries to their utmost extent, and roamed freely across the wide world. Wondrously he drove all of existence into the tip of his brush – verily the myriad things had nowhere to run! His influence reached even unto

¹⁹⁹ *Summa Theologica* 1.1.i.9. Quoted in Brittan, *Poetry, Symbol, and Allegory*, p. 31.

things that lay hid in the dark without substance, without form, and without names.²⁰⁰ And yet he was still able to wondrously seek these things out, drive them on, and make all of them into his own endowment! With his prose he made them beat and made them dance, and in this he glimpsed their sublimity.

吁莊生觀化盡精籌數極玄逍遙乎六合之表、冥驅萬物入己筆舌。萬物固無攸逃焉。其餘波遠及於幽冥無象無質無形無名之物、猶能冥搜之旁驅之而皆為己資。文章鼓之舞之、以見其妙也。

It is only after this encomiastic description of Zhuangzi's accomplishment, which comes quite near the end of the essay, that Chūgan proceeds to offer his own analysis of the parable of the Kun and the Peng. As summarized previously, Chūgan reads the parable through a multitude of law-like natural correlations or "norms" 數 and takes it to figure transformation. Throughout his reading, he returns repeatedly to the twin tropes of concealment and revelation. Chūgan's Zhuangzi marshals his extensive knowledge and rhetorical abilities to expose what is hidden. He investigates and "drives" 驅 the things of the world as one drives a horse, ultimately "making them all into his own endowment" 皆為己資. Chūgan comes close to personifying the "myriad things" 萬物 when he says that they "had nowhere to run" 無攸逃,²⁰¹ rather as a nomothetically inclined naturalist might do in speaking of Nature as "surrendering her secrets." He bookends his account with yet more praise

²⁰⁰ The idea of a "nameless" thing seems a curious and possibly contradictory notion given Chūgan's earlier definition of things as *traces* of words and names. Reasoning as before that a thing is only recognized as such in and through language, it might be supposed that what Chūgan has in mind here are simply phenomena – "things" in the broadest sense – that no one has yet perceived, and which thus have yet to be named.

²⁰¹ 攸 is equivalent in meaning here to 所, and the phrase 無攸逃 would likely have been read *nogaruru tokoro nashi* in Japanese.

for Zhuangzi's redoubtable linguistic skills (J. *hitsuzetsu*, C. *bishe* 筆舌), which are to him not merely decorative, but the means for communicating perceptual insights that are normally ineffable:

Oh to perceive the transformations without depending on essences! To traverse the norms in a way that did not depend on being mysterious (玄)! Who else could go this far? What's more, it was by means of the marvelous subtlety with which he developed these in his writing that he was able to exhaust them and probe their limits. Authors of later ages could not even attempt to match him.

吁觀化不以精、步數不以玄。則孰能造於此哉。加之以其筆舌鼓舞之妙、盡之極之。後世作者不能企而及也。

These are the closing words of *Konpōron*. Chūgan's decision to bookend his allegorical reading of the Kun and the Peng with yet more praise for their creator suggests that he wished his own account to be seen not as an act of creation as such, but simply of revelation, and that what it reveals is not only the true meaning of a parable, but the matchless authorial genius behind it. At the same time, and particularly when taken in conjunction with his earlier celebration of identificatory delight, the move exposes a measure of anxiety over the act of interpretation itself. From a modern perspective, Chūgan's reading demonstrates the ways in which yin-yang correlative cosmology dramatically amplifies the hermeneutic potential of a text, allowing appropriately conditioned readers to link various elements of the story world to a plethora of phenomena outside it. The paradigmatic substitutions licensed by this approach are, in principle, bounded by yin-yang theory. Yet in moving freely across an enormous range of entities and ideas, the chains of association can grow long, and depending on the connections being proposed, they

can threaten to break away from the syntagmatic expectations that would ordinarily structure the reading process.

In *Konpōron*, the first chain of associations with the Kun were as follows: Northern Darkness, north, water, the number 1, the first Earthly Branch (i.e. “rat” 子), child, beginning, the animal “rat” (鼠), water (again), lurking/concealment, the Black Tortoise (玄武).²⁰² Some links in this chain are perfectly syntagmatic given the elements of the parable: the number one, water, north, and child are joined in the story by the fact that the Kun is a single fish, living in a northern body of water, and its name is also a word that admits “roe” as a principal meaning. Still, it is plain that this kind of approach might lead to even more baroque interpolations, and Chūgan was probably well aware that there had already been criticisms, like Lin Xiyi’s, of the application of yin-yang theory to *Zhuangzi*. Recall that Lin’s opinion of yin-yang correlationist readings was that they insisted upon introducing “knots” (強生節目). Lin had readily granted that the names Kun and Peng were allegorical; the problem, it would seem, was that correlationist allegoreses tended to stray *too* far from the manifest sense of the text and, in doing so, they created complexities where none need exist. Lin’s basic point is hard to refute: a heavily wrought work like *Konpōron* is implicitly based on the seemingly unprovable assumption that the parable it explicates was always *intentionally* complex, always possessed of a surfeit of meaning that was not creatively imputed by the exegete, but intended all along by its author and not immediately apparent at the “surface” level of denotation. It is an

²⁰² See the translation in Appendix 1 at the end of this chapter. At present, I have not been able to deduce the symbolic significance of some of these, and they therefore did not feature in my analysis of Chūgan’s account.

assumption that, in this case, inevitably reveals more about Chūgan than it does about Zhuangzi, who, like many ancient writers, is known almost exclusively through the writing ascribed to him. More generally, it also bespeaks the precariousness of the interpreter's position, for it is hard to be both a faithful insider and an active creator, both conduit and source; the closer interpretation comes to resemble authorship, the further the interpreter is estranged from his object.

To this extent, the effusive praise of Zhuangzi inoculates Chūgan, and perhaps his readers too, against the possibility that it is they, and not the Neo-Confucians, who are the real offenders, distorting the text by imposing extraneous material upon it. *Konpōron* makes no claim to mystical or otherwise non-discursive access to *Zhuangzi* (or to Zhuangzi), yet in the very complexity of its interpretation, it clearly purports to offer an insider's take on the Kun and the Peng. What makes such a position credible, at least within the interpretive framework Chūgan develops, is a rather remarkable property he imputes to the historical Zhuangzi, who according to him was capable of "probing the mysteries to their utmost extent" (極玄) yet also able to "traverse the norms *without* being mysterious" (步數不以玄). This comment seems meant in part to distinguish the approach taken by Zhuangzi from that taken by Laozi, who was closely associated with the concept of "mystery" (C. *xuan*, J. *gen* 玄) on account of the prominence that notion enjoys in the famous opening chapter of *Laozi* (*Dao de jing*).²⁰³ Still more importantly, the historical

²⁰³ That Chūgan, too, associated Laozi first and foremost with mystery is suggested by the opening couplet of a short panegyric verse (J. *san*, C. *zan* 贊) he dedicated to the old master: "In mystery his thoughts did rightly rest; a mind content and self-possessed..." 玄宜思潭、澹泊心甘 (GBZS 4.40).

Zhuangzi's ability to do what he did without being mysterious is what enables *Zhuangzi* to be interpretable in the ordinary, discursive sense. It is both the means to achieving a unique fusion of aesthetic and intellectual experience and the condition of possibility for interpretation in the first place; and it is something, we are told, that no other author (作者) of later ages could match. It is a pity that Chūgan did not try.

Appendix 1: A Complete Translation of Chūgan's Correlative Account of the Kun and the Peng

With respect to the term “Northern Darkness,” north represents concealment; according to the *Hetu* diagram, it is the direction in which yang energy lies sunk and concealed. The one of Heaven begets water in the north. One is the beginning of numbers; in the sexagenary system, it is the child 子, and may also be glossed (訓) as “beginning” 始. Its spirit (神) is that of the rat 鼠, an animal that lurks concealed in pools of water. In form (實) it belongs to the Black Tortoise 玄武, and its trigram is *kan* 坎 (The Abysmal; Water).²⁰⁴ In the “Hong Fan” chapter of *The Book of History*, it is written that water is that which soaks and descends, and in soaking and descending, it makes salt.” This describes the sea. *Ming* 冥 is also a name for the sea, which based upon its black color is called *ming* 溟, and which, in its dark obscurity (晦昧), becomes *hai* 海.²⁰⁵ Zhuangzi used the term Northern Darkness in order to put into words that which is dark, profound, possessed of a hidden essence, and is the place where the myriad things lie dormant and concealed. A fish is a creature of the water who's nature is to be submerged; *kun* is an egg whose body is amorphous and has yet to assume the full form of a fish. It lies latent and concealed and is extremely miniscule. Yet the ambition it nurtures is vast, “stretching for who knows how many thousand *li*.” Although one might say (that *kun*) is tiny and hidden, it represents nonetheless the seed of a dragon. The lofty flair of Zhuangzi's style can be glimpsed here!

The substance of the *feng* bird is to be of brilliant variegated colors and to soar into the heavens. How meet it is that it flies to the south. South is the direction of patterned brightness (文明), and its trigram is *li* 離 (The Clinging; Fire). *Li* belongs to fire,

²⁰⁴ The Black Tortoise is one of the “Four Celestial Animals” (四神) or “Four Symbols” (四象), mythological creatures each associated with a season, a digram (爻), a trigram (卦), a cardinal direction, and also with a specific set of seven of the Twenty-Eight Mansions (二十八宿) in Chinese astronomy.

²⁰⁵ Here two words that denote the sea (溟, 海) are explained as cognate with two words that suggest darkness and obscurity (冥, 晦).

and fire has the ability to transform things. Thus the text (of *Zhuangzi*) says “(the Kun) transforms into a bird.” In the “Hong Fan” chapter of *The Book of History*, fire is that which blazes and ascends, and in blazing and ascending, it becomes bitter.” Bitter is the taste of that which is burnt (*jiao*) 焦, and the Peng is also termed *jiaopeng* 焦朋, a fact due simply to Sima Xiangru’s rhapsody.²⁰⁶ In form it belongs to the Vermillion Bird 朱雀 of the south.

In the *Hetu* diagram, the Two of Earth begets fire. Two is divisible 拆; being divisible it is even 偶 and comprised of a pair 朋 (*peng*). The number one is unitary 單; being unitary it is odd 奇 and a singular individual among many 昆 (*kun*).²⁰⁷ For this reason, the body of the Kun is singularly conceived (昆侖) and concealed in the dark sea of the north. The Peng has two wings that spread symmetrically, and it soars into the heavens and goes south. With respect to position vis-à-vis the sun, north is *ren* 壬; it represents a state of pregnancy 妊孕 where eggs 鯤鰮 (*kun’er*) lie submerged. With respect to position vis-à-vis the sun, south is *bing* 丙; it represents a state of brightness 炳耀 (*bingyao*) where flocks of birds 鵬羽 (*pengyu*) ascend into the sky.

²⁰⁶ Like the *feng*, a bird known as the *jiaoming* 焦明 has also been associated with Zhuangzi’s Peng; it appears in Sima Xiangru’s famous rhapsody on the imperial hunting park (上林賦), and is rendered “blazing firebird” by David Knechtges. The alternate term *jiaopeng* 焦朋 appears in Sima Xiangru’s biography in *Han shu*; whether Chūgan is simply conflating the poem (as it appears in *Wen xuan*) with the biography, or whether he was using an edition of *Wen xuan* (or another source altogether) in which the bird in the poem was rendered *jiaopeng* instead of *jiaoming*, is unclear. This part of Chūgan’s essay is somewhat perplexing, at least insofar as he was previously quite adamant that Zhuangzi’s Peng is not identical to the *feng*, and here he seems to be drawing connections between *feng* 鳳, *jiaopeng* 焦朋, and *peng* 鵬, noting the association each has with fire. The Vermillion Bird is one of the Four Celestial Animals and is associated with south, fire, and yang.

²⁰⁷ “Singular individual among many” is an admittedly cumbersome rendering of 昆 that attempts to convey Chūgan’s understanding of the character, which seems to be based mainly on the sense it possesses in terms such as *kunchong* 昆蟲, “(a swarm or multitude of) insects” and *kunqun* 昆羣, “multitude.” This sense is obviously present in *kun* 鯤 when construed as “roe,” and what Chūgan seems to be emphasizing in the connection between unity 單, oddness 奇, and *kun* 昆 is the sense of being small and discrete even if part of a larger group.

所謂北冥者、北伏也。陽氣潛伏之方在河圖也。天一生水於北。一者數之始、於辰為子。訓亦云始也。其神為鼠、伏池中之獸。實屬玄武也。於卦為坎。在書洪範水曰潤下、潤下作鹹。謂海也。冥亦海之稱也。以黑色曰溟、以晦昧為海。云北冥者以言幽晦玄真而萬物潛藏之地耳。魚性沈潛且為水物也。鯤體渾渾然而未具魚體之卵也。潛伏而微，小之甚也。然所養之志氣浩大、不知其幾千里也。雖云微潛、亦龍種耳。莊子氣象之傲可見矣。鳳之質五色文章而有騫舉之儀。宜其飛于南。南文明之方、於卦為離。離屬火、火能化物。故曰化而為鳥。在書洪範火曰炎上、炎上作苦。苦焦氣之味也。鵬又名焦朋、相如賦由之耳。實屬南方朱鳥。在河圖也、地二生火。二者拆、拆偶而為朋。一者單、單奇而為昆。是故鯤體一合昆侖而伏于溟北也。鵬翼二張朋會二騫于天南也。北之於日也為壬、妊孕而鯤鰲潛矣。南之於日也為丙、炳耀而鵬羽騰矣。

Appendix 2

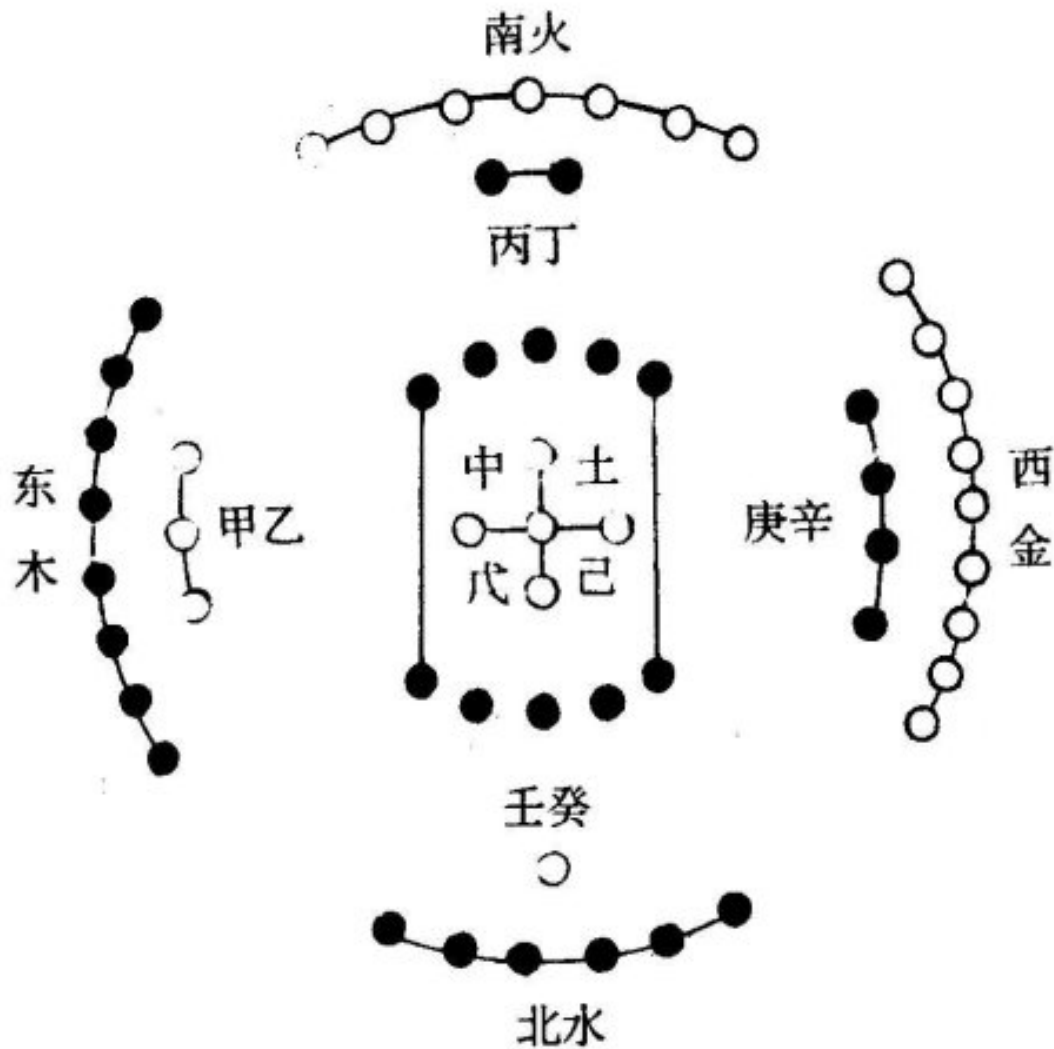


图1 河图

In the *Hetu* diagram, linked black and white dots represent natural numbers from 1 to 10. Even (yin) numbers are represented with black dots while odd (yang) numbers are represented with white dots. Adjacent pairs of yin and yang numbers correspond with the five elements: 1 and 6 with water, 2 and 7 with fire, 3 and 8 with wood, 4 and 9 with metal, and 5 and 10 with earth. These pairs are said to be comprised of a smaller “begetting number” (生數) and a larger “completed number” (成數), the common difference between which is always five.

Chapter Four

Poems of Remembrance, Poems of Social Engagement

1. Chūgan Engetsu and Early Gozan Poetry: An Historical and Stylistic Overview

Poetry was the central literary endeavor within the Gozan monasteries, so much so that the modern coinage “Five Mountains Literature” (*Gozan bungaku* 五山文学), ubiquitous in surveys of medieval Japanese literature, is frequently used as if poetry were its only constituent. Though somewhat misleading, this convention suggests the longstanding appreciation for both the quantity and artistic quality of the poetry collections in the Five Mountains corpus; these collections have generally been held by modern and early modern scholars to represent the zenith of medieval Japanese *kanshi*. Formally speaking, the vehicles of choice among Gozan poets were the *gātha* (J. *ge*, C. *ji* 偈), a strictly religious type of verse intended to encapsulate and convey doctrinal positions, and the *shi* 詩, which in its five- and seven-syllable varieties had been practiced assiduously in Japan since at least the eighth century. Like every notable contributor to Gozan literature, Chūgan was an accomplished poet; that he was arguably an even better expositor and essayist is but one of the idiosyncrasies distinguishing him from his contemporaries. Another, more specific to the realm of poetry, was his willingness to thematize the political tumult of the era and to use unorthodox, or at least highly uncommon, poetic forms and syllabic meters. Although the principal collection of Chūgan’s work, *Tōkai ichiōshū* 東海一瀕

集, is dominated by expository prose, its first fascicle contains three *fu* 賦 (lengthier, metrically unregulated poems usually termed “rhapsodies”), while the next five contain 227 *shi*, a large number relative to other Gozan collections. Most of the major styles of *shi* are represented, including five- and seven-syllable “recent-style” quatrains (J. *zekku*, C. *jueju* 絕句), regulated verses (*risshi*, *lüshi* 律詩), “ancient-style” verses of varying length, and even hexasyllabic quatrains.²⁰⁸ Stylistically, the collection is highly variable and bespeaks no single, preponderant source of influence or inspiration: while some scholars have noted Chūgan’s fondness for High Tang (c. 713-66) poetry, others have emphasized the influence of Song (960-1279) models.²⁰⁹ Moreover, the fact that he played a seminal role in popularizing *Santishi* 三體詩 (J. *Santaishi*), an anthology of mostly Mid- and Late Tang (c. 827-907) verse, plainly suggests interest in those styles as well. In the poems treated below, the most salient thematic connections are to be found with the work of poet-scholars such as Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-72) and Fan Chengda 範成大 (1126-93), who were especially noted for their attention to social ills and the vicissitudes of plebian life.

²⁰⁸ So-called “recent-style poetry” 近體詩 (J. *kintaishi*, C. *jintishi*) is governed by prosodic and structural constraints stricter than those that had governed early *shi* poetry; after the full establishment of recent-style verse during the Tang, the less rule-bound variety came to be termed “ancient-style poetry” 古體詩 (*kotaishi*, *gutishi*). *Shi* poetry in the six-syllable meter (六言詩) is vastly less common than penta- and heptasyllabic varieties. Chūgan appears to have been the first Gozan figure to use the form, and some general remarks regarding both its historical development and its adaptation of recent-style tonal conventions will be given in the following chapter.

²⁰⁹ See Kageki Hideo, *Gozan shi shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1977), p. 219.

As a result of this artistic orientation, Chūgan occupies a singular niche within the roughly 250-year history of Gozan poetry. This history is often held to comprise two broad epochs: the first, characterized by growth and creativity, begins around the time of Chūgan's birth in 1300 and peaks near the turn of the fifteenth century; the second, marked unsurprisingly by stagnation and decline, begins in the mid fifteenth century and roughly tracks the gradual economic collapse of the Gozan establishment itself. The émigré monk Yishan Yining 一山一寧 (J. Isshan Ichinei, 1247-1317), who arrived in Japan as a Yuan emissary in 1299, is often identified as the progenitor of the Gozan literary movement.²¹⁰ Other seminal writers include Yishan's Japanese disciple Sesson Yūbai 雪村友梅 (1290-1348), who would spend twenty-two years in China and become one of the first major Gozan poets, and Kokan Shiren 虎関師錬 (1278-1346), whose groundbreaking treatise *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釋書 constitutes the earliest general history of Japanese Buddhism. To many scholars, what distinguishes Gozan literature (and indeed Gozan monastic life) of this time from that of the late fourteenth century and beyond is its explicitly religious character: writers of this era, including even gifted lyricists like Sesson, were Zen priests first and foremost, not literati who happened to reside in Zen temples.²¹¹

²¹⁰ This suggestion seems to have originated with Kamimura Kankō 上村觀光 (1873-1926), the first modern scholar to study and collate a significant fraction of the Gozan corpus; it remains widely accepted today. See Kamimura, *Gozan bungaku shōshi* (Tokyo: Shōkabō, 1906), pp. 3-4.

²¹¹ Haga Kōshirō, "Zen bungaku to Gozan bungaku," in Yamagishi Tokuhei, eds., *Nihon kanbungaku shi ronkō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), pp. 409-415.

The impetus behind the shift away from religious life and towards secular avocations was, ironically, the increasing success of the Zen sect itself. While Ashikaga patronage brought the major Gozan monasteries unprecedented wealth and political prominence, it also drew the most artistically and intellectually gifted prelates away from religious praxis and into elite social circles.²¹² The pivotal figure in this trajectory is Zekkai Chūshin 絶海中津 (1336-1405), who along with Gidō Shūshin 義堂周信 (1325-88) helped make the so-called Kitayama 北山 era – named for the lavish private estate of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (r. 1368-94) – a heyday of medieval high culture.²¹³ Flourishing a generation after Chūgan, Zekkai represents to many modern scholars the triumph of secular aesthetics over religious conviction; his literary renown bespeaks the apogee of Gozan poetry while also auguring the decadence to come.²¹⁴ Whereas Chūgan is relatively well known to intellectual historians but figures only modestly in most surveys of Gozan poetry, Zekkai is almost universally regarded as the greatest *shi* master in the Gozan milieu. This appraisal is due in large part to the unusual esteem his work earned in China: tellingly, he is the only Japanese poet in history to have one of his poems honored

²¹² See Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, pp. 98-102.

²¹³ This estate contains the famous temple Rokuonji 鹿苑寺, better known today as Kinkakuji 金閣寺, “The Temple of the Golden Pavilion.” Yoshimitsu is also famous (or infamous) for acquiescing to the hierarchical diplomatic demands of the Ming court in order to reestablish trade relations with China. The move earned him the title “King of Japan” (日本國王) in China and the enduring disfavor of Japanese nationalists.

²¹⁴ Haga, “Zen bungaku to Gozan bungaku,” p. 409; Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism, A History: Japan* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2005), pp. 169-77.

with a responsorial verse by a reigning Chinese emperor.²¹⁵ And although modern critics would generally avoid evaluating Japanese literary Sinitic media solely on the basis of their fidelity to Chinese norms, there can be little doubt that Zekkai's historical reputation has been predicated on just such a criterion. In his *Nihon shi shi* 日本詩史 (*A History of Japanese Shi Poetry*, 1771), the early-modern poet and scholar Emura Hokkai 江村北海 spoke of Zekkai (and Gidō Shūshin) in terms that, if somewhat polemical, are nonetheless entirely recognizable in much scholarship today:

Zekkai and Gidō (Shūshin) are often mentioned together and held up as rivals. I read (Zekkai's) *Shōkenkō* some time ago, and I have also read (Gidō's) *Kūgeshū*. It is clear that they are the two great bulwarks of Zen.²¹⁶ If we're talking about who advanced further in learning (學殖), then it would seem that Gidō surpasses Zekkai. But in terms of poetic talent (詩才), Gidō is no match for Zekkai. Zekkai's poems not only have no equal in the ancient and medieval periods, but even the famous poets of recent times would, in all likelihood, cast off their armor and flee into the night! The reason is that although the works of the ancient (i.e. Nara and Heian-era) court gentlemen are not without beautiful lines and arresting couplets, they are also full of faults, and it is very rare to find verses that are beautiful the entire way through. And while impeccable verses may occasionally be found, they are still only poems of our country, which when

²¹⁵ See Inoguchi Atsushi, *Shinshaku kanbun taikai*, vol. 45, "Nihon kanshi," pt. 1 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1972), p. 96. On Zekkai's audience with the Hongwu Emperor (Ming Taizu), see Micah Spencer Hecht, "Conventions of Unconventionality" (Ph.D. Diss., Univ. of Hawai'i, 2005), pp. 124-30. In brief, Zekkai appeared before the emperor in 1376 to answer questions on Buddhist doctrine. Evidently curious about Zekkai's homeland, the emperor pointed to a map of Japan and asked about the famous site of Kumano, where, according to legend, the ancient diviner Xu Fu 徐福 traveled in search of the elixir of immortality. Zekkai composed a poem at the emperor's request, and the emperor generously authored a responsorial verse of his own. Both verses thematize Kumano and Xu Fu's legendary journey; they are translated in Hecht, pp. 125-29.

²¹⁶ "The two great bulwarks of Zen" renders the phrase 二禪の壁壘. From context, it seems that Emura must mean *Zen literati*, but it is also possible that he did not entertain a sharp distinction between spiritual advancement on the one hand and excellence in letters on the other, and took the latter to be indicative of the former.

compared to those of the Chinese are vastly inferior. Even the poets of today can see for themselves that these are, after all, just Japanese poems, perennially blighted by unorthodoxies of diction. But in the case of Zekkai, this is not so.²¹⁷

絶海、義堂、世多く並稱して以て敵手と為す。余嘗て蕉堅藁を讀み、又空華集を讀む。二禪の壁壘を審かにす。學殖を論ずれば則ち義堂、絶海に勝るに似たり。詩才の如きは則ち義堂、絶海の敵に非ず。絶海の詩、但だ古昔中世敵手無きのみならず、近時の諸名家と雖も、恐らくは甲を棄てて宵に遁れん。何となれば則ち、古昔朝紳の詠言、佳句警聯無きには非ず。然れども疵病雜陳、全篇佳なるもの甚だ稀なり。偶、佳作有るも亦唯我邦の詩のみ。之れを華人の詩に較ぶれば、殊に逕蹊を隔つ。近時の諸名家と雖も、余を以て之を觀れば、亦唯我邦の詩なり。往往俗習を免れ難し。絶海の如きは則ち然らず。

While Chūgan's poetry is more voluminous and thematically variegated than Zekkai's, it has rarely won comparable acclaim from early-modern or modern scholars.²¹⁸ Nonetheless, Chūgan's poetic oeuvre, much like his corpus of prose, remains among the most compelling in the history of medieval *kanshi*, comprising not only works on eremitism, religious contemplation, and scenes of nature – common themes among Zen poets – but also strident political works treating the effects of poverty, warfare, and social dislocation. While such topoi are well within the ambit of traditional Chinese poetry, they are seldom encountered in premodern *kanshi* and are even rarer in *waka*. Even by the eclectic standards of Gozan literature, Chūgan's "political" poetry is entirely unique in both quantity and lyrical

²¹⁷ Shimizu Shigeru et al., eds, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* v. 65, "Nihon shi shi, Gozandō shiwa" (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991), pp. 77.

²¹⁸ The famous Meiji-Taisho era sinologist and poet Kubo Tenzui 久保天随 (1875-1934) is, to my knowledge, the only literary figure of note to favor Chūgan's poetry over Zekkai's. See Inoguchi, *Shinshaku kanbun taikei* v. 45, pt. 1, p. 48. Emura makes no mention of Chūgan in *Nihon shi shi*.

intensity; perhaps not surprisingly, it is this type of poetry that is most often selected to represent him in modern anthologies of Japanese literary Sinitic verse.

While many of Chūgan's thematic inclinations adhere in the main to artistic precedents that, in some cases, date as far back as the Eastern Han (25-220) and Jin (265-420) dynasties, others reflect the comparatively recent innovations of the Song Dynasty. In general, poets of the Song were distinguished from their Tang and Six-Dynasties predecessors by their willingness to treat a wide variety of topics drawn from ordinary life.²¹⁹ One such topic was illness and physical infirmity, which Song poets, building upon precedents set by Han Yu and Meng Jiao, would approach with extraordinary candor.²²⁰ Unusually for a Japanese poet of his era, Chūgan too would poeticize illness, detailing in verse the bodily experience of being sick with malaria while on tour in China. Although the piece, titled simply "Malaria," is not in any sense a "political" poem, its language, structure, and relatively early date make it an especially fine introduction to Chūgan's poetic sensibilities, which in many ways remained quite stable even as he matured stylistically over the 1330s. The work is the only of its kind in *Tōkai ichiōshū*, and to my knowledge no similar works are found elsewhere in the corpus of Gozan poetry. Usefully, it illustrates multiple rhetorical features common to all but one of the poems treated in the remainder of this chapter:

²¹⁹ Ronald Egan, "Shi Poetry: Ancient and Recent Styles," in Zong-qi Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008), p. 308.

²²⁰ Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Han Yu* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975), passim. Poem no. 13 of Meng Jiao's series "Autumn Meditations: Fifteen Poems" 秋懷十五首, analyzed on pp. 179-81, is particularly striking in this regard.

瘧疾
Malaria

三尸謀疾疫	The Three Corpses plot malaise,
二豎穴胸膈	The Two Children burrow inside my chest. ²²¹
老夫盍誅之	“This ol’ wight, let’s put him to death!” ²²²
陰蟲放毒螫	Hidden pests with poison barbs.
熏熇氣相蒸	In the hot smoke of fumigation, my <i>qi</i> is brazed away;
風雷勢虩虩	Wind and thunder roars with frightening force.
天地成甌鑿	The whole world becomes a boiler and hotplate, ²²³
澣澣汗流腋	Sweat streams from my armpits.
俄爾輒送寒	Then suddenly I have the chills,
凜凜冰底溺	Like being drowned at the bottom of an icy river.
衾裯重繒紉	Silken fabrics piled atop my quilt and bed sheets:
當暑莫之歎	When the weather’s hot, nothing is more detestable.
胡為須臾間	How, in the space of an instant,
陰陽忽變易	Can yin and yang change places so abruptly?
咳嗽和噴嚏	Coughing and sneezing,
涕泗交津液	Tears and snot mixed with other fluids. ²²⁴

²²¹ The Three Corpses, also known as the Three Worms (三蟲), and The Two Children refer to spirits residing inside the body thought to cause illness.

²²² The phrase “old fellow” 老夫 (C. *laofu* J. *rōfu*) has to refer to Chūgan, though he was only in his twenties at the time. The translation above takes 盍 as 蓋, “ought to,” and construes the line as an interjection in the voice of the Two Children. Alternatively, if 老夫 is taken as a first person subject pronoun (an attested usage) and 盍 is understood as an interrogative pronoun essentially equivalent to 何, then the line might be rendered “How am I to eliminate them?” (with the referent of 之 now being the Two Children).

²²³ The actual character that appears in the final position of this line is not 鑿 but the variant form 鑿, whose typeset versions are not recognized by Microsoft Word.

²²⁴ The term *shin’eki* 津液 (C. *jinye*) is a general reference for bodily fluids in traditional Chinese medicine; by itself, the character 津 may refer either to saliva or perspiration, and since the latter was mentioned already in line eight (albeit with a different word, 汗), we might imagine phlegm to be intended here. The previous compound *teishi* 涕泗 (C. *tisi*), “tears and snot,” has a long history in poetry, appearing in works by Ruan Ji and Du Fu, among others.

反仄不暫安
何當定枕席
起臥偕歎為
動輒求扶掖

Tossing and turning, I cannot get comfortable for long;
When will I finally be able to rest easy?
Sitting up or lying down, both are taxing to do;
Again and again I ask for help.

眼眩混方圓
顛倒視黑白
平生茹蔬荀
欣然口自適

Dizzy, I can't tell squares from circles,
And I confound black and white.
All my life I have eaten greens and shoots;
Fortunately, I find they suit my palette.

今設五侯鯖
苦淡同冰蘖
少間倚繩牀
瘦質如乾腊

Now I have before me some Five Marquis fish stew,
As bitter and bland as a meal of ice and cork.²²⁵
After a while, I recline on a folding chair;
I'm as gaunt as a piece of dried meat.

傍有相過者
視吾疑欺魄
終日口嗒呀
觸事多怒嚇

At my side are some who've come to visit:
Upon seeing me, they could swear I'm a ghost.
All day long I mutter to myself:
Contact with things of the world entails so much anger and fear!

回心自省身
萬里海外客
所志無人知
越語憐莊舄

I turn my mind inward and reflect upon myself:
A traveler from far across the sea.
The feelings I harbor, no one knows:
In my own "Yue tongue," I sympathize with Zhuang Xi.²²⁶

Genuine thematic innovation is almost always accompanied by at least some liberalization in the realm of language. This poem, written when Chūgan was twenty-six, includes multiple words and phrases well removed from the mainstream of Japanese *kanshi*, which on the whole emphasized select models from the Tang and

²²⁵ "Five Marquis Stew" 五侯鯖 was a well known stew of fish and meat; here the character 鯖 simply means "stew," not "mackerel."

²²⁶ Zhuang Xi was a native of the coastal state of Yue 越 who served as an official in the inland state of Chu 楚; though successful and well assimilated, he reverted to the dialect of his homeland when ill. Zhuang Xi appears in *Shiji* in the memoir of Zhang Yi 張儀, and also in Wang Can's famous rhapsody "Climbing the Tower" (登樓).

Six-Dynasties eras. And while every age has its iconoclasts, a line of verse consisting simply of “coughing and sneezing” (咳嗽和噴嚏) – these remain the standard terms in modern Chinese – probably finds an easier home in Song poetry than in the poetry of any previous epoch. In terms of narrative structure, “Malaria,” like all of Chūgan’s long poems, is linear, tracing the path of the illness from onset to partial recovery with no disruptions in temporal continuity. Somewhat atypically for Chūgan, the lyrical “I” is present, at least implicitly, in every single couplet, and in most lines the object of description remains the subject of enunciation. In sum, it is an entirely autobiographical piece. The couplets having to do with physical symptoms are striking; that they occupy just a fraction of the poem’s total length might suggest a cautious approach to such detail, lest an unrelenting fixation on the morbid cast too heavy a shadow over the whole of the work. Alternatively, it is possible that Chūgan’s primary interest was not the particular, harrowing details of the experience itself, but the ensuing reflection upon human frailty and dependency to which such an experience leads. In either case, the contrast produces an effect common to a great many of Chūgan’s poems, which often bring one kind of aesthetic sensibility to the reader’s attention only to abruptly withdraw it in favor of another. Nowhere is this rhetorical strategy employed more frequently and more effectively than in his political poems, which are both sufficiently numerous and artistically compelling enough to merit extended treatment.

2. A Country Divided, A Future Uncertain: Poetry in Times of Turmoil, 1333-1343

Poems of social commentary, some with a strong subtext of political criticism, begin to feature prominently in the year 1333, which witnessed the stunning collapse of the Kamakura Shogunate and Emperor Go-Daigo's triumphant return from exile. Having only recently returned from China, Chūgan was still in Kyushu as these events unfolded. By the fifth month, he had taken up residence at the well-known temple Manjuji 萬壽寺 in Bungo Province.²²⁷ At the behest of his patron, Ōtomo Sadamune, who was an ally of Go-Daigo, he departed that autumn for Hakata. Shortly thereafter, he embarked for Kyoto in Sadamune's company, where he would deliver his memorial to the emperor. The journey took him past multiple sites of local interest and, in some cases, historical or religious importance, and it occasioned a series of ten commemorative quatrains, two of which speak directly to the upheavals of the time:

檀浦
Dannoura²²⁸

晚浦煙橫日影斜	At dusk on the bay mist spreads wide, casting shadows aslant in the evening sun;
漁歌送恨落蘋花	Fishermen's songs, betelling grievances of old, scatter the <i>ping</i> blossoms. ²²⁹

²²⁷ Information concerning Chūgan's travels and the temples at which he resided comes mostly from his *Busshu Esai Zenji Chūgan Getsu oshō jirekifu* (hereafter *jirekifu*), *GBSS* v. 4, pp. 611-32. This is a chronologically organized, autobiographical record comprised of brief summaries of various key events for each year.

²²⁸ The site of a famous twelfth-century battle (see below).

封侯能有幾人得 In the end, how many can win enfeoffment?
 戰骨乾枯堆白沙 Bones of the war dead lie dried and bleached, mounds of white
 sand.²³⁰

鞆津
 Tomo Harbor²³¹

楸梧風冷海城秋 Through catalpa and parasol trees the wind blows chill: seaside
 ramparts, mantled in autumn.
 燹火煙消灰未收 The fires that raged in war smolder no longer, but their ashes
 have yet to be cleared.²³²

²²⁹ The *ping* or *baiping* 白蘋 (*Hydrocharis dubia*, J. *tochikagami*) is a flowering aquatic plant that grows in shallow, muddy water. Perhaps because the blossoms reach just inches above the water's surface, poems describing them as having "fallen" seem to be relatively rare. The interpretation followed here was suggested by Kamimura, whose *kunten* markings in *GBZS* indicate a Japanese reading of *gyōka*, *urami o okurite hinka o otosu*, in which 落 is construed as a transitive verb with subject 漁歌 and object 蘋花.

²³⁰ *GBZS* v. 2, pp. 32-33; *GBSS* v. 4, p. 327.

²³¹ An historically important harbor in what is now Hiroshima Prefecture.

²³² The last couplet recalls Du Mu's famous quatrain "Moored on the Qinhuai River" 泊秦淮, whose second couplet reads "Singing girls know nothing of the shame of the country's ruin; Still intoning from across the river the tune of Rear Garden Blossoms" 商女不知亡國恨、隔江猶唱後庭花. The specific event referred to in the second line of "Tomo Harbor" is unclear, a fact that has led to some confusion in modern sources treating this poem. The series to which it belongs ends with a note, seemingly written by Chūgan himself, that reads "The foregoing ten poems were composed after the Genkō Disturbance when I was on my way from Hakata to the capital" 右十首、元弘亂後自博多上京道中作也. However, the earliest record of an event corresponding to the language of the poem (and indeed of a major fortification at Tomo Harbor) is from 1342: in the Battle of Tomo 鞆合戦, the Daigashima Fortress 大可島城, built earlier that year on an island just outside the harbor, was attacked by forces of the Northern Court and completely destroyed. It is conceivable that in collating this material several decades later, Chūgan misremembered when "Tomo Harbor" was composed; on the other hand, the location had been of strategic and commercial importance for centuries, and it is equally possible that he simply witnessed the aftermath of an earlier outbreak of violence that occurred around the time the shogunate fell. In either case, the "ramparts" mentioned in the poem cannot refer to Tomo Castle 鞆城, which was constructed under the aegis of the Mōri family in the 16th century.

遊妓不知亡國事 The courtesans know nothing of the ruination of the state:
 聲聲秦曲泛蘭舟 Singing to musical accompaniment, they bob along on bedizened
 boats.²³³

The juxtaposition of descriptive couplets with critical or didactic ones is a recurrent feature in Chūgan's political poems. This juxtaposition, moreover, is always an uneven one, with the political statements in the second couplet unambiguously privileged over the description offered in the first. Structurally speaking, this is consistent with popular poetic practice of the Song and Yuan eras: according to the compositional principles advanced in the aforementioned *Santishi*, which was compiled around 1250 by the poet and theorist Zhou Bi 周彌 (1194-1255), the third line of a quatrain is the dominant line and the most important to the overall success of the poem.²³⁴ In "Dannoura," the turn in the third line towards discursive, prosaic language comes near to what Zhou Bi terms "empty continuation" 虛接, wherein the first and second lines of a quatrain are non-affective or "solid" 實 while the third reveals the feelings or opinions of the poet and is termed "empty" 虛.²³⁵ "Empty continuation" was a common strategy, and one that grants special prominence to the poem's discursive "point" by setting it in relief against an

²³³ *GBZS* v. 2, p. 33; *GBSS* v. 4, p. 328.

²³⁴ Zhou Bi's critical comments are translated and analyzed by Stephen Owen in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1992), pp. 421-34.

²³⁵ Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, pp. 422-25. Although the first couplet of "Dannoura" is heavy on description, the use of the term "grievance" 恨 in the second line does imply judgment and hence a lyrical subject; to the extent that it foreshadows the political message of the second couplet, the rupture between the couplets is not total, and the poem is not a perfect example of "empty continuation."

ostensibly objective, non-evaluative background. Chūgan structured many of his quatrains this way, and in light of his noted fondness for *Santishi*, it is reasonable to posit that he used the collection very much as Zhou Bi had intended, namely as an explicitly “writerly” guidebook to poetic composition.

From an artistic standpoint, the brevity of the quatrain form makes it a better vehicle for imagism than for social critique, and “Dannoura” in particular seems almost calculated to frustrate aesthetic expectations, initially offering the reader the pleasure of detached, imagistic description only to snatch it away with the imposition of a blunt moral message. It is an approach that contrasts markedly with that taken by other Gozan poets, who generally avoided overt didacticism even when composing poems that fit thematically into the “history” (J. *eishi*, C. *yongshi* 咏史) sub-genre. While the Battle of Dannoura may have held particular significance for Chūgan as an example of senseless feudal warfare, he was not the only Gozan poet to memorialize the event in verse. No less a figure than Zekkai Chūshin would also do so several decades later, though to much different artistic effect and, most likely, with much different motivations in mind. The contrast between the two verses is instructive:

赤間関

Akamagaseki²³⁶

風物眼前朝暮愁 The scene before my eyes brings grief from morning till evening:

寒潮頻拍赤城頭 A cold tide ceaselessly pounding ruins of red stone ramparts.

²³⁶ A location on the southwestern tip of Honshu in what is today the city of Shimonoseki. It overlooked the waters in which the Battle of Dannoura occurred.

怪岩奇石雲中寺	Fearsome crags and curious rocks guard a temple in the clouds;
新月斜陽海上舟	Under the new moon and the setting sun, a boat drifts upon the sea.
十萬義軍空寂戚	A righteous army of hundred thousand vanished into emptiness;
三千劍客去悠悠	Three thousand swordsmen lost for all time.
英雄骨朽干戈地	Bones of heroes, withered away upon the battlefield;
相憶倚欄看白鷗	Lost in remembrance, I lean on the balustrade, watching the gulls. ²³⁷

The Battle of Dannoura was the final decisive engagement of the Genpei War 源平合戦 (1180-85), an episode of strife and general lawlessness framed principally by the contest between two military houses, the Minamoto 源 and the Taira 平. The Taira, who had been fleeing westward after losing Kyoto, were soundly defeated and would never recover; their spectacular rise and fall would inspire writers throughout the medieval era, and the Battle of Dannoura would come to be seen as the most poignant and dramatic of all historical Japanese battles. This was not simply because it was large by the standards of the era, but because the annihilation of the newly ascendant Taira was total, and because the young Emperor Antoku (r. 1180-83), born of a Taira mother and barely six years old at the time, was among the thousands drowned in the melee.

Both “Dannoura” and “Akamagaseki” treat the same historical event, but their differences are striking: where Chūgan speaks only of the bones of the war

²³⁷ *GBZS* v. 2, p. 1920; Iriya, ed., “Gozan bungaku shū,” pp. 96-97.

dead, Zekkai speaks of the bones of heroes; where Zekkai concludes with an aestheticization of violence that moves the reader from human mortality to the freedom of nature, Chūgan simply suggests that the war was a misguided conflict over a limited resource (“In the end, how many could win enfeoffment?”). Zekkai’s poem may be interpreted as one of spiritual conciliation (*chinkon* 鎮魂), a traditional function of much medieval literature on the Genpei War. Chūgan may have chosen instead to emphasize the futility of that conflict for more immediate purposes, almost surely intending his verse to be seen by Go-Daigo and Sadamune. Here it should be remarked that insofar as the Genpei War represented exactly the sort of conflict most antithetical to a fundamentally statist, Confucian worldview, Chūgan surely saw no contradiction in bemoaning it even as he backed the royal cause against the Kamakura regime in his memorial.

As observed previously, Chūgan began to express more critical views of Go-Daigo’s revolution in early 1334, following his return to Kamakura upon the sudden death of Sadamune. What he found when he arrived was a town scarred by violence and despoliation. During the summer of 1333, a force gathered by the warlord Nitta Yoshisada (1301-38), hitherto a principal vassal of the shogunate, had marched on Kamakura and attacked the Hōjō garrison. According to the famous account in the historical chronicle *Taiheiki* 太平記, the fighting was heavy and lasted for some days; with defeat imminent, Hōjō Takatoki set fire to numerous administrative buildings, retreated to the temple Tōshōji, and committed suicide along with several

hundred of his men.²³⁸ Approximately five years later, Chūgan memorialized these events in a series of heptasyllabic quatrains and bemoaned the ongoing political disarray:

惜陰偶作

Impromptu Verses Lamenting the Passage of Time

昔年是日鎌倉破	Several years ago on this day, the city of Kamakura fell;
所在伽藍氣像皆	The temples that were there, the scenery – all of it was reduced to nothing. ²³⁹
商女不知僧侶恨	The peddler girls know not the monks' grievances:
賣柴賣菜打官街	Selling firewood and greens, they hawk up and down streets once lined with government offices. ²⁴⁰
雨壓炎塵涼似秋	Rain tamps the scorching dust and the coolness feels like autumn;
無根綠樹翳林丘	Rootless, verdant trees shade wooded hills. ²⁴¹
摩挲老眼看如畫	Straining my old eyes, it looks just like a painting;
若箇濛濛佛也愁	But in this drizzly mist, even the Buddha would feel melancholy.

²³⁸ *Taiheiki* 10.2; 10.4.

²³⁹ The character 皆, nearly always adverbial, here denotes a verb meaning “to be reduced to nothing.” I have been unable to discover comparable examples of this usage in Chinese texts, though the vernacular Japanese expressions *mina ni nasu* “exhaust,” “reduce to naught” and *mina ni naru*, “be exhausted,” were in common use by the mid-thirteenth century. The earliest example seems to be from *Kokon chomonjū* 古今著聞集, a collection of *setsuwa* 說話 from 1254. Kamimura does not indicate a *kun* reading for the character, while Yamagishi Tokuhei suggests *tsukiru*, which implies a rough synonymy with 盡; his complete *kundoku* rendering of the poem may be found in “Gozan bungaku shū, Edo kanshi shū,” pp. 90-91.

²⁴⁰ This couplet once again seems to draw directly on the second couplet of Du Mu’s “Mooring on the Qinhuai River” (see note 214).

²⁴¹ Presumably mist is obscuring the lower portion of the trees, making it appear as if they were “rootless.”

佛也愁時神更悲	In a time when even the Buddha feels melancholy, the gods must be sadder still.
腥風鼓海社簾吹	A foul wind whips the sea and the blinds of the shrine are blown open.
去年華表隨龍去	Last year, the ornamented columns followed the dragon and departed:
洚水稽天人作龜	Amidst a baneful flood of excess that reaches the heavens, men become as turtles!
更無前代好衣冠	Gone, moreover, are the good gentry of ages past:
滿眼氛埃暗社壇	My eyes fill with baleful dusts that benight the altar.
終古黃梅時節雨	From time immemorial, the season of ripe plums has brought rain;
今朝特地著愁看	Today, however, I look upon it with a sense of anxious grief. ²⁴²
世事隆衰自有時	The affairs of the world flow and ebb, each in its own time;
山河是矣但人非	Mountains and rivers are constant, but man is not.
戰骨未收邊戍起	Bones of the war dead lie uncollected as border garrisons arise;
鐵衣早晚復儒衣	But the suits of armor, sooner or later, will be exchanged once again for Confucian robes! ²⁴³

²⁴² If the subject is taken to be the season itself, the last line might be rendered "Today, however, it wears (著) a mien of grief (愁看)." The basic sense of the line seems to be that the rainy season, usually a happy time, is not so this year; the invocation of rain may also be seen to continue the flood metaphor introduced in the second verse.

²⁴³ *GBZS*, v. 2, pp. 35-36; *GBSS*, v. 4, p. 352. The fourth verse is found only in *GBSS*, which also includes two additional verses in this group.

As in “Tomo Harbor,” women going about everyday activities are presented as figures of ignorance; while they lack not for material means, they remain oblivious to the sociopolitical problems that so exercise Chūgan. In the fourth and last verse, the corrosive effect of militancy is thematized in terms reminiscent of his essays *Genmin* and *Gensō*. Notably, this poem also employs a striking tonal prosody that reinforces its message: where the opening couplet adheres perfectly to the tonal conventions of a recent-style quatrain, the second, quite unexpectedly, breaks entirely with those conventions. The result is a dramatic and productive dissonance in which initial fidelity to prosodic rules buttresses the detached and aphoristic quality of the first couplet, while the subsequent violation of them amplifies the impassioned, critical tenor of the second.²⁴⁴

The second, third, and fourth verses seem joined in narrative continuity, with the second functioning as a mostly descriptive preamble to the other two. In effect, the three poems evince an extension of the descriptive-didactic mode switching observed previously on the level of individual couplets. The third verse is arguably the most interesting, and the only one that allows a plausible date of composition to be adduced. Its first couplet, framed clearly as a continuation of the previous verse,

²⁴⁴ The tonal distribution is as follows:

仄仄平平仄仄平
 平平仄仄仄平平
 仄仄仄平平仄仄 (the expected pattern is 平平仄仄平平仄)
 仄平仄仄仄平平 (the expected pattern is 仄仄平平仄仄平).

Such alteration was by no means unprecedented in the Chinese tradition; it is highlighted only to demonstrate the manner in which tonal patterning, a formal property, may contribute integrally to a poem’s content.

is among the few in Chūgan's poetry to explicitly mention Japanese *kami*. What becomes clear in the next couplet, which, as detailed below, seems driven by an uncommonly bold double entendre, is that the entire poem is an acerbic take on the present condition of the Japanese imperium. By early 1337, Emperor Go-Daigo had fled Kyoto for the rural mountains of Yoshino, where he hastily established a rival court that would hold out against the Ashikaga Shogunate for the next half century.²⁴⁵ Assuming Go-Daigo's flight to Yoshino is indeed what Chūgan is referring to, the verse must have been composed sometime in 1338. The term rendered as "flood of excess" is *kōsui* 洚水 (C. *jiangshui*), a relatively rare phrase that appears most famously in *Mengzi*:

Bo Gui said, "I excel even King Yu in water management." Mengzi replied, "You are mistaken, sir. In water management, King Yu followed the way of water. For this reason, King Yu had the Four Seas as his reservoir. But you only have neighboring states as your reservoir. Opposing the course of the water is what led to the "overflowing waters" (洚水). The overflowing waters were flooding waters (洪水). This is something hated by benevolent people. You are mistaken, sir."²⁴⁶

白圭曰、丹之治水也愈於禹。孟子曰、子過矣。禹之治水、水之道也。是故禹以四海為壑。今吾子以鄰國為壑。水逆行謂之洚水、洚水者、洪水也。仁人之所惡也。吾子過矣。

Bo Gui fails because he, unlike the great King Yu, attempts to control water without regard for its nature. In light of both Chūgan's previous writings and the other verses in this group, the implication of the poem seems obvious: like Bo Gui's

²⁴⁵ This is what is referred to as the Southern Court; its establishment marks the beginning of the so-called Northern and Southern Courts (Nanbokuchō) 南北朝 era in Japanese history, which continued until a rapprochement between the courts was reached in 1392.

²⁴⁶ *Mengzi* 6B11; Van Norden, *Mengzi*, p. 168.

misguided approach to managing water, the pursuit of suzerainty through martial preeminence is a violation the way of the benevolent man (仁人), and the upheavals it has wrought upon the country have saddened the *kami*. The phrase “men become as turtles” is intriguing, and possibly quite edgy. At first blush, “turtle” may appear an unsurprising image in a couplet that contains floodwaters and a dragon, since both dragons and turtles are conventionally associated with water. A conservative interpretation of the line might therefore be that people, normally terrestrial creatures, are forced to become “amphibious” in order to survive the new political environment. The word “turtle,” however, could also be an insult in vernacular Chinese meaning either “bastard” or “cuckold.”²⁴⁷ In this light, the line seems to suggest that people have been duped and degraded amidst a power struggle that represents, or has unleashed, a deluge (泽水) of political dysfunction. It need not be assumed that the “flood of excess” is Go-Daigo’s alone: Chūgan surely would have laid a great deal of blame upon the ascendant Ashikaga, who represented precisely the kind of authority he loathed – yet another “hegemon” 霸 in a state still without a true king. Even so, given that “dragon” is among the commonest euphemisms for

²⁴⁷ The first sense derives from a folk belief according to which male turtles were incapable of copulation, requiring female turtles to mate with snakes in order to lay their eggs, thereby making turtles “bastards” by definition. According to Morohashi Tetsuji, the sense of “turtle” as something like “cuckold” (specifically, a man whose wife is engaged in extramarital liaisons or prostitution), dates to the Tang; as might be expected, however, textual examples are much more plentiful in later periods. An informative analysis of vernacular insults in the novel *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸傳 (*Water Margin*), the earliest portions of which were authored around the time Chūgan was active, is given in Liu Peipei, “‘Shuihuzhuan’ lima yanjiu ji qi zai Huayu wenjiaoxue zhong de yiyi” (M.A. Thesis, National Chengchi University, 2011). “Turtle” and related terms are covered on p. 39.

emperors and the dragon in this verse seems unambiguously to be Go-Daigo, the couplet may well be the most daring in his oeuvre.²⁴⁸

Continuing the focus on the decline of once hallowed institutions, the fourth verse laments the absence of estimable officials (衣冠) and, seemingly, the profaning of the religious world by current events (this, at any rate, would appear to be the implication of the intriguing locution “baleful dusts benighting the altar”).²⁴⁹ The term rendered as “altar” is *shadan* 社壇 (C. *shetan*); this is the broadest and most elementary translation, and it is consistent with the use of the word in pre- and early imperial China. In a specifically Japanese context, however, *shadan* may also denote the raised area of earth on which the main building (*shaden* 社殿) of a Shinto shrine is built. It is reasonable to assume that this sense would have been easily apprehended by most medieval readers, especially in light of the explicit mention of *kami* in the previous verse. To the extent that terminology associated with *kami* worship leads syntagmatically to Japanese kingship and the traditional, apotheosized body politic, one may readily interpret the benighting of the “altar” to figure the corruption or occlusion of the imperial majesty. Altogether, the language might seem to suggest a rather romanticized vision of the old royal order:

²⁴⁸ In the interest of philological completeness, an additional, and quite different, historical meaning of the phrase 作龜 is “set up the turtle” and refers to plastronomy, a method of divination in which turtle plastrons are heated and the resulting cracks interpreted. It is not impossible to construe the line on the basis of this sense, for instance by supposing it to mean that in uncertain times people turn to divination. However this would seem a rather mild and anticlimactic conclusion to a line that began by emphatically describing a state of rampant moral waywardness and mismanagement – “a baneful flood of excess that reaches the heavens” (洚水稽天).

²⁴⁹ On “baleful dusts” 氛埃, see note 252 below.

objectively speaking, Japan was probably governed as well during the Kamakura period as during any age of its premodern history. Even the imperial court, while increasingly overshadowed by the shogunate, was at that time a substantially healthier institution than it had become by time of this poem. Indeed, Chūgan may be implicitly admitting as much through his use of the somewhat elastic term *zendai* (C. *qiandai* 前代), which could just as easily refer to the *previous* age as to “past ages” in general. And given the seemingly nostalgic reference in the first verse to “streets (once) lined with government offices” (官街), it is even conceivable that Chūgan was no longer quite so ill disposed towards the vanquished Kamakura regime as he had been in his earlier writings: having grown up in the vicinity of Kamakura itself, he could not but have recalled that the years of his youth were at least marked by political stability, if not by his desired political order. In any event, the overriding theme of these verses – dissolution and loss on levels both institutional and spiritual – was one to which Chūgan would return frequently during the years of civil unrest that inaugurated the turbulent Muromachi era.

Yet regardless of his distaste for shogunal authority or his hope for unitary imperial governance, Chūgan could see as well as anyone that by the end of the 1330s, the fighting had succeeded only in moving Japan even further from that ideal. In the winter of 1339, Chūgan assumed the headship of the newly built temple Kichijoji and publicly embraced the Rinzai lineage of Dongyang Dehui. Despite the hostility this provoked, the early 1340s were a productive time; his poetic output remained high, and his historical work *Nihon sho*, which would probably have required many months of research, was completed in 1341. That year also

occasioned what is probably his most famous single poem, a lengthy meditation on the suffering of the poor during an unusually destructive blizzard. The piece is among the finest works of social engagement in medieval Japanese literature, and was possibly the first of Chūgan's poems to be translated into English:²⁵⁰

春雪
Spring Snow

辛巳二月二十五 On the twenty-fifth day of the second month in the year of junior-metal snake (1341),
相陽大雪深五尺 Sōyō recorded a snowfall five feet deep.²⁵¹

初聞郭索步窗前 At first I heard a sound like crabs marching at the window,
俄驚樹杪風漸瀝 Then soon arose a wind, whistling through the treetops.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ See Burton Watson, *Japanese Literature in Chinese*, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 28-29.

²⁵¹ The first two lines, despite seeming more like paratextual headnotes, are treated in the vulgate edition of *Tōkai ichiōshū* and all subsequent sources as part of the poem proper. This seems to be because the entering-tone character 尺 rhymes with the remaining final characters of even-numbered lines, all of which are entering tone and, in Middle Chinese, conclude with the consonant cluster iek/iek.

²⁵² The sound of crabs marching is an unusual figure for the sounds associated with falling snow. Chūgan seems to have liked it, for it appears in the opening couplet of another of his poems, "Expressing My Feelings on the Topic of Snow" 題雪寄懷: "The marching of crabs is what first I heard in the bamboos outside my window; In a dream it raps upon my freezing pillow, a sound lonely and sparse" 蟹步先聞窗外竹、夢敲寒枕響疎々。 A locus classicus for this figure has remained elusive; Iriya Yoshitaka remarks that he is unaware of examples elsewhere. See "Gozan bungaku shū," p. 297. The word *kakusaku* 郭索 (C. *guosuo*) does appear in a couplet by Lin Bu 林逋 (967-1028): "Through the grass and mud, crabs go marching; From beclouded trees come cries of the francolin" 草泥行郭索、雲木叫鉤軸。 The rest of this poem seems to have been lost, but the couplet is cited with admiration by Ouyang Xiu in his *Guitian lu* 歸田錄, and again by Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031-1095) in his famous *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 (*Dream Pool Essays*). The relevance of this is simply that Lin Bu was already much beloved by Gozan poets, and a couplet of Lin's praised by Ouyang would stand an excellent chance of circulating widely among them.

淅瀝轉作砰湃聲	Then the whistling became a roaring:
百千雷霆鬪相擊	A thousand thunderclaps at war with one another. ²⁵³
開窗昧目萬斛灰	Opening the window my gaze was darkened by vast mass of ash;
急掩扉頃便堆席	Hurriedly I shut the door and stacked up the mats. ²⁵⁴
去年栽竹忽遭摧	The bamboos I planted last year were crushed in an instant;
林木挫抑何是惜	But with whole stands of woodland trees bent and bowed, what use is there in bewailing them?
鎌倉城在海東南	In Kamakura, the city by the sea southeast of here,
古老皆言未嘗覩	The old men all say they've never seen anything like this before.
且如今年元日来	Though the first day of the New Year has dawned,
天弄陰機非旦夕	Heaven has seen fit to loose its mysterious design and erase all distinction between the dawn and the evening. ²⁵⁵
陌上泥濘沒牛尻	On roads the mud swallows oxen up to their hindquarters,
故旧訪我難為屐	Impeding the progress of old friends who try to visit me.
北客見慣能憑陵	Visitors from the north, accustomed to such conditions, shamelessly bully and cadge;
土人縮頸不便僻	Locals merely keep their heads down, unwilling to act speciously.

²⁵³ This couplet recalls lines from Ouyang Xiu's "Rhapsody on the Autumn Wind" 秋聲賦: "At first it blew with a whistling shrill; Then suddenly it roared like a thundering gallop" 初淅瀝以蕭颯、忽奔騰而砰湃.

²⁵⁴ White ash appears in earlier Chinese poems as a metaphor for snow. However ash also carries connotations of death, and in the context of this poem, the sense the term generates is one of foreboding.

²⁵⁵ The lines contain a mild pun on the first day of the New Year, which is conventionally termed *gantān* (C. *yuandan* 元旦) or "First Dawn." The compound term *inki* 陰機 (C. *yinqi*), rendered above as "mysterious design," seems to be particularly common in poems treating blizzards. It is found, for instance, in one by Han Yu titled "Snow in the Year of Junior-Metal Hare" (辛卯年雪), which includes the exact phrase 弄陰機, and in one by the Qing poet Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664), also titled "Spring Snow" (春雪).

咫尺鄰里少相過	Even people from the closest neighboring villages seldom cross paths;
百賈晝眠絕交易	Merchants sleep till noon and cease conducting business.
富門御冬蓄有余	The rich have ample stores to get them through the winter:
机俎羅張厭脯腊	With trays and tables splendidly arrayed, they have their fill of dried meats.
銷金帳裡那知寒	Shut safely behind golden curtains, what do they know of the cold?
淺斟低唱情自適	Sipping wine and singing softly, they are completely at ease. ²⁵⁶
窮家數日突無煙	But from poor houses no smoke rises for days on end;
羸臥陋巷同窀穸	In mean alleys hovels lie low, like rows of graves.
詩書萬卷徒撐腸	All the poems and books in the world do nothing to fill an empty stomach:
竟不能療朝饑感	Never could they offer relief from the morning's hunger.
一束柴索價遼天	For a single bundle of firewood, the going price is higher than the heavens,
五合黃陳無處糴	And a measly five cups of stale yellowed grain are nowhere to be bought.
或言雖晚瑞豐年	Some say that although it came late, the blizzard betokens a year of good harvests,
為我未免按劍戟	But to me it augurs not but further resort to swords and spears. ²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ The phrase “sipping wine and singing softly” 淺斟低唱 is a common idiom that appears in numerous Song-era poems, including one by Fan Chengda.

²⁵⁷ Here Chūgan may be making a pun on the phrase 為我 (C. *weiwo*, J. *wa ga tame*), which happens also to denote Yang Zhu's “hedonist” philosophy of self-preservation (in this meaning, the compound would generally be pronounced *iga* in Japanese). If this is so, the idea would seem to be that rampant self-interest, perhaps intensified in the wake of the blizzard, is ultimately what makes the fighting inevitable. As a prepositional phrase, 為我 appears in Han *yuefu* with the meaning of “on my (or our) behalf,” and in Chūgan's piece it is probably best understood to mean something like “by my lights.”

In the Japanese *kanshi* tradition, “Spring Snow” is reminiscent of a masterful series of ten pentasyllabic poems titled “Feeling the Cold Early” 寒早 by Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903), a court scholar of the Heian period who remains one of Japan’s most widely appreciated literary Sinitic poets. All ten poems begin with the line “Who feels the cold the earliest?” 何人寒氣早; they then proceed to identify various people, such as peasant runaways, orphans, and elderly widowers, whose wintertime suffering is exacerbated by their difficult personal circumstances. Though the individuals and situations Michizane described were inspired by his actual experiences as a provincial governor, the poems themselves betray little information regarding the context of their composition, and the artistic gaze of the poet is rarely if ever intrusive or insistent. To this extent they are perhaps more aesthetically satisfying than “Spring Snow,” which despite possessing greater linguistic richness than “Dannoura” and “Tomo Harbor” shares with those verses a persistently “singulative” thrust that anchors it firmly to its historical moment.²⁵⁸ It is hard to conceive of a less poetic couplet than the one with which “Spring Snow” begins; this matter-of-fact start, along with the strict chronological order in which events are presented, imparts to the piece a strongly documentary or diaristic flavor. The closing line foregrounds the lyrical “I,” who offers final judgment on the significance of the events just described. This speaker, whom the reader is led by convention to construe as Chūgan himself, poses questions, relates indirect quotes,

²⁵⁸ By contrast, Michizane’s poems come closer to “iterative discourses,” where a single discourse evokes a plurality of similar events. See Richard Howard, trans., Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 31.

and recounts both his own responses to the blizzard and the responses of others. Aside from “crabs marching at the window” and the conventional substitution of ash for snow, figurative language is almost nonexistent, particularly in the second half of the poem, where nearly every couplet seems to advance social critique. Description too is kept to a minimum, at least if that term is taken to mean the sort of detached, non-evaluative treatment of objective phenomena in which symbolism, ratiocination, and intertextual coding is eschewed.

It is easy enough to understand these rhetorical features of “Spring Snow” as a consequence of Chūgan’s political commitments, which when articulated in verse produced works more or less analogous in spirit to his expository prose. Social protest is, of course, among the oldest established functions of the *shi*, and to that extent “Spring Snow” fits readily into the broader Chinese poetic tradition. Moreover, as an ancient-style *shi* with no fixed length or stringent prosodic requirements, “Spring Snow” is substantially freer and more capacious than tightly knit, recent-style quatrains such as “Dannoura” and “Tomo Harbor.” Prose, of course, is freer still, and sentiments like those expressed in the second half of “Spring Snow” would indeed be well suited to the various non-fictional prose genres commonly used to lodge protest in medieval Japan, e.g. *ge* 解, *mōshijō* 申状, and *shūjō* 愁状. But by expressing them in a *shi*, the poet automatically underscores their emotional authenticity without compromising the historical veracity of the events related. In contradistinction to works from genres such as *fu*, *shi* were traditionally read as non-fictional, emotionally sincere treatments of things

witnessed or experienced by the poet.²⁵⁹ While this assumption of non-fictionality can probably be relaxed somewhat for post-Tang *shi*,²⁶⁰ “Spring Snow” would still generally have been read by Chūgan’s contemporaries as both a truthful account of, and a literary memorial to, real-life hardships witnessed first hand. Additionally, by fusing moral concern with aesthetic experience, poems laid claim to a vastly larger readership than practical documents typically did: while a “peasant grievance report” (*hyakushō shūjō* 百姓愁狀) was intended to elicit action from government officials and estate proprietors, a poem was intended for posterity. So long as the *shi* genre remained vital, even one as singulative as “Spring Snow” would survive the passage of time intact and undiminished, its interventionist potential operative not just on the level of logos, but also and indeed primarily, on the level of pathos.

In theme and diction, ample precedent for “Spring Snow” may be found as far back as the realist poetry of the Jian’an 建安 era (196-220), particularly in the work of poets such as Wang Can 王粲 (177-217), Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232), and the slightly later Fu Xian 傅咸 (239-94), whose brief pentasyllabic piece “Suffering Through a Rainy Spell” (愁霖詩) touches on a very similar theme and employs strikingly similar motifs:

舉足沒泥濘
市道無行車

I lift up a foot only to sink into the muck;
On the road to the market, no carts go.

²⁵⁹ Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics* (Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1985), pp. 34; 57.

²⁶⁰ Owen notes that some of Li Shangyin’s poetry comes very near to fiction, and that Song-era poets no longer shared the same faith as their forebears in an “uncreated universe” where traditional modes of poetic expression were simply “natural.” See *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics*, pp. 52; 88-89.

蘭桂賤朽腐
柴粟貴明珠

Orchids and cinnamon are cheaper than rotting trash;
Firewood and millet are more precious than lustrous
pearls.²⁶¹

The latter half of “Spring Snow” is propelled by a series of tropes that would have been immediately recognizable to Fu Xian a millennium before: the disparity between the rich and the poor, the difficulties in getting around, and the price of daily necessities. If there is a notable point of thematic difference in the way Chinese and Japanese poets handled this type of material, it is that political conditions in China, at least during eras of unity and strong central governance, often inclined poets there to focus specifically on the role of errant government policies in causing or exacerbating poverty. Bo Juyi 白居易 (772-846), probably the best known Chinese poet in premodern Japan, produced dozens of intensely didactic poems, some in the “New Music Bureau” (*xin yuefu*) genre, bemoaning peasant hardships and excoriating official corruption.²⁶² *Shi* poetry expressing similar sentiments was common throughout the Song Dynasty, beginning with the work of early figures such as Ouyang Xiu and Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-86). Both were elite scholar-bureaucrats who expressed in verse harsh criticisms of government policies they thought misguided.²⁶³ And Fan Chengda, a poet of otherwise humble

²⁶¹ *Taiping yulan*, v. 1, “Tianbu” 11, “Yuxia.”

²⁶² See Kondō Haruo, *Haku-shi monjū to kokubungaku: shingafu, shinchūgin no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1990); Liao Meiyun, *Yuan-Bai xin yuefu yanjiu* (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1989).

²⁶³ Famous examples include Wang’s poem “Confiscating Salt” (收鹽), which depicts the enforcement of the government salt monopoly, and Ouyang’s poem “The People Who Eat Dregs” (食糟民), which criticizes the government monopoly on wine-making.

beginnings, still aspired like most of his contemporaries to a career in the official bureaucracy, an aspiration he realized after passing the imperial examination in 1154. Like Ouyang Xiu and Wang Anshi, his poetic oeuvre contains many verses highlighting the suffering of the peasantry, several of which make reference to tax burdens – a theme also addressed by Bo Juyi.²⁶⁴

Though not unknown, such poetry was a good deal less common in Japan. While several factors might be adduced to explain this difference in artistic sensibility, two seem particularly relevant. First, and most parsimoniously, the number of overtly “socially conscious” Japanese poets was limited by the fact that vernacular poetic media were seldom marshaled for social criticism; although the great *Man’yōshū* poet Yamanoue no Okura 山上憶良 (c. 660-733) did do exactly that, he stands far outside of what became the mainstream *waka* tradition.²⁶⁵ Second, and more germane to present purposes, professional service to a large, centralized bureaucratic state with widespread authority over taxation and land administration was not an avenue available to the medieval Japanese poet, since such a state simply did not exist. There was no imperial examination system or comparable mechanism for drawing men of talent into government service, and even if there had been, the Kyoto authorities, even before the wrenching events of the 1330s, were in no position to make and enforce policy on a countrywide scale. It is therefore

²⁶⁴ See Ronald Egan, “*Shi* Poetry: Ancient and Recent Styles,” in Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry*, p. 324; Kondō, *Haku-shi monjū to kokubungaku*, pp. 307-311.

²⁶⁵ Just how different he was (and remains) from any other major *waka* poet is revealed by the fact that in just one long verse, his famous “Dialog with the Impoverished” (“Hinkyū mondō no uta,” 貧窮問答歌), he uses 30 terms found nowhere else in *Man’yōshū* – a collection of almost 4,500 poems.

unsurprising that Chūgan's poem concludes not by castigating government monopolies (there were none) or excessive taxation, but with concern over the ever-present possibility of localized warfare.²⁶⁶

While "Spring Snow" may have drawn inspiration from the writings of Song Dynasty intellectuals such as Fan Chengda and Ouyang Xiu, the poem is otherwise consonant with longstanding rhetorical conventions regarding the treatment of social ills in *shi*, and it does not reveal characteristically Song-era aesthetic preferences as plainly as some of Chūgan's other compositions do. And because few lines were set in the descriptive mode, "Spring Snow" also evinces greater stylistic uniformity than a poem such as "Dannoura," which switched from a comparatively staid, descriptive vignette of flowers and fishermen to a subject-centered moral argument about feudal competition. Such mode switching creates cleavages in the poem that disrupt the reading process and beckon the reader back to the level of narrative content; although the approach works against aesthetic reverie, it makes for very effective homily, a hortatory genre in which Chūgan, like most Gozan literati,

²⁶⁶ Oppressive taxation could of course be a problem in medieval Japan too, but rarely if ever because of policies adopted by the imperial court or even the shogunate. By the thirteenth century, legal rights to agricultural income (*shiki* 職) were of manifold variety; on a given property, many different types of *shiki* would be held by many different claimants, whose interests might easily come into conflict. While the high nobility or the shogunate might claim rights to income from a certain property, so too might military governors (*shugo*) and their deputies (*shugo-dai*), local estate stewards (*jitō*), estate superintendants (*gesu*), estate managers (*tadokoro*), and so on. More often than not, those most responsible for squeezing the residents of a particular estate were not Kyoto aristocrats, but *jitō* and other "men of the land" (*kokujin*). By the early 15th century, taxes levied by *shugo* were often more onerous than those levied by the Muromachi shogunate.

was eminently proficient.²⁶⁷ While this fact is not especially relevant to works that were not intended to teach or persuade, it is central to poems whose manifest aim is to impart to the reader religious truths. Such is the case with many verses exchanged with other Zen prelates; these tend to unfold rather like sermons, and they resemble *gāthas* in the clarity of their doctrinal arguments. The following poem, written in response to one from fellow Gozan luminary Betsugen Enshi 別源 円旨 (1294-1364), is among Chūgan's finest and illustrates the approach well:

和答別源
Harmonizing Reply to Betsugen

窓間吐月夜沈々	The window discloses the moon as night wears on
壁角光生藤一尋	In a corner of the room, it glints in the light: my six-foot staff.
窮達与時俱有命	Frustration and success arrive when they will, as both are determined by fate; ²⁶⁸
行藏於世総無心	Action in and withdrawal from the world must always be done in a state of no-mind.
夢中誰謂彼非此	Who, in the midst of a dream, would declare that “that” is not “this”?
覺後方知古不今	It is only upon waking that one knows the past is not the present.
自笑未能除僻病	I laugh at myself for being still unable to eliminate my wayward habits;
逸然乘興發高吟	In ease and idleness, I follow wherever my inspiration leads and chant verses aloud.

²⁶⁷ Chūgan may have been even more adept at doctrinally focused, homiletic exposition than his peers, as religious disquisitions (説) and commentaries (疏) are found in greater numbers in *Tōkai ichiōshū* than in most Gozan collections.

²⁶⁸ The phrase “to be fated” 有命 is understood as in *Lunyu* 12.5: “I (Zixia) have heard this: ‘Death and Life are matters of fate; wealth and worldly honor are in the hands of Heaven.’” 商聞之矣：死生有命、富貴在天。

If the opening couplet of this verse may be ascribed a specific rhetorical function, it is to clear the mind and allow it to rest in imagery that is in some way propadeutical to the ensuing message. The sudden appearance of the moon, itself a conventional symbol of enlightenment, reveals in its light an object that is both a metonym for the Buddhist priesthood and, owing to its sheen (it has been rubbed smooth over years of use), a symbol for old age and the world-wisdom it brings. Possessed of a quiet dignity befitting its symbolic potency, the staff connects one prelate to another and, in turn, connects any would-be reader to the broader Buddhist episteme. Having thus set the appropriate mood, Chūgan proceeds to offer a series of thematically traditional, aphoristic statements about the nature of action and individual achievement. Both “frustration” (窮) and “success” (達) are contingent upon being in the right place at the right time; under such circumstances, the choice facing the principled scholar, i.e. that between acting (行) in the world and withdrawing (藏) from it, is best made in a state of non-intentionality. Here, two concepts redolent of Buddhist thought, “no-mind” 無心 and “awakening” 覺, are marshaled to address what is in essence a classic problem of Confucian ethics: act in corrupted world and risk being corrupted, or withdraw and wait for a more opportune moment. In a move typical of Zen literature, the final couplet resolves the matter by letting it go and turns instead towards private joys.

There is much in this poem that speaks directly to Chūgan’s personal experiences: the idealistic scholar-vizier, once eager to serve his country in a “public” capacity, is rejected for his beliefs; yet in turning within and reflecting upon his own

shortcomings, he ultimately achieves a measure of peace. It is often the case in Chūgan's poetry that complaints of individual misfortune and statements of self-reflection feature most prominently in verses exchanged with friends. This is to be expected: although works such as "Dannoura," "Spring Snow," and the poems comprising "Impromptu Verses Lamenting the Passage of Time" all express the subjective moral judgments of their author, they mainly describe societal, as opposed to individual, misfortunes and are addressed to no one in particular. The next verse, which was composed for another of Zhuxian Fanxian's Japanese disciples, Unbō Eitaku 雲夢齋澤, is essentially a personal letter set in rhyming couplets. It begins with a familiar recounting of societal ills, but then narrows its focus to the various trials besetting the two friends; as with "Spring Snow," its adherence to the formal conventions of the *shi* renders it not just a description of, but also a memorial to, the hardships it recounts:

送澤雲夢
Seeing off Taku Unbō²⁶⁹

乾坤干戈未息時	At a time when the violence of the world remains unabated,
氛埃眯目風橫起	Baleful dusts blown aslant cloud the eyes. ²⁷⁰
餓者轉死盈道路	The starving die in turn, filling the roads;

²⁶⁹ "Taku Unbō" 澤雲夢 is an inverted, three-character abbreviation of Unbō Eitaku 雲夢齋澤; these abbreviations had been a common practice among Japanese literati since antiquity. As noted in the biographical introduction, Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月 usually becomes "Getsu Chūgan" 月中巖.

²⁷⁰ Iriya Yoshitaka understands the compound *fun'ai* 氛埃 (C. *fen'ai*) as "dust of war" 戰塵 (*senjin, zhanchen*), a term that does appear elsewhere in Chūgan's poetry. Its basic sense is simply "foul air."

荒城白日狐狸嬉 In the ruined city, foxes and badgers sport in broad daylight.
 我問樂土在何許 Where, I ask, is there a place free from sorrow,
 一身可以安棲遲 That I might live in peace and ease?
 固欲適他無所適 How I have wished to go someplace else, but there is nowhere to
 go.
 之子先我將何之 This fellow who goes before me – where is he going?
 倉卒告別難為情 With such a hurried parting, feelings are impossible to express;
 袖出剡藤索吾詩 I take from my sleeve a piece of paper and try to come up with a
 verse:
 浮雲流水無定跡 “Drifting clouds and flowing water leave no fixed trace;
 再得會合試難期 There is but the faintest hope that we will ever meet again.”
 久厄艱危我羸臥 Long beset by troubles, I lay down ill and gaunt;
 磨墨揮毫皆不為 I rub ink and take up my brush, but it is all to no avail.
 感君拳拳有厚意 Moved by the earnestness of your conviction,
 勉強起來拂烏皮 I force myself up and clear off my desk.
 惜君學道不日成 I lament that your studies will soon be complete;
 如何早離金仙師 How is it that you take leave so soon of your golden, saintly
 master?²⁷¹
 想君似我乏供給 I think you, like me, are in straightened estate,
 不得已故得相辭 And we thus have no choice but to say our goodbyes.
 望君此去逢佳境 I hope after you leave here you find a place of happiness;
 招我薯蕷同充饑 Invite me then for some wild yams and let us eat our fill
 together!²⁷²

²⁷¹ I.e. Zhuxian Fanxian.

²⁷² *GBZS* v. 2, p. 7; *GBSS* v. 4, p. 335; Iriya, “Gozan bungaku shū,” pp. 289-91.

As in the more explicitly political poems encountered already, war and social unrest figure prominently, but this verse arrives at a conclusion that is intriguingly ambiguous. The final couplet offers a warm entreaty that bespeaks at least the possibility of enjoyment amidst privation, yet the rest of the poem clearly belies Chūgan's confidence that a "place of happiness" can in fact be found, or that the two friends really will see each other again. Other features, such as self-interrogation and language suggestive of everyday speech, are highly typical of Chūgan's work, while the insertion of a metacouplet ("Drifting clouds and flowing water leave no fixed trace; There is but the faintest hope that we will ever meet again"), itself part of an ekphrastic account of the writing process, is unique to this poem. Even by Chūgan's standards, the piece is unusual in the range of topics it covers. The gaze of the poet moves gradually from a large thematic space (medieval Japan) and a universal, or at least widely shared, emotional experience (living in times of strife), to an intimate space (the Zen monastic community) and a single moment in the arc of a particular friendship.

For Chūgan, personal experience and societal experience were imbricated to a degree unseen in the poetry of his contemporaries. This is not, of course, equivalent to claiming that he felt the suffering of others or the tumult of his age more keenly than did other poets, only that he was more willing than they were to directly thematize violence and suffering in his work. At this point, it is natural to wonder whether Chūgan ever did express in poetry the same sort of advocacy for unitary imperial governance – and for a royal monopoly on military force – that he

espoused so forcefully in his memorial to Go-Daigo. As might be inferred from the material surveyed here, nearly early every verse that touches upon the political situation during the 1330s seems to echo the denunciation of war and militarism put forth in the “Keiken” chapter of *Chūseishi*, a work that, like most of the poems treated above, was written after 1333. One feature shared by all of these poems is that they were either unbidden, “declarative” responses to worldly events or “dialogic” products of private exchanges with close friends. Yet for noted Gozan writers, especially those patronized by shoguns or powerful provincial leaders, poetry, no less than prose, could sometimes serve entirely professional ends. A clear demonstration of this is the number of inscriptions (J. *mei*, C. *ming* 銘) preserved in Gozan collections, including *Tōkai ichiōshū*; these might be engraved upon newly cast temple bells and other valued objects, and they often concluded with formal tetrasyllabic poems. In Chūgan’s case, the social and financial support he received from Sadamune could warrant reciprocation in the form of public, belle-lettristic support for Ōtomo family objectives. That this arrangement might have resulted in at least some “pro-Kenmu revolution” poetry is revealed by the following verse, which is unique in form and thematic content:

軍士圖

Soldiers in Formation

沈而思	Immersed, they ponder;
吞而知	Imbibing, they know:
承歟乘歟	Do we take it on? Do we ride?
兵莫持疑	Among the soldiers, not one has doubts!
笑而喜	Laughing, they rejoice;

嗔而恚	Scowling, they rage:
壯哉驕哉	How strong! How proud!
人馬美矣	The men and the horses – all so beautiful! ²⁷³

Seemingly crafted to eulogize a departing army, it is difficult to overstate how different this piece is from anything else in *Tōkai ichiōshū*. It is classified in the 1764 vulgate edition as a formal panegyric or *san* (C. *zan* 贊). This appears to be unique to that edition, which was prepared by the priest Daige Sōdatsu and presumably reflects his personal classificatory choices.²⁷⁴ While the lack of paratextual information precludes easy contextualization, we might surmise that Chūgan was asked to compose the poem for a specific company of soldiers, perhaps one marshaled by the Ōtomo in the early days of the Kenmu Revolution. Though the brevity of each utterance and the mixing of meters imparts to each hemistich a staccato rhythm, the piece as a whole is highly symmetrical and governed by extremely tight parallelism. The beauty of strong, confident men on the eve of battle is an unusual theme for any *kanshi* poet, particularly one of Chūgan’s ideological temper, but as a benedictive praise poem, “Soldiers in Formation” is undeniably successful.

²⁷³ *GBSS* v. 4, p. 363; *GBZS* v. 2, p. 41.

²⁷⁴ The eight verses Sōdatsu grouped under the heading *san* are scattered throughout Tamamura Takeji’s modern edition of *Tōkai ichiōshū*. Sōdatsu seems to have listed these verses as *san* because of their content (e.g. offering praise to famous figures such as Lanxi Daolong, Laozi, Liezi, Zhuangzi, and Confucius), or because of their use of the solemn-sounding tetrasyllabic meter, which is identified as essential to a proper *zan* in the late fifth-century critical treatise *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍.

With the exception of this verse, the poems treated in this chapter are broadly unified by their attention to political ills and popular welfare. A compelling case can be made that the willingness to treat these subjects at length was Chūgan's most notable thematic contribution to Japanese *kanshi*, and an outstanding contribution to Japanese literature more broadly. In its unusual form, "Soldiers in Formation" also reveals Chūgan's equally notable willingness to venture outside the dominant penta- and heptasyllabic meters and experiment with metrical irregularity. These experiments, moreover, were not confined to special sub-genres such as praise poems or inscriptions: Chūgan experimented with metrical variety in *shi* too, composing a series of quatrains in the unusual six-syllable meter. Even more unusually for a Japanese poet, he also studied the "song lyric" or *ci* 詞 while in China and included a composition of his own in *Tōkai ichiōshū*. The *ci* was a major poetic genre by the 11th century, and the gradual expansion of its thematic and stylistic range ranks among the most culturally significant trends in Chinese literature after the Tang Dynasty. Beyond offering further testimony to the artistic adventurousness of an individual poet, these pieces shed light on the scope of Chinese literary forms in medieval Japan.

Chapter Five

New Directions in Form: *Ci* Poetry and Hexasyllabic *Shi*

It is no surprise that in the history of Japanese *kanshi*, poems in the five and seven-syllable line should predominate almost to the exclusion of all other meters. The concerted study of Chinese poetry began in Japan only in the seventh century, by which time the pentasyllabic meter had been dominant on the continent for several hundred years and the heptasyllabic line was rapidly gaining traction. Though early Japanese *kanshi* were overwhelmingly pentasyllabic, by the middle of the Heian period (794-1192) *kanshi* anthologies contained mostly heptasyllabic, eight-line pieces that generally conformed to the complex rules of recent-style regulated verse.²⁷⁵ Perhaps because most Heian poets were aristocrats, trained to appreciate fine distinctions and to uphold exacting standards of decorum, the prosodic constraints of regulated verse did not immediately give rise to countervailing pressures for greater artistic liberty. As Edward Kamens has observed in relation to vernacular Japanese poetry of the same era, the protocols of public aristocratic life sometimes meant that courtiers' poems were not so much expressions as they were performances of expression.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Steinenger, *Chinese Literary Forms in Heian Japan*, p. 85.

²⁷⁶ Kamens, "Terrains of Text in Mid-Heian Court Culture" in Adolphson et al., eds., *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2007), p. 136. See also Helen Craig McCullough, *Brocade by Night: Kokin Wakashū and the Court Style in Japanese Classical Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 46-48 and p. 421.

So-called “ancient-style” poetry, which developed in tandem with recent-style verse but was prosodically freer, rose in popularity during the medieval period and was widely favored by Zen literati. While many Gozan collections still boasted an impressive number of carefully crafted recent-style quatrains, regulated verses, and even the occasional extended regulated verse (J. *hairitsu*, C. *pailü* 排律), the less ornamented ancient-style was seen to facilitate direct lyrical expression and could be turned easily to causes ranging from religious devotion to social critique. Yet with the exception of religious encomia, inscriptions, and death poems – small but important sub-genres that frequently used the solemn sounding tetrasyllabic meter – five and seven-syllable lines remained the norm in medieval Japan regardless of subject matter or tonal prosody. To broach a point that will be addressed in greater detail below, the overwhelming dominance among *kanshi* poets of penta- and heptasyllabic *shi* is at least mildly surprising, since Japanese literati were generally well acquainted with contemporary trends in China, and newer poetic media such as the *ci* 詞 (J. *shi*, *tenshi* 填詞) and *qu* (J. *kyoku* 曲), which employed mixed syllabic meters, were composed by some of the same Chinese poets already well regarded in Japan for their *shi* poetry.²⁷⁷

At present, relatively little is known about the practice of *ci* poetry in medieval Japan or what influence it might have had upon Japanese *kanshi*, as the

²⁷⁷ Owing to the homophony between the characters 詞 and 詩 in Japanese, the compound term *tenshi* 填詞, which literally means “filling in (the musical piece) with lyrics,” is preferred when referring to *ci*.

topic has received only sporadic interest from scholars, most of it quite recent.²⁷⁸ The oldest known *ci* by a Japanese poet was composed by Emperor Saga (r. 809-23) and is preserved in the royally commissioned collection *Keikokushū* 經國集 (827); despite this early imprimatur, the form would not receive sustained attention in Japan until the early Tokugawa period (1600-1868).²⁷⁹ Few complete *ci* from before the seventeenth century remain, and none but Emperor Saga's explicitly indicate their tune titles (*cipai*, *shihai* 詞牌). Without these, accurate identification requires the attention of a specialist, as the compositions appear at first glance simply to be unregulated poems of mixed syllabic meter. Indeed, premodern Japanese collators of literary collectanea may have been generally unaware of, or unconcerned with, the historical connection between *ci* and music; the earliest clear indication that a Japanese poet understood *ci* to be lyrics set to music appears in the sixteenth-century work *Notes on Achieving Perfection the Study of Poetry* 詩學大成抄, by the Gozan monk Ikō Myōan 惟高妙安 (1480-1568).²⁸⁰ While the material considered

²⁷⁸ See Matsuo Hatsuko 松尾肇子, "Gozan Zenrin ni okeru shi no juyō" 五山禪林における詞の受容, *Fengxu* 13 (Dec. 2016), pp. 60-82; Nogawa Hiroyuki 野川博之, "Gozan ni-ryūgakusō no tenshi seisaku: Ryūzan, Chūgan no Mokurenge" 五山二留學僧の填詞製作: 龍山・中巖の木蘭花, *Chūgoku bungaku kenkyū* 25 (1999), pp. 96-109; Nogawa, "Chūgan Engetsu no Sōshi shōkai 中巖圓月の宋詞紹介, *Chūgoku bungaku kenkyū* 26 (1999), pp. 71-84. An early investigation of *ci* in Japan is Kanda Kiichirō 神田喜一郎, *Nihon ni okeru Chūgoku bungaku* 日本における中国文学, vol. 1, "Nihon tenshi shiwa" 日本填詞史話 (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1965).

²⁷⁹ Saga's *ci* may be found in *Gunsho ruijū* vol. 6, p. 562. It is set to the tune "A Fishing Song" 漁歌子 and appears to be modeled closely on one by the Tang poet Zhang Zhihe 張志和 (c. 730-810).

²⁸⁰ This work contains Japanese glosses and explanations of material excerpted from the late Song or early Yuan-era treatise *Shixue dacheng* 詩學大成 (*Achieving Perfection in the Study of Poetry*). See Matsuo, "Gozan Zenrin ni okeru shi no juyō," pp. 61-62.

below makes it nearly impossible to believe that Ikō was the first to grasp this, even in China the actual manner in which the *ci* tunes were originally sung had long been lost, and the few Japanese poets who attempted to compose *ci* may have simply seen the tune patterns, which determined meter, rhyme placement, and the position of tones, as a kind of challenge not unlike the requirements of recent-style *shi*.²⁸¹

Significantly, Chūgan's personal collection of writings, *Tōkai ichiōshū*, is one of only two from the medieval era currently known to include a complete *ci*. *Tōkai ichiōshū* happens also to be the first Gozan collection to feature quatrains set in the unusual hexasyllabic meter; while six-syllable lines were used frequently in *ci* and *qu*, regular hexasyllabic *shi* were quite rare in both China and Japan. This chapter will examine these pieces, together with another *ci* set to the same tune pattern by one of Chūgan's older contemporaries, and will attempt to situate them in relation to relevant Chinese precedents. Scholarship on the reception and composition of *ci* in pre-Tokugawa Japan has only just begun, and the fact that Chūgan's *ci* was not identified as such until 1999, despite *Tōkai ichiōshū* having been available in print for almost 90 years, should suggest the discoveries that remain to be made among the vast body of Gozan poetry yet to be surveyed. Because both *ci* seem to have been composed in the 1320s, predating the hexasyllabic quatrains by a decade or more, our analysis will begin there.

²⁸¹ On the rules governing *ci*, see Majia Bell Samei, "Ci Poetry: Short Song Lyrics (*Xiaoling*)," in Zong-qi Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry*, pp. 245-48.

兜率寺陋房夜為大風雨所擺搖醒而作

Composed when I was awakened in my ramshackle room at Doushuai Temple, which, thanks to fierce wind and rain, was being jostled about.

雨澎湃	Rain falls in a wild onslaught,
海雷浪	The roiling sea hath thunder brought:
澗澗轆轤侵柴牀	Surging and rumbling it assails my brushwood cot!
櫺建瓴	The eaves like casks with water brimming,
潢盈庭	Pools and puddles the garden filling:
屋欲流兮動不停	My hut's about to be washed away – it shakes with no relenting!
中正禪子住其中	But within resides the Prelate of Balance and Rectitude,
至於此極未為窮	Who even brought to this extreme is not a man entrapped:
睡受三禪天上樂	Dozing he receives the joy of the Third Meditation Heaven;
夢覺又御冷然風	Waking from his reverie he shields himself from icy drafts. ²⁸²

Perhaps owing to the extreme rarity of the *ci* in Japan, the vulgate edition of *Tōkai ichiōshū*, which was compiled in 1764, simply listed it as an ancient-style *shi*. Nogawa Hiroyuki has identified the piece as one set to the tune “Lily Magnolias” (木蘭花), which appears in the collection *Huajian ji* and is generally traced to the Five-Dynasties poet Wei Chengban 魏承班 (d. 925).²⁸³ As is often the case in *ci*, Chūgan’s composition incorporates elements common to multiple poetic genres: repeated use of the reduplicative binomes *pengpang* 澎湃 (J. *hōbō*), *yinyin* 澗澗 (*in’in*), and *lulu* 轆轤 (*rokoroku*) evoke the verbose style of *fu* or “rhapsodies” (J. *fu* 賦), while the trisyllabic lines recall *yuefu* (J. *gakufu* 樂府). The rhyme scheme is mixed in a manner typical of *ci*, which uses strophes (as opposed to couplets) as the basic

²⁸² *GBSS* v. 4, p. 354.

²⁸³ Nogawa, “Gozan ni-ryūgakusō no tenshi seisaku,” p. 105-06.

structural unit.²⁸⁴ Here, the end rhymes switch in Early Mandarin from –aŋ (滂, 浪, 牀) in the first three lines to –eŋ (瓴, 庭, 停) in the fourth, fifth, and sixth.²⁸⁵

Whereas in *shi*, narrowly defined, the same syllabic meter is generally retained throughout the entirety of the poem, *ci* usually employ lines of variable length. This enables great variety in rhythm and reflects the structure of the music to which the lyrics were originally set.²⁸⁶ The specific 3+3+7 syllabic pattern of the first two strophes of Chūgan’s *ci* is identifiable as far back as Han-era *yuefu*, and it appears in compositions such as Du Fu’s famous “Ballad of the Army Carts” (兵車行, c. 750). While this medium length work is predominantly heptasyllabic, it opens with a single stanza that is closely analogous to the strophes found in *ci*:

車麟麟	The carts go clikety-clack,
馬蕭蕭	The horses whinny and neigh;
行人弓箭各在腰…	With bows and arrows at their waists the soldiers march away... ²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ The term strophe indicates a unit of verse ending in a rhyme; in *ci*, they may be comprised of one to four individual lines. See Samei, “*Ci* Poetry,” p. 248.

²⁸⁵ Reconstructed pronunciations here and elsewhere follow Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1991). As noted in Chapter Three, Early Mandarin refers to the language of the fourteenth-century rime book *Zhongyuan yinyun* 中原音韻; some scholars, including Michael Fuller, term this language Middle Mandarin.

²⁸⁶ Samei, “*Ci* Poetry,” pp. 245-46.

²⁸⁷ QTS 216.11. “Ballad of the Army Carts” is an ancient-style poem of mixed meter (雜言古詩) representative of a type of narrative poem termed a “song ballad” (C. *gexing*, J. *kakō* 歌行). Examples much beloved in Japan are Bai Juyi’s “Ballad of the Lute” 琵琶行 and “Song of Everlasting Sorrow” 長恨歌. “Ballad of the Army Carts” also appears in the well known 18th century anthology *Tang shi san bai shou* 唐詩三百首 (*Three Hundred Tang Poems*), where it is classed as a heptasyllabic *yuefu*.

The last four lines of Chūgan's *ci*, which comprise its second section or "verse" (C. *que*, J. *ketsu* 闕), return the reader to the type of prosodic symmetry characteristic of *shi*. These lines invoke both Buddhism and, allusively, Confucianism while maintaining the playful, chatty quality of the first section. Together, the unbalanced hemistiches mirror two different aspects of the poet's psychological experience: the quiescent joy of meditation punctuated by the exciting tumult of a storm.

Nogawa theorizes that Chūgan was first introduced to *ci* by the expatriate monk Ryūzan Tokken 龍山德見 (1284-1358), a fellow Zen prelate who was of a different Rinzai lineage but had also studied under Gulin Qingmao.²⁸⁸ For a Japanese monk, Ryūzan was unusually well established in the Chinese Chan community and was highly familiar with the literary culture of the major southern monasteries. He had already been living in China for 24 years when Chūgan met him at the renowned monastery Yunyansi 雲巖寺 in 1325, and he would not return to Japan until 1349. Ryūzan has to his credit one surviving *ci* that is also set to the tune "Lily Magnolias." Its heavy use of allusion and strongly religious character make it considerably harder to interpret than Chūgan's; these features also suggest that the work was probably not Ryūzan's first attempt at *ci*:

²⁸⁸ Ryūzan belonged to the Huanlong 黃龍 lineage while Chūgan belonged to the Yangqi 楊岐, both of which arose in the Northern Song. Gulin seems not to have been particularly concerned with establishing consistent transmission through a single dharma lineage, reportedly accepting disciples principally on the basis of their skill in composing *gatha* 偈頌. See Nogawa, "Gozan ni-ryūgakusō no tenshi seisaku," p. 99.

送有知客參黃龍 吳人
Seeing off Visitors' Officer You, Who is Going to Join the Huanlong School
 (He's a Man of Wu)²⁸⁹

蘇州有	We've got 'em in Suzhou
常州有	We've got 'em in Changzhou:
擬議思量成過咎	Exercising the mind with deliberation is to fall into error!
收驢脚	So withdraw your donkey legs,
展佛手	And extend your Buddha hand:
道火何曾燒著口	Even if you speak fire, how could your mouth be burned?
處處秋林落葉黃	Everywhere autumn woods are decked with fallen leaves of gold;
處處春風鬧花柳	Everywhere vernal breezes rouse the blossoms and willows.
還它有眼定古今	If you defer to those of true insight to determine past and present,
六六元來八十九	Then six by six turns out to be eighty-nine after all. ²⁹⁰

To take the last line first, Nogawa supposes it to be a deliberately nonsensical proposition that repudiates conventional truth. The characters 六六 are construed as six times six on the basis of what would appear to be a syntactically homologous line from one of Gulin's poems: 九九依然八十一, which plainly seems to say "nine by nine is, as usual, eighty-one." To assume strangeness or incomprehensibility to be an intended feature of the text and not an effect of current critical limitations is always a risky business, but Nogawa's hypothesis is compelling so long as Ryūzan's line is understood to work grammatically like Gulin's; this, in turn, seems a reasonable supposition as it is unlikely that a copyist's error could result in 三十六

²⁸⁹ The title is difficult to understand. A *zhike* 知客 (J. *shika*) was one of the six administrative officers at a temple (六頭首) and was charged with receiving visitors. You 有 appears to be his family name, and Nogawa believes the smaller characters 吳人 below the title identify Mr. You as someone from the Wu area; the opening lines of the poem seem to pun humorously on his name and place of birth.

²⁹⁰ *GBSS* v. 3, p. 278.

appearing as 八十九. We might offer further support for the interpretation by noting that if Ryūzan's purpose was indeed to posit an arithmetic identity that is logically absurd, he has chosen his numbers well: eighty-nine is prime while thirty-six contains more divisors than any integer smaller than it, making it a so-called "anti-prime" or highly composite number.²⁹¹

The humorous opening lines allude to a popular New Year's custom in the Suzhou region, the historical center of Wu 吳 culture: on New Year's eve, children would shout *mai chidai* 賣癡獸, "dunces for sale!," as if to invite buyers from other regions to help reduce the surplus of idiots traditionally held to reside in Wu.²⁹² How exactly this connects conceptually with what follows is difficult to determine; it is conceivable that the idiots are, in this case, those who *do* exercise their minds in ratiocination and thereby fall into error. Nogawa notes that the practice of likening one's hands to those of the Buddha and one's legs to those of a donkey is traceable to methods of Chan instruction used by the patriarch of the Huanglong school,

²⁹¹ There remains, of course, the possibility that there is in fact a legitimate arithmetic connection between 六六 and 八十九 (whatever these character combinations are taken to mean), or that the purpose of the line is to present a kind of notational puzzle for the reader to interpret and solve. If 六六 and 八十九 are allowed to be read as shorthand for two *different* mathematical operations, then such connections may be found, e.g. if 八十九 is taken not as eighty-nine but as the product of 8, 10, and 9, and 六六 is allowed to mean 6! (six factorial), then we would have the legitimate relation $6 \cdot 5 \cdot 4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2 \cdot 1 = 8 \cdot 10 \cdot 9 = 720$. Modern games of this sort are quite common; "perfect 3s," for instance, presents expressions such as $3 \ 3 \ 3 = 7$ and asks readers to create true equations using only these numbers and basic operations, e.g. $(3 \div 3) + 3! = 7$.

²⁹² Nogawa, "Gozan ni-ryūgakusō no tenshi seisaku," pp. 99-100. The custom was evidently widely recorded; among the collected works of the poet Fan Chengda, whose possible influence upon Chūgan was discussed in Chapter Four, is a *ci* entitled "Selling Dunces" 賣癡獸.

Huinan 慧南 (1002-69).²⁹³ Like the final line of the second verse, the final line of the first verse also makes a seemingly paradoxical claim, and the overall lesson of the poem seems to be that rational, discursive thought (擬議思量) cannot lead to enlightenment.

As these examples suggest, *ci* may employ syntactic rhythms and patterns of metrical variation seen in older forms such as *fu* and *yuefu*, and they may also include whole sections that are metrically regular and prosodically akin to *shi*.²⁹⁴ Points of overlap between the *ci* and *shi* were in fact numerous and longstanding, and the gradual expansion of the *ci*'s thematic range during the Song Dynasty eventually gave rise to critical discussions of what its proper purview ought to be vis-à-vis the older and more prestigious *shi*.²⁹⁵ Elite literati like Su Shi brought the refined sensibilities of *shi* to the *ci*, while the leading *ci* poet of the Northern Song, Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1084-1151) criticized Su's efforts as yielding "nothing but *shi* with irregular lines."²⁹⁶ By the time Chūgan arrived in China, it had long been the case that poets known primarily for composing *shi* would also compose *ci*, even if few would have wished this fact to bear too heavily upon their own literary

²⁹³ Ibid, p. 102.

²⁹⁴ Note that in the second section of Chūgan's *ci*, the characters at the end of the second and fourth lines, 風 and 窮, behave precisely as they would be expected to in *shi*: both are level-tone words, and although they are only slant rhymes in Modern Mandarin, they rhyme completely in both Early Mandarin (*fuŋ*, *k^hjuŋ*) and Middle Chinese (*fjywnŋ*, *khiwnŋ*).

²⁹⁵ On connections between early *ci* and *shi*, see Shuen-fu Lin, "The Formation of a Distinct Generic Identity for *Tz'u*," in Pauline Yu, ed., *Voices of the Song Lyric in China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994), pp. 14-17.

²⁹⁶ Xinda Lian, "Long Song Lyrics (*Manci*)," in Zong-qi Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry*, p. 263.

legacy.²⁹⁷ While it is difficult to ascertain whether or not the study of *ci* played a meaningful role in encouraging Chūgan to be more experimental in his *shi*, it seems fitting that after trying his hand at *ci* composition he would later venture to compose *shi* in the unorthodox hexasyllabic meter. *Ci* made frequent use of six-character lines, and hexasyllabic *shi* often used language that was comparatively colloquial and prosaic. Wei Shaosheng has surmised that the development of *ci* was in fact influenced by hexasyllabic *shi*;²⁹⁸ given that *shi* employing that particular meter, while always rare, did become more prevalent after the Tang, it also seems possible that the burgeoning popularity of *ci* among serious poets like Su Shi fostered increased composition of six-syllable *shi*.

The four hexasyllabic *shi* included in *Tōkai ichiōshū* are informal vignettes of Chūgan's travels around a rural estate in eastern Japan; they are descriptive but not austere, using ordinary language and avoiding the imagistic density often associated with Song and Yuan-era descriptive poetry. There is no indication as to why he chose this as the occasion to experiment with a novel syllabic meter, but insofar as he was clearly comfortable treating journeys and landscapes in verse, it is possible that he felt a new venture in form was more likely to be successful if the topic was a familiar one.

²⁹⁷ See Ronald C. Egan, "The Problem of the Repute of *Tz'u* During the Northern Sung," in Yu, ed., *Voices of the Song Lyric*, pp. 191-225.

²⁹⁸ Wei Shaosheng, *Liuyan shiti yanjiu* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2010), pp. 183-203.

利根山行春
Late Spring in the Mountains of Tone²⁹⁹

陰涯或有殘雪	平平仄仄平仄
春溪半帶流澌	平平仄仄平平
風日乍寒乍暖	平仄仄平仄仄
杖屨且留且之	仄仄仄平仄平

Shady crags – some with remnant snow;
Springtime streams – half full with ice from the melt.
Wind and sunshine – it’s cold one minute and warm the next;
Outfitted for the hike, I tarry and go, tarry and go.

白雲溶溶洩洩	仄平平平仄仄
流水潺潺浹浹	平仄平平平平
乘興行春未盡	平仄仄平仄仄
胡為倦鳥先還	平平仄平平平

White clouds undulating softly,
Streams babbling gently.³⁰⁰
I shall take advantage of the fact that spring is not yet out:
How could I tire? How could I turn back?!³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ “Late spring” renders 行春, which in this usage literally means “departing spring.” Another more specialized meaning that may also be germane is “springtime inspection tour,” which describes the custom of officials conducting inspections on foot or horseback, once winter had ended, of places under their jurisdiction. It was not uncommon for Zen monks to be tasked with administrative duties on temple properties or on estates held by private patrons; given that Tone was an Ōtomo family shōen, it is possible that such an inspection tour was the context for the travels described in the poems.

³⁰⁰ The imagery and heavy use of reduplicative binomes is strongly reminiscent of a couplet by the Chan monk Zhengjue 正覺 (1091-1157), which is part of the sixth verse of his series “Two Hundred and Five Gathas” 偈頌二百零五:

溶溶洩洩山上雲	Undulating softly – the clouds over the mountain;
潺潺浹浹山下水	Babbling gently – the stream at its base.

³⁰¹ In the third line, if 行春 is taken to mean “springtime inspection tour,” the line would mean “I shall take advantage of the fact that my tour has not yet finished.”

枯藤屈曲蟲盤	平平仄仄平平
怪石爛熳獸蹲	仄仄平平仄平
拒暘雪積巖罅	仄平仄仄平仄
搖綠春回燒痕	平仄平平平平

Dried out wisteria lie coiled like worms;
 Strange rocks of variegated colors resemble crouching beasts.
 They block the sun's rays, allowing snow to accumulate in the crevices;
 Amidst swaying green, spring returns to reclaim ground once charred by wildfire.³⁰²

山深風俗淳朴	平仄平平平仄
民樂無懷之時	平仄平平平平
溪梅別有風韻	平平仄仄平仄
野質村姿更奇	仄仄平平仄平

Deep in the mountains, customs are simple;
 People are at ease as in the time of Wuhuai.³⁰³
 Plum blossoms in the valley possess elegance unmatched,
 Yet the rusticity of the fields and beauty of the villages is more charming still.

Dating these verses is difficult, but the reference to Tone in the title suggests they were likely composed after 1337. Between 1337 and 1359, Chūgan spent part of nearly every year at one of two Ōtomo family properties in eastern Japan: Wisteria Valley (Fujigayatsu 藤谷) and Tone Estate 利根庄, the latter a mountainous demesne in what is today Gunma Prefecture. Tone Estate was the site for the

³⁰² The language here recalls the line “Sitting down, I see the spring return to ground once charred by fire” 坐看春回入燒痕, from a quatrain by the monk Huihui 慧暉 (1097-1183). Huihui's poem is included in the well known series Nineteen Verses Eulogizing the Old 頌古十九首, compiled by the Chan master Faquan 法全 (1114-69). The series contains both *shi* and *ci* and its title may be a nod to the Nineteen Old Poems 古詩十九首, a foundational group of early pentasyllabic *shi*.

³⁰³ Wuhuaishi 無懷氏 (J. Mukaiishi) is a mythical ruler who is sometimes placed in the generation just after Fuxi 伏羲 and the creator goddess Nuwa 女媧 or, as in *Shiji*, in the much later generation just preceding the Yellow Emperor. His era is invoked here to figure peace and popular contentment.

temple Kichijōji 吉祥寺, built with Ōtomo support in 1339 and headed by Chūgan, and an attached Zen retreat called Shishian 止止庵.³⁰⁴ These places offered privacy and respite during the difficult times following his rejection of the Sōtō sect and adoption of Dongyang Dehui's line of Rinzai Zen. The four verses are listed in the vulgate edition of *Tōkai ichiōshū* as hexasyllabic quatrains 六言絕句. Though somewhat more common than hexasyllabic regulated verses, quatrains in this meter are still extremely rare. Of the approximately 48,000 *shi* in the *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, only about 150 are hexasyllabic, and the most prolific user of the form, Zhang Yue 張說 (667-730), is credited with just eight verses.³⁰⁵ Among poets of wider repute, Wang Wei is known to have composed seven hexasyllabic *shi*, Li Bai three, and Bai Juyi two.³⁰⁶ No study of which I am aware examines the prevalence of the form in Japan, though because its popularity was rising in China throughout the Song Dynasty, it is likely that many Japanese poets were aware of it. Among Gozan writers, the principal users seem to have been Chūgan and his illustrious younger compatriot Gidō Shūshin (1325-88), who left no less than eleven in his massive collection *Kūgeshū* 空華集.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ The name of both the temple and the retreat allude to the aphorism “Good fortune lies in stopping when it is time to stop” 吉祥止止, which is derived from *Zhuangzi* 2.1: “Observe the void – the empty room emits a pure light. Good fortune lies in stopping when it is time to stop” 瞻彼闕者、虛室生白、吉祥止止 (tr. Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, p. 33). Given Chūgan's abiding interest in moral balance and his view that Go-Daigo had disastrously overplayed his hand in the Kenmu Restoration, the names are well chosen.

³⁰⁵ *Liuyan shiti yanjiu*, p. 95.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *GBZS* v. 2, pp. 472-73.

There is disagreement among scholars as to whether poems of this meter can in fact qualify as recent-style poetry at all, with some opting to limit that designation to penta- and heptasyllabic poems.³⁰⁸ In terms of tonal prosody, hexasyllabic *shi* may sometimes contain lines of which four, five, or in some cases all six words are homotonous, and the so-called “adherence rule” (粘法) of recent-style verse, which helps tie couplets together, is not followed rigorously.³⁰⁹ Nonetheless, hexasyllabic *shi* did generally incorporate at least some of the patterns of tonal alteration characteristic of recent-style verse: strong tonal contrast between words within a single line and between lines of a single couplet was more common than the lack thereof, and hexasyllabic *shi* almost always upheld the essentially inviolable recent-style rule that even lines must rhyme and that rhyming words must be in level tone.³¹⁰ The similarities were evidently enough to motivate at least some premodern poets to include six-syllable *shi* in their collections of quatrains: Hong Mai’s encyclopedic *Wanshou Tangren jueju* 萬首唐人絕句 (late 12th c.), for instance, includes 48 such verses – still a modest number given the immense size of the work.³¹¹ In any event, the boundary between ancient-style and recent-style poetry was historically rather fluid, with some poems characterized as quatrains or

³⁰⁸ Ren Bantang, *Tang sheng shi* (Shanghai: Xinhua Shudian, 1982).

³⁰⁹ The rule stipulates that the first two words of the *last* line of one couplet should be of the same tone as the first two words of the *first* line of the succeeding couplet.

³¹⁰ An overview of the conventions of recent-style poetry may be found in Zong-Qi Cai, “Recent-Style *Shi* Poetry: Pentasyllabic Regulated Verse” in Zong-Qi Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008), pp. 161-77.

³¹¹ Wei, *Liuyan shiti yanjiu*, p. 150. Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202), a minister and scholar during the Southern Song, initially compiled a collection of 5,000 Tang quatrains and presented it to Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗; this was subsequently expanded into a work of 100 volumes containing 100 quatrains each, about three quarters of which are heptasyllabic.

regulated verses based seemingly on the fact that they somehow “sounded” like recent-style poems, despite containing a great many tonal violations.³¹²

In terms of their grammatical structure, hexasyllabic lines do not scan in the patterns typical of penta- and heptasyllabic lines, producing syntactic rhythms that are not only strikingly different but more variable as well.³¹³ In *ci* poetry associated with the school of “Heroic Abandon” (C. *haofang*, J. *gōhō* 豪放), the six-character meter was sometimes used to produce dramatic and highly imagistic lines that relied on pure parataxis and avoided final predication:

名月別枝驚鵲

The full moon, slanting branches, a startled magpie.

Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140-1207)

孤村落日殘霞
輕烟老樹寒鴉

A lonely village, the setting sun, lingering hues of pink.
Light haze, an aged tree, a crow in the cold.

Bai Renfu 白仁甫 (1226-1306)

While the conventions of classical Chinese grammar do not admit of rigidly defined parts of speech – a given word may function as a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb depending on context and syntactic position – these lines effectively contain

³¹² Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 432.

³¹³ The differences in syntactic rhythm between *shi* of different meters are not necessarily apparent if reading is done according to Japanese *kundoku* conventions (any more than such differences are necessarily apparent in English translation). As noted in the introduction, the working assumption of this study is that Chūgan was attentive to the way his poems sounded in Chinese. Eminent *kanshi* poets were usually well trained in matters of tonal prosody even though most did not speak Chinese, and the assumption that Chinese prosody was significant for a poet such as Chūgan, who by all accounts did possess notable proficiency in speaking, seems especially warranted.

no verbs save those used as participles (e.g. the *setting* sun 落日), and they use no prepositions, particles, or other devices to specify grammatical relations. The lines scan in the 2+2+2 semantic rhythm, producing a distinctive staccato style. Chūgan's verses work differently, making frequent use of grammatical particles and featuring lines that constitute complete or nearly complete sentences. Interestingly, this more prosaic style was not only common in *ci* and *qu*, which is unsurprising given the vernacular origins of those forms, but was also a mainstay of hexasyllabic *shi*, a fact Wei Shaosheng believes may reflect the influence of *fu*.³¹⁴ Examples reflecting the prosaic style by Li Bai, Wang Jian, Wang Wei, and many other eminent poets appear plentiful when considered as a fraction of the total number of surviving hexasyllabic *shi*, and the verses of "Late Spring in the Mountains of Tone" bear many similarities to archetypes such as the following:

題舒州山谷寺石牛洞

Written on Shiniu Grotto at Shangu Temple in Shu Prefecture³¹⁵

水泠泠而北出	The water is clear and cool and flows north;
山靡靡而旁圍	The hills are scattered about and encircle the area.
欲窮源而不得	I wanted to find the source but was unable to get it;
竟悵望以空歸	In the end, my hopes went unrealized and I returned empty handed. ³¹⁶

Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-86)

³¹⁴ Wei, *Liuyan shiti yanjiu*, p.168.

³¹⁵ Shangu Temple is more commonly known as Sanzu Temple 三祖寺, owing to the fact that the Third Chan Patriarch Sengcan 僧璨 (510-606) once resided there. Shu Prefecture is located in the modern Anhui Province.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

田園樂七首

Seven Poems on the Joys of Fields and Gardens, no. 6

桃紅復含宿雨	Peach blossoms flush with color still hold last night's rain;
柳綠更帶春烟	Willows lush and green remain mantled in springtime mists.
花落家僮未掃	Petals lie strewn about and the houseboy has yet to sweep them away;
鶯啼山客猶眠	An oriole calls out, but the mountain traveler stays fast asleep. ³¹⁷

Wang Wei 王維 (699-759)

Of the two, Wang Wei's poem is the more descriptive and the less insistently subject-centered, though in each line words such as "still" (復/更/猶) and "has yet to" (未) underscore the poet's personal judgment about the scene. Such was also the case throughout the first verse of "Late Spring in the Mountains of Tone," which relied heavily upon similar adverbial expressions (或, 半, 乍, 且), and in the second verse, whose second couplet featured two interrogative locutions (胡為, 烏).³¹⁸ The particles and conjunctions in Wang Anshi's verse (而, 以) impart to it a strongly prosaic quality; this point can be easily appreciated by imagining the second line as one rephrased in the pentasyllabic meter without 而: where 山靡靡而旁圍 yields "the hills are scattered about and encircle the area," the truncated 山靡靡旁圍 might best be rendered "hills, scattered about, encircle the area." Together with the clearly metaphorical second couplet – the words "source" 源 and "empty" 空 are redolent of Buddho-Daoist thought – the poem as a whole could not be much further from the

³¹⁷ Ibid., p. 74

³¹⁸ Through a process of paranomastic borrowing, the character 烏 is used for its sound *wu* (Early Mandarin *u*, Middle Chinese *ʔuə*) to represent the word "how."

austere, naturalistic mode glimpsed in the lines of Heroic Abandon *ci* by Xin Qiji and Bai Renfu.

The pentasyllabic paraphrase of Wang Anshi's line adumbrates a feature common not only to Chūgan's hexasyllabic poems but to hexasyllabic *shi* more generally, namely how readily a great many lines may be recast into hypothetical five or seven-syllable variants with no substantive change in meaning. For instance, the first couplet of Chūgan's third verse, "Dried out wisteria lie coiled like worms; Strange rocks of variegated colors resemble crouching beasts," might be rephrased in the seven-syllable meter as 枯藤屈曲若蟲盤、怪石爛爛似獸蹲, which simply makes explicit the relations of likeness implied in the original. Both lines now scan in the very familiar 2+2+3 pattern; better still, since 若 ("as if") and 似 ("to resemble") are entering-tone words, both lines now align perfectly with recent-style tonal requirements. Similarly, the opening lines of the second verse, "White clouds undulating softly; Streams babbling gently," might be shortened from 白雲溶溶洩洩、流水潺潺浹浹 to 白雲溶洩洩、流水潺浹浹; although the resulting tonal distribution does not accord entirely with recent-style conventions, the lines scan easily and their meaning remains unchanged.

This exercise may seem little more than a speculative indulgence, but it suggests the relative ease with which a particular poetic image might be realized in multiple syllabic meters. It also illustrates a compositional strategy that is in fact known to have informed the early development of pentasyllabic *shi* poetry, namely the expansion of four-syllable lines into five-syllable equivalents via the use of particles or binomes (for instance, using *daolu* 道路 for "road" instead of just *dao* 道

or *lu* 路 alone).³¹⁹ Historically, of course, heptasyllabic verse was rare before the Tang Dynasty and thus played no formative role in the development of hexasyllabic *shi* as such. But it seems quite possible that pentasyllabic poetry might have, and in any event by the time Chūgan was active, the seven-syllable line had been dominant in both China and Japan for many centuries, making more or less continuous interplay between all of these forms likely. It is therefore unsurprising that in addition to the apparent stylistic influence of earlier hexasyllabic *shi*, a stock of phrases and poetic images culled from heptasyllabic poems, such as those by the monks Zhengjue and Huihui, seem also to have influenced the verses of “Late Spring in the Mountains of Tone.”

Conclusion: *Ci* and Sinitic Poetry in Medieval Japan

The central aim of this chapter has been to highlight works in *Tōkai ichiōshū* whose formal properties were unusual for Sinitic verse in Japan and to consider them in reference to relevant poetic developments in China. Chūgan was not the only figure in the Gozan movement to understand these developments, but he was evidently more willing than most of his contemporaries to experiment with them in his own verse, or at least more willing to preserve the results for posterity. Yet in light of the extraordinary popularity and artistic vibrancy the *ci* had achieved in China by the end of the twelfth century, its near total absence from Gozan collections is among the most curious facets of Gozan literary culture, and indeed of

³¹⁹ See Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2006), p.74.

medieval *kanshibun* more generally. The problem, it should be noted, was not a lack of basic knowledge: the earliest and most influential anthology of *ci*, Zhao Congzuo's tenth-century *Huajian ji* 花間集, is long known to have circulated among Gozan literati,³²⁰ and several other famous works that discuss or contain examples of *ci*, such as *Shiren yuxie* 詩人玉屑 and Juefan Huihong's *Linjian lu* 林間錄, were printed in Japan via woodblock and published by major Gozan monasteries.³²¹ Given the general esteem accorded to Chinese *belle lettres*, it is thus rather surprising that notable Japanese practitioners of *ci* did not appear until the eighteenth century, nearly a millennium after the form's emergence in China.³²²

Multiple explanations might be adduced for the apparent lack of interest in *ci* among premodern Japanese poets, the most parsimonious of which is simply that the new form was, to them, largely superfluous: the *shi* remained artistically sufficient for their purposes, and few Japanese poets were inclined to study a new form whose mastery demanded knowledge of dozens of tune patterns that determined meter, rhyme scheme, and tonal prosody. Buttressing this position is the fact that *kanshi* poets, by all indications, were never beset by a sense of

³²⁰ See Kanda Kiichirō, *Nihon ni okeru Chūgoku bungaku*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1965), pp. 56-7.

³²¹ Such editions are known today as “Gozan editions” (*Gozan-ban* 五山版). See Kanda, *Nihon ni okeru Chūgoku bungaku*, p. 53.

³²² See Chen Zhuhui 陳竺慧, “Nomura Kōen no ‘gashi’ to Shindai no shidan: sono eibutsushi o tegakari ni” 野村篁園の「雅詞」と清代の詞壇: その詠物詞を手がかりに, *Waseda Daigaku daigakuin bungaku kenkyūka kiyō* 62 (Mar. 2017), pp. 203-215. As Chen notes, even in the Edo period, *ci* remained a minor art form of little interest to most *kanshi* poets. The first Japanese treatise of *ci* poetics, *Tenshi zufu* 填詞図譜, was compiled by Tanomura Chikuden 田能村竹田 (1777-1835) and published in 1807.

belatedness or Bloomian anxiety vis-à-vis the great Chinese poets of the past, nor did they feel a need to escape from the weight of an oppressive *shi* tradition. Meaningful participation in that tradition was accomplishment enough, and the fact that Li Bai or Du Fu remained unsurpassable did not drive Japanese *shi* poets away from the medium or towards conspicuous stylistic novelty.³²³

An additional and perhaps even more salient factor that might have motivated the arm's-length approach Gozan monks took to *ci* – read and reprint them, but don't write your own – was the form's historical association with women and the entertainment quarters.³²⁴ Indeed, *Huajian ji* is dominated by the ostensibly feminine themes of love and abandonment,³²⁵ and to the extent that this collection was the major source of information about *ci* in early medieval Japan, Gozan poets might have apprehended the form as an inherently feminized one. Moreover, while most male literati expressed varying degrees of disapproval for excessive indulgence in *ci*, Gozan monks might have taken special notice of the fact that it was a Chan, monk Fayun Faxiu 法雲法秀 (1027-1090), who offered the great poet Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) a famous admonition against dabbling in the form at all:

³²³ Lest this be thought simply a reflection of a general conservatism among Japanese literati, it is worth noting that in the realm of vernacular poetry, attempts to break free from certain traditional poetic strictures were being made at this time by *waka* poets of the Kyōgyoku 京極 school, and the development of serious linked verse (*renga* 連歌) would soon fundamentally transform Japanese poetry and poetic theory.

³²⁴ Samei, “*Ci* Poetry: Short Song Lyrics (*Xiaoling*),” p. 245; Egan, “The Problem of the Repute of *Tz'u*,” pp. 194-207 and *passim*.

³²⁵ Samei, p. 251.

... One day, the dharma master said to Luzhi (Huang Tingjian), “There’s no harm in writing as many *shi* as you like, but you should stop composing erotic songs and little *ci*.” Luzhi laughed, “They are just words in the air. I’m not killing anyone, and I’m not stealing. Surely I won’t be sentenced to one of the evil destinies for writing these songs.” The dharma master replied, “If you use wicked words to arouse lust in men’s hearts, causing them to ignore propriety and violate the law, then your words will be a source of crime and wrong, and I’m afraid you will not merely be punished with evil destinies.” Luzhi nodded and subsequently stopped writing songs.³²⁶

As it happened, Huang Tingjian did not stop writing *ci*, though in his own account of this exchange, the Chan master is even more explicit in his warning, opining that rebirth in the Hell of Slit Tongues awaits those who use offensive language.³²⁷ Notably, the master is decidedly unconcerned with *shi*, and it is easy to imagine Zen monks in Japan harboring a similar prejudice against the *ci* even as they pursued *shi* composition assiduously. Had the *ci* been as artistically prominent in the eighth century as it was by the twelfth, it might easily have found quick popularity among Nara and Heian aristocrats, who at the time were the tastemakers in the small world of Japanese *kanshibun* and much enamored with palace-style *shi*, whose thematic similarities to *ci* were substantial.³²⁸ And insofar as motifs such as clandestine romances, abandonment, and unrequited love emerge with extraordinary prominence in vernacular Japanese prose and poetry of the Heian era, it is quite conceivable that male aristocrats of the time might have been more

³²⁶ Quoted in Egan, “The Problem of the Repute of *Tz’u*,” pp. 202, with minor orthographic changes.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ See Kang-i Sun Chang, *The Evolution of Chinese T’zu Poetry: From Late T’ang to Northern Sung* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), p. 18, cited in Lin, “The Formation of a Distinct Generic Identity for *T’zu*,” p. 16.

amenable to stereotypical *ci* themes than their monastic countrymen were to be four centuries later.

Conclusion

Gozan Literature in Retrospect

1. *Kanshibun* and the *Kokugaku* 国学 Legacy

In modern formulations of Japanese literature, the Gozan corpus occupies a unique position, one that is unquestionably central to the history of Japanese *kanshibun* 漢詩文 – poetry and prose composed in the trans-national, trans-linguistic medium of “literary Sinitic” – and yet, for that very reason, peripheral to the canon as a whole. To a significant degree, this state of affairs is the result of the monolingual and phonocentric imperatives that began to inform the construction of a “native” Japanese literary canon in the eighteenth century. Scholars associated with the *kokugaku* 国学 or “native studies” movement sought to recover the indigenous linguistic and cultural sensibilities of early Japan. Their efforts were motivated not simply by philological curiosity, though many were indeed gifted philologists, but by an abiding desire to develop an ideological alternative to the Neo-Confucianism ascendant in Tokugawa-era intellectual life. Though colored by an anti-Chinese and anti-Buddhist outlook that Gozan literati would undoubtedly have found bizarre and distasteful, the movement was extremely productive: *kokugaku* scholars undertook rigorous hermeneutical examinations of Japanese texts that had not previously received such attention, the most culturally consequential of which would turn out to be the little known mythohistorical

chronicle *Kojiki* 古事記 (*A Record of Ancient Matters*, 712). Equally significant to the field of literary studies were their reconsiderations of famous vernacular works of poetry and prose fiction, such as *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (*Tales of Ise*, 9th c.), *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (*The Tale of Genji*, c. 1010), *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (*Collection of Myriad Leaves*, 759), and *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (*Collection of Japanese Poems, Ancient and Modern*, 905). These investigations laid the groundwork for substantial advances in linguistics and lexicography.³²⁹ And a century before English literature had earned a place in the British academy alongside the Greek and Latin classics, the efforts of *kokugaku* scholars helped establish the formal study of vernacular Japanese literature as an academic enterprise on par with the study of the Chinese classics, which until then had been the only “classics” recognized as such in Japan.³³⁰

By the late nineteenth century, the nativist impetus behind *kokugaku* had been augmented by a burgeoning nationalism as Japan sought to define its place in

³²⁹ See Susan Burns, *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2003), passim. This is not to say that *kokugaku* was exclusively, or even primarily, a philological or “textual” movement, only that its ideological goals necessitated the interpretation of texts, and that this imperative led to various critical advances.

³³⁰ Terminologically speaking, words often translated as “classics” (*tenseki* 典籍, *tenpun* 典墳), referred most often to Chinese texts. Similarly, words such as *saigaku* 才学, “learning,” referred not just to knowledge in general but to knowledge of the Chinese classics in particular. For example, the poet and lover Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 (825-80), whose adventures are recounted in *Ise monogatari*, is described in the history *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三代實錄 as “rather bereft of *saigaku* but excellent at composing *waka*” 略無才學善作倭歌. While the precise meaning of this line is the subject of ongoing debate, the traditional view, first put forth by *kokugaku* scholars, has been that the compilers of *Sandai jitsuroku* were appraising Narihira in relative terms as being unremarkable in Chinese learning but distinguished in *waka* composition. Meiji academics from the late 1880s onward would begin to freely apply the term *koten* 古典, “classics,” to vernacular Japanese works.

the Westphalian world order. European phonocentrism jibed nicely with the longstanding anti-logographic bent of *kokugaku*, which had from its inception praised Japanese *kana* (and Siddham script) while disparaging Chinese characters.³³¹ And European notions of an essential, organic relation between a people, their spoken language, and the literature wrought from that language were easy to reconcile with the ethnocentric claims of *kokugaku* scholars, who were often at pains to emphasize the alterity of all things Chinese. When Kada no Azumamaro 荷田春満 (1669-1736), a founding figure in the *kokugaku* movement, referred to *Man'yōshū* as “the essence of our national temperament” (国風の純粹), he was positing the persistence in Japanese literature of what Hippolyte Taine (1828-93) would later identify as the “innate and hereditary dispositions” that belong to a particular people and are manifest in their literature.³³² Taine was one of several Western theorists whose work would be enthusiastically received by Meiji-era scholars in Japan, both because it answered contemporary pedagogical and ideological needs and because it dovetailed nicely with long established nativist convictions. In a similar vein, the reverence shown to folk songs by the poet and philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) aligned neatly in both its motives

³³¹ See Regan E. Murphy, “Esoteric Buddhist Theories of Language in early Kokugaku: The *Sōshaku* of the *Man'yō daishōki*,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 36.1 (2009), pp. 65-91.

³³² Quoted in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 513; H. Van Laun, trans., Hippolyte Taine, *History of English Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), p. 10. These dispositions comprise what Taine famously terms “la race,” the meaning of which, as explained by historian Nathalie Richards, is not so much a “déterminisme biologique” but a “forme d’esprit collective.” See Richards, *Hippolyte Taine: Histoire, Psychologie, Littérature* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013), p. 145.

and its critical nomenclature with *kokugaku* scholars' veneration of similar media in Japan. Herder believed that language was a foundational, even sacred, constituent of a people's identity, and his notion of the *sprachgeist* (spirit of language) found an easy home among Meiji-era theorists long accustomed to the revived and repurposed notion of *kotodama* 言霊 (the spirit of words), which had become a central concept in late Tokugawa *kokugaku* discourse.

The eventual result of these interactions was the formation of a new academic and ideological venture known as *kokubungaku* 国文学 or "national literature," which by the 1890s had become the dominant critical paradigm governing the study of premodern Japanese texts. Though heir to much of the intellectual legacy of *kokugaku*, *kokubungaku* assimilated European ideas about literary form and history that took the nation-state as the preeminent expression of cultural and political development. This imparted to the discipline certain ideological objectives and formal interests not shared by its predecessor. Whereas *kokugaku* had placed particular emphasis on *waka* poetry, *kokubungaku* emphasized Japanese prose fiction, which shared many attributes with the novelistic writing that had won such esteem in the West. And whereas *kokugaku* had sought to uncover an authentic, prelapsarian Yamato idiom unsullied by continental influences, *kokubungaku* endeavored to present Japanese literature as the uniquely identifiable product of a transhistorical culture more-or-less coterminous with the traditional geopolitical boundaries of the Japanese imperium. In principle, *kokubungaku* thus had the potential to be quite capacious, as any written artifact of archipelagan origin might conceivably be construed as falling

within the boundaries of “Japanese” literature. Yet while its canon was indeed larger than that of *kokugaku*, mainly because it did not exclude Tokugawa-period works, *kokubungaku* too struggled to accommodate Japanese *kanshibun* and continued to privilege vernacular genres as the quintessence of Japanese literary expression.

For the leading lights of Meiji *kokubungaku*, *kanshibun* was, it would seem, still too “Chinese.” As early as 1890, the pioneering *kokubungaku* scholar Haga Yaichi 芳賀矢一 (1867-1927) had defined a circumlocutory “grace” (*yūbi* 優美) as the essence of Japanese literary aesthetics, in contrast to the “strength” (*yūsō* 勇壯) of Chinese literature and the “precision” (*seichi* 精緻) of Western literature.³³³

Nearly twenty years later, Haga would argue strongly for the incorporation of *kanshibun* into academic treatments of Japan’s national literature,³³⁴ but by then the dye had largely been cast. In part, *kanshibun* literature was excluded by aesthetic fiat: its language, to state the obvious, aspired to artistic effects different from those of *waka* or *monogatari*; to most specialists of national literature, even when it was good, it was not really Japanese. Further pushing *kanshibun* to the margins was *kokubungaku*’s formal focus on the novel. Although *kanbun* fiction was not

³³³ Haga Yaichi and Tachibana Sensaburō, eds., *Kokubungaku tokuhon*, in Haga Yaichi senshū henshūinkai, ed., *Haga Yaichi senshū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kokugakuin, 1983), pp. 192-93. A similar view was propounded by Masaoka Shiki, though in explicit relation to languages: he held Western languages to be precise (緻密) and given to meticulous description (叙事詳細), Chinese to be bold and magnificent (雄渾雄大), and Japanese to be graceful and fine (優美纖柔). See Matsui Toshihiko, “Masaoka Shiki shū,” in *Nihon kindai bungaku taikei*, vol. 16 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1972), p. 132.

³³⁴ Matthew Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums: Narushima Ryūhoku and Sinitic Literary Traditions in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2016), pp. 6-7.

unknown, it was vastly outweighed in quantity and quality by vernacular fiction. In light of both the formidable linguistic challenges and longstanding scholastic prejudices against fiction itself, it is probably safe to say that the small minority of Japanese Buddhist or Confucian literati who possessed sufficient technical competence in literary Sinitic to compose fictional stories marked by complex characterization and psychological depth had little interest in actually doing so. While outstanding Japanese *kanshi* poets did occasionally produce works sufficient to meet with approbation in China – Zekkai Chūshin and Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725) are famous examples – there is, to my knowledge, no work of literary Sinitic (or vernacular Chinese) fiction by a Japanese author that is comparable in quality to notable works of fiction by Chinese authors, or to notable vernacular Japanese *monogatari*.³³⁵

The thorny issue of originality posed yet another problem: premodern Japanese historical and philosophical writing was as deeply steeped in Buddhism and Confucianism as European history and philosophy was in Platonism and Abrahamic theology. But while republican Rome and the ancient Greek poleis bulked large in the European imagination, they were long extinct and bore essentially no relation to the polities controlling Italy and the Peloponnesus in early

³³⁵ As noted in Chapter Four, Zekkai exchanged poems with the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang. For Hakuseki, matters unfolded more serendipitously. A collection of his poems seems to have been brought to the Ryūkyū Kingdom and then subsequently to China, where a Hanlin academy scholar, Zheng Renyue 鄭任鑰, appraised it highly and wrote a laudatory preface. See Burton Watson, *Japanese Literature in Chinese* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1976), v. 2, pp. 13-14 and Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *Hōchō fushi: Rongo zakki, Arai Hakuseki itsuji* (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1971), pp. 81-193.

modern times. By contrast, Chinese dynasties, including even the Mongol Yuan (1280-1368) and Manchu Qing (1644-1912), purported to uphold ideals of royal paramountcy and cultural excellence that, in principle, extended as far back as the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 B.C.). Qing rulers partook extensively of Chinese high culture, adopting Beijing as their capital city and retaining the basic bureaucratic machinery of their vanquished Ming predecessors. It was an approach that contrasts markedly with that of the roughly contemporaneous Ottoman rulers of Greece, and it helped foster the sense that “China,” as a political and cultural entity, was characterized by an extraordinary degree of continuity, certainly far higher than that which characterized the various early modern European states whose lands were once home to the Mediterranean civilizations of antiquity. This sense of an “eternal” China, long noted in European writings on Asia, was also very much a part of the premodern and early-modern Japanese imagination. In this connection, it is illustrative to contrast the relationship that early-modern European powers enjoyed with the fruits of Greco-Roman culture with Japan’s relationship to the Chinese cultural legacy. Whereas the former was largely curatorial and rarely if ever marked by chauvinism on the part of Europeans, the latter was complicated from the outset by 6th and 7th-century Japanese rulers’ desire for political parity with the Sui and Tang courts. Even the open hostility displayed twelve centuries later by jingoistic *kokugaku* partisans found a sympathetic domestic audience in part because Qing China remained a geopolitical competitor to Japan.

Finally, the historical legacy of Gozan writers must be understood in reference not only to Japanese attitudes towards China and the Chinese language,

but also to the ebbing fortunes of institutional Buddhism during the Tokugawa era (1600-1868). Formally speaking, Buddhism was an “established” religion, at least insofar as the Tokugawa shogunate, determined to extirpate Christianity in the wake of the Shimabara Rebellion (1637-38), legislated the use of temples as centers of compulsory religious registration. On the intellectual front, however, the faith was increasingly on the defensive, as Neo-Confucian and *kokugaku* polemicists – ideologically aligned in this particular instance – attacked both its tenets and its institutional structure.³³⁶ As early as 1666, the daimyo of Okayama domain, Ikeda Mitsumasa, ordered that 598 Buddhist temples be abolished and that religious registration at temples (*tera-uke*) be discontinued in favor of registration at Shinto shrines (*shinshoku-uke*).³³⁷ Similar policies were carried out by other daimyo, sometimes under the aegis of promoting Shinto, and always with an eye towards strengthening domainal finances by returning temple lands to the tax rolls. By the end of the Tokugawa period, acts of violence against temples had occurred in multiple domains, and further despoliation of Buddhist property followed in the years after the shogunate’s dissolution.³³⁸ The Meiji reformers, for their part, did not actually seek the wholesale eradication of Buddhism – the infamous slogan *haibutsu kishaku* 癸佛毀釋, “Abolish the Buddha and Destroy Shakyamuni,” was not official policy. Yet they left little doubt that Buddhism was, at best, to be seen as an unessential element in the cultural life of the new nation, and at worst as an

³³⁶ See Martin Collcutt, “Buddhism: The Threat of Eradication,” in Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rozman, eds., *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 143-167.

³³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 146.

³³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 146.

unwelcome adulterant to Shinto, from which it was to be rigorously separated.³³⁹

This cleaving of Buddhism from Shinto, *shinbutsu bunri* 神佛分離, was official policy, and it brought to an end almost a millennium of institutional religious syncretism.³⁴⁰ More than this, it helped instantiate in the religious realm the same pursuit of purity and national essence that so often propelled *kokubungaku* discourse.

As a result of these processes, the Gozan corpus was multiply alienated from the modern understanding of Japanese literature: its language (or at least its orthography – more on this below) was Chinese, its dominant genres were *shi* poetry and non-fictional expository prose, and its eclectic subject matter, aimed mostly at elite audiences, was held to reflect values that were fundamentally alien, and possibly even anathema, to the indigenous Japanese Volksgeist. Fully integrating the works of leading Gozan literati into the Japanese canon was thus ideologically fraught in a way that, for example, the integration into the English canon of William of Occam’s theological and scientific writings, which are in Latin, was not. The broad exclusion of Gozan literature and other literary Sinitic writings meant that an immense volume of *shi* poetry, along with an imposing body of scholarship in areas such as statutory law and political philosophy, was assigned a more marginal position than it had in fact occupied historically.³⁴¹ Even more

³³⁹ Ibid, pp. 150-51.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 151.

³⁴¹ The centrality of *kanbun* texts to premodern Japanese education is detailed extensively in Haruo Shirane, “Curriculum and Competing Canons,” in Shirane and Tomiko Yoda, eds., *Inventing the Classics*, (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 220-249. In some cases, *kanbun* texts constituted the entirety of a curriculum and occupied the bulk of extracurricular reading. The Ashikaga gakkō, an influential institution of collegiate education for samurai, maintained a curriculum comprised

perniciously, by fostering the impression that premodern and early-modern Japan produced highly original vernacular poets and prose writers but not jurists and philosophers, the monolingual character of the *kokubungaku* canon abetted essentialist and anti-rationalist claims according to which Japan, unlike China and the West, was a culture of affective immediacy, not discursive reason.

While such claims proved remarkably durable, continuing even today to hold secure purchase upon the nationalist imagination, it would be misleading to imply that ideological factors alone explain the relegation of *kanshibun* to the periphery of the Japanese canon; they do not. No less germane is the simple fact that achieving mastery of literary Sinitic was hard, comparatively speaking, for Japanese writers. Even with extensive formal training, it is no mean feat to write artfully in a medium developed to transcribe a language drastically different from that which one speaks. And even if we assume, as is common in much current scholarship on Japanese *kanshibun*, that educated writers had so thoroughly internalized the *kundoku* 訓読 methods through which literary Sinitic script was realized in Japanese as to make its use “second nature,” it must still be remembered that as a *productive* medium, literary Sinitic is not an alternative orthography for the Japanese language in its entirety. Rather it is an alternative orthography for *kundokubun* 訓読文 itself, which is but one very particular register of Japanese. It is of course theoretically possible

of both Buddhist and secular Chinese texts, with the latter assuming an increasingly dominant position in the 15th century. As Shirane observes, 76 percent of the university’s book titles were works of Chinese literature, philosophy, and divination; 16 percent were Buddhist texts; and 7 percent were Japanese texts that, more often than not, were written wholly or partly in *kanbun*, e.g. *Wakan rōeishū*, *Azuma kagami*, and *Goseibai shikimoku*.

that a Japanese writer's inner monologue might be in something quite close to *kundokubun*, in which case he could easily put his thoughts to paper using literary Sinitic; what he could not do with literary Sinitic, however, is transcribe the spoken language of any era of Japanese history.³⁴²

The relevance of this fact to the skill of *kanshibun* writers or the literary value of their works is difficult to assess disinterestedly, as any such assessment will appear to imply either support for, or resistance to, the *kokubungaku* valorization of vernacular language. Traditionally, of course, the most common assumption among critics has been that although Japanese *kanshi* poets might possess estimable technical proficiency, their compositions will generally lack the artistic panache and “authenticity” of vernacular Japanese poems. Once again, the problem with such a conclusion is not that it is demonstrably false, but that its premise only invites further questions. If one prizes spontaneity above craft or believes that an “authentic” poetic voice necessarily employs the poet's spoken language, then *kanshi* will fall short by definition. Yet in the context of premodern Japanese literature, one may well ask why the line should be drawn at *kanshi*: a *waka* poet of the nineteenth century might choose to compose in the language of the ninth, which is grammatically near to modern Japanese in many respects but is nonetheless a very long way from vernacular. Such compositions, moreover, may involve as much mentation and craft as the typical *kanshi*, particularly for *waka* poets who are partial to the complex regime of wordplays and rhetorical devices developed over the course of the Heian period (794-1185). It is also worth remembering that debates

³⁴² These and related points are developed more fully in the appended essay “*Kanshibun, Kundoku, and the Japanese Language.*”

regarding the artistic merit of verses composed spontaneously as opposed to those carefully worked and reworked over longer periods of time had been commonplace for centuries in both Chinese *shi* and Japanese *waka* criticism.³⁴³ And while some post-Heian *waka* poets did aspire to a more direct, unembellished style, the fact remains that a great many premodern Japanese poets granted a secure place in the *kokugaku* and *kokubungaku* canons were masters of craft, sticklers for convention, and everywhere reliant upon an immense body of acquired textual knowledge. Hence, if unusual artistic quality or “authenticity” are the paramount criteria for admission into the canon, it becomes difficult to justify consigning *kanshi* to the margins unless one is prepared to do the same to many major *waka* poets of the conservative Nijō school, for example.

Such an approach to classical literature would of course result in a dramatically smaller and artistically impoverished canon: Nijō *waka* are properly canonical not because they appear brilliant when deracinated from their historical context (they usually do not), but because they were valued highly by generations of poets schooled to appreciate the particular qualities of traditional courtly verse. The fact that such poetry generally fails to satisfy modern aesthetic sensibilities ought not be material to its canonicity, especially since the canon is not primarily envisioned by modern readers as prescriptive and “writerly” in nature. Gozan *kanshi* too is worthy of study and appreciation because it constitutes the very best of

³⁴³ See Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese Middle Ages: Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 107-129; Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, *Murmured Conversations: A Treatise on Poetry and Buddhism by the Poet-Monk Shinkei* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2008), pp. 36-39; 53-55; 68-60.

an esteemed genre that was practiced continuously in Japan for over ten centuries; if it is not a genre that answers adequately to modern needs, the contemporary poet may freely abandon it, but for the critic to do the same would be to let the aesthetic preferences of the last hundred years guide the critical evaluation of the last thousand.

Such considerations notwithstanding, works of literature that seemingly transcend the aesthetic and ideological values that governed their production are rightly deserving of special attention. These are works that later readers may approach on their own terms, and which are aesthetically rewarding *even when read with minimal knowledge of the semiotic system in which their various symbols and motifs originally encoded meaning*. Insofar as the poetry and prose of Gozan writers rarely satisfies this criterion, the modern student of Gozan literature must still face the question of why this imposing corpus is worthy of intensive study. One answer would return us immediately to the issue of canon formation: in the *longue durée* of Japanese literary history, Gozan literature appears of minor importance not because of its low intrinsic quality, but because it was excluded from early-modern and modern canons *despite* possessing impressive thematic breadth and conceptual richness. It sometimes happens in the history of literature that texts can be extremely important without being particularly “good” (early Meiji experiments in approximating the style of European fiction might be adduced as one such example); in the best Gozan *kanshi* we find the converse, works that were quite good by the standards of the *shi* genre – in the best cases, even earning the esteem of critics in China – but which were not enormously important to the subsequent trajectory of

Japanese letters.³⁴⁴ Even this, however, probably understates the case for Gozan literature, for if it appears today to have been little more than a cul-de-sac in Japanese literary history, it bears emphasizing that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, leading Gozan literati were in fact very important figures who helped shape the elite culture of that era, and their writings yield insights into medieval Japanese poetics, hermeneutics, and political thought unavailable anywhere else. The principal subject of the foregoing study, Chūgan Engetsu, illustrates this with particular clarity. Even if one errs on the side of traditional critics and remains skeptical of the artistic merit of a written medium so far removed from the spoken vernacular, in the matter of originality, at least, there can be no doubt that Chūgan was among the most original thinkers in all of Japanese history.

Some Gozan writings, moreover, did influence developments beyond the medieval period. For instance, in contradistinction to literati from hereditary scholar families, Gozan literati eagerly embraced Song Neo-Confucianism and were the first to produce annotated Japanese editions of such foundational works as Zhu

³⁴⁴ Here the reader might ask whether the “standards of the *shi* genre,” which, historically speaking, derived entirely from Chinese models, constitute an appropriate criterion for evaluating Japanese *shi*. I believe they do, and that most Gozan writers would have said the same (the idiosyncratic Banri Shūku (1428-1502) might be one exception). It was not until the Tokugawa period that Japanese *kanshi* poets, in order to better treat the quotidian aspects of Edo society, began to widely embrace rhetoric that deviated markedly from Chinese poetic norms. On Banri’s poetry, see David Pollack, *Zen Poems of the Five Mountains* (AAR Studies in Religion no. 37, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1985), p. 146. For a treatment of Qing-Dynasty Chinese views of “Japanized” (和習) Tokugawa-era *kanshi*, see Guo Ying 郭颖, *Hanshi yu hexi: cong “Dongying shixuan” dao Riben de shige zijue* 汉诗与和息从《东瀛诗选》到日本的诗歌自觉 (Xiamen: Xiamen Daxue chubanshe, 2013), pp. 202-24 and *passim*.

Xi's Comments on the Four Books in Sections and Sentences (*Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注).³⁴⁵ Gozan scholarship would appear in the work of philosophers Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619), Hayashi Razan (1583-1657), and Yamazaki Ansai (1619-82), and is therefore immediately relevant to the study of Neo-Confucian thought during the early Tokugawa era. Finally, it should not be forgotten that few Japanese literary movements, whether modern or premodern, have ranged so freely across so vast an episteme: Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and correlative cosmology form the intellectual matrix of the Gozan writer, whose principal genres included expository essays (*ron* 論), religious commentaries (*sho* 疏), sermons or disquisitions (*setsu* 説), inscriptions (*mei* 銘), poetic rhapsodies (*fu* 賦), “classical” Chinese poetry (*shi* 詩), devotional verses (*ge* 偈), and, in the case of Chūgan, royal memorials (*hyō* 表). It is a corpus that generously rewards critical inquiry, making unique contributions to the study of intertextuality and philosophical syncretism within a specifically premodern, transnational context.

³⁴⁵ *Shisho kuntei* 四書訓点, by Giyō Hōshū 岐陽方秀 (1361-1424), is the seminal work in this area, but several other notable Gozan scholars lectured on Neo-Confucian topics, a fact demonstrated by the many surviving *shōmotsu* (alt. *shōmono* 抄物), which record the content of these lectures. See Yamagishi Tokuhei, ed., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, vol. 89, “Gozan bungaku shū, Edo kanshi shū” (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966), pp. 14-21, and Aishin Imaeda, “The Zen Sects,” in Kazuo Kasahara, ed.; Paul McCarthy and Gaynor Sekimori, trans., *A History of Japanese Religion* (Tokyo: Kosei, 2002), pp. 227-54.

Appendix

Kanshibun, Kundoku, and the Japanese Language

The analysis of *kanbun* 漢文 prose and *kanshi* 漢詩 poetry leads quickly to conceptual and terminological difficulties surrounding language and orthography. Since the 1990s, these difficulties have motivated several notable changes in the nomenclature used by Anglophone scholars of East Asian literatures: where it was once common to see *kanbun* rendered simply as “Chinese” and *kanshi* as “poetry in Chinese,” phraseologies that do not use the word “Chinese,” such as “Literary Sinitic,” “Sino-Japanese,” “Sinitic poetry,” and the like are now prevalent.³⁴⁶ Even the once ubiquitous term “Chinese character” has been replaced in recent scholarship by the neologism “Sinograph,” and for reasons that will be addressed below, the Japanese terms *kanbun* and *kanshi* are themselves often avoided. These changes reflect greater recognition of two fundamental points. The first is that the trans-regional reach and trans-cultural impact of “Sinitic” writing makes it useful to develop a nomenclature that does not call to mind a cultural or geopolitical construct as specific as phraseologies involving “China” or “Chinese” might. Here the skeptical

³⁴⁶ The phrase “literary Sinitic” seems to have been popularized first by Victor H. Mair; see “Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 53.3 (Aug. 1994), pp. 707-751. “Sino-Japanese” is the preferred translation of *kanbun* for John Timothy Wixted; see “*Kanbun*, Histories of Japanese Literature, and Japanologists,” in *Sino-Japanese Studies* 10.2 (April 1998), pp. 23-31. “Sinitic poetry” is used by Matthew Fraleigh and many other current scholars to render *kanshi*; see Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums: Narushima Ryūhoku and Sinitic Literary Traditions in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2016), p. 20.

reader will no doubt opine that the shift is merely cosmetic, since the modern English term China, along with the Japanese *Shina*, Persian *Cīnī*, Sanskrit *Cīna*, and Latin *Sina* (from which is derived the root Sino-) are all thought to have arisen from the same source, namely the ancient state of Qin 秦 or, conceivably, the state of Jing 荆.³⁴⁷ Nonetheless, it is difficult to deny that “Sinograph” and similar neologisms do not suggest modern-day linguistic or politico-cultural referents so readily. Their relative opacity in this regard makes them well suited to application in more specialized academic contexts, where the mild inconvenience of new vocabulary may be preferable to the connotative baggage entailed by more common terms.

The second fundamental point is that care must be taken to avoid conflating orthography with language. As a mode of inscription, *kanbun* was so thoroughly adapted to the Japanese language via the development of *kundoku* 訓読 that Japanese writers of *kanbun* prose and *kanshi* poetry need never have conceived of themselves as writing in a *language* that was anything other than “Japanese,” no matter how closely the texts they produced happened ultimately to conform to orthodox Chinese usage. And the “domesticity” of *kanbun* emerges with even greater clarity outside the realm of high literature. To countless premodern government officials, merchants, and literate warriors, *kanbun*, broadly conceived,

³⁴⁷ Endymion P. Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2000), p. 753. See also Joshua A. Fogel, “New Thoughts on an Old Controversy: *Shina* as a Toponym for China,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 29 (Aug. 2012). Su Zhongxiang 苏仲湘 posited the name of the state of Jing as the origin of the term Zhina 支那, which was first used by Indian monks and, centuries later, gained currency in early-modern Japan. See “Lun ‘Zhina’ yici de qiyuan yu Jing de lishi he wenhua” 论支那一词的起源与荆的历史和文化, *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究 4 (April 1979), pp. 34-48, cited in Fogel, p. 13.

was simply the most natural medium of record for a wide variety of ordinary, workaday purposes. Whether the documents they produced used Sinographs in accordance with the semantic and syntactic norms of languages such as Old Chinese (c. 600 B.C. – 0 A.D.), Middle Chinese (c. 0 – 800 A.D.), or the early and middle stages of Mandarin (800 – 1600 A.D.), or whether they would have been intelligible at all to a denizen of the continent, was entirely immaterial to their utility in Japan.

In this connection, it is important to remember that the word “*kanbun*” is a superordinate term that can be applied to an extremely wide spectrum of texts. In modern Japanese nomenclature, one end of this spectrum is occupied by what are sometimes called *jun kanbun* 純漢文 or “pure *kanbun*” texts; these are entirely logographic and adhere closely to conventions of usage typical of what is called *wenyanwen* 文言文 in modern China and “literary Chinese” or “classical Chinese” in the West. This is the kind of writing that predominates throughout such works as *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (c. 720), *Honchō monzui* 本朝文粹 (mid 11th c.), and most Japanese anthologies of *shi* 詩 poetry. The rest of the spectrum is occupied by texts that use Chinese characters in ways that depart in varying degrees from the norms of literary Chinese. Such texts are sometimes assigned to categories set explicitly against *jun kanbun*, such as *washū kanbun* 和習漢文 (“Japanized *kanbun*”) or *hentai kanbun* 変体漢文 (“deviant *kanbun*”). Alternatively, the writing style may be described in reference to a textual category of which it is characteristic, e.g. *kirokutai kanbun* 記録体漢文 (“document-style *kanbun*”), which from a purely linguistic perspective is synonymous with “Japanized” or “deviant” *kanbun* and is

simply an alternative term one might encounter in the field of Japanese diplomatics (*komonjogaku* 古文書学). Finally, perhaps because Japan's oldest extant mythohistorical work, *Kojiki* 古事記 (710), has long received special veneration, its script is often described as “*kanbun* that bends the rules” (*hensoku no kanbun* 変則の漢文), a more respectful phraseology than “*hentai kanbun*.”

Works employing any type of *kanbun* may of course be enunciated or “read out” in literary Japanese via the application of *kundoku* rules. Significantly for present purposes, although *kundoku* is often understood primarily as a method of translational reading, it could also serve as a set of instructions — a “program” of sorts — for *composing* in *kanbun* without any direct knowledge of the Chinese language as such. More interesting still is the fact that the *kanbun* text resulting from such a procedure need not be “deviant” or “Japanized” at all. To reiterate a point raised earlier, a Japanese author with profound expertise in the conventions of *kundoku* yet entirely ignorant of any Chinese dialect could, in theory, write a text in *kanbun* that is indistinguishable from literary Chinese texts written by Chinese authors. The power of *kundoku* is thus two-fold: it enables essentially any literary Chinese text to be read as if it were encoding meaning in Japanese, albeit in a rather specialized register of Japanese (more on this below), and it enables an author speaking or thinking *in that register* to write “Japanese” using Sinographs in a manner fully consistent with Chinese linguistic norms.

It is for this reason that David Lurie has cautioned against invoking the terms “Japanese” and “Chinese” to distinguish between, say, the language of *Kojiki* and that of *Nihon shoki*, both of which are written entirely in Sinographs. For while it is true

that the latter adheres more closely to literary Chinese norms and can be read smoothly *as* Chinese, both texts are equally realizable through *kundoku* and thus equally readable as Japanese.³⁴⁸ Even a Chinese work such as the eclectic *Huainanzi* 淮南子, an important source for the compilers of *Nihon shoki*, could be apprehended as a *Japanese* text by a reader highly skilled in *kundoku* yet somehow unaware of *Huainanzi*'s continental provenance.

Kundoku is indeed an astonishing achievement in linguistic technology, utterly without parallel in Western languages and more extensively developed than similar systems known to have existed in Korea and Vietnam.³⁴⁹ Moreover, in specifically linguistic (as opposed to cultural or "literary") terms, the existence of *kundoku* undeniably undermines the common comparison of *kanbun* in Japan to Latin in Europe: as Lurie has observed, while an early modern English writer might be extremely proficient in Latin, there was no systematic set of structural and lexical equivalences allowing him to mentally process written Latin *as* English. Yet for the purposes of this study, and for the study of Japanese *kanshibun* more generally, I believe caution is in order when opting for nomenclatures that, in attempting to redress the simplistic suppositions of earlier scholarship, eschew reference to

³⁴⁸ Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2011), p. 180.

³⁴⁹ Methods analogous to *kundoku* are known to have emerged on the Korean Peninsula sometime prior to their emergence in Japan, and it is likely that émigré scholars from Paekche played an instrumental role in developing and popularizing these methods on the archipelago. Japanese *kundoku* is unique not because it was the earliest such system, but because it has been in continuous attested use for well over a millennium and its complex array of rules and conventions are well documented. Even today it remains the principal vehicle through which students in modern Japan begin learning literary Chinese.

“Chinese” (or “*kanbun*”) altogether. My purpose is not to reject attractive neologistic alternatives such as “literary Sinitic,” which happens to be an excellent paraphrase of “*jun kanbun*” and which I use frequently throughout this study. However, in the remainder of this essay I will attempt to highlight some potential shortcomings of the new terminology and to argue briefly for the ongoing utility of the ever capacious, superordinate term “*kanbun*” in Western-language Japanological scholarship. I will also offer a brief defense, within specific parameters, of the old practice of describing Japanese works of literary Sinitic as “Chinese.”

2. Between Style and Language: *Kundokubun* and Literary Sinitic

“People [in early Japan] often did not really know what language they were writing in, Chinese or Japanese; and we are often in no better position to make a judgment on the question when we study some of the documents they produced.”

R. A. Miller,

1967³⁵⁰

“From the vantage point of script, both Bai Juyi’s and Michizane’s poems can be characterized as “Chinese,” but read aloud by [Middle Captain] Tadanobu, they are just as equally “Japanese.”

Brian Steininger,

2017³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ *The Japanese Language* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 131.

³⁵¹ *Chinese Literary Forms in Heian Japan: Poetics and Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), p. 8.

The court scholar and statesman Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903) was among the finest *shi* poets of Heian Japan. The degree to which his written works may be viewed as linguistically Japanese, or at least *not* as exclusively Chinese, depends upon the degree to which logographic script can be understood to represent the Japanese language. Since *kundoku* clearly lies at the crux of the matter, it will prove useful to expand upon the points broached above and investigate its properties more closely. To begin, it is important to recognize that the *kundoku* register is noticeably different from that of vernacular Japanese prose and poetry of any time period, admitting many phraseologies found nowhere else in the Japanese language.³⁵² The *kundoku* register even includes some phraseologies that, strictly speaking, are ungrammatical by the standards of vernacular Japanese.³⁵³ While a

³⁵² It might be objected that our current understanding of the precise *kundoku* rules taught in different time periods or at particular temples or academies is too incomplete to posit such a wholesale disjunction between *kundoku* and vernacular Japanese. It is true that the *kundoku* methods widely taught today generally represent conventions current in the nineteenth century, and that the techniques of a great many premodern schools of *kundoku* have been lost to history. Some surely hewed nearer to vernacular diction than others, but as will be shown below, any true *kundoku* system – one that permits both the reading and composition of logographic locutions – will run up against challenges that make departures from vernacular Japanese usage essentially inevitable. At bottom, this is because vernacular Japanese cannot be fully encoded logographically, at least so long as the only logographs at your disposal are “Sinographs.”

³⁵³ An example is the enunciation of the possessive particle *no*, used to gloss the character 之, in sentences such as 仕王之人, “a person who serves the king.” This may be read via *kundoku* as “*Ō ni tsukauru no hito*,” despite the fact that the particle *no* is not used in vernacular Japanese to subordinate nouns to verbs: such relative clauses are formed by directly modifying the subordinate noun with the verb in a specific conjugation called the *rentaikei* 連体形. Here, the Japanese verb *tsukau* (*tsukafu*), which is the *kundoku* gloss for 仕, is already in its *rentaikei* form *tsukauru* (*tsukafuru*), making *no* semantically superfluous and indeed grammatically “wrong.” Though the violation does not compromise intelligibility, the effect is perhaps akin to saying in English something along the lines of “a person who does serves the king.”

full accounting of these features would necessitate too lengthy a digression, close examination of one example should help clarify both the power and the limitations of *kundoku* as an interlingual medium. As a method of translational reading, *kundoku* is easily applied to a logographic locution such as this: 王為臣之所尊, “the king is esteemed by his minister.” While different *kundoku* traditions can be expected to produce different renderings, two broad approaches may be identified, namely that of *metaphrase* and that of *paraphrase*. The former seeks to preserve a sense of alterity and to maintain maximum linguistic fidelity to the source text; these priorities lead to a Japanese rendition such as *Ō, shin no tōtomu tokoro to nasu* 王、臣の尊む所と為す. The latter, by contrast, might result in the somewhat more liberal *Ō wa shin ni tōtomaru* 王は臣に尊まる. This sentence uses everyday Japanese grammar and betrays no connection to logographic writing or “Chinese,” save possibly for the terms “king” and “minister,” which do appear frequently in the Chinese classics. Both of these approaches are in fact taught in modern *kanbun* textbooks as equally valid, standard ways of handling the literary Chinese “passive” construction X 為 Y (之) 所 V, which means “X is V-ed by Y.”³⁵⁴ Yet it is apparent how dramatically the two renditions differ. The metaphrase attempts to account for as many lexical elements in the original sentence as possible and, consequently, it

³⁵⁴ Technically, this structure should probably not be labeled “passive,” as it simply means “X is *that which* Y V-s.” The word 所 constitutes what historical linguist Edwin Pulleyblank terms a “relative pronoun;” its function is to transform the verb or verb phrase it precedes into a noun phrase, e.g. 買 = “to buy;” 所買 = “that which one buys” or “that which is bought.” For pedagogical purposes, however, this construction is often presented in both English-language and Japanese-language textbooks of literary Chinese as one of several grammatical patterns expressing the passive voice.

departs from vernacular Japanese usage, particularly in its characteristic (though not ungrammatical) use of *tokoro* to render the special pronoun 所.³⁵⁵ Like a smudge on a photograph or a microphone boom in a movie scene, the presence of lexical elements redolent of the *kundoku* register is a linguistic punctum reminding the reader that the otherwise Japanese locution “*tōtomu tokoro to nasu*” is stylistically connected to the world of *kanbun*.

By contrast, the second reading constitutes a vernacular Japanese paraphrase, complete with postpositional particles (*wa, ni*) not present anywhere in the original, along with a Japanese verb conjugation that expresses the passive voice. Chinese, of course, is an uninflected language and has no verb conjugations whatsoever. Considered together, these two renderings of 王為臣之所尊 reveal the difficulty in accepting the view that *kundoku* can ever be quite as “invisible” as some scholars have implied: either one must opt for a metaphrase that, in Friedrich Schleiermacher’s terminology, will generate at least a mild sense of “alienation” in the target language, or one must opt for a paraphrase and thereby “naturalize” the

³⁵⁵ Like 所 in Early Chinese, the basic sense of the Japanese word *tokoro* is “place” or “location.” It admits a wide range of extended uses, including designating a “point in time” or a “part” of something (e.g. *omoshirokarikeru tokoro* = “the part I found delightful”). By the medieval period, uses deriving from the literary Sinitic 所 construction are seen in works of Japanese prose that seek specifically to replicate the formal, authoritative register of literary Sinitic. Hence, in the first chapter of *Heike monogatari*, we have: *minkan no ureuru tokoro o shirazarishikaba* = “because (rulers like Zhao Gao of Qin and Wang Mang of Han) were ignorant of the people’s distress...” The use of *tokoro* to make relative clauses such as *tsukuru tokoro no tera*, “the temples that were built” stems directly from *kundoku* practices; something very near to this was almost certainly how the literary Sinitic phrase 所造之寺, which appears in Book 25 of *Nihon shoki* (Taika 1.8.8), was enunciated. Such relative clauses are found occasionally in vernacular prose, e.g. *korosu tokoro no tori*, “the birds that he killed” (*Tsurezuregusa* 162), but are far less common than alternatives.

source text.³⁵⁶ The first approach makes *kundoku* visible by using Japanese words in distinctive or unusual ways, while in the latter, *kundoku* becomes visible during its application to the source text because of the interpolation of words or grammatical elements not present there.

Significantly, this same slippage is also seen when *kundoku* is used *productively* as a means to facilitate logographic writing. Suppose that a Japanese writer seeks to represent the Japanese sentence *muko wa shūto ni homeraretari* (“the groom was praised by his father-in-law”) entirely logographically, which is to say in “good” *kanbun* that upholds literary Chinese norms. How might he do it? There are many options, and this happens to be quite an easy sentence to handle, but any representation our writer chooses will inevitably end up eliding some elements of Japanese grammar. Sinographs are, after all, closed morphemes that cannot be declined or conjugated or otherwise altered, and it is impossible to modify them with other characters to effectively indicate all Japanese inflectional endings. Even the simplest Japanese sentence will typically involve choices of tense and modality that must either be left unexpressed in *kanbun* or must be approximated imperfectly by adverbial auxiliaries. Many of the most common Japanese inflecting suffixes, such as *ki*, *ri*, *tsu*, *nu*, *rashi*, *meri*, and numerous others have no conventional *kanbun* equivalents, meaning that the vast bulk of Japanese

³⁵⁶ On the “invisibility” of *kundoku*, see Semizu Yukino, “Invisible Translation: Reading Chinese Texts in Ancient Japan,” in *Translating Others* pp. 283-295.

locutions that are not already in the *kundoku* register cannot be fully encoded in *kanbun* at all.³⁵⁷

Additionally, there are also a wide range of Japanese locutions that *can* be encoded in *kanbun*, but only with the inclusion of lexical elements that are either awkward or nonsensical in literary Sinitic. For instance, let us imagine a locution such as “Lord Tokihira has now boarded the boat.” A sentence with this meaning could conceivably appear in a Japanese historical document as *Tokihira-dono wa fune ni norashime tamai owannu* and be written in *kanbun* as 時平殿令乗給船畢.

Many elements here are unusual in literary Sinitic, and the characters 令～給, which may appear in a variety of positions and render the Japanese honorific construction *shime tamau*, make no sense whatsoever.³⁵⁸ And we could go further still: suppose

³⁵⁷ This problem may of course be solved if one departs from literary Sinitic and allows desemanticized characters to be mixed in, as with the so-called *senmyō-gaki* 宣命書き or “proclamation style” of writing used during the Nara and early Heian periods. In this style, the locution *muko wa shūto ni homeraretari* might be written 婿者舅仁褒良礼多利, where the desemanticized characters are made graphically smaller – a common technique in *senmyō-gaki* – and function like *okurigana* in modern Japanese. Indeed, this approach demonstrates that an essentially modern mix of graphically distinct logographic and phonographic script, ordered according to Japanese syntax, was hit upon quite early.

³⁵⁸ In medieval and early-modern documents, some attested examples of “deviant” *kanbun* come strikingly close to vernacular Chinese, e.g. 見了返給 *mi-owarite kaeshi tamau*, “(he) returned it after looking it over.” Here, 給 is still construed as the honorific suffix *tamau*. Yet the sentence can be read in modern Mandarin, with 給 pronounced as *gei* (a reading not used in classical Chinese), and interpreted to mean something like “(he) looked at it and gave it back.” The example is taken from Karikome Hitoshi 苺米一志, *Nihon-shi o manabu tame no komonjo, kokiroku kundokuhō* 日本史を学ぶための古文書・古記録訓読法 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2016), p. 73. Vocabulary items drawn from vernacular Chinese, such as *jinmo* 甚麼 (“what”) and *shashi* 這些 (“this/these”), do appear in Zen writings, and it seems possible that certain idiosyncratic usages observed in “deviant” *kanbun* were adapted from or inspired by vernacular Chinese.

the text were to say *Tokihira-dono wa e umajikarikeru onna o motometamaikemu*, “It would seem Lord Tokihira pursued a lady who was impossible to win.” Such a sentence may of course be translated into *kanbun*, whether “pure” or “deviant,” but it cannot be *written* in *kanbun*.

Returning, finally, to the somewhat easier challenge posed initially, our hypothetical writer might very well choose to represent the sentence *muko wa shūto ni homerarekeri* as 婿為舅之所褒, which happens to share the exact same structure as the earlier example 王為臣之所尊, for which we advanced two possible *kundoku* renderings. Note the lack of any explicit marker indicating the past tense. This is in fact entirely normal: locutions in literary Sinitic typically rely upon context and the reader’s common sense for the determination of tense, which means that any other representation our writer chooses, e.g. 婿褒於舅, 婿被舅褒, etc. will be unable to provide a metaphor the Japanese inflectional ending *keri*.³⁵⁹

The point of the foregoing is simply to say that if we wish to avoid a nomenclature that overemphasizes the alterity of *kanbun*, or that implies too facile a dichotomy between what is native and what is foreign, we must also recognize that as a medium of inscription, *kanbun* by itself can only ever represent a specific register of the Japanese language, and that the accuracy of such a representation will often come at the expense of fidelity to literary Sinitic norms. So what is the

³⁵⁹ The verbal prefix 被, which may indicate the passive voice in modern Mandarin but is generally not used as such in orthodox literary Sinitic, became a commonplace indicator of the Japanese passive conjugation *~ru/raru* in “Japanized” *kanbun* writings of the medieval and early-modern periods. Since this conjugation may also be used as an honorific, 被 was used in this sense as well, with the common honorific verb *nasaru* frequently seen as 被成 or 被為 in historical documents.

current-day scholar to do? My provisional answer is twofold. First, retain the term *kanbun* and its relatives (*kanshi*, *kanshibun*), while recognizing that like innumerable other terms to capture the attention of cultural and literary theorists (“nation,” “sign,” “text,” etc.), these denote something more complex than has traditionally been appreciated. Usefully, *kanbun* and *kanshi* may still be understood to encode meaning in Japanese – bearing in mind the litany of limitations outlined above – yet the terms themselves make no claim on whether an individual author of a purely logographic work thought of himself as writing in Japanese or in Chinese. The phrases “Literary Sinitic” and “Sinitic poetry” are of course useful in this way too, but they are suited *exclusively* to logographic works intelligible throughout the Sinosphere and are quite inapplicable to writings in “deviant” *kanbun*.

Admittedly, the Japanese terms come at a price. The central downside to a term such as *kanbun* is that it participates inexorably in the famous dyadic relation of “*wa-kan*” 和漢, most frequently and overtly by being paired with the term *wabun* 和文, “Japanese prose.” In modern usage, the *wa-kan* dyad tends to imply an ontology in which cultural and linguistic phenomena from any era are yoked to an ostensibly transhistorical Japanese national identity: *wa* is “Japanese” in all the ways salient to the modern project of uniting language, culture, and ethnicity under the rubric of nationhood.³⁶⁰ It need hardly be said that such a view encourages *kan(bun)* to be conceived of as something culturally and linguistically non-Japanese, a narrow and anachronistic conception that is belied partly by the interlingual

³⁶⁰ A detailed analysis of these issues is given in Jason Webb, “Beyond *Wa-Kan*: Narrating *Kanshi*, Reception, and Sociolects of Poetry,” in *Proceedings for the Association of Japanese Literary Studies* 5 (Summer, 2004), pp. 245-259.

properties of *kundoku* and undermined completely by the enormous welter of historical documents that, while written in *kanbun*, are *only* understandable as Japanese linguistic artifacts. Still, it is important that a deconstruction of the metaphysics informing modern nationhood not lead to the equally misguided notion that premodern Japanese literati possessed no sense of “Japan” as a singular geopolitical entity or of “Japanese” as a meaningful cultural and linguistic category. Evidence of a consciousness that, absent a convenient adjectival form of the word “country,” can most reasonably be called “national” is identifiable among archipelagan elites for as far back as the textual record extends.³⁶¹ This in itself does not constitute a reason to approve of the terms *kanbun* and *kanshi*; it is noted only to reject the position that mere participation in modern discourses concerning national identity and national literature must fatally compromise them.

Some scholars have avoided the term *kanbun* because its literal meaning, “Han (Chinese) writing,” seems to efface the interlingual character of logographic writing in Japan. This is a fair point, though some of the proposed alternatives, such

³⁶¹ It is interesting to note in this connection that the term “international” is widely used in current scholarship to describe intercourse between premodern East Asian polities. Its Westphalian ring notwithstanding, such a description is not altogether inaccurate, for an imagined community in the sense of Benedict Anderson need not be held to exist among a general populace for something quite similar to be present among the small cadre of individuals involved in domestic administration, diplomacy, and overseas trade. With respect to language in particular, a keen awareness of the linguistic differences between what was spoken on the archipelago and what could be set down in orthodox literary Sinitic is possibly suggested by Ō no Yasumaro’s famous preface to *Kojiki*. I believe that it is, though Lurie contests this interpretation. For his arguments, see *Realms of Literacy*, pp. 247-50 and the extensive discussion of Yasumaro’s preface in Lurie, “The Origins of Writing in Early Japan: From the 1st to the 8th Century C.E.” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 2001), pp. 300-10.

as describing prose or poetry as “Chinese-style,”³⁶² seem to present their own problems. Here, the phrase “Chinese style” is really no less vague than the “*kan*” in *kanbun* or *kanshi*, and the highly elastic term “style” begs additional questions. For instance, practical *kanbun* documents, though set exclusively in Sinographs, may use mostly Japanese vocabulary and show little to no awareness of Chinese literary style. Conversely, some Japanese prose works of the Meiji period were composed in a register very near to *kundokubun*, complete with vocabulary drawn directly from the Chinese classics.³⁶³ Are both “Chinese style,” albeit in different ways? Or does only one (or perhaps neither) qualify as such? Again, my purpose is not to reject out of hand the phrase “Chinese style,” which is useful inasmuch as it clearly indicates *some* connection to the Chinese literary tradition without placing the work it describes exclusively within that tradition. This point leads to the thorniest question of all, namely whether works by Japanese authors that do comport with literary Chinese norms can *ever* be legitimately termed “Chinese.”

The question has practical as well as theoretical implications. In the summer of 2000, the Library of Congress adopted a new classification scheme for *kanshibun* materials, moving from a script-based, Sinocentric system to one based squarely on

³⁶² Fraleigh notes that some scholars have used the phrase “Chinese-style poetry” to denote *shi* composed by non-Chinese authors, in contradistinction to “Chinese poetry,” which is reserved for *shi* composed by Chinese authors. See *Plucking Chrysanthemums*, p. 20.

³⁶³ For example, Niwa Jun'ichirō's *Karyū shunwa* 花柳春話 (1877), a Japanese translation of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Ernest Maltravers*, cleaves so closely to the *kundoku* register that its language is said to be “*kanbun kuzushi*” 漢文崩し, a style meant to replicate the *kundoku* rendering of literary Sinitic. For an examination of this text, see Indra Levy, *Sirens of the Western Shore: The Westernesque Femme Fatale, Translation, and Vernacular Style in Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2006), pp. 29-31.

national provenance. Prior to that date, such materials had been shelved according to Chinese dynastic chronology and interfiled with works by Chinese and Korean authors; to Western bibliographers, these works were unified by the fact that they were all written in classical Chinese.³⁶⁴ The change bears significantly upon our earlier discussion of terminology, for by shelving collections of *shi* poetry by Japanese authors alongside collections of *waka* from the same period of Japanese history, the new arrangement strongly implies that both are equally a part of “Japanese literature,” and it at least leaves open the possibility that the former may even be viewed as *linguistically* Japanese. The new approach seems to me an improvement over the old, though it does unavoidably reinforce the nation as the preeminent framework for organizing literary scholarship, something that may be especially misleading when dealing with works in literary Sinitic. Indeed, it is quite conceivable that prominent Gozan literati such as Zekkai Chūshin 絶海中津 (1336-1405) or Ryūzan Tokken 龍山徳見 (1284-1358) might well have *preferred* their works to appear with those of their contemporaries, whether Japanese, Chinese, or Korean, who also wrote in literary Sinitic.³⁶⁵ All were heir to a cultural legacy whose fountainhead was China but whose scope was pan-Asian, and all would have viewed themselves as operating within a broadly Confucian intellectual episteme that, by

³⁶⁴ On this see Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums*, pp. 7-8.

³⁶⁵ Zekkai is sometimes regarded as the greatest *shi* poet in Japanese history; he had the honor of exchanging poems with the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, who was curious about Japan and summoned Zekkai for an audience in 1376. Ryūzan emigrated to China in 1301 when he was seventeen and became well established in the Chan community; he did not return to Japan for almost 50 years.

the Tang Dynasty, was being referenced with characteristic pith and solemnity as “This Culture” (C. *siwen*, J. *shibun*, K. *simun* 斯文).

The relevance of this to the problem at hand is simply that we should be open to the possibility that, at least in some cases, the English phrase “in Chinese” might come closest to conveying how a premodern Japanese writer of literary Sinitic actually conceived of his own enterprise. Indeed, even to a dedicated *shi* poet of the Tokugawa period, who had almost surely never left Japan and might never have studied spoken Chinese, the application to one’s poetry of the epithet “Japanized” *washū* 和習, 和臭 was a scathing indictment.³⁶⁶ To be sure, the self image of premodern *kanshibun* writers, largely irrecoverable anyhow, provides no *linguistic* reason at all to use the word “Chinese” in reference to their works. After all, a language, in Saussurean terms, is simply a system of rules through which verbal meaning-making is accomplished, and as we have already seen, *kundoku* is a system that allows at least a partial transmutation of Chinese into Japanese and vice versa. This means that a locution written in literary Sinitic must qualify as a parole in both languages simultaneously, rendering the term “Chinese” incomplete by itself. Yet mastery of literary Sinitic as a mode of inscription necessarily implies mastery of the rules – syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic – of the *language* of literary Chinese. Here it is important to note that although literary Chinese, unlike Middle Chinese or Mandarin, is a conventionalized written language with no unique phonology, it is rooted in the spoken vernacular of Warring States China and certainly qualifies as a

³⁶⁶ Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums*, p. 8.

“language.”³⁶⁷ To this extent, a Japanese author capable of producing a logographic text consistent with the norms of literary Chinese, even if he does so entirely by rendering *kundokubun* into *kanbun*, must necessarily know the literary Chinese language. It is in this sense, of knowing the rules, that it is defensible to claim that the most important cultural achievement in early Japan was indeed “the mastery of the Chinese language.”³⁶⁸

³⁶⁷ Michael Fuller, *An Introduction to Literary Chinese* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 1999), p. 1.

³⁶⁸ Edwin Cranston, “Asuka and Nara Culture: Literacy, Literature, and Music,” in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), p. 453. The accuracy of the statement could of course be improved by specifying “literary” Chinese.

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