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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF STORIES
FROM THE KOKONCHOMONJŪ,
WITH INTRODUCTION

by
Janet E. Goff

A paper submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in the department
of Far Eastern Languages and Literatures,
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December, 1974

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ABBREVIATIONS

The Nihon koten bungaku taikei edition of the Kokonchomonjū was the principle text used in this study, and after the first citation, the title is abbreviated as NKBT. All the stories are referred to by their NKBT number.

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INTRODUCTION

The Kokonchomonjū is a collection of short narrative tales called setsuwa in Japanese. The use of the word setsuwa as a generic term is only a recent phenomenon: the compiler himself refers to them as monogatari, the same term used for long works like the The Tale of Genji. The Kokonchomonjū falls into the category of secular rather than Buddhist setsuwa collections. It focuses on the life of the aristocracy during the Heian period and contains many anecdotes about famous historical figures. There are approximately seven hundred stories as well as a Chinese preface and Japanese epilogue, making it the second largest setsuwa collection after the Konjaku monogatari.

Unlike much of early Japanese literature, the compiler, title, and date of completion of the Kokonchomonjū are undisputed facts. The signature Tachibana Nariue¹ is at the end of the preface and epilogue, both of which were unquestionably written by the compiler of the collection. In the preface, the compiler refers to the work as "A Collection of Well-known Things Past and Present," and the epilogue notes that it was formally completed on the sixteenth day of the tenth month of Kenchō 6 (1254), when a banquet was held.

The Compiler

The only available information about Narisue's genealogy comes from Fujiwara Teika's diary, the Meigetsuki. In an entry for the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month of 1230 (Kangi 2) concerning Fujiwara Michiie's attendants at the Kamo Festival, the name Uemon no Jō Narisue is followed by the note: "very close retainer, adopted son of the late Mitsusue, younger brother of Motonari and Kiyonari." From this, the Edo scholar Kurokawa Harumura (1799-1866) deduced that Narisue was the son of Kiyonori and a descendant in the fourteenth generation² of Tachibana Moroe (684-757), a powerful figure at Court. The editors of the Nihon koten bungaku taikei edition of the Kokonchomonjū cite another theory placing Narisue in the sixteenth generation after Moroe but conclude that persuasive evidence about Narisue's ancestry is lacking.³

The Meigetsuki also mentions a son.⁴ In an entry for the sixth day of the ninth month of 1233 (Tenpuku 1), Teika wrote that someone, allegedly a servant of Narisue, stole a screen belonging to Fujiwara Michiie's aunt Gishūmon'in, who was Go-Toba's Empress. According to Teika, Narisue was quite embarrassed, and his son was said to have taken vows as a result of the incident.

Scattered references to Narisue by title in such works as the Meigetsuki, Hyakurenshō, and Bunkidan give some idea of his position. An entry for the fifteenth day of the eighth

month of 1231 (Kangi 3) in Teika's diary notes that Uemon no Jō Narisue was one of the contestants in a horse race held for the entertainment of high-ranking officials, including Fujiwara Michiie. Teika later mentions that Narisue was in charge of horse racing.

The rank given by Narisue at the end of the epilogue was Lower Fifth, Upper Grade, qualifying him as a member of the provincial governor's class and a low-ranking courtier. In two documents he is in fact referred to as a governor. The Hyakurenshō, a record of life at Court from the tenth to the thirteenth century, calls him the "former governor of Ōsumi," while the Bunkidan, a collection of essays on gagaku music from the 1280s, has "Governor of Iga." Narisue's statement in the preface that he had been at leisure for some years is taken to mean that he had been retired from official life for a while by the time the Kokonchomonjū was completed.

Though not a high-ranking courtier, Narisue seems to have been on close terms with a number of men who were at the center of Court life. The Meigetsuki, for example, notes that he was the "favorite retainer" of Michiie, who was head of the Fujiwara clan and held the highest posts at Court, and a variety of sources give Narisue as an attendant in one capacity or another of someone in the Michiie family.

Narisue figures in several stories in the Kokonchomonjū that reflect his close contact with the Court, the center of cultural life. One story (276) notes that he played the taiko

drum in a performance of the gagaku piece "Sogō" at the palace of Emperor Go-Saga. Another (721) relates how he was entrusted with the care of a black-headed gull by one of the Emperor's attendants. It is evident from 68 and 164 that Narisue knew Ōnakatomi Chikamori, who was a friend of Kamo no Chōmei, the author of the Hōjōki.⁶

As personal statements of Narisue's interests and purpose in compiling the collection, the preface and epilogue give the reader a tantalizing glimpse of the compiler himself. In the preface, Narisue wrote:

A scion of the illustrious Tachibana family, I reflected upon my meager, worthless abilities and decided to take lessons on the biwa from a master. Somehow I managed to learn the ritsu and ryo modes. Dull-witted though I am, I am fond of painting and have cultivated my sensibilities a little at a time.

Scholars think that the master alluded to was the noted musician Hōjinbō, whose father Takamichi taught the ex-Emperor Go-Toba to play the biwa. (496, translated below) The large number of stories about Hōjinbō in the Kokonchomonjū would in itself suggest some sort of personal connection, and we know from the Bunkidan, written by Hōjinbō's pupil Ryūen, that Narisue was in fact one of Hōjinbō's pupils. Also, in 276, Narisue notes that he had discussed the correct way to hit the taiko with Hōjinbō prior to the performance of "Sogō." It is evident from Narisue's criticism of other musicians in the Kokonchomonjū that he had confidence in his own musical judgment and definite opinions on proper behavior for musicians.

A posture of humility was essential for a man of letters, particularly when writing in Chinese, but Narisue's self-assurance is so apparent in places that one may imagine that he was a smug, self-righteous sort. He ends the preface with the comment:

I am ashamed of the excesses and oversights resulting from shallow views and little knowledge and realize that this work will only invite the snickers of scholars and wise men. It must not leave our house lest it mistakenly be compared with masterpieces.

Yet, as we shall see later, he had the temerity to emulate the great Imperial anthologies in writing the Kokonchomonjū, which he clearly intended as a record to be handed down to posterity:

Though this collection is trivial and without merit, if I did not record both the good and bad from long ago, who would leave for posterity the feeling of nostalgia for things from the past? (Epilogue)

Considering the large number of stories about impious priests and fallen nuns, Narisue would seem to have had an irreverent attitude toward Buddhism, at least the popular Buddhism of his day. He was also quick to condemn the behavior of others. For example, in 494 (translated below), Narisue criticizes the priest Saigyō, saying that "Though he had left the world, Saigyō was still as obstinate as in the past."

In the epilogue, Narisue equates his work with the life of Master Ch'ü, who, according to the Huai-nan-tzu, at the age of fifty had made forty-nine years worth of mistakes. On the strength of this, the Japanese scholar Fujisaki Toshishige suggests that Narisue wrote the work around the age of fifty,

but there does not seem to be any other evidence to support his view.⁷

While the Setsuwa bungaku jiten gives the date of Narisue's death as 1272, the NKBT editors are less definite, saying only that 1272 was the latest possible date. Their conclusion was based on a passage in the Bunkidan:

A descendant in the seventh generation, Takayori was the only son of Takatoki /Hōjinbō/ and inherited all the writings and secret teachings. Lamentably, he died almost immediately after his father on the nineteenth day of the fifth month of Bun'ei 9 [1272] . . . Among the courtiers to whom his family's tradition was handed down . . . [was] Kazan'in no Dainagon Nagamasa . . . Kazan'in formerly studied under Narisue. After Narisue's death, he was initiated into the secret gagaku music by Takayori.

Thus, since Kazan'in studied under Takayori after Narisue's death and Takayori died in 1272, Narisue had to have died by 1272.

"A Collection of Well-known Things Past and Present"

In the preface, Narisue refers to his work as the Kokonchomonjū, "A Collection of Well-known Things Past and Present." Kokon ("past and present") echoes a phrase in the preface about his knowledge of the past and present in Japan. The characters cho and mon (著;聞) occur together in Chinese and Japanese histories and seem to denote something well-known, orally or in writing. For example, the biography of a government minister, Ch'ao Ts'o, in the History of the

Former Han (forty-ninth section) says:

If the Emperor is without virtue, then indeed his understanding cannot shine forth, and his wisdom cannot govern. What the minister has written is well-known. (Italics mine.)

In another section of the History of the Former Han, the "Annals of Yüan-ti," the phrase is interpreted as something "heard openly:" "This is what ⁹ everyone in the empire has heard openly."

The Kokonchomonjū is unusually tightly organized for a setsuwa collection. As the epilogue notes, Narisue divided the stories he had gathered together into twenty books and thirty chapters. At the beginning of each chapter, he briefly described the origin of the topic and then presented the stories "in order," namely chronological order.

In the epilogue, Narisue says that nostalgia for the past moved him to compile the Kokonchomonjū:

... if I did not record both the good and bad from long ago, who would leave for posterity the feeling of nostalgia for things from the past? Bearing this in mind, I searched private records and sought out famous passages. I also included what I heard, both first hand and from hearsay, concerning tales of the road and customs of out of the way places.

The feeling of nostalgia for the past is reflected in the structure and contents of the Kokonchomonjū. Narisue was keenly aware of precedents in the realms of poetry and prose. He was deeply attached to the old way of doing things, and romanticized the past, the Imperial age, as the standard for

the present.

The preface begins with the remark: "This collection of well-known tales derives from the skillful stories of Uji Dainagon. It follows in the wake of the enlightened discourse of Ōe Masafusa." Both the Uji dainagon monogatari and the Gōdanshō date from the Heian period, and though the influence of the no longer extant Uji dainagon monogatari cannot be ascertained, the influence of Ōe Masafusa's Gōdanshō is readily apparent in chapter 4 on "Literature."

Narisue also emulated the Imperial anthologies, as if to make the Kokonchomonjū a kind of Imperial anthology of true records and narrative tales. The signed Chinese preface and Japanese epilogue are analogous to signed Chinese and Japanese prefaces in the Imperial anthologies. Like many of the first eight Imperial anthologies, the Kokonchomonjū is divided into twenty books, and the titles of a number of the chapters correspond to titles of books in the anthologies. It is clear from the epilogue that Narisue had the Imperial anthologies in mind when he decided to hold a banquet to celebrate the end of his labors, and the kokon in the title may well have been chosen because of the words "past and present" in the title of the first Imperial anthology, the Kokinshū. The careful topical and chronological organization of stories not found in other setsuwa collections brings to mind the Shinkokinshū in which poems in a given book were tightly organized in terms of association and progression and

period of composition on a scale not seen before in Imperial anthologies.

Narisue's comments on material presented in the collection reflect his nostalgia for the past. He condemned unorthodox, gauche behavior, such as the musician's in 246 translated below, and expressed regrets over behavior or traditions no longer seen in the degenerate age in which he lived, a view plainly stated in 496, which is also translated.

Unlike previous setsuwa collections such as the Konjaku monogatari and Jikkinshō, the Kokonchomonjū is devoted exclusively to Japanese matters. It was the last setsuwa collection to focus on Court life: later Kamakura collections such as the Shasekishū all dealt primarily with Buddhist subjects.

Instead of turning to other setsuwa collections such as the Konjaku monogatari for material as his predecessors had, Narisue looked through private records. Among his sources were diaries by Fujiwara Yorinaga (Taiki) and Fujiwara Munetada (Chūyūki). He also drew upon the Gōdanshō mentioned earlier; the Kyōkunshō, a compilation of information on music and musical instruments dating from 1233; ōjōden, stories of persons who attain rebirth in paradise; and shrine and temple records.

He also gathered material from oral tales, but his primary goal was clearly historical accuracy. He described the origin of the topic at the beginning of each chapter and arranged the stories chronologically. He strove for historical accuracy within the setsuwa themselves by remaining faithful to the

original text, though occasionally he would change Chinese into Japanese or abridge the material. At the end of a story he would state his opinion about the information--whether it was accurate or needed further investigation. For example, in 291 he comments: "There is no reason to doubt the above. Yuki-yoshi's story, as well as what Hōjinbō said, was written up in a document, stamped by Yuki-yoshi, and sent to Hōjinbō." This emphasis on documented records and specialized subject matter is no doubt one reason why the Kokonchomonjū has not enjoyed the same literary position as the Konjaku monogatari or Uji shūi monogatari.

The epilogue tells us that Narisue began the Kokonchomonjū by collecting outstanding stories in the fields of poetry and music with the intention of making paintings about them. He expanded the scope of his investigation and eventually produced what has been termed a kind of encyclopedia of the age. The titles of the chapters will give an indication of the breadth of the collection: Shinto deities; Buddhism; government and loyal ministers; public affairs; literature; Japanese poetry; music, singing and dancing; calligraphy; magic; filial piety and devotion; love affairs; martial valour; archery; horsemanship; sumo wrestling and strong men; painting; "football" (kemari); gambling; robbers; congratulatory messages; laments; excursions; attachment to worldly things; arguments; clever and witty remarks; strange things; supernatural beings; food and drink; plants and trees; fish, insects, birds, and beasts.

and "Clever and Witty Remarks," are ribald, not to say

The encyclopedic quality of the Kokonchomonjū makes it a particularly valuable source of information about well-known historical personages and customs, especially in the fields of music and art, owing to Narisue's keen interest in those areas. It is only from the Kokonchomonjū, for example, that we know that Toba Sōjō painted the doors of the kondō at the Hosshōji Temple. There are a number of interesting anecdotes about historical figures such as ex-Emperors Go-Shirakawa and Go-Toba, and the priest Saigyō. One story about Saigyō (494, translated below) later found its way into the Tsurezuregusa.

Since Narisue was inspired by a feeling of nostalgia for the past, it is not surprising to find that the collection focuses on the life of the aristocracy, on accomplishments such as "football" (kemari), calligraphy, music, and painting. In stories that do not deal directly with such accomplishments, the aristocratic quality is still emphasized: a warrior's ability to write renga is more important than his martial prowess.

Nevertheless, Narisue also included what he heard "first hand and from hearsay concerning tales of the road and customs of out of the way places." About one-third of the roughly seven hundred stories concern the Kamakura period. They are concentrated at the end of the collection in the chapters on "Thieves," "Clever and Witty Remarks," and "Fish, Insects, Birds, and Beasts."

Many stories, especially in the chapters on "Love Affairs" and "Clever and Witty Remarks," are ribald, not to say

scatalogical. The frank, unadorned descriptions and dark humor contrast sharply with the quieter, more refined humor¹⁵ of a collection like the Uji shūi monogatari. This contradiction between the idealized aristocratic past and the rough, degenerate present is a reflection of the period in which the compiler found himself--a time when the power and influence of the anachronistic Court culture had waned, and the rough, "uncivilized" military had gained ascendancy.

Textual History

Narisue tells us that the Kokonchomonjū was formally completed in the tenth month of 1254, but internal and external evidence suggests that a considerable amount of revision went on after that time. About one-tenth of the stories are considered later additions, for several reasons. The stories are organized chronologically by chapter, and so those that fail to adhere to this principle presumably were inserted later by someone other than the compiler, someone who did not understand Narisue's method. Stories concerning Chinese subjects are also regarded as later additions because they contradict Narisue's statement in the preface that he had not presumed to look into the classics and histories of China. Stories taken from works written after the Kokonchomonjū are, of course, considered later additions. The story from the Naruto chūjō monogatari (331) is cited as an example of this type. Though its date is uncertain, it is believed to have been written at

least eighteen years after the Kokonchomonjū, and some Kokonchomonjū texts have the notation "interpolation" by the story.

An overwhelming percentage of the stories thought to be later additions are from the Jikkinshō: one estimate is sixty-one; another sixty-four.¹⁶ The Jikkinshō was compiled just two years before the Kokonchomonjū, which is considered too short a period of time for the collection to have come into Narisue's possession. Except for the waka chapter, all the Jikkinshō stories were added at the end of chapters--the only place where the chronological order is disturbed.¹⁷ The insertion of the stories in the middle of the chapter on "Waka" suggests that at one time the chapter may have been in two volumes because of its length.¹⁸

The NKBT editors consider sixteen other stories later additions. Five are from the Gōdanshō, Naruto chūjō monogatari, Ōigawa gyōkō wakashū, and Kakinomoto Eiguki. The exact source for the others is unknown. Copyists' notes shed light on the fortunes of the Kokonchomonjū as time went by. Sometimes an amanuensis, writing in Chinese, would simply indicate that a story was added later, but other notes are longer and more detailed. A comment after 72 acknowledges in effect that the story is chronologically out of place:

This tale has been added in accordance with the Imperial copy. It belongs after the story about the priest Jōshō and before the one about Prince Shōshin.

The Kokonchomonjū has the following postscript:

On the eighteenth day of the second year of Ryakuō [1339], I took up my brush at the age of sixty and copied these twenty volumes. My goal was partly to while away the idle hours, and partly to provide for posterity this fund of knowledge. The collection should be carefully guarded.

The priest Sōmon

The postscript indicates the form of the collection at a particular point in time, and suggests one type of person who was at work on the task of transmission.

The Kanmongyoki, a diary by Prince Gosukō-in dating from the fifteenth century, is the only other source of information about the early history of the Kokonchomonjū. It provides evidence that the collection was read and copied in the highest circles at Court. One entry (Eikyō 5 [1433] /12/28) notes that the Emperor Go-Hanazono asked to borrow Gosukō-in's copy of the Kokonchomonjū. A later one mentions that Gosukō-in copied the sixteenth book of the palace manuscript to complete his own edition. This entry is of special interest because it mentions the existence of yet another text, the "Asukai" manuscript, and reveals that there was a difference in quality among the texts. ¹⁹

The oldest extant copy of the Kokonchomonjū is believed to be the one in the possession of the late Ikeda Kikan, said to date from the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, its present whereabouts are unknown.

Until the NKBT edition, all printed editions of the Kokonchomonjū have been based on the woodblock edition of 1690, which, according to the NKBT editors, is full of mistakes and

therefore unreliable as a source. Instead of using it, they examined over forty texts in search of a more suitable one. The texts were divided into two categories according to whether or not they contain Ki no Tsurayuki's preface to the Ōigawa gyōkō wakashū. Category II is believed to be closer to the original because it does not contain the tenth-century preface, which, in Category I texts, follows a thirteenth-century story (478). This error in chronology and the interlinear note "addition" at the beginning of the story indicate that the story was not part of the original collection. The absence of the last line of the previous story as well as the preface in Category II texts suggests that the preface may have been ~~deleted~~ accidentally.

The two categories apparently derive from the same source since they both have the 1339 postscript, but the editors consider the Category I texts (particularly those in Group A) more valuable as source material because they seem older and, in general, closer to the original than Category II texts, which show signs of later, conscientious revision. For example, 135 in Category I texts wrongly attributes a statement in the Shih ching to Confucius--a mistake also found in the Jikkinshō, the source of the story. Category II texts are correct, and the editors note that in this group corrections and improvements of this kind are fairly common.

The texts in Category II exhibit no marked variations, but those in Category I widely differ, and the editors have accordingly divided them into three groups, largely on the

basis of the order of material at the end of the Kokonchomonjū. In Group A, the order is as follows: a Japanese poem beginning Nigori naki; the words "former governor of Mikawa, Urabe Kanenao;" the epilogue; stories 722-726 from the Jikkinshō; and the postscript by the priest Sōmon from 1339.

In Group C, the words "former governor of Mikawa, Urabe Kanenao" are followed by the poem, stories 722-726, the epilogue (unsigned), and the postscript. The editors suggest that the order in Group C might have been due to copyists' errors. Kanenao's name should follow his poem, not precede it, and since Narisue imitated the form of Imperial anthologies, it is unlikely that he left the epilogue unsigned. Also, the last five stories, which are later additions, presumably were put at the very end of the collection for convenience' sake.

Group B includes texts with a combination of unique features of each of the other groups. In one text, for example, the epilogue is signed although the Jikkinshō stories precede it.

The editors concluded that Group A was the most reliable and chose a text from that group, the Imperial Household Offices of Libraries and Mausolea copy, as their basic text. They supplemented it with another Category I-A text, the Gakushūin Library edition, and one from Category II, the Mite Library edition belonging to the Kamo Shrine. The translations below are all based on the NKBT edition.

The Translations

The stories were taken from a number of chapters to give a general idea of the scope of the collection. They were selected for a variety of reasons, ranging from the knowledge they provide about the life of the times to the insight they give into the nature of Narisue's approach.

The preface contains important information about the compiler and his work and could hardly have been omitted. The rigidly parallel Chinese prose distinguishes it from the rest of the Kokonchomonjū, most of which is written in Japanese.

The first story, "Go-Tokudaiji Sanesada's Visit to Kasuga Shrine . . ." (chapter 1, "Shinto Deities," 20) was selected because of its description of the factionalism within the powerful Fujiwara clan at the end of the Heian period, and the intense concern over status and promotion. It is one of a number of stories in the collection that deal with members of Sanesada's immediate family. Another, 494, has also been translated.

The next story, "The Priest Saigyō's Arduous and Grueling Austerities on Omine" (chapter 2, "Buddhism," 57), is based on the Saigyō monogatari, a semi-fictional account of Saigyō's life. It treats a different aspect of Heian life--asceticism, in particular, the practices of the mountain priests' sect, Shugendō.

"In Which the Former Governor of Chikuzen Plays a Shō at the Imperial Palace and Runs into Difficulty" (chapter 7,

"Music," 246) is an example of Narisue's condemnation of others' lack of savoir faire, while the following story concerning the plaque for Hōjinbō's private chapel (from chapter 8 on "Calligraphy") reflects Narisue's habit of commenting on the information presented. The calligrapher's remarks suggest that even in Narisue's day the arts tended to be a family affair, with name given precedent over talent.

The next three stories are from chapter 11 on "Love Affairs." "In Which Atsukane's Wife is Moved by Her Husband's Song and Strengthens the Bond Between Them" (319) charmingly depicts the elegant past and its refined sensibility for which Narisue yearned. "Kojijū's Confession at Go-Shirakawa's Palace" is an amusing anecdote told at the expense of one of the more infamous emperors, Go-Shirakawa. The skillful use of the narrative technique of suspense makes it one of the best written stories. The third story, 329, is one of a number of setsuwa concerning fallen priests and nuns.

Toba Sōjō is traditionally regarded as the creator of the Chōjū giga, an animal scroll caricature of human beings, and the drawing described in 395 (chapter 16, "Painting") suggests the same sort of whimsy. This story is one of many instances where the Kokonchomonjū serves as a useful source of information about historical figures. The following story was also included because of the amusing exchange between Toba Sōjō and a pupil.

The story about Saigyō from chapter 23 on "Attachment to Worldly Things" (494) gives a different view of him from the

one offered in 57. The episode about kites on Sanesada's roof can also be found in Tsurezuregusa, but by the fourteenth century, Saigyō's disgusted reaction had been given a somewhat more sympathetic interpretation befitting a legendary figure.

The story about the petty jealousy of two musicians (from the same chapter) offers a critical look at the prevailing conditions in the world of music in Narisue's day. Still, it defends the secrecy and exclusiveness prevalent in the arts that would tend to give rise to just such a situation.

Takamichi's remark about Go-Toba's biwa playing might seem obscure, but it must be remembered that the ex-Emperor was strongly opposed to the Shogunate and spent the last years of his life in exile as a result of the Shōkyū uprising.

The story about the yamabushi from chapter 25, "Clever and Witty Remarks," was chosen to represent the ribald stories in plentiful supply in the collection. The last three stories are examples of "tales told on street corners." Stories of the fantastic, particularly those concerned with Buddhist subjects, are an intrinsic part of the setsuwa tradition, going back to the origin of the genre in China.

The epilogue explains why Narisue began the collection and describes the banquet he held to celebrate its completion. It is a curious combination of Japanese and Chinese, as if Narisue were trying to show off his writing skills in both languages. The long inflected verbs and convoluted structure at the beginning are typical of classical Japanese, and two makura

kotoba ("pillow words," which by that time were an archaic poetic device) are even included. Then, when speaking of the banquet, Narisue suddenly shifts to a laconic style full of Chinese terms, and the number of Chinese characters and compounds increases until the last few lines, which are entirely in Chinese.

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TRANSLATIONS

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season in autumn!

easy harmony of mysterious

and from the beautiful

gurations of nature and things of nature accord with Heaven's grand design. One realizes exactly what a vivid brush can do. Accordingly, one may privately enjoy the refined music of a peaceful age in the company of musicians or commission painters to depict places famous from of old for their beauty.

Having been at leisure for some years, I have reflected upon and investigated many aspects of these two branches of the arts. I compiled what I learned into thirty chapters and arranged them in order in twenty volumes. The title of the

PREFACE TO THE KOKONCHOMONJŪ

This collection of well-known tales derives from the skillful stories of Uji Dainagon.¹ It follows in the wake of the enlightened discourse of Ōe Masafusa.²

A scion of the illustrious Tachibana family, I reflected upon my meager, worthless abilities and decided to take lessons on the biwa from a master.³ Somehow I managed to learn the ritsu and ryō modes. Dull-witted though I am, I am fond of painting and have cultivated my sensibilities a little at a time.

Oh the warbling of nightingales beneath the blossoms in spring⁴ and the cry of wild geese before the moon in autumn! At such times, one somehow senses the easy harmony of mysterious music. When the artistic spirit arises from the beautiful configurations of nature and things of nature accord with Heaven's grand design, one realizes exactly what a vivid brush can do. Accordingly, one may privately enjoy the refined music of a peaceful age in the company of musicians or commission painters to depict places famous from of old for their beauty.

Having been at leisure for some years, I have reflected upon and investigated many aspects of these two branches of the arts. I compiled what I learned into thirty chapters and arranged them in order in twenty volumes. The title of the

work is A Collection of Well-known Things Past and Present.

Though it was a mad endeavor, I still managed to include some true-to-life incidents. I did not presume to look into the classics and histories of China. The collection concerns the customs of ordinary people in the mundane world, and my knowledge is limited to the past and present in Japan, including tales told on street corners and stories of everyday happenings.

I am ashamed of the excesses and oversights resulting from shallow views and little knowledge and realize that this work will only invite the snickers of scholars and wise men. It must not leave our house lest it mistakenly be compared with masterpieces.

The unworthy Tachibana Narisue

appointed. Sanesada was still resentful. On the seventeenth
 he eighth Eisan 1 /1165/, he resigned as
 Major Councillor while being promoted to Senior Second Rank.
 Giving up one's post when one's rank was increased was an
 unusual step for a high-ranking courtier to take, but he was
 said to be determined to get ahead of Sanesada.
 People felt badly that his fortunes, for one reason or
 another, had declined. Sanesada was upset and paid a visit to
 Kasuga Shrine in disguise. In the midst of prayers requesting
 a decision about his future, a shrine maiden at Wakamiya, a
 Middle of the tenth month,
 Kenchō 6 /1254/

20. Go-Tokudaiji Sanesada's Visit to Kasuga Shrine to Pray
for a Promotion. His Visit to Itsukushima.

On the twenty-third day of the second month of Ōhō 2 [1162],
Middle Councillor Fujiwara Sanenaga¹ was promoted to Junior
Second Rank in honor of an Imperial excursion to Hiyoshi.
Another Middle Councillor, Fujiwara Sanesada, later known as
the Go-Tokudaiji Minister of the Left,³ was passed over. From
time to time he would reluctantly go to his office, but on
that particular day he did not appear.

Around that time, there was an Imperial excursion to the
residence of Sanesada's father, the late Minister of the Right.
The old honors' lists were consulted, and he was promoted to
the same rank as Sanenaga on the seventeenth day of the eighth
month. His position, however, was still lower than Sanenaga's.

Though both men became Major Councillors on the twenty-
third day of the tenth month of Chōkan 2 [1164] when a minister
was appointed, Sanesada was still resentful. On the seventeenth
day of the eighth month of Eiman 1 [1165], he resigned as
Major Councillor while being promoted to Senior Second Rank.
Giving up one's post when one's rank was increased was an
unusual step for a high-ranking courtier to take, but he was
said to be determined to get ahead of Sanenaga.

People felt badly that his fortunes, for one reason or
another, had declined. Sanesada was upset and paid a visit to
Kasuga Shrine in disguise.⁴ In the midst of prayers requesting
a decision about his future, a shrine maiden at Wakamiya, a

was very hopeful that the opening would provide him with an

branch shrine, suddenly had a divine revelation concerning the former Major Councillor. Sanesada did not think that it actually referred to him and remained incognito for a time, but it was very curious, and so, unable to wait any longer, he made his presence known. "Top offices in the land will be bestowed upon you. Do not lament," he was told. Wiping away the tears brought on by this awesome experience, he joyfully departed.

The following Chinese couplet and Japanese waka were among the many outstanding poems of the day:

Though I left my post, I still have not
 forgotten the moon in the Palace.
 I shall soon see the spring for the fifth
 time since I first held this grievance.

Eight years in all
 Have passed,
 Though, alas, it seems
 Like only yesterday
 Since I met adversity.

People felt even sorrier for him when they heard these poems.

And so the months and years went by. On the fifth day of the third month of Angen 3 [1177], Fujiwara Moronaga was promoted from Great Minister of the Center to Prime Minister. Taira no Shigemori,⁷ who was Major Councillor and Captain of the Left Palace Guards, became Great Minister of the Center, and Sanesada took up the post of Major Councillor again in his place.

Almost immediately thereafter, however, on the fifth day of the sixth month, Shigemori resigned as Captain. Sanesada was very hopeful that the opening would provide him with an

opportunity for advancement, but months passed with one thing or another getting in the way. And so he vowed to himself that he would go to Itsukushima Shrine if his wish was granted. Finally, on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month he became Captain of the Left Palace Guards. The prophecy at Wakamiya had at last been fulfilled, he thought, and he was convinced that his vow to go to Itsukushima had helped, too.

On the last day of the third month of Jijō 3 [1179], he set out for Itsukushima. It is said that Major Councillor Fujiwara Sanekuni and Middle Councillor Fujiwara Saneie accompanied him. Fujiwara Tsunemune also went that day. Fujiwara Sanefusa, who later became Great Minister of the Left, was a Major Councillor at the time. Tsunemune's eldest son Yorizane, a Middle Captain in the Palace Guards, went along, too. Perhaps it was on this occasion that he performed what was said to be a charming rendition of the Dance of Great Peace before the deities at Itsukushima.

parassed him unmercifully. "I am not the kind of person who is interested in fame or profit," said Saigyō with tears streaming down his face. "My only concern was to further my faith, but I did not realize that the leadership was so high-handed and arrogant. Inflicting such bodily pain and mental anguish is deplorable."

Hearing this, Shūnanbō called Saigyō over and said, "It is well-known that you are a holy man who has resolutely undergone arduous and grueling austerities, and this has inspired faith in others. I have allowed you to come to this mountain

57. The Priest Saigyō's Arduous and Grueling Austerities on Ōmine.¹

Though eager to practice austerities at Ōmine,² Saigyō³ vacillated because it was an unusual step for a Buddhist priest to take. Learning of his indecision, the Ōmine spiritual leader, Shūnanbō Sōzu Gyōsō said, "What's the matter? There's no problem if your goal is to deepen your faith."

Saigyō was overjoyed and made up his mind to go.

"Although I have left the world," he said, "it is impossible for me to perform the rituals exactly like mountain priests. If you will make allowances for me, I will accompany you."

"I am fully aware of your situation," replied Shūnanbō. "You should leave everything up to others and have no doubts." Saigyō was very pleased and immediately set out with him to enter the mountain retreat.

Shūnanbō broke his promise. Treating Saigyō much more harshly than others, he performed the rituals rigorously and harassed him unmercifully. "I am not the kind of person who is interested in fame or profit," said Saigyō with tears streaming down his face. "My only concern was to further my faith, but I did not realize that the leadership was so high-handed and arrogant. Inflicting such bodily pain and mental anguish is deplorable."

Hearing this, Shūnanbō called Saigyō over and said, "It is well-known that you are a holy man who has resolutely undergone arduous and grueling austerities, and this has inspired faith in others. I have allowed you to come to this mountain

peak precisely because of your unique position. The arduous

"Undergoing physical hardship; cutting down trees and drawing water; listening to harsh reprimands and being beaten with a walking stick--all of these things represent the sufferings of Hell. Eating only a little food each day and suffering terrible hunger pangs atone for the sufferings of hungry demons. Climbing high mountain peaks and making one's way through deep valleys bearing a heavy load re-enacts the suffering of beasts. Eradicating sin and other obstacles to one's enlightenment by attacking the flesh day and night like this and reading prayers of repentance at dawn--all of this gives one the spirit to end the sufferings of the Three Lower ⁴ Realms and quickly move on to the holy realm free of impurity and passion.

"As a devout priest, you claim to be eager to transcend the bounds of life and death. Nevertheless, you fail to grasp the essential truth of this experience and foolishly say that our practices are concerned with fame and fortune."

The ascetic's words shamed Saigyō. He stood with his hands clasped together and shed tears of joy in the Law.

"Truly I was very foolish and did not know the proper spirit," he said, repenting of his mistake. He withdrew, and thereafter applied himself seriously and diligently in everything. Endowed with a strong constitution, he performed the austerities much better than others.

It is said that he took to heart the ascetic's words and later returned to practice austerities again on the mountain.

Thus, though he was a Buddhist priest, he undertook the arduous rituals at Ōmine twice, an act of unusual piety and endurance.

246. In Which the Former Governor of Chikuzen Plays
a Shō at the Imperial Palace and
Runs into Difficulty.

One must handle musical instruments with great care. The former governor of Chikuzen, Minamoto Kanetoshi,¹ once received permission to go to the Imperial Palace because a shō² player was needed. On the first day of practice, he was given the shō "Kisakie" to use. He began at once to play and swallowed a spider. The Emperor and ministers laughed until their sides ached as he choked and gagged. It was an amazing display of stupidity, and he was not permitted to enter the Palace again.

One should take special precautions if the occasion demands it lest such blunders be made. In particular, a royal instrument rarely played should be tested first by blowing lightly into it.

receiving you here like this," he said, "but it is our last chance to see each other. I am delighted you have come. Pray tell, what is the reason for your visit?"

"I had no idea that you were in this state," Hōjinhō replied. "I came to ask a small favor, but seeing your condition, I wouldn't think of mentioning it now. I will speak to you about it later when you have recovered."

"My illness is indeed serious. But speak up. What is the purpose of this unusual visit?" asked Yuki Yoshi insistently.

291. Concerning the Plaque for Hōjinbō's¹
Private Chapel.

Hōjinbō's private chapel, the Temple of Music, was frequented by his musical cronies. He eventually attached to the altar curtain a small plaque inscribed with the name of the chapel and the characters "A," "Sha," and "Myō." The three characters were added because the chapel contained statues of Amida, Shaka, and Myōonten² and also because Hōjinbō often read from the Lotus Sutra and played music there.

On the thirteenth day of the eighth month of Kencho 3 [1251],³ Hōjinbō called on the priest Yukiyoshi to have the plaque in question made. Because the priest, who had been sick for days, was critically ill at the time and could not even stand up, Hōjinbō talked to him in the sickroom. He seemed very ill. His stomach was distended, and his breath came in gasps, making his words unintelligible. But finally he managed to speak. "I must apologize for receiving you here like this," he said, "but it is our last chance to see each other. I am delighted you have come. Pray tell, what is the reason for your visit?"

"I had no idea that you were in this state," Hōjinbō replied. "I came to ask a small favor, but seeing your condition, I wouldn't think of mentioning it now. I will speak to you about it later when you have recovered."

"My illness is indeed serious. But speak up. What is the purpose of this unusual visit?" asked Yukiyoshi insistently.

Hōjinbō told him about the plaque. Astounded, Yuki-yoshi began to weep. "It's incredible," he said. "Some years ago, a priest from the province of Ōmi came to me with a request. He was doing all he could to repair a terribly run-down temple. For a long time evil spirits had been interfering, frightening the priests living there, and causing damage and loss in the fields. Though afraid, he felt badly about the imminent collapse of the temple, and wanted more than ever to restore it. He asked me to make a plaque for him, which I did immediately.

"The same priest came back four or five years later. He informed me that the malevolent spirits had disappeared after the plaque had been put up. The priests at the temple felt safe again, and the temple lands prospered. It was revealed to him in a dream that his cherished wish had been realized because of the plaque. He came back now out of gratitude, he said, to tell me. And with that, he bowed deeply and left.

"Then, eight days ago I took to my bed with this illness. Early one morning I had a dream in which a person I took to be a denizen of heaven brought a plaque and asked me to fix the damaged lettering. I recognized it as the plaque I had made for the priest from Ōmi. In the course of the dream, I fixed the letters, which were indeed slightly worn away. Overjoyed, the heavenly being turned to leave, then looked back, saying, 'Within five days, someone will again come to you about making a plaque. You must do so, for it will cause you to be reborn

in the Pure Land.' Just when I realized that the heavenly being had vanished, the dream ended.

"And so I have been secretly waiting every day. This is exactly the fifth day since the dream, and because of your order for a plaque I will be able to enter the Pure Land. I will make it as soon as possible, but first I have to prepare myself spiritually. Come what may, I will not die until I have finished it." Overcome by religious fervor, the priest wept.

"In this world, many men follow the same way, but there is no one in your field to match you," he went on. "The same is true in mine. For instance, an order was received for a screen of the annual observances in honor of the recent Imperial withdrawal to the Kan'inden.⁴ But I was ill and could not make it, and my son Tsunetomo had gone to the Kantō⁵ area about a petition. And so, a suggestion was made to use the old screen. The military officials, however, said that it would not do. One way or another, some member of our family had to paint the screen. As a result, Tsunetomo's son, a boy of nine, humbly accepted the awesome Imperial commission and made it.

"Now you can see why I feel this way. I think we can commend ourselves that there is no one to compare with us in our respective fields. Although there are many musicians in this world, who is your equal? Likewise, there are many calligraphers, but when it comes to important commissions of the Court, only this house will do. Then, too, there is the

dream that making the plaque will bring about my rebirth in the Pure Land." Tears of gratitude streamed down his cheeks as he spoke.

There is no reason to doubt the above. Yuki-yoshi's story, as well as what Hōjinbō said, was written up in a document, stamped by Yuki-yoshi, and sent to Hōjinbō.

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he hint from his wife, the serving women all avoided him.

Feeling melancholy, he pushed open the wooden door by the carriage entrance and sat alone, lost in thought. The light of the moon and the sound of the wind in the early morning calm filled his soul, and he was particularly conscious at that moment of others' spitefulness. To soothe his troubled heart, he took out his hichiriki and played music which fit the mood of the moment. Over and over again he recited:

319. In Which Atsukane's Wife is Moved by Her
Husband's Song and Strengthens
the Bond between Them.

Atsukane,¹ the head of the Ministry of Justice, was an extremely homely man; his wife was young and beautiful. One time she saw a number of attractive men at a performance of Gosechi² dancers and became despondent realizing how ugly her husband really was.

After returning home, she sat stiffly with her head averted and would not say a single word or meet her husband's eyes. For a while he did not have the vaguest notion what was going on. But her displeasure gradually grew greater and greater until it was painful to see, and so he moved to other quarters rather than staying with her as he had in the past.

Once when he went to the office and returned home late at night, there was not even a light at the entrance. He removed his clothing but there was no one to fold it for him. Taking the hint from his wife, the serving women all avoided him. Feeling melancholy, he pushed open the wooden door by the carriage entrance and sat alone, lost in thought. The light of the moon and the sound of the wind in the early morning calm filled his soul, and he was particularly conscious at that moment of others' spitefulness. To soothe his troubled heart, he took out his hichiriki³ and played music which fit the mood of the moment. Over and over again he recited:

The white chrysanthemum
 In the bamboo fence has faded
 Like my love's affection--
 A painful sight, indeed!⁴

The lady I once knew
 Has hidden from me,
 Her love withered
 Like the flowers.

Atsukane's wife overheard and immediately had a change of heart. It is said that after that they lived a long and happy life together. And so, his wife seems to have been a lady of sensitivity and refinement after all.

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 was taken comp
 I thought about day and night, I was unusually nervous. The clear light of the moon shone all around; the wind felt cold. As the night wore on, I was torn apart by a thousand and one anxieties, and my heart was in a turmoil. Hearing the sound of a carriage in the distance, I thought, my heart-pounding, 'It must be for me.' By the time the carriage had reached the house, I was almost beside myself and jumped inside in a most disgraceful fashion.

322. Kojijū's Confession at Go-Shirakawa's Palace.

One time when it was quieter than usual at Go-Shirakawa's palace, a couple of courtiers who were the Retired Emperor's personal attendants and a few ladies-in-waiting were having a conversation. "What unforgettable experience have you had?" asked Go-Shirakawa. "Everyone should tell exactly what happened in order to repent as well."

One after another, from His Highness on down, everyone spoke. When it came to Kojijū's turn, people said, "You surely must have a splendid story to tell."

"I have lots of them," said Kojijū, smiling. "There is one experience, though, that I shall find difficult to forget. It will surely prove a vain attachment tying me to this world, but if I repent of it in Your Highness' presence I trust the burden of my sin will be lightened."

"Someone had been sent from a certain place to fetch me. I was taken completely by surprise, and since it was an affair I thought about day and night, I was unusually nervous. The clear light of the moon shone all around; the wind felt cold. As the night wore on, I was torn apart by a thousand and one anxieties, and my heart was in a turmoil." Hearing the sound of a carriage in the distance, I thought, my heart pounding, 'It must be for me.' By the time the carriage had reached the house, I was almost beside myself and jumped inside in a most disgraceful fashion.

Go-Shirakawa said, and asked her one question after another.

"As we drew up to the carriage entrance at our destination, the person I had been longing for emerged from behind a bamboo screen, lithe, slender, and wondrously perfumed. He raised the carriage blinds and helped me down. Full of passion, we embraced then and there without waiting until we were alone. No words could adequately express how impatiently I had waited.

"Afterwards, we poured out our souls to each other. But even a long night must end, and so we still had not expressed all that lay in our hearts when a bell sounded far off and we could hear the early morning birds chirping. I rose to leave, my spirits fading faster than the morning dew. At the sound of the approaching carriage, I felt as if my soul had parted from my body, and I got into the carriage in a daze.

"I returned home, my passion unabated. If I had felt like sleeping again, I could at least have seen him in my dreams. But all I had as a keepsake was his wonderful fragrance clinging to me, and I felt miserable. I cannot express how distraught I was when someone was sent in the morning to claim the robe he had exchanged for mine the night before, for I was now bereft of even the perfumed keepsake."

"It truly must have been unbearable," said Go-Shirakawa and the others after she finished. "But now, you have to tell us who he was."

"It's impossible," she replied.

"Well, then, you are not sincerely repentant," Go-Shirakawa said, and asked her one question after another.

Kojijū smiled. "Very well," she said, "since you are so insistent, I will tell you. But I am surprised Your Highness does not remember."

She proceeded to explain when it had happened during his reign, and who his messenger had been. "How can you deny it?" she asked. "Surely the circumstances were no different from the way I have related them." Her words caused quite a stir. Go-Shirakawa was overcome and fled from the room.

... let her go.
... do what she
... in vain no
... their huts nearby
... ently to her and got
... her collapsed in
... ears filled him with remorse, because he knew that it was
entirely his fault. He was even more drawn to her after their
intimacy and did not wish to leave. But he could not stay, and
so he comforted her and left.

A couple of days later he went back to see the nun. The place was exactly the same as he had left it, except that she was not in sight. He looked all over for her, thinking she might have hidden, but she was nowhere to be found.

A poem had been left at the spot where they had made love:

329. The Story of a Nun's Encounter with a Man
and Her Disappearance.

A man walking around Ōhara¹ came across an interesting-looking hut. Going inside, he found a nun all alone whom he took to be the owner. An aura of quiet refinement filled the place.

Could it have been a bond from a former existence? Had he been possessed by a demon causing him to take advantage of her? Once having seen her, he had no desire to go on his way. He went up to her and made advances. Aghast, she tried to hide, but he held tightly onto her and would not let her go. Her feelings of shock and dismay were natural, for do what she might to resist, no one was around to help.

The man realized that his efforts would not be in vain no matter how she struggled, for there were no other huts nearby where they could be overheard. He spoke gently to her and got his way with her in the end. The sight of her collapsed in tears filled him with remorse, because he knew that it was entirely his fault. He was even more drawn to her after their intimacy and did not wish to leave. But he could not stay, and so he comforted her and left.

A couple of days later he went back to see the nun. The place was exactly the same as he had left it, except that she was not in sight. He looked all over for her, thinking she might have hidden, but she was nowhere to be found.

A poem had been left at the spot where they had made
love:

This was my final home,
 A refuge from the world,
 I thought; 2
 But in the village of Ūhara
 I feel more wretched than ever.

He never found out where she went. Though driven by circumstances to perform an unthinkable act, she was in fact very devout.

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What Toba Sōjō said disturbed the abbot. After that,

the handling of the rice was tightly controlled, and there were
 no more irregularities.

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395. Toba Sōjō's Painting Satirizing
Irregularities in the Handling
of Rice Offerings.

An artist without equal in recent times, Toba Sōjō¹ did the painting on the door of the main hall at Hosshōji Temple.² Once when there irregularities in the handling of rice offerings, he depicted it in a painting. With vigorous strokes of the brush, he drew an amusing picture in which a whirlwind was blowing rice bags up in the air while acolytes and priests ran around trying to catch them as they rose like dust or ashes.

The Abbot was intrigued by the painting and wondered who had done it. He asked Toba Sōjō the meaning, and the priest replied, "As a result of extreme irregularities in the handling of rice offerings, the bags contain no rice, only bran, and because of their lightness, they have been blown up in the air by the whirlwind. In spite of this, the young priests are still trying to catch the bags. I painted the picture because I thought the idea amusing."

What Toba Sōjō said disturbed the Abbot. After that, the handling of the rice was tightly controlled, and there were no more irregularities.

"What at all troubled the priest resounded." "What at the grotesque paintings of the masters of old. The figures are enlarged and out of proportion. Why should they be realistically done? If they were drawn to scale, the paintings would have no appeal. That is why a painting is said to be a work of the imagination. Even in your own work, there are many examples of this sort of thing." Toba Sōjō was overwhelmed by his reasoning and said nothing.

396. Toba Sōjō's Criticism of a Warrior-
Priest's Painting.

A warrior-priest painted under this same Toba Sōjō. He was so devoted to his art that he eventually came to rival the Sōjō himself. The Sōjō, it seems, was jealous, for he was determined somehow to find a flaw in the priest's work. One time the priest was very pleased with a painting he had done of men fighting with knives. The Sōjō noticed that a knife, still clutched in someone's hand, was protruding from a man's back.

A bad mistake, he thought, and said, "You ought to stop painting. What sort of man can stab another so hard that even his fist comes out the back? Stabbing someone to the hilt is considered quite a feat, but this is impossible. You shouldn't paint if this is the extent of your conceptual powers."

The priest very politely began to explain that it was in the old style, but Toba Sōjō interrupted him. "Your painting's in the old style? That's absurd!"

"Not at all," replied the priest, undaunted. "Look at the erotic paintings of the masters of old. The private parts are enlarged and out of proportion. Why should they be realistically done? If they were drawn to scale, the paintings would have no appeal. That is why a painting is said to be a work of the imagination. Even in your own work, there are many examples of this sort of thing." Toba Sōjō was overwhelmed by his reasoning and said nothing.

494. The Priest Saigyō's Search for the Whereabouts
of the Go-Tokudaiji Minister Sanesada
and His Nephew Kinhira.

Before he left the world, the priest Saigyō¹ had been a retainer in the household of Fujiwara Saneyoshi, the Tokudaiji Minister of the Left.² He returned to the Capital after practicing austerities for several years, and out of affection for the master he had served for a long time, tried to find³ his grandson Sanesada, the Go-Tokudaiji Minister of the Left. Looking in at Sanesada's residence from outside the gate, he noticed a rope tied to the ridge poles.⁴ Thinking it odd, he asked someone about it and was informed that it had been placed there to prevent kites from roosting. "What's so awful about having kites on the roof?" he thought, and went on his way in disgust.

Inquiring next about the whereabouts of Sanesada's brother Saneie,⁵ Saigyō learned that Saneie's wife was disappointed in her husband. He was offended by Saneie's avarice and did not go to see him. A third brother, Sanemori, had died at an early age.⁶ Saigyō asked where his son Kinhira, a Middle Captain, was and went to the family temple to call on him. He found him leaning against a railing on the verandah gazing at the cherry trees in the garden. Kinhira looked very elegant in his aquamarine jacket with a white lining worn over billowing trousers, the bottoms of which were drawn tight at the ankle. This man, at least, has something of his great-grandfather's aura, thought

Saigyō, impressed.

He approached the cherry trees without any hesitation and stood waiting. "Who are you?" asked Kinhira. When Saigyō announced himself, Kinhira delightedly exclaimed, "I have been wanting to meet you for years!" He invited Saigyō onto the verandah where they talked about current matters and things that had happened long ago. Saigyō left when it was dark, and often went back after that to talk with Kinhira.

Around that time, word spread that a new minister was going to be appointed. Kinhira had the necessary qualifications for the position of chief archivist in the Imperial Secretariat; but the former Emperor Go-Shirakawa⁷ wished to gain the position⁸ for Middle Captain Naritsune, and the Regent had recommended Treasury Minister Muneyori. When word reached Saigyō that neither post in the Secretariat seemed available, he hurried to Kinhira and discussed the situation with him. "If you are passed over," he said, "you should definitely leave the world."

"You are quite right," responded Kinhira. "But I am overseeing work on a nunnery I have pledged to build for my mother. If I were to intervene after leaving the world, I would be like priests who pressure people about temple donations, so I'll make plans after fulfilling the vow." Saigyō went away dejected.

Just as rumor had it, Muneyori and Naritsune became the heads of the Secretariat when a new minister was appointed. Hoping Kinhira would follow his advice, Saigyō sent a disciple to him that morning to explain the situation. When there was

no response at all from Kinhira for days, Saigyō inquired by letter about the subject he had broached before. Kinhira replied that he had explained in detail when they met, and so Saigyō concluded that he was worthless fellow and avoided him thereafter. Although he had left the world and given up his position in society, Saigyō was still as obstinate as in the past.

"You aren't really Sadasuke's knowing the case, you must eat, to teach him the ~~to~~ eat something. I will feel better if I see you do so." He mixed some rice with water and urged Takamichi to eat it. When he saw Takamichi gulp it down, his suspicions were confirmed, and he went away with his mind at rest.

Truly if the way is made excited, the numbers swell; treating it casually is regrettable. In the preface to the Nankyūfu,⁵ it says, "Something secret and inaccessible acquires value. Therefore one should keep it hidden away, waiting for the right buyer. Music rarely heard becomes precious. Therefore one should wait for the right person, then hand it down."

496. The Intense Attachment of Fujiwara Takamichi and Fujiwara Sadasuke to the "Takuboku" Tune.

1
When Takamichi was young, he was sick for a number of days with some undefined illness. His condition grew steadily worse. He could not swallow anything and seemed in danger of losing his life.

2
Moronaga was alarmed. He sat beside Takamichi's pallet and questioned him at length about his symptoms. His flagging spirits raised, Takamichi said, "There isn't any particular pain anywhere. Nor do I really feel sick. But several days have passed for some reason without my being able to eat, and so I feel weak and listless."

Moronaga looked intently at him. "You aren't really sick," he said. "You are upset about Sadasuke's³ knowing the secret biwa tune "Takuboku." If that's the case, you must eat. I did promise Sadasuke, but I intend to teach him the⁴ Tsunenobu version, so don't fret. Now eat something. I will feel better if I see you do so." He mixed some rice with water and urged Takamichi to eat it. When he saw Takamichi gulp it down, his suspicions were confirmed, and he went away with his mind at rest.

into Truly if the way is made exalted, the numbers swell; treating it casually is regrettable. In the preface to the Nankyūfu,⁵ it says, "Something secret and inaccessible acquires value. Therefore one should keep it hidden away, waiting for the right buyer. Music rarely heard becomes precious. Therefore one should wait for the right person, then hand it down."

In this degenerate age, the art of music has fallen into a lamentable state of decline. I hesitate to be specific, but I feel that I ought to tell the story anyway, despite my deep-seated reluctance.

6

The Retired Emperor Go-Toba studied the biwa under Sadasuke. When it came time for His Majesty to receive the innermost secrets of the art, Takamichi was in attendance. "I hate to say this about His Highness' biwa," he muttered, "but it's like a man's wearing a samurai cap while dressed properly in ceremonial Court attire." Go-Toba overheard him, and he was summoned to the Archery Exhibition Hall, where the Great Minister of the Center, Fujiwara Nobukiyo, asked him the reason for his remark.

"In playing the biwa, Sadasuke has adhered in every respect to the school generally followed today--interpretation, technique, and method of tuning," he explained. "But when it comes to Takuboku," the crowning achievement in our field, he follows the Tsunenobu style.

"Moronaga exhaustively studied both approaches. He considered various aspects of the old and new and delved deeply into their inner nature. He concluded that the generally accepted version was the authoritative one, the Tsunenobu version secondary, and made no secret of it. Nevertheless, Sadasuke plays the Takuboku tune in the Tsunenobu style. There's no way he can hide it if you ask him. Fortunately, I learned the tune according to the approach generally accepted today.

"I have likened the biwa to ceremonial dress worn with a samurai cap because of these circumstances regarding the pinnacle of our art."

Nobukiyo reported to the Retired Emperor the explanation frankly offered by Takamichi. As a result, it was decided that Takamichi would replace Sadasuke. When Sadasuke heard about it, he made a big fuss. "I have taught Your Majesty from the beginning," he said in tears. "To be replaced by Takamichi at this crucial point is a kind of living death. I have always considered him a second-rate teacher, and I will resent this the rest of my life. What is the meaning of such a command? If this is your final decision, please banish me immediately."

What he said was not unreasonable, and so His Majesty had pity and learned from him after all. Though it may receive high praise, excessive devotion to one's art is truly reprehensible.

Pleased with the idea, she let him in at once, and went to bed with him. When he was satisfied, the yamabushi set the hat on her pillow and left, pretending he would be right back. Afterwards, he mussed up his hair the way it had been before. Under the pretense of performing his usual rituals, he said to his companions, "I would like to travel with you, but I have pressing matters to attend to, so I'll go on ahead."

"You should fortify yourself for the journey," they said, trying to hold him back, but he went off without heeding them.

549. In Which a Priest, a Yamabushi, and a Kettle Maker
Stop at the Same Inn and an Argument
Breaks out the Next Morning.

Recently, a low-ranking priest from Tennōji Temple fell in with a yamabushi and a kettle maker while traveling to the Capital. Darkness overtook them as they were walking along in the vicinity of Imazu, and so they stopped at an inn.

The proprietress, a woman of easy virtue, retired to the storeroom to sleep after everyone had gone to bed. When everything was quiet, the yamabushi got up and tied his hair in a topknot. While the priest, who was pretending to be asleep, looked on, he finished tying his hair and put on the soundly sleeping kettle maker's hat. Going to the woman's room, he knocked gently on the door. She immediately opened it and asked who was there.

"I'm one of the guests," he said. "I noticed you only have one kettle instead of a pair. You must want another one. I'm a kettle maker and would be happy to give you one if you'd like."

Pleased with the idea, she let him in at once, and went to bed with him. When he was satisfied, the yamabushi set the hat on her pillow and left, pretending he would be right back. Afterwards, he mussed up his hair the way it had been before. Under the pretense of performing his usual rituals, he said to his companions, "I would like to travel with you, but I have pressing matters to attend to, so I'll go on ahead."

"You should fortify yourself for the journey," they said, trying to hold him back, but he went off without heeding them.

The kettle maker searched for his hat later and became very anxious when he could not find it. As it was daybreak by then, the woman got up and spoke to him. "Where is the kettle you promised? Give it to me right now," she demanded.

Not having the faintest idea what she was talking about, he curtly refused. "Don't play dumb!" she cried. "The hat's right here. Now how are going to get out of it? Do as you promised, and don't waste any more time about it."

"I never made any such promise," protested the bewildered kettle maker. "Why are you acting as if I did?"

But she would not listen. "What a rotten liar!" she cried. "Though you're an old man, you're seven inches long, and you were lustier than someone half your age."

He could not take any more. "Heaven preserve me! I swear by the Gods and Buddhas above. Look at it!" he said, exposing himself. "Does it measure seven inches?" When she saw that it was indeed very small, and, moreover, that the foreskin was enlarged, she did not have a word to say.

Those nearby overheard and laughed snidely, saying that the yamabushi had done it. Having thus averted disaster, the kettle maker set out for the Capital.

Some of the islanders held bows and arrows which the demons demanded. When they refused, the demons let out a war cry. Going after the ones who held bows first, they beat the islanders to death with their staves. Of the nine men attacked, five died; the other four, though wounded, survived. After that, the demons held out flames from their sides. Fearing they would all be killed, the islanders requested sacred bows and arrows from the local shrine. They confronted the demons with them, whereupon the demons entered the water and went along the bottom of the ocean to the boat. They climbed aboard

599. The Arrival of a Boatload of Demons
at Oki no Shima in Izu.

On the eighth day of the seventh month of Jōan 1 [1171],
a boat came to the shores of Oki no Shima¹ in the province of
Izu. Thinking the boat had been driven there by adverse winds,
the islanders watched as it was anchored about two hundred and
fifty feet from shore. After a demon lowered a rope and tied
it securely around a rock at the bottom of the ocean, eight
demons in the boat entered the water. Climbing ashore a little
while later, they drank like horses the chestnut wine offered
them by the islanders.

The demons did not speak. About nine feet tall, they had
hair like Yaksa.² Their hairless bodies were reddish black in
color, their eyes round like monkeys'. Naked except for loin-
cloths woven from rushes, they had various designs with
borders³ tattooed on their bodies, and everyone held a staff
six or seven feet long.

Some of the islanders held bows and arrows which the
demons demanded. When they refused, the demons let out a war
cry. Going after the ones who held bows first, they beat the
islanders to death with their staves. Of the nine men attacked,
five died; the other four, though wounded, survived. After
that, the demons held out flames from their sides. Fearing
they would all be killed, the islanders requested sacred bows
and arrows from the local shrine. They confronted the demons
with them, whereupon the demons entered the water and went
along the bottom of the ocean to the boat. They climbed aboard

and immediately set off at high speed, heading into the wind.

That same year, on the fourteenth day of the tenth month, an official document was written up and presented to the governor of the province, together with a sash that had been dropped. It is said that the sash in question was placed in the treasurehouse of the Rengeō-in.⁴

She nestled up to him, and the man, who seemed to think little of her dire prediction, soon had his way with her. Their passion knew no bounds as they spent the night exchanging tender words. Just before dawn, the woman got up to leave and asked him for his fan.

"What I told you was no lie," she said. "I have given up my life for you. If you wish to see proof, you should look in the area around the Butokuden¹ on the grounds of the Imperial Palace." With these parting words, she went away.

681. A Man's Encounter with a Fox Disguised
as a Beautiful Woman.

Walking along Sujaku Avenue in Kyoto early one evening, a man came upon an indescribably beautiful woman. He went up to her and made advances to which she did not seem completely indifferent. Close up, she was even lovelier than from afar, and he did not have the slightest desire to walk away and leave her there. After various overtures which met no resistance, he proceeded to try to make love to her.

"Since we have come this far, it would be easy to go all the way--but if that happens, you must die," she said, and refused to go any further.

Unable to contain himself, the man became more insistent. "You have spoken so earnestly, it is impossible to refuse," she said, feeling helpless. "Very well, I will comply with your wishes and then die in your place. If you are moved by this, please mourn for me by writing out the Lotus Sutra on my behalf."

She nestled up to him, and the man, who seemed to think little of her dire prediction, soon had his way with her. Their passion knew no bounds as they spent the night exchanging tender words. Just before dawn, the woman got up to leave and asked him for his fan.

"What I told you was no lie," she said. "I have given up my life for you. If you wish to see proof, you should look in the area around the Butokuden¹ on the grounds of the Imperial Palace." With these parting words, she went away.

In the morning, the man went to the Butokuden and found a fox lying dead on the ground with his fan covering its face; He was full of sorrow, and every seventh day he wrote out a portion of the Lotus Sutra in the woman's memory.

On the night of the forty-ninth day after her death, she appeared in a dream, surrounded by heavenly beings. "Through the power of the One Vehicle,² I have been reborn in the Trāyastimsá realm,"³ she informed him, and vanished.

They held the end of the vine while the other two chased the fish downstream in its direction.

They must be trying to catch fish by imitating our use of cormorants, thought Mongaku. It was foolish to substitute a crow for cormorants, but he was amazed by the care with which they went about it.

Though thrown into the water to catch fish, the crow proved worthless. When it died, the monkeys tossed the body away and went back into the mountains. Mongaku told others about the strange thing he had seen happen right in front of his eyes.

697. In Which the Priest Mongaku Sees Some Monkeys
Imitating Cormorant Fishing with a Crow.

One time in the days when Takao¹ was at the height of prosperity, Mongaku Shōnin² happened to see three large monkeys upstream on the Kiyotaki River³ while he was taking a walk. One monkey was lying motionless on its back on a rock; the other two were sitting some distance away. Thinking it strange, the priest hid so that he could watch them.

Meanwhile, a crow flew up and perched beside the monkey that was lying down. After a little while, it began pecking at the monkey's foot. The monkey remained motionless, playing dead, and so the crow went on pecking. When it hopped on top of the monkey and tried to gouge out an eye, the monkey grabbed it by the foot and stood up. The other monkeys then came up and tied a long vine around the crow's foot as it struggled in vain to fly away. The monkeys all immediately went down to the river and tossed it into the water. One monkey held the end of the vine while the other two chased fish downstream in its direction. They must be trying to catch fish by imitating our use of cormorants, thought Mongaku. It was foolish to substitute a crow for cormorants, but he was amazed by the care with which they went about it. Though thrown into the water to catch fish, the crow proved worthless. When it died, the monkeys tossed the body away and went back into the mountains. Mongaku told others about the strange thing he had seen happen right in front of his eyes.

EPILOGUE

I began this collection with the intention of gathering together outstanding stories in the fields of poetry and music which could be used as the subject of paintings. My investigation covered a wide area from the vestiges of the long ago past to the amours of this degenerate age. I recorded everything and even extended my search to other tales, all of which I wrote down indiscriminately. As a result, the stories are as plentiful as the grasses in a summer field and the fallen leaves in a forest.

Though this collection is trivial and without merit, if I did not record both the good and bad from long ago, who would leave for posterity the feeling of nostalgia for things from the past? Bearing this in mind, I searched private records and sought out famous passages. I also included what I heard, both first hand and from hearsay, concerning tales of the road and customs of out of the way places, and so established fact, no doubt, is mingled with unreliable information.

After everything else was completed, I divided the stories into various sections and determined the number of books, making thirty chapters and twenty books altogether. At the beginning of each chapter, I briefly described the origin of the topic and then presented the stories in order.

Following the example of banquets held upon completion of Imperial anthologies, I put on a celebration with poetry and music on the sixteenth day of the tenth month of Kenchō 6 [1254]. Since the collection focuses on these two realms, I hung up¹ likenesses of Po Chü-i, Hitomaro, and Lien Ch'eng-wu and placed offerings in front of each one. I also prepared casks of saké, dried meats, side dishes, and fruit.

Beginning with the preface, I read aloud the introduction and first story in each of the thirty chapters. Then, accompanied by musical instruments, I chanted songs in the ritsu and ryo modes. I followed that with a recitation of Chinese poetry, the theme of which was "Winter has Come to the Home of the Arts." Next I recited Japanese poetry on the subjects of "Chrysanthemums of Late Fall Seen in the Morning," "Fallen Leaves in the Evening," and "Felicitations on the Theme of a Crane." After all the poems had been read,² rōei were sung. The verses were "Auspicious times,"³ "T'ai Mountain did not relinquish any ground,"⁴ and "This temporal world."⁵ I sang all of them, with other people chiming in. These three pieces set the tone for the banquet. After that, I proposed a round of drinks. During the second round, we ate. During the third round, songs were sung again, followed by more rounds of drinks. People left their seats when the winter night was finally about to end. The culmination of several years' effort on the collection, this banquet fulfilled my expectations.

I shall permit no outsiders to see this work. If among my descendants there is anyone who ignores my instructions and distributes it outside the family, he will be acting in a manner ill-befitting a descendant, and the guardian deity of our clan will surely strike him down. The granting or denying of permission should, however, depend on the individual and, I would imagine, on the circumstances. From time to time permission may be given to intimate friends.

After careful perusal of the contents, I have decided that they resemble the life of Master Ch'ü, who, at the age of fifty, had made forty-nine years' worth of mistakes.⁶ I would that the frivolous words in this overly ambitious collection might suddenly be transformed into an efficacious means of acquiring Buddhahood. It would lend credence to the teaching that writing, whether awkward or smooth, enables one to attain salvation.

The above was recorded by my secretary on the seventeenth day of the tenth month of Kenchō 6 [1254], the morning after the banquet.⁷ Wintry clouds are scattered here and there; the blue mountains extend silently into the distance. The late chrysanthemums overflowing the bamboo hedge are a yellowish purple. Mandarin ducks are nestled together by the small spring flowing over the rocks along the house. The sights in the still garden are very moving.

Tachibana Narisue,
Junior Fifth Rank,
Upper Grade

NOTES

Introduction

¹The name Narisue is actually written Chinese style, Na·e, with two characters chosen for their pronunciation to represent the first and last syllables.

²Daijinmei jiten (Heibonsha, 1938-41), IV, p. 179.

³Nagazumi Yasuaki and Shimada Isao, eds., Kokonchomonjū, in Nihon koten bungaku taikei (Iwanami Shoten, 1966), hereafter cited as NKBT.

⁴There is some question about the son, for in the Bunkidan, a collection of essays on gagaku music from the 1280s, Ryūen, a student of the musician Hōjimbō, states: "Narisue studied under Hōjimbō, but I have not heard about his having any descendants." This statement contradicts the Meigetsuki, but the son may have died before Narisue, or what Ryūen may have meant was that Narisue left no musical heir.

⁵According to Michiie's diary, the Gyokuzui, Kenryaku 1 (1211)/3/27, Narisue went in attendance on Gishūmon'in, Michiie's aunt, to Kasuga Shrine. Michiie's diary also notes that Narisue led the ceremonial horse at the coming of age ceremony for Michiie's grandson.

⁶Narisue is thought by scholars to figure in other stories as well. The Daijinmei jiten maintains that the story about Fujiwara Ietaka's composition of waka in the chapter on "Laments" (469) makes reference to the death of Narisue's father, his journey to Ise, and the subsequent death of his mother. The Daijinmei jiten and the Setsuwa bungaku jiten, edited by Nagano Jōichi (Tōkyōdō, 1969), p. 281, state that in 471 Narisue is the person in mourning for the wife of the Tsuchimikado Emperor. According to the Setsuwa bungaku jiten, the "witty" poem in 535 was composed by Narisue. Narisue may also figure in 669, in which Fujiwara Takasuke, the son of Ietaka, invites someone (Narisue?) to see flowers blooming at Shirakawa.

⁷NKBT, p. 7.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Pan Ku, History of the Former Han, trans. Homer Dubs (n.p.), II, 325.

¹⁰NKBT, p. 9.

¹¹Other titles correspond to those in the work of the Chinese poet Po Chü-i, and the Wakan rōeishū, a collection of Chinese and Japanese poetry set to music and chanted. Umezu Akihito, "Kokonchomonjū," Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū (Showa 33/1858/11), p. 57.

¹²See also Umezu, "Kokonchomonjū," p. 60.

¹³Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁴In the NKBT edition, there are 726 stories, 77 of which are considered later additions, and 29 of which are remarks at the beginning of each chapter explaining the origin of the subject of the chapter.

¹⁵NKBT, p. 13.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 35; Umezu, "Kokonchomonjū," p. 59.

¹⁷Umezu, "Kokonchomonjū," p. 59.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹The entry reads:

"A person who had part of the Kokonchomonjū for sale was summoned to the Palace. Since my copy lacked the sixteenth book, I was permitted to copy it. I realized when I saw it that it was a superior text. It is said to be in the late Asukai Middle Councillor Munemasa's hand. I wonder where it came from. I do not know for sure." (Eikyō 9 [1437/5/1])

²⁰The introductions to the chapters and the end of the epilogue are also in Chinese. Other passages in the collection in Chinese are suspected of being later additions.

Preface to the Kokonchomonjū

¹Scholars think that this refers to a lost work, Uji dainagon monogatari, attributed to Uji Dainagon Minamoto Takakuni (1004-77).

²Oe Masafusa (1041-1111) was a scholar of Chinese studies. "Enlightened discourse" alludes to the Gōdanshō, a collection

of Masafusa's conversations compiled by Fujiwara Sanekane, a follower.

³Commentators suggest that Narisue was alluding to Fujiwara Takatoki (Hōjinbō), a noted musician of the day. There are several stories about him in the Kokonchomonjū that portray him as a versatile, gifted musician. In 276, Narisue discusses playing the taiko drum with him. His flute playing and his discord with his father are the subject of 223, and 497 tells about his severe treatment of his young daughter, who also played the biwa. Also see the Introduction, pp. 4,6, and the story about him translated above, pp. 31-34.

⁴An allusion to a gagaku (Court music) piece, "The Warbling of Nightingales in Spring."

⁵Immediately following the compiler's name is a curious note, the meaning of which seems to be "Assigning this to an aide, I merely gave a rough outline." Commentators do not give any explanation. A similar sentence can be found in the Chinese section of the epilogue preceding Narisue's signature.

Story 20

¹The son of Fujiwara Kin'yuki. Sanenaga became Middle Councillor in Ōhō 1 (1161)/9/13. He was promoted to Junior Second Rank in Ōhō 2 (1162)/2/23, and became Major Councillor in Chōkan 2 (1164)/10/23, a position he resigned two years later on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. He died in 1182 at the age of 55.

²Hiyoshi Shrine, located at the eastern foot of Mount Hiei in Shiga Prefecture, was patronized by the Court.

³Sanesada (1139-1191) was the son of Fujiwara Kin'yoshi (the Oi no Mikado) and the grandson of Fujiwara Saneyoshi (the Tokudaiji Minister of the Left). Sanesada also figures in the story "The Priest Saigyō's Search for the Whereabouts of the Go-Tokudaiji Minister Sanesada and His Nephew Kinhira" (494), translated above, pp. 44-46.

⁴Kasuga Shrine in Nara was the Fujiwara clan shrine. Accounts of Sanesada's visit to Kasuga can also be found in the Kasuga Goryūki and the Kasuga Gongen Kenki. In the former, it says:

"The Go-Tokudaiji Minister had given up his position as Major Councillor and was living in seclusion at the time. He remained out

public life for twelve or thirteen years.

"Once when his son Kinmori went to Kasuga Shrine to serve at a festival, he went along incognito in his carriage. Unknown to anyone, he was among the attendants. While his son was at Wakamiya Shrine, there was a revelation during the kagura /Shinto/ music: 'We are pleased you have come and will see that you are not disappointed.' When asked who the prophecy was about, the medium replied, 'The Major Councillor who has come here in disguise.'

"Shortly thereafter, the Go-Tokudaiji Minister became Major Councillor again, and by the end of the year he became Captain of the Palace Guards."

⁵The Chinese couplet is in lines of seven characters, which, because of the compactness of the Chinese language, become considerably longer in English. The Japanese poem is in the Senzaiwakashū, Book XX, "Shinto Deities." The Senzaishū states that the poem was "composed on the theme of grievances at a Sumiyoshi Shrine poetry contest [1170] held while he was out of office."

⁶Fujiwara Moronaga (1137-1192) was the second son of Fujiwara Yorinaga. A skilled biwa player, he was a favorite of the ex-Emperor Go-Shirakawa. Moronaga also appears in 496, "The Intense Attachment of Fujiwara Takamichi and Fujiwara Sadasuke to the Takuboku Tune," translated above, pp. 47-49.

⁷Taira no Shigemori (1138-1179) was the eldest son of Kiyomori, the de facto ruler of Japan during the ascendancy of the Taira clan at the end of the Heian period.

⁸A son of Fujiwara Kin'yoshi, and Sanesada's half-brother. He also appears in 494, pp. 44-46 above.

⁹The Dance of Great Peace (taiheiraku) was performed at coronation ceremonies by four dancers in military regalia accompanied by gagaku music.

Story 57

¹This story is based on the Saigyō monogatari, a picture scroll and text depicting Saigyō's life.

² Ōmine, a mountain range in Nara and Wakayama prefectures. The name was often used to refer to a single mountain, Kinbusen. Ōmine was the chief training ground of the ascetic mountain sect (Shugendō). From Heian times on, ascetics of esoteric Buddhism used it as a mountain retreat for practicing austerities and rituals. Those who carried out austerities there were venerated by the people.

³(1118?-1190). Saigyō's secular name was Satō Norikiyo. He came from a military family and served as a retainer under ex-Emperor Go-Toba. He was a famous poet, many of whose poems are in the Shinkokinwakashū. He took vows at the age of twenty-three and spent much of his life thereafter on pilgrimages.

⁴The worlds of hungry demons (gaki), beasts (chikushō), and hell (jigoku).

Story 246

¹Kanetoshi only rose as far as Junior Fourth Rank, and so under normal circumstances he would not have been able to enter the Palace without special permission.

²The shō was a reed instrument used in gagaku music.

Story 291

¹See the Preface to the Kokōchōmonjū, n. 3.

²Another name for Benzaiten (Sarasvatī), a patron saint of music.

³Fujiwara Yukiyoshi, a poet and calligrapher, was a seventh generation descendant of Fujiwara Yukinari (Kōzei), a famous Heian calligrapher. He took vows in 1240 at the age of 61.

⁴The Kan'inden in Kyoto was originally the home of Fujiwara Fuyutsugu. From the end of the Heian period to the middle of the Kamakura period, it was primarily used as an Imperial palace. In the second month of 1249, it was destroyed by fire. In the sixth month of 1251, there was a ceremony marking the Emperor's return to the Kan'inden after its restoration.

⁵"Kantō area" refers to Kamakura, the seat of the military government that ran the country during the Kamakura period.

Story 319

¹A member of the northern branch of the Fujiwara clan. He learned the hichiriki from his father, a noted player.

²The Gosechi dance was performed at the time of the Shinto Harvest Festival in the eleventh month, notably at the Toyo no Akari Court banquet the day after the festival. The dancers were five girls chosen from among the aristocratic and provincial governors' classes.

³A wind instrument used in gagaku music. It produces a mournful sound.

⁴In the original, the shira in shiragiku ("white chrysanthemum") contains a pun, "to be unaware of," which was left out of the translation. The verb utsurou has a double meaning: "to fade" and "one's feelings change." Kareni refers both to withered flowers and the alienation of affection.

son of Sanemori,
He died in 1193.

Story 322

¹Go-Shirakawa (1127-1192) was the fourth son of the Emperor Toba. He reigned from 1155 to 1158 when he abdicated. He was a cloistered Emperor (In) from 1158 to 1192 and actively participated in the political affairs of the time. He took vows at the age of 43.

²A more literal rendering would be "standing there fully dressed."

³

Story 329

¹A field northeast of Kyoto.

²The ō in Ōhara contains a pun on the word "many" (ōi).

Story 395

¹Toba Sōjō (1058-1140) was the son of Minamoto Takakuni. A priest of the Tendai Sect, he was at one time steward of the Hosshōji Temple. The Chōjū giga, an allegorical animal containing caricatures of humans, is traditionally attributed to him.

²A temple on the eastern side of Kyoto founded by the Emperor Shirakawa.

Story 494

¹See 57, n. 3, p. 64.

²Fujiwara Saneyoshi became Minister of the Left in 1156, and died in 1157 at the age of 62. He appears more prominently in 19 and 488, which have not been translated.

³See 20, n. 3, p. 62.

⁴Another version of this episode appears in the Tsurezuregusa, section 10.

⁵See 20, n. 8, p. 63.

⁶The NKBT edition says that he was the son of Sanemori, but other sources have him as Kin'yoshi's son. He died in 1193.

⁷See 322, n. 1, p. 65.

⁸The NKBT has Fujiwara Kanezane; the Nihon bungaku taikai edition of the Kokonchomonjū, Fujiwara Motofusa.

⁹Another text has mōsubeki instead of mōshiki, making the tense of the verb "explain" future rather than past.

Story 496

¹A member of the provincial governors' class, Fujiwara Takamichi was a student of Fujiwara Moronaga and the father of Hōjimbō.

²See 20, n. 6, p. 63.

³The son of Fujiwara Chikanobu, Sadasuke rose to Senior Second Rank. He died in 1227 at the age of 65.

⁴Minamoto Tsunenobu, the sixth son of Minamoto Michikata, was a noted poet and musician who eventually attained Senior Second Rank. He died in 1087 at the age of 82.

⁵The Nankyūfu ("Music Notations of the Southern Palace") was a collection of biwa music compiled by Prince Sadayasu, the son of Emperor Seiwa (r. 858-876).

⁶Go-Toba reigned from 1183 to 1198. As an ex-Emperor, he was active in the compilation of the Shinkokinwakashū and throughout his life fostered the development of Court poetry. He was strongly opposed to the Shogunate and spent the last years of his life in exile as a result of the Shōkyū uprising.

Story 549

¹Shitennōji Temple, which belongs to the Tendai Sect, is located in Osaka. It was founded by Shotoku Taishi in the early seventh century.

²Yamabushi are priests who practice austerities in the mountains. They are often depicted as large and unruly with long unkempt hair.

³The NKBT editors think that it may have been a section of Nishinomiya in present-day Hyōgo Prefecture.

Story 599

¹Scholars are not sure of the reading of the character 奥.

²One of the eight classes of beings who protect Buddhism. Ugly demon gods, they are said to harm nonbelievers.

³Fukurin is tentatively defined by commentators as "border" or "edge."

⁴The Rengeō-in, a temple of the Tendai Sect in Kyoto, is commonly known as the Sanjūsangendō.

Story 681

¹The Butokuden was a building on the Imperial Palace grounds used when emperors watched previews of equestrian archery held in the fifth month.

²"One Vehicle" refers to the Mahayana doctrine that there is only one true way for all sentient beings to attain Buddhahood. It is most clearly set forth in the Lotus Sutra.

³In Buddhism, the Trāyastimsá realm is the second heaven in the world of desire. It is located on the top of Mt. Sumeru.

¹ Takao Shingōji is a famous Shingon Sect temple northwest of Kyoto.

² A priest of the Shingon Sect who lived during the end of the Heian period and the beginning of the Kamakura period. He restored the temple on Mount Takao.

³ A river northwest of Kyoto in the vicinity of the Takao Shingōji Temple.

Epilogue

¹ Lien Ch'eng-wu was a biwa master who lived during the T'ang Dynasty.

² The word at first referred to a method of reciting Chinese poetry; it eventually came to include Japanese poems. Verses were sung to fixed melodies, and so were prose passages.

³ This verse is from a miscellaneous poem by the Six Dynasties poet Hsieh Yen in the Wakan rōeishū:

On auspicious occasions
There is endless joy;
Even after a thousand autumns,
Ten thousand years,
The pleasure does not cease.

⁴ This phrase is part of a brief excerpt from Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Records of the Grand Historian in the Wakan rōeishū: "T'ai Mountain did not relinquish any ground; that is why it was able to become so tall. The rivers and seas did not scorn narrow streams; that is why they were able to become so deep."

⁵ This phrase is from a rōei in the Wakan rōeishū. The rōei is a prose passage from a collection of the T'ang poet Po Chü-i's poetry donated to the Hsiang-shan Monastery near Loyang: "May the act of writing about this mundane world, the sin of vain and frivolous words, be transformed in future lives into a means of propagating the Law."

⁶ From the Huai-nan-tzu, a collection of essays put together under the direction of Prince Liu An (d. 122 B.C.) of Huai-nan, the grandson of the first Han emperor.

⁷ Although the rest of the epilogue was written in Japanese, this afterword is in Chinese.

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