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Abstract: The reign of Saga Tennō (810–823) is known for its burst of literary activity, largely concentrated on the production of Chinese-language *shi*. In this endeavor the sovereign himself took the lead. Saga was a formidable poet, an avid student of the Chinese classics, and an enthusiastic facilitator of numerous poetic occasions both during his reign and in the many years following his abdication. Under his supervision, a royal anthology of poetry was compiled in Japan for the first time. Two more royal anthologies were completed before his death in 842. This decades-long surge of literary activity took as its philosophical basis a phrase excerpted from an essay by third-century ruler, poet, and theorist Wei Emperor Wen, known also as Cao Pi: "Writing is the grand enterprise in ordering the state, an imperishable glory." Cao Pi's declaration is quoted often enough in early Heian documents to warrant being called the official slogan of Saga's court. The concerns of this article are three-fold: 1) What are the possible meanings of these words when viewed in their original context, Cao Pi's essay "Lunwen"? 2) If the frequent early Heian invocations of Cao Pi constitute a distinct early ninth-century hermeneutical inflection of his work, how might this inflection compare to Six Dynasties and Tang-era usages of Cao Pi? And, 3) As a quotation, Cao Pi's words appear in a diversity of Heian-era contextual environments. How does the quotation from a 600-year-old imported text function within discussions otherwise treating intensely local, contemporary issues? Moreover, what impact did the quotation of Cao Pi have on prior literary theorization in the archipelago?

Keywords: Reception, Saga, Heian literature, Cao Pi, *Lunwen*, *shi*, *Ryōun shū*

The Big Business of Writing: *Monjō keikoku* in the Early Heian Court of Saga Tennō

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Early in the ninth century Heian officials began using variations of the phrase *monjō wa keikoku no daigyō nari* 文章は經國之大業なり ("Writing is the grand enterprise in ordering the state") as a means to declare their renewed appreciation for the value of literary composition.[1] The phrase originates in "Lunwen" 論文 ("Discourse on Writing"), part of a treatise composed by third-century Wei ruler and literatus Cao Pi 曹丕. "Lunwen" most likely was made accessible to early Heian students and scholars by its inclusion in the massive sixth-century anthology, *Wen xuan* 文選, *Selections of Fine Literature*.[2] Beginning in the Kōnin 弘仁 era (as the reign of Saga 嵯峨, 810–823, is known) Cao Pi's words came to be employed as a kind of slogan, a frequently invoked reminder of the close interdependence of political rule (經國) and written composition (文章) as articulated by the venerable Wei emperor. With this phrase, the ideal relationship between writing and governing was given a name.

Though Saga abdicated in 823, for the remainder of his life his dominance in the sphere of literary composition continued undiminished, permeating the reigns of his younger half-brother and successor Junna 淳和, as well as Junna's successor, Saga's son Ninmyō 仁明.[3] Saga died in 842. The term *writing* as employed by Cao Pi encompasses a great number of genres: memorials 奏, disquisitions 議, letters 書, treatises 論, inscriptions 銘, eulogies 誄, as well as *shi* 詩 and *fu* 賦 poetry. For Saga, the most important form of writing seems to have been poetry (especially *shi*). For the roughly forty years that comprise his reign and subsequent term as *daijō* 太上 (retired/abdicated monarch), Saga was unquestionably the principal force of court poetic composition. This supremacy is attested to not only by the statistically overwhelming proportion of his compositions preserved in early Heian anthologies, but also in how he coordinated the means by which poetry, in the forms he endorsed, flourished.

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[1] Romanization of this phrase follows the conventional *kundoku* 訓読 conversion of classical Chinese into classical Japanese idiom. Some Japanese scholars prefer *bunshō* as an alternative pronunciation to *monjō*. Pinyin romanization for this ancient phrase is *wenzhang jingguo zhi daye.*

[2] The title of the treatise in which "Lunwen" appears is *Dianlun* 典論, most of which has been lost. "Lunwen" is preserved in juan 52 of *Wen xuan*. This English rendering of the anthology's title follows David Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or, Selections of Fine Literature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982– (multiple volumes). Cao Pi (187–226) reigned from 220 until his death as Wei Emperor Wen 魏文帝.

[3] Junna's reign is known as the Tenchō 天長 era, 823–833. Ninmyō reigned from 834 until his death in 850, mostly during the Jōwa 承和 era, 834–848. Late in his life the era name was changed to Kashō 嘉祥 (848–851).

Poetic works by the sovereign and his courtiers were predominately (though not exclusively) composed in the Chinese language, a mode of writing now commonly referred to as *kanshi* 漢詩. *Kanshi* is a latter-day term, however, popularized by proponents of national literature during the late nineteenth century and used widely today by Japan scholars as a generalized term for "Chinese-language poetry." Saga and his coterie would have identified what they were doing with greater specificity of genre, and without the *kan* marker of language/territory. They were enormously productive composers of *shi* in a variety of its forms: pentasyllabic (五言詩), heptasyllabic (七言詩), and irregular meter and lineation (雜言). Less often, they composed *fu*. By the early ninth century the practice of *shi* composition in the archipelago certainly was not new, but because it found happy consonance with other ostensibly Tang-style reforms Saga initiated, its importance grew accordingly. Besides that, Saga clearly enjoyed reading and writing poetry. During his lifetime three royal command anthologies came to being in quick succession: *Ryōun shinshū* 凌雲新集 "New Anthology Atop the Clouds" (814, commonly abbreviated as *Ryōun shū*), *Bunka shūrei shū* 文華秀麗集 "Anthology of Supremely Beautiful Literary Flowers" (818), and *Keikoku shū* 經國集 "Anthology for Ruling the State" (827)—a degree of literary output unequalled in the history of Japan's royal anthologies (*chokusen shū* 勅撰集).[4] The title of the third anthology, *Keikoku shū*, marks the most prominent invocation of Cao Pi's phrase, but in fact other, less obvious references to it appear in documents from the earliest years of Saga's reign.

Repeated invocations of Cao Pi's words by Heian authorities give rise to several questions: did the excerpt from "Lunwen" truly serve as a philosophical inspiration for early Heian poetry composition, or was it merely a convenient, authoritative-sounding piety? How does the quotation of Cao Pi's phrase suggest a distinct hermeneutical inflection on what was, from the perspective of the early ninth century, a six-hundred-year-old imported text? What is the relationship between the early Heian excerption of "Lunwen" and the grand flow of commentary on Cao Pi and frequent quotation of his works that persisted on the continent through the Tang period? With all of these issues in mind, this analysis of reception proceeds from the belief that an act of quotation—especially one as frequent as *monjō keikoku*—can be better appreciated if the text from which it originates is viewed as a whole. An approach of this sort does not necessarily preclude the possibility that, during the early Heian period, certain individual acts of alluding to Chinese texts might have been something akin to quoting prior quotation, or a process guided by chapbooks.[5] But the shadow of Cao Pi looms too large over Saga's

[4] For an introduction to these three anthologies and a masterfully wrought sampling of their contents, see Judith N. Rabinovitch and Timothy R. Bradstock, *Dance of the Butterflies: Chinese Poetry from the Japanese Court Tradition*, Ithaca: Cornell East Asian Series, 2005, pp. 49–97.

[5] Wiebke Denecke outlines many of the methodological challenges facing students of reception in her groundbreaking article, "Chinese Antiquity and Court Spectacle in Early Kanshi," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 30:1 (2004), pp. 97–122.

era for the early Heian use of his words to be discounted as mere mimicry and superficial understanding. Moreover, the rather sudden invocation of Cao Pi must also be assessed in in light of previous literary theorization in the archipelago, namely the preface to *Kaifūsō* 懐風藻 "Cherished Customs and Writings of Old" (751). As such, this study seeks to consider as a whole the original contextual home of the phrase *monjō keikoku*, elucidate patterns of early Heian quotation of "Lunwen," and situate these invocations of Cao Pi within domestic debates about the function and value of writing. Ultimately I argue that each episode of allusion even to just this pithy phrase must be evaluated both for its linkage to hallowed literary ideals from the continent as well as to its historically specific, highly localized rhetorical objectives. Put another way, during the decades of Saga's dominance the local meaning and significance of *monjō keikoku*, as a quotation, did not stand still.

The advent of **monjō keikoku** *in Saga's court*

The earliest explicit articulation of a formalized connection between governance and the enterprises of study and composition during the Kōnin era comes in the form of a royal edict, issued by Saga in 812, concerning the modification of a prior mandate about university enrollment:

> 勅經國治家、莫善於文。立身揚名、莫尚於學。是以大同之初、令諸王及五位已上子孫十歳已上、皆入大學、分業教習。庶使拾芥磨玉之彦。霧集於環林。呑鳥雕蟲之髦。風馳乎璧沼。而朽木難琢、愚心不移。徒積多年、未成一業。自今以後、宜改前勅。任其所好、稍合物情。
>
> Edict: For governing the country and managing the household, nothing is better than writing; for establishing oneself and raising one's reputation, nothing could be better than study. Thus in the first year of Daidō [806] there was a command for all boys aging ten and above, who are the sons or grandsons of princes or those of the fifth rank and above, to enter the university, determine a specialization, and learn through instruction. My desire is to have talented young men picked up like small polished jewels and gathered together in the misty forest, to have bird-swallowers and insect carvers gallop like the wind in the jeweled valley.[6] However, rotten wood is difficult to shine, and a foolish mind will not change; though they may study for years upon years, it comes to little result. Henceforth the previous edict is amended, leaving to each his preference [about attending the university], so as to bring into harmony [educational policy and individual disposition].[7]

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[6] A reference to *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 by Liu Xie 劉勰 (died 552).

[7] *Nihon kōki*, Kōnin 3 [812], Fifth Month, Twenty-first day. An alternative translation of this passage can be found in Andrew Pekarik, *Poetics and the Place of Japanese Poetry in Court Society Through the Early Heian Period*, Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University, 1983, p. 99. I

It is not fully apparent what prompted Saga to amend the policy established by his older brother and predecessor Heizei 平城 (ruled 806-809). It could be that Saga (or certain of his university-affiliated advisors) genuinely was irked by the scholarly failings of young aristocrats who went to school solely for the reason that attendance had been mandated. There also may have been interest in creating vacancies for the offspring of lower-status aristocratic families so as to train those who actually would utilize writing skills in the bureaucratic positions required by the everyday business of the court. Heizei's original edict did not contain reference to Cao Pi. The rhetorical strategy of Saga's edict above is to posit the supreme utility of writing for "ruling the country" and "ordering the household" as the spirit guiding both the original text of 806 and its amendment in 812.

This kind of phrasing can be regarded as an adumbration of fuller engagements with "Lunwen." Attributed quotation of Cao Pi first appears in 814 in the preface to *Ryōun shū*. The retrospective scope of this first of the three royal anthologies extends back to 781 (the first year of the reign of Saga's father Kanmu 桓武, founder of the Heian capital). The total number of works collected is 90, in some versions 91. If bad feelings lingered about the recent attempted coup d'état (the so-called Kusuko Incident), they are not detectable in *Ryōun shū*.[8] A smattering of poems by members of Heizei's entourage was included, suggesting that Saga did not seek an immediate or total cultural break with his older brother

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am indebted to Yugen Wang and Matthew Fraleigh for helping clarify portions of this passage. Here and throughout, translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

[8] In 810 the court had experienced a brief crisis of authority, when Heizei, some time after his abdication, attempted to re-enter the political sphere by establishing a rival court at the former Heijō capital. The new rival "court" began to issue edicts, and there were rumors that Heizei was recruiting disaffected clan leaders to form an armed force that would march on the Heian capital. Saga quickly put an end to the planned rebellion, blaming (officially, anyway) the inordinate influence exerted on Heizei by his lover, Fujiwara no Kusuko 藤原薬子; hence the name *Kusuko no hen* 薬子の変 (the "Kusuko Incident"). Kusuko's older brother Nakanari 仲成 was also implicated. He was swiftly put to death, and Kusuko herself forced to commit suicide with poison. Heizei was required to take tonsure, and his son forfeited the status of Crown Prince (it was at this time that Saga transferred the title to his younger brother, who would later rule as Junna). For summaries and commentary, see William McCullough, "The Heian Court, 794–1070," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 2, p. 33; Mezaki Tokue 目崎徳衛, *Heian bunka shi ron* 平安文化史論, Ōfūsha, 1968, pp. 64–74; and Hashimoto Yoshihiko 橋本義彦, *Heian kizoku* 平安貴族, Heibonsha, 1986, pp. 42–59. A more recent discussion of the event appears in Gustav Heldt, *The Pursuit of Harmony: Poetry and Power in Early Heian Japan*, Ithaca: Cornell East Asian Series, 2008, p. 39. Lately some Japanese scholars—perhaps motivated by a perception of misogynism in the traditional label—have come to refer to the episode as the 平城太上天皇の変 "Retired Sovereign Heizei Incident." Regardless of nomenclature, this turn of events is especially important because it marks the rise of the Northern branch 北家 of the Fujiwara lineage over the Ceremonial branch 式家 that had sided against Saga, a change of fortune that culminated in the unprecedented dominance during the later Heian of Fujiwara no Michinaga 道長.

and his supporters.[9] Like the edict that amended university practices, *Ryōun shū* deftly emphasized continuity with Heizei's reign. Still, the majority of works collected are *shi* that Saga and members of his coterie composed between 811 and 814, making *Ryōun shū* for the most part a record of recent poetic activity. Its brief preface, composed by poet and advisor to Saga Ono no Minemori 小野岑守, reads as follows:

> 臣岑守言、魏文帝有曰文章經國之大業、不朽之盛事。年壽有時而盡、榮樂止乎其身。信哉。
>
> Your servant Minemori states: there is a saying by Emperor Wen of Wei, "Writing is the grand enterprise in ordering the state, an imperishable glory. There comes a time when life expires. Honor and pleasure cease with this body." How true this is!
>
> 伏惟、皇帝陛下、握裒紫極、御辨丹霄、春臺展熙、秋荼翦繁。叡知天縱、艷藻神授、猶且學以助聖、問而增裕。屬世機之靜謐、託琴書而終日。歎光陰之易暮、惜斯文之將墜。
>
> I humbly submit that His Majesty the Sovereign, possessing the royal dignity in the Great Purple Halls, rules with great judiciousness [all under] the red skies, extending joy from the Spring Dais to master and servant, and cutting back the autumn overgrowth [i.e. excessive laws]. His wisdom was granted by heaven; his literary finesse was awarded by the gods. Moreover, studying assists his sagehood; inquiring increases his insight. The realm now knows peace, and there is leisure to spend days immersed in musical and textual pleasures. One sighs at how quickly time passes, and laments that our writing might some day perish.
>
> 爰詔臣等、撰集近代以来篇什。臣以不才、忝承絲綸、命渙汗。代大匠斲、傷手爲期。
>
> Your humble subjects have received a command to gather a selection of the literary works of recent times. Though I lack the necessary talent, I humbly accept the thick cords of a royal command. A command is like perspiration [i.e. once issued it stands]. But when one [unqualified] takes the place of a master and attempts to carve wood, he is sure to end up cutting his hand.

[9] Not in this first royal anthology, anyway. Tracing patterns of inclusion and exclusion from one anthology to the next, Kinpara Tadashi 金原理 speculates about changes in the historical views of disgraced Heizei and his supporters. See his "Saga chō bundan no kichō" 嵯峨朝文壇の基調, *Kokugo to kokubun* 国語と国文, 50.10 (1973), pp. 26–40, especially p. 29.

臣今所集、掩其瑕疵擧其警奇、以表一篇盡善之未易。得道不居上、失時不降下、無言存亡、一依爵次。

Showing the splendid perfection of a composition is no easy matter, and among those presented herein your subject has hidden some shortcomings while offering up what is finest. It would not do to place those whose careers are successful at the top, and those out of step with the times on the bottom, nor to speak of distinctions between the living and deceased; [instead] the sequence has been determined by court rank.

至若御製令製、句高象外、韵絶環中。豈臣等能所議乎。而殊被詔旨、敢以採擇。氷夷讃洋詠井之見、不及大陽昇景化草之明。斯迷、博我以文、欲罷不能。辱因編載、巻軸生光。猶川含珠而水清、淵沈玉而岸潤。

Verses by the Sovereigns [Saga and Heizei] and the Crown Prince [Junna] are so fine as to not be of this world, so superior that they seem supernatural. How could one such as me even debate [their worth]? But we have been given a special order, and dare to undertake selections [among the royal compositions]. Our understanding is like the river god who sees the ocean for the first time and is awed into praise, as narrow as a creature swimming in a well; we could not approach the great wisdom of the sunrays that transform the grasses [i.e. the sovereign's power of judgment]. It is a source of great anxiety that the Sovereign has chosen us to broaden by way of literature,[10] and though we thought to give up the task [for lack of qualification] we could not. Thus we have compiled verses [by royal hands], a whole chapter emanating bright light; [these poems] are like beautiful jewels in the pure water of a river, the riverbed made lustrous by the jewels sunken there.

起自延暦元年、終于弘仁五年。作者二十三人、詩總九十首、合爲一巻、名曰凌雲新集。

The collection spans from the first year of Enryaku [781] to the fifth year of Kōnin [814]. It contains ninety poems by twenty-three poets, brought together in a single volume. The collection has been named the *Ryōun shinshū, New Anthology Atop the Clouds*.[11]

[10] An echo of *Analects* IX.10/11.

[11] An alternative translation of the preface can be found in Heldt, pp. 301–302. He also provides valuable translations of the prefaces of the other two early Heian royal anthologies, pp. 303–308.

One hears in Minemori's presentation a theme already raised by the *Kaifūsō* preface of sixty or so years prior: the triangular, self-fulfilling notion that wise rule begets peace, peace begets the leisure to enjoy writing, and fine writing in turn serves to affirm wise rule. The *Kaifūsō* preface also links the desire to preserve poems in the form of an anthology to fears about the perishability of textual accomplishments; one day it all, quite literally, might go up in smoke. The conflagration of the Ōmi 近江 capital, a result of the Jinshin War 壬申の乱 of 672,[12] is portrayed by the anonymous author of the *Kaifūsō* preface as foremost a loss of literary treasures: "Exquisitely carved compositions, gorgeous writing—there were hardly a hundred works. But time passed and the world fell into disorder. All were burnt to ashes. How it pains one's heart to think of their destruction!" (雕章麗筆、非唯百篇。但時經亂離。悉從煨燼 。言念湮滅、軫悼傷懷).[13] In the *Ryōun shū* preface, Minemori echoes this sober awareness about the perishability of writing, but the idea is expressed more as a general truth than as a fact grounded in known historical precedent: "One sighs at how quickly time passes, and laments that our writing might some day perish" (歎光陰之易暮、惜斯文之將墜). Here *si wen* 斯文 "this *wen*" carries with it not only the meaning of writing but also connotations of cosmological and civil custodianship.[14] The broader importance of writing thus is encased by the particular: the loss of *these* writings would constitute the loss of our civilization itself. In this way, the compilers of both *Kaifūsō* and *Ryōun shū* seem to agree that an anthology should function as a safeguard against the inherent fragility of literary discourse, presumably because it would give rise to multiple scribal copies and thus have greater chance of survival.

The differences between the prefaces, however, are telling. For one, there is a marked contrast in how the ideal royal attitude toward study and writing is portrayed. In the *Kaifūsō* preface, Tenji, cast in the role of exemplary sage-ruler, is shown to express a royal commitment to learning chiefly through acts of sponsorship: establishing a university (爰則建庠序), seeking out the talented men of the kingdom (徵茂才), and hosting lavish banquets to which literati were invited (施招文學之士、時開置醴之遊). To the delight of his guests, Tenji even on occasion composed his own poetry, for which his virtue was praised all the more (當此之際、宸翰垂文、賢臣獻頌). Yet in none of these hospitable acts toward writing do we see a dramatization of Tenji himself actually engaged in study.

Saga, in contrast, is presented by Minemori as a sovereign willing to engage in scholarly exertion in order to hone his already substantial divinely-conferred talent: "His wisdom was

[12] For an excellent recent analysis of this event and the historiographical issues it engenders, see Torquil Duthie, "The Jinshin Rebellion and the Politics of Historical Narrative in Early Japan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 133.2 (2013), pp. 295–319.

[13] Denecke, pp. 104–105, rightly notes a parallel between the *Kaifūsō* preface's portrayal of the burning of Ōmi's literary treasures and the book burning carried out by China's first emperor, Qinshi Huangdi.

[14] With those same larger nuances in mind, Peter Bol uses his translation of *si wen* as the title of his volume, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transition in T'ang and Sung China,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.

granted by heaven; his literary finesse is awarded by the gods. Moreover, studying assists his sagehood; inquiring increases his insight" (艷藻神授、猶且學以助聖、問而增裕). Embedded within the rhetoric praising Saga's innate wisdom are thus remarks that humanize the sovereign as a fellow devotee to scholarly activity, eager to "study" and "inquire." Indeed, he becomes an individual capable of self-improvement. His sagehood (or sacredness, depending upon how one translates 聖) *grows*, explicitly aided by study (學以助聖). This manner of describing Saga integrates him—to a certain degree—into the court-based community of scholars and poets in a way that we do not see in the *Kaifūsō* preface's portrayal of Tenji. Of course, this notion of royal "membership" in the community of literati in turn exalts the status and importance of those at court who are affiliated with study and with literary composition in its various forms.

The most obvious distinction between the prefatory rhetoric of *Ryōun shū* and *Kaifūsō* preface is Minemori's strident declaration of the importance of writing by way of Cao Pi's phrase: "Writing is the grand enterprise in ordering the state, an imperishable glory. There comes a time when life expires. Honor and pleasure cease with this body." Unmistakably bold in tone, Cao Pi's precise meaning is elusive. To be sure, the idea that a sovereign wise enough to put writing (and its agents) to use will be well-served already had precedent in the archipelago: according to the *Kaifūsō* preface, Tenji employed it as a sage-king would to regulate customs (調風), transform the common folk (化俗), and disseminate laws to far-flung places (規模弘遠). Were these the purposes that the *shi* collected in *Ryōun shū* served, or was it in some other way that its composition (and preservation) assisted in ordering the state? And what is the exact relationship of *shi* to other forms of writing? Minemori's quotation of Cao Pi contains another provocative element: if writing functions as an "imperishable glory" (不朽之盛事)—that is, a kind of enduring legacy—under whose custodianship does such a legacy fall? In order to address these questions, we first should examine Cao Pi's words in their own context. The phrase Minemori employs to declare the purpose of writing and the significance of the anthology is in fact only a small facet of one of the earliest sustained theoretical discussions in Chinese about writing, authorship, and genre.

"Lunwen": *locus classicus of* monjō keikoku

"Lunwen," literally "A Discourse on Literature," is a brief and at times desultory set of remarks, but offers marvelously rich content.[15] Cao Pi begins by lamenting the petty resentments and jealousies that occur among even the most gifted writers. He then declares himself sufficiently worthy of undertaking a discourse on literature, and sets out to identify and evaluate the most renowned writers of his day. Next Cao Pi enumerates a list of accepted genres, providing a word of prescription for each. His thoughts then turn to the nature of individual talent, how writing functions within the polity, the significance of a literary reputation rightly earned, and, finally, what constitutes the pinnacle of success in letters. "Lunwen" reads as follows:[16]

> 文人相輕、自古而然。傅毅之於班固、伯仲之間耳。而固小之、與弟超書曰、武仲以能屬文、爲蘭臺令史下筆不能自休。夫人善於自見、而文非一體、鮮能備善。是以各以所長、相輕所短。里語曰、家有弊帚、享之千金。斯不自見之患也。
>
> Men of letters disparage one another; from ancient times it has been this way. The relationship of Fu Yi and Ban Gu was like that of brothers,[17] yet Ban Gu belittled him, saying in a letter to his younger brother [Ban] Zhao, "Because of his glib compositional skill, Wu Zhong [i.e. Fu Yi] became an Imperial Librarian; once he started writing, he was unable to stop himself." Even if a man is good at self-discernment, writing is not of a single form,

[15] "Lunwen" is not Cao Pi's only attempt to theorize the craft of composition and its value. He makes other comments about writing in two letters to Wu Zhi 吳質, works that are collected in *Wen xuan*, juan 42. Roughly seventy poems by Cao Pi also survive, mostly *fu*, pentasyllabic *shi*, and, notably, a single heptasyllabic *shi* "Yan ge xing" 燕歌行, "Song of the Swallow," the earliest example of that form by a known author. The best guess for the time of compilation of "Lunwen" is 217 C.E., just before Cao Pi's ascension as Wei emperor. For a summary of the evidence supporting this date, see Okamura Shigeru 岡村繁, "Sōhi no 'Tenron ronbun' ni tsuite" 曹丕の「典論論文」について, *Shinagaku kenkyū* 支那学研究, (Hiroshima Shina gakkai) 24, (1960), pp. 75–85.

[16] In preparing this translation I reviewed prior ones by Donald Holzman, "Literary Criticism in China in the Early Third Century A.D.," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 28.2 (1974), pp. 128–131; Obi Kōichi 小尾郊一 and Hanabusa Hideki 花房英樹, eds., *Monzen*, vol. 6 (*Zenshaku Kanbun taikei* 全釈漢文大系#31), Shūeisha, 1977 (hereafter referred to as Obi-Hanabusa); and Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992, pp. 57–72. My punctuation of the original for the most part follows Obi-Hanabusa.

[17] As Owen notes, it is difficult to determine whether the stated filiation between Fu Yi and Ban Gu was meant to imply a friendship or a nearly equal skill at writing (Owen, p. 599, n. 4). It could be both. The *Li shan* 李善 commentary on the *Wen xuan* takes it as the latter, "*Baizhong* 伯仲 is a metaphor of brotherly relations, which says that among brothers differences of skill are not too great." Regardless, the point seems to be that among those who write, criticizing other writers, both near and far, is an inescapable habit.

and few are good at everything. Thus each uses his own strengths to depreciate in others that in which he himself is weak. There is a folk proverb that says, "The old frayed broom at my house is worth a thousand in gold." Such is the unfortunate result of not being able to discern [one's own abilities].

今之文人、魯國孔融文舉、廣陵陳琳孔璋、山陽王粲仲宣、北海徐幹偉長、陳留阮瑀元瑜、汝南應瑒德璉、東平劉楨公幹、斯七子者、於學無所遺、於辭無所假、咸以自騁驥騄於千里、仰齊足而竝馳。以此相服、亦良難矣。蓋君子審己以度人。故能免於斯累而作論文。

Present men of letters are Kong Rong of the state of Lu, called Wen Ju; Chen Lin of Guangling, called Kong Zhang; Wang Can of Shan-yang, called Zhong Xuan; Xu Gan of Bei-hai, called Wei Zhang; Ruan Yu of Chen-liu, called Yuan Yu; Ying Chang of Ru-nan, called De Lian; and Liu Zhen of Dong-ping, called Gong Gan. These Seven Masters have no lapses of learning and no borrowing in their rhetoric. Like the mighty steeds Li and Yu galloping for a thousand leagues neck-and-neck, it was difficult for one to yield and recognize good in the other. A superior man studies himself to assess others. Thus he is able to avoid such attachments[18] and compose a discourse on literature.

王粲長於辭賦。徐幹時有齊氣、然粲之匹也。如粲之初征登樓槐賦征思、幹之玄猿漏巵圓扇橘賦、雖張蔡不過也。然於他文未能稱是。琳瑀之章表書記、今之雋也。應瑒和而不壯、劉楨壯而不密。孔融體氣高妙、有過人者。然不能持論、理不勝詞。以至乎雜以嘲戲。及其所善、楊班儔也。常人貴遠賤近、向聲背實。又患闇於自見謂己為賢。

Wang Can's strength is *fu*. Though at times Xu Gan's *qi* flags, still he is a match for Wang Can. Wang Can's "Setting Out on a Journey," "Climbing a Tower," "The Scholartree," and "Thoughts on Travel," and Xu Gan's "The Black Monkey," "The Syphon," "The Circular Fan," and "The Tangerine Tree" are not surpassed even by Zhang Heng and Cai Yong.[19] Yet their

[18] That is to say, the prejudices that result from thinking too highly of one's own talent. Cao Pi thus nominates himself as sufficiently judicious to execute a broad and fair survey of others' abilities.

[19] Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139), eminent astronomer and writer of *fu*, spent ten years composing one on the two capitals 二京賦. This work was modeled after Ban Gu's *fu* of a similar topic, and satirized the extravagance of the upper classes. Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133–192) was a wide-ranging scholar and a virtuoso of parallel prose. His most esteemed work is of funerary stone inscriptions

other writings do not measure up to these.[20] As for memorials, letters, and records, those composed by Chen Lin and Ruan Yu are the finest of the present age.

Ying Chang is pleasant but lacks force. Liu Zhen has force but lacks restraint. Kong Rong's form and *qi* is lofty and delicate, possessing something that surpasses other men; yet he is incapable of sustaining an argument, and his logic loses out to his rhetoric. When he blends in playfulness in just the right way,[21] he may well keep company with Yang Xiong and Ban Gu.

Ordinary men esteem what is far away and disdain that which is close at hand. They embrace celebrity and turn their backs on substance. Further, they suffer from benighted self-regard, believing themselves to be men of superior talent.

夫文本同而末異。蓋奏議宣雅、書論宣理、銘誄尚實、詩賦欲麗。此四科不同、故能之者偏也。唯通才能備其體。文以氣為主、氣之清濁有。不可力強而致。譬諸音樂、曲度雖均、節奏同檢、至於引氣不齊巧拙有素。雖在父兄不能以移子弟。

The essence of all writing is the same, but differences exist among its manifestations. Indeed, memorials and disquisitions should be dignified; letters and treatises should be logical; inscriptions and eulogies should uphold the truth; *shi* and *fu* should seek after what is beautiful. These four categories differ from each other, so that the writer of talent will have his favorite. Only a complete genius could master them all.

Writing is governed by *qi*. *Qi* has forms limpid and turbid. It cannot be realized by force. If likened to music: though the melody may be the same

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(*bei* 碑 and *ming* 銘), the style of which remained influential among the generation of poets Cao Pi sets out to appraise here.

[20] It is difficult to determine whether Cao Pi's comparison continues between both pairs of authors or is concerned solely with the oeuvres of the first. That is, his meaning could be 1) Wang Can's and Xu Gan's writings in other genres do not measure up to their excellence shown in the specific works of theirs listed; or 2) Wang Can's and Xu Gan's writings in other genres do not measure up to the excellence of Zhang Heng and Cai Yong's in their respective best genres. Either way, the point is that few writers if any can excel in *every* genre.

[21] Owen takes this phrase to be a continuation of the criticism of the previous lines; in other words, that Cao Pi regards Kong Rong's spoofing as a fault. My translation instead concurs with those of Holzman and Obi-Hanabusa, who take the line as praise, and indeed as the specific feature that links Kong Rong with Yang Xiong and Ban Gu. That said, evidence that Ban Gu incorporated jokes and whatnot into his work is slim. In that regard, Obi-Hanabusa point to his 答賓戲一首 in *Wen xuan*, juan 45.

and the rhythms in accord, it is at the point that [a musician] summons his *qi* that there is a basis for determining skill and ineptitude. Though it exists in a father, he cannot convey it to his son; nor can an elder brother convey it to a younger.

蓋文章經國之大業、不朽之盛事。年壽有時而盡榮樂止乎其身。二者必至之常期、未若文章之無窮。是以古之作者、寄身於翰墨見意於篇籍、不假良史之辭、不託飛馳之勢、而聲名自傳於後。故西伯幽而演易、周旦顯而制體。不以隱約而弗務、不以康樂而加思。夫然則古人賤尺璧而重寸陰。懼乎時之過已。而人多不強力。貧賤則慴於飢寒、富貴則流於逸樂。遂營目前之務、而遺千載之功。日月逝於上、體貌衰於下、忽然與萬物遷化。斯志士之太痛也。融等已逝。唯幹著論成一家言。

Writing is the grand enterprise in ordering the state, an imperishable glory. There comes a time when life expires. Honor and pleasure cease with this body. For those two things to attain perpetuity, nothing is better than the permanence of writing. This is the reason that the authors of old committed themselves to ink and brush, revealing their thoughts in composition. They had no need of a good historian's words [to record their legacy] nor did they rely on the power of a wealthy patron. Rather, they themselves handed their reputations down to posterity.

Thus the Earl of the West, while in prison, enlarged upon the *Book of Changes*, and the Duke of Zhou, after gaining office, enacted the *Rites*. The former did not neglect his work [of writing] during a time of privation and obscurity; the latter did not allow comfort and pleasure to distract him. In this way we can see that the ancients thought little of a foot-length of jade, and instead treasured an inch on the sundial. They feared that time would pass them by.

Yet the majority of men make no great effort: in poverty or low station they dread hunger and cold; in wealth and prestige they are awash with idle pleasures. They busy themselves with immediate affairs and lose sight of achievement that could last a thousand years. In the heavens above, the sun and moon hasten along; here below, the face and body wither away, soon to change into the stuff from which we are made. For a person with aspiration this is a most painful thing. Kong Rong and the others already have passed away; only Xu Gan's discourses constitute the fully accomplished oeuvre of an individual writer.

Cao Pi's tract raises many issues, but its main thrust seems to be differentiation, a series of exercises in subtle discernment. Though initial nods are made to the existence of a primordial "oneness"—that all writing is *basically* the same (夫文本同), for example, and that it is governed by a single, undifferentiated *qi* (文以氣為主)—in fact Cao Pi's chief concerns seem to be delineating and ranking the diverse manifestations of writing and assessing distinctly individual authorial achievement.

Whence Cao Pi's emphasis on the individual? Separate from the trend of theorizing the craft of writing, in the late second and early third centuries there arose interest in the quasi-systematic assessment of the strengths and defects of individuals, which in turn was developed into a kind of applied philosophy meant to assist the ruler (and lesser leaders) as he made decisions about court appointments. This discourse of "characterology" sought to articulate personality types, predict their strengths, weaknesses, and inclinations, and for them recommend suitable bureaucratic positions. The most sophisticated example is the *Renwu zhi* 人物志, written by Liu Shao 劉邵, a figure slightly junior to Cao Pi. Liu Shao's twelve-chapter essay covers a wide range of material including personality determinants, character types, modes of observation, traits shared among men of the highest abilities, common errors in judging men, and how one type of individual is apt to perceive other types.[22] Certain faults of personality, Liu Shao argues, arise inevitably from the existence of particular strengths; for example:

> 厲直剛毅材在矯正失在激訐。柔順安恕美在寬容失在少决。雄悍傑健任在膽烈失在多忌。精良畏慎善在恭謹失在多疑。
>
> [When a man is] severe, strict, sharp, and resolute, his ability lies in regulating others, but his defect is to stimulate their faults.
> [When a man is] soft, pleasant, peaceful, and considerate, his beauty lies in toleration, but his defect lies in a lack of decision.
> [When a man is] fierce, brave, heroic, and strong, his task lies in fiery action, but his defect lies in too much jealousy.
> [When a man is] refined, docile, fearful, and cautious, his goodness lies in courteous carefulness, but his defect lies in having too much suspicion.[23]

The talents and traits of an individual render him (this was a decidedly male-centered discourse) suitable for only certain kinds of offices. Responsibility for ascertaining the particularities of individual personalities and assigning them to best official use rested with the ruler—hence the crucial importance of the ruler's power of discernment. Once each retainer was assigned to his proper place, organizational balance could be achieved. To this

[22] J. K. Shryock, "The Study of Human Abilities: The *Jen wu chih* of Liu Shao," *American Oriental Series*, vol. 11, New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1937.
[23] Shryock, p. 102.

end Liu Shao offers the following kinds of advice:

> 需學之材安民之任也。文章之材國史之任也。辯給之材行人之任。驍雄之材將帥之任也。是謂主道得而臣道序官不易方而太平用成。若道不平淡與一材同用好。則一材處權而衆材失任矣。
>
> The ability of the learned man belongs to the office of pacificator. The ability of the literary man belongs to the office of imperial historiographer. The ability of the dialectician belongs to the office of the minister of foreign affairs. The ability of the military hero belongs to the office of commander. Therefore when the way of the sovereign is achieved, the way of the ministers follows as corollary. The officers will not change their places, and peace will be attained. If the way [of the sovereign] is not balanced, but inclines toward one of these abilities, that ability will acquire [undue] power, and the other abilities will lose employment.[24]

According to Liu Shao, then, it is up to the sovereign to orchestrate the complexities of governmental apparatus. Small-scale success can be achieved by finding the right individual for a particular job. Collective success can be realized by maintaining balanced relationships among the constituent bureaucratic units and their carefully selected leaders. In short, talented individuals *belong* somewhere, and it is the task of the sovereign to make good judgments about how to locate them and place them into service. In order to successfully meet this challenge, the sovereign must cultivate insight into individual personalities and integrate them into a grand scheme of a government designed to work toward a unified set of purposes. If carried out skillfully, the result will be an atmosphere of peace and stability (太平).

In "Lunwen," Cao Pi has drawn upon the epistemic assumptions of characterology in order to analyze writing, as a whole and in its parts, and to evaluate the literary achievement of individuals. For him each author has 1) strengths and faults that are observable, 2) a unique capacity unto himself, and 3) a particular genre that most suits his genius (much like a retainer whose skills make him more appropriate for a certain office). Considered within the larger history of early Chinese literary theory, at the hands of Cao Pi there has occurred a shift in thought. Here he is not relying on writing as a means by which to understand the individual who stands behind it; rather, he sets out to appraise the *practice* of writing, the nature of genres, and *men-as-writers*. One might say that in the context of "Lunwen," Cao Pi shows little interest in the many people he introduces besides their capacity as writers. The basic posture of a ruler who evaluates individuals' all-round fitness for service has been transposed to the assessment of individual talent and

[24] Shryock, p. 111.

achievement in the realm of letters. With this movement, Cao Pi transformed the enterprise of writing itself into something worthy of rigorous evaluative scrutiny.

We should pause for a moment to appreciate how Cao Pi asserts his qualifications for such an undertaking, because this gesture brings into even tighter focus the highly participatory notion of the royal custodianship of writing, from which Saga and Minemori themselves may have taken cues. Men in the thick of things—bent on establishing their reputations, enflamed with jealousy toward their equals or betters—are, Cao Pi argues, poor judges of writing. Partiality to themselves blinds them to the merits of others. A superior man, in contrast, sees things with clarity and equanimity:

> 君子審己以度人。故能免於斯累而作論文。
>
> A superior man studies himself to assess others. Thus he is able to avoid such attachments and compose a discourse on literature.

There is little doubt that the "superior man" 君子 to whom Cao Pi refers is he himself. Although such a statement may seem outrageously arrogant, if we remember the consequences (described in *Renwu zhi*) of a ruler whose judgments tilt unduly in any one direction—again, in the larger governmental sense, not just with regard to writing—it is clear that the capability for broad (even universal) sapience has been posited a standard prerequisite for successful rule. And because Cao Pi was being groomed as a candidate for Crown Prince, it is not at all surprising that a persona of consummate judiciousness—aloof but somehow all-knowing—should emerge as his basic approach to *wenzhang*. Stephen Owen has observed that Cao Pi's rhetorical differentiation of himself from talented but prejudiced writers implies that the latter are not *junzi*.[25] One might take things a step further to say that Cao Pi's remarks, which attribute to motives of self-love and jealousy writers' (mostly negative) evaluations of each other, in effect preclude the possibility of open-minded critical discussion by anyone *except* a *junzi*. The lofty perspective of the sovereign (or sovereign-to-be) makes for superior literary criticism; all the rest are mired down by their attachments and tainted by bias. With Cao Pi, supremacy of political authority and supremacy of literary authority have merged into one.

[25] Owen feels that Cao Pi is using *junzi* in the older sense of "son of a prince" (he is, after all, a royal son) *and* in the Confucian sense of a "superior man," which he aspires to be; see Owen, p. 61, and p. 600, n. 10. Of the two meanings, I think the latter is the stronger. If Cao Pi merely meant that a "son of a prince" was inherently a superior literary critic, in addition to asserting his own credentials he would be tacitly endorsing the literary authority of his brother, rival for the throne and gifted literatus Cao Zhi 曹植. Most evidence suggests that, for a variety of reasons, he was not inclined to do that. The *junzi* with which Cao Pi most strongly self-identifies is, I would argue, figurative and Confucian.

Within the rhetorical flow of "Lunwen," the lines that so intrigued Saga and his assistants appear between a discussion of genre and talent and another set of statements about the splendor of writing as an individual's legacy. As I suggested before, the two-fold notion of writing as, first, the grand enterprise in ruling the state, and second, an imperishable glory, is rather ambiguous—and as such ripe for use by later readers with their own set of purposes. Before considering what Cao Pi (or Saga) might have meant when he claimed that writing was a major enterprise in *ruling the state* (經國), we should examine further the meanings of two key words of the phrase, *writing* (文章) and *imperishable* (不朽). Our questions might be boiled down to: what genres comprise writing, and, in terms of perceived value, how do they differ? In what ways (and for whom) does writing, in any of its possible forms, secure an imperishable legacy?

Genre, authorship, and legacy in "Lunwen"

Cao Pi's usage of *buxiu*, "imperishable" is in basic accord with certain precedents—ancient even from his perspective—that associated an individual's legacy with good conduct. The modes of good conduct that produce a legacy are not, however, *equally* good. Though each has the potential to contribute to an individual's lasting fame, there exists a definite hierarchy, as posited by *Zuo zhuan*:

> 太上有立德、其次有立功、其次有立言、雖久不廢、此之言不朽。
>
> Highest is the establishment of one's virtue; next is to establish good deeds; after that establishing one's words. If even after much time has passed, they have not been rejected [by posterity], then they may be called imperishable.[26]

This notion of imperishability—quite literally to "not wilt" or "not wither," in defiance of the natural vegetative cycle—thus is associated, as early as *Zuo zhuan*, with the ideal of amassing achievements that will outlast the life of the individual.

According to *Zuo zhuan*, "establishing words" (立言) is one of three ways to attain a kind of life-after-death. Of the three, however, it garners only third-place. Writing thus remains a good but lesser pursuit. Cao Pi, despite his apparent desire to recognize writing

[26] Duke Xiong, year 24. *Zuo zhuan*, likely written during the third or fourth century B.C.E., is one of the three early narrative commentaries on the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*). Renowned for its vivid rendering and orderly exposition of historical events, *Zuo zhuan* served to embellish the otherwise bare-bones historical description in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Though many of the narratives are cautionary—e.g. the ruthless and ambitious ruler eventually is hoist on his own petard—the complexity of the work resists a uniform ideological characterization. James Legge provides a full translation in his *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, (*The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5.), first published 1872, reprinted Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960. Burton Watson has translated a selection of the text's most famous episodes, *The Tso Chuan: Selections from China's Oldest Narrative History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

and authorship as worthy in themselves, also conceded that with regard to living a virtuous life, or at least a life worthy of being remembered, the activity of writing was important but not of supreme importance. In a letter to Wang Lang, recounted and quoted in the *San guo zhi* 三國志, Cao Pi, stricken by the recent serial deaths of his friends in poetry, echoes the prescription offered in *Zuo zhuan*:

> 生有七尺之形, 死唯一棺之土, 唯立德揚名，可以不朽, 其次莫如著篇籍. 疫癘數起，士人彫落，余獨何人，能全其壽.
>
> During his lifetime a man may be of goodly height, but when he dies he is only a coffinful of earth. There are only two ways of attaining immortality: the better way is to establish one's virtue and become famous; the next best method is to write books. Men have been cut down in the epidemics that have occurred again and again: who am I that I should be able to preserve my life?[27]

As is commonly noted, Cao Pi's concern for legacy likely was intensified by the outbreak in 217 of an epidemic, which within a year had killed at least four of his literati friends.[28] In a separate letter to Wu Zhi he notes his grief-ridden task of collating his dead friends' works into an anthology. This collection unfortunately has been lost.

> 頃撰其遺文，都為一集．觀其姓名，已為鬼錄，追思昔游，猶在心目，而此諸子化為糞壤，可復道哉。
>
> I recently gathered together their remaining works and assembled them in a single collection. Their names look like a list of the dead. Our old parties, when I think back on them, still seem to be in front of my eyes, but those who accompanied us on them have turned to dust. What more is there to say?[29]

For Cao Pi, the notion that life and its splendors quickly perish has ferocious immediacy. It is therefore unsurprising that his perception of the potential imperishability of writing, evident in the very works he gathered in order to memorialize his dead friends, is acute.

But what, for Cao Pi, does *writing* entail? As I noted earlier, although "Lunwen" initially shows a concern with oneness, in fact most of its deliberative energy is devoted to the exercise of differentiation. Though writing *as a whole* is valuable, some kinds of

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[27] Translated by Holzman, p. 122. His preferred rendering of *buxiu* is "immortality."
[28] These men are known as the Seven Masters of Jian'an (建安七子), whose achievements Cao Pi appraises in "Lunwen."
[29] Holzman, p. 123.

writing are more valuable than others—for issues beyond just the level of quality with which they are rendered. As Kōzen Hiroshi has observed, Cao Pi's list of genres is inherently hierarchical.[30] Cao Pi, again, enumerates genres as follows:

> 蓋奏議宣雅、書論宣理、銘誄尚實、詩賦欲麗。
>
> Indeed, memorials and disquisitions should be dignified; letters and treatises should be logical; inscriptions and eulogies should uphold the truth; *shi* and *fu* should seek after what is beautiful.

Kōzen argues that this sentence is more than just a list; rather, he claims, Cao Pi arranged the four pairs of genres in order of decreasing importance. The first two pairs comprise the larger category of unrhymed 無韻 writing, what comes to be called during the Six Dynasties *bi* 筆. The second two pairs make up the category of rhymed 有韻 writing, or, in later Six Dynasties' critical parlance, *wen* 文.[31] *Shi* and *fu*, notably, are last on the list, a clear indicator of their lowly status within the grand scheme of writing.

Cao Pi and the members of his coterie, whom he saw taken, one after another, by the epidemic, devoted a great deal of time to composing pentasyllabic *shi*. As such, it seems difficult to believe that he would dismiss the form as *entirely* frivolous. In fact, one can read Cao Pi's explanation of genres, and even "Lunwen" as a whole (especially when considered with the fact that he compiled a separate anthology) as a gesture implicitly meant to induct pentasyllabic *shi* into the repertoire of accepted, canonized genres. This is a subtle point, because in Cao Pi's time the term he employs for poetry, *shifu* 詩賦, did not, strictly speaking, encompass the pentasyllabic *shi* form for which his Jian'an poets became so famous. Rather, like the list of which it is a part, the term *shifu* places into evaluative sequence its two elements, *shi* and *fu*. This *shi*—superior to *fu*—fundamentally denotes the *shi* of *Shijing* 詩經, the most venerable of *shi* forms, not the pentasyllabic *shi* contemporaneous to Cao Pi. The conceptual association of *shi* and *fu*—a common practice that long preceded Cao Pi—actually stemmed from an attempt to aggrandize, or at least justify, *fu* composition during the time it was considered a licentious poetic form. This effort to forge a connection between the two forms is typified by first-century B.C.E. historian Ban Gu 班固 in his preface to his "*Fu* on Two Capitals" 両都賦二首 (*Wen xuan*, juan 1) and, in more detail, his "Yiwen zhi" (藝文志 *Treatise on Belles Lettres*) of *Han shu* (漢書 *History of the Former Han*).[32]

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[30] Kōzen Hiroshi 興膳宏, *Chūgoku no bungaku riron* 中国の文学理論, Chikuma shobō, 1988, pp. 22–25.

[31] Kōzen draws this definition of *bi* and *wen* from Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong*. See Kōzen, p. 43, n.17.

[32] For translations of both documents, see Burton Watson, *Chinese Rhyme-Prose*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, pp. 111–113. For a more detailed discussion of what Ban Gu meant when he claimed that 或曰賦者古詩之流也, "Someone has said that *fu* are a type of ancient

Although the semantic range of the term *shifu* here remains rather narrow (*shifu* would not come to mean a generalized "poetry" until centuries later), the practices of the Jian'an poets, combined with Cao Pi's later editorial activities, strongly suggest that Cao Pi believed that pentasyllabic *shi* deserved to be promoted from the realm of frivolity and integrated, though at the lowest rank, into the basically honorific category of *wenzhang*. For these and other reasons Cao Pi is widely thought of as a transitional figure. And although some ambiguity inevitably remains about the precise significance of his historical moment in the development of Chinese poetic theory, it seems reasonable to conclude that at the hands of Cao Pi, the then current medium of pentasyllabic *shi* was gingerly raised into a position of minor legitimacy.

Coexistent with Cao Pi's various innovations, however, was the steadfast notion that writing poetry of any sort was somehow childish, an indulgence to be left behind when one moves on to accept the responsibilities of adulthood and high office. Cao Pi's brother Cao Zhi relates as much in a letter to his friend Yang Xiu 楊修, though the fact that he attached the remarks to a manuscript of the very poems he purports to dismiss indicates some lingering attachment to them:

> 今往僕少小所著辭賦一通相與 … 辭賦小道、固未足以揄揚大義、彰示来世也。昔楊子雲、先朝執戟之臣耳。猶稱壯夫不爲也。吾雖德薄、位爲審侯、猶庶幾勠力上國、流惠下民、建永世之業、留金石之功。豈徒以翰墨爲勳積、辭賦爲君子哉。[33]
>
> Herewith I am sending you some *ci* and *fu* I wrote in my youth . . . [And yet] *ci* and *fu* are minor arts and definitely incapable of exalting the Great Moral Law and showing it in all its brightness to coming generations. Yang Xiong was only a low official in the preceding court, and even he declared, "A grown man does not [write *fu*]." Although I have little virtue and my rank is that of a country lord, I still hope to exert myself for the State and benefit my people, accomplishing something that will last forever, merit that will be engraved into metal or stone. How could I accept mere writing as my achievement, and *ci* and *fu* to be the work of a superior man?[34]

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shi," see Knechtges, vol. 1, pp. 92–93, and Obi-Hanabusa, *Monzen*, vol. 1, pp. 56–57. In translating the above phrase I follow Knechtges, who reads 流 as "type" rather than, as Obi-Hanabusa do, "outflow."

[33] Excerpted from *Wen xuan*, juan 42, 與楊德祖書一首。

[34] Holzman, pp. 118–119, with slight alteration. It is possible here and below that Holzman is overtranslating the term 辭賦 as *ci* and *fu*. It might simply mean *fu*. Regardless, most important here is that Cao Zhi's attitude toward writing is deeply ambivalent.

Clearly Cao Zhi, who at the time of this letter himself still was a candidate for the position of Crown Prince, did not want his legacy to be merely that of a practitioner of the "small path of *ci* and *fu*" (辭賦小道). Something greater was required of him in order to realize his aspiration to "establish a lasting achievement" (建永世之業). Cao Zhi does not seem to be casting the entire enterprise of writing into the category of the "small path"—just *ci* and *fu*—but one does get the sense that instead of writing himself he would prefer to be performing deeds about which others later could write. In other words, even as Cao Zhi rejects authorship as a *primary* means to establish one's reputation, he anticipates relying on those who possess skills in the verbal arts to record, preserve, and otherwise monumentalize his accomplishments "on metal or in stone" (留金石之功). Most of all he denies the connection of writing—in general, and specifically that of *ci* and *fu*—with conduct becoming of a *junzi* (豈徒以翰墨爲勳積、辭賦爲君子哉). After all, what superior man would be content merely to follow the path of "ink and brush"?

Still, Cao Zhi's letter continues, as a second-best manner of gaining a durable legacy, writing may not be so bad. If circumstances dictate that it is all that he could accomplish, then Cao Zhi intends to write, and write well:

> 若吾志不果，吾道不行，亦將採史官之實錄，辯時俗之得失，定仁義之衷，成一家之言。
>
> But if my ambitions bear no fruit and I cannot put my ideals into practice, then I will [like Confucius before me,] collect material from the historians' draft records, judge what is good and what is bad in the morals of our times, determine when goodness and justice have been attained, and thus set up the words of a school of thought.[35]

This notion of "setting up the words of a school of thought" (*cheng yijiazhiyan* 成一家之言), of becoming a fully realized, unique, and independent author in one's own right, is an ideal that seems to be endorsed by both Cao brothers. One might even say that it represents the crux of Cao Pi's ideas about genre, authorship, and legacy. Recall that Cao Pi reserves his highest praise of the writers he introduces for the final line of "Lunwen":

> 唯幹著論成一家言。
>
> Only Xu Gan's discourses constitute the fully accomplished oeuvre of an individual writer.

It is significant that Xu Gan was noted for his moral tracts, not for *shi* or *fu*. In sum, of the many kinds of *wenzhang*, poetry is just a part, and a minor one at that.

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[35] Holzman, p. 119.

Regarding the notion of establishing a legacy, or, more to the letter, attaining the status of "imperishability," what Cao Pi provides in the context of "Lunwen" is a discussion almost entirely grounded in a conception of writing as an enterprise conducted by individuals. Individual writers can be distinguished from each other by comparison of strengths and faults; individuals' skills and personalities cause them to become attached to pet genres; talent for writing is so unique to the individual that it cannot be transmitted even between intimates such as siblings or father and son (雖在父兄不能以移子弟); and the pinnacle of literary achievement is to be recognized as *yijiazhiyan*. It thus is perfectly organic to the overall orientation toward the individual in "Lunwen" that Cao Pi would urge each capable of writing to take charge of his own destiny by finding time to leave a written legacy:

> 是以古之作者、寄身於翰墨見意於篇籍、不假良史之辭、不託飛馳之勢、而聲名自傳於後。
>
> This is the reason that the authors of old committed themselves to ink and brush, revealing their thoughts in composition. They had no need of a good historian's words [to record their legacy] nor did they rely on the power of a wealthy patron. Rather, they themselves handed their reputations down to posterity.

In this way, those of the Seven Masters who suffered untimely deaths by illness were fortunate to have written as much as they did. Their literary productivity enabled their legacies to be self-wrought, as it were. Cao Pi urges his readers not to wait another day to write, because in doing so, they themselves might be able to exert some control over how they will be perceived by later generations. In the context of "Lunwen," the notion of imperishability thus takes on a distinctly individual, personal scale—and is transmitted with urgency, as if an exhortation.

How then should we regard Cao Pi's remarks that "Writing is the grand enterprise in ordering the state, an imperishable glory"? With all his discussion about individual talents, traits, and responsibilities, one is tempted to view the remark that writing also makes a contribution to "ordering the state" simply as window dressing to a text whose real concerns lay elsewhere. Certainly Cao Pi never draws explicit ties between writing and the government such as the power of the written word as a civilizing tool or legal instrument (as does the preface to *Kaifūsō*), nor does he identify other possible political uses, such as the capacity writing has to admonish a wayward ruler back to the path of righteousness. Perhaps these examples are of a nature too direct for Cao Pi—or perhaps by his time they were so obvious that they did not bear repeating. Regardless, the *junzi* persona that Cao Pi cultivates in "Lunwen" allows for a vision of himself presiding over a coterie of gifted writers, the members of which, while not compelled to praise their patron at every poetic

turn, still, by proximity, lend luster to his authority and discernment. The achievements of these individuals, so expertly assessed by Cao Pi, of course function to carry their names into posterity, but taken together they also are an enormous credit to their patron, the prince who facilitated their success, and, subsequently, ensured that their words would be properly preserved and appreciated after their deaths. Cao Pi was no mean poet himself (although most would place his brother Cao Zhi ahead of him) but his persona as the aloof but all-seeing ruler seems to have allowed him the latitude to acknowledge, even while grading with pluses and minuses, the greatness of the men whom he had gathered around him. And though rhetorically his chief concern seems to have been that of differentiation—of discerning the subtleties of literary genres, individual talents, and authorial achievements—his preoccupation with legacy suggests that another kind of *oneness*—that of the uniformly shared inevitability and finality of death—remained throughout a motivating (if anxiety-provoking) force of the literary theorization he offers in "Lunwen."

Saga's Big Business

Viewed on the continuum of Chinese literary theorization that spans from the Late Han and to the early Tang, Cao Pi's "Lunwen" can be appreciated as combining a restatement of certain Han-era principles and a first cautious step in a direction of autonomy for writing. This newly formulated autonomy that Cao Pi promotes takes shape both in the practical sphere of the individual writer, who is encouraged to discover his own unique talents and to exercise control over his destiny, as well as in the conceptual sphere, in which writing is posited as a distinct object of analysis and evaluation. In retrospect, one can see that these threads of Cao Pi's thinking were extended and elaborated upon by subsequent theorists, notably Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303) in his *Wenfu* 文賦 and, with an exceedingly high degree of subtlety and sophistication, Liu Xie in *Wenxin diaolong*. It nonetheless cannot be assumed that in the early ninth century Saga and his officials possessed a systematized timeline of the development of literary theory between Cao Pi's era and their own.

Indeed, even with ample hindsight, among late-twentieth century scholars of Wei-Jin literary thought, interpretations of Cao Pi's lines that Saga and Minemori found so impressive (and even more so the meaning of "Lunwen" as a whole) are varied. Luo Zongqian, for one, argues that it would be a mistake to interpret *wenzhang jingguo zhi daye* as crass utilitarianism, a recommendation that literature be used as an instrument for rule—after all, the Jian'an poets Cao Pi celebrated were not exactly composing works intended to provide political or moral education. Rather (Luo continues), Cao Pi's accomplishment was to assert that the twin endeavors of governing a country and writing for posterity are in fact of equivalent value—even if, content-wise, the writing in question has little to do with politics as such.[36] Chen Shunzhi, in contrast, observes that the

[36] Luo Zongqiang 罗宗强, *Wei Jin nan bei chao wen xue si xiang shi* 魏晋南北朝文学思想史, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996, pp. 16–17.

establishment of an "independence" of writing so often ascribed to Cao Pi would more aptly be applied to Cao Pi's concept of immortality-through-literature. For Chen, Cao Pi's message is that the capability of literary achievement to endure posthumously itself carries intrinsic value, enabling it to transcend the historical contingencies and political dependencies of the moment of literary production.[37]

Excised from its original context, the statement "Writing is the grand enterprise in ordering the state, an imperishable glory," can be construed with great flexibility, a fact that may account for Saga and Minemori's primary attraction to it. Though Minemori conspicuously puts it to use in opening the preface of the first royal anthology, like Cao Pi he was less concerned with elaborating in concrete terms how exactly writing makes its contribution. Even so, we can identify several significant ways in which *Ryōun shū* usage of Cao Pi's phrase differs from that of "Lunwen." First, though *Ryōun shū* ostensibly draws inspiration from Cao Pi's words, by "writing" here Minemori seems to signify only *shi*, evident by the fact that *Ryōun shū* contains nothing of what Cao Pi would judge to be the genres of highest importance. This fixation on *shi* would change by the time of the compilation of *Keikoku shū*, but in 814 it seems to have been the only form of composition deemed worthy of preservation. As for these poems' political utility, certainly it is no stretch to see *shi* cast in the mode of *kunshō shinwa* 君唱臣和 "the lord intones and the vassal responds," replete as they are with affirmations of bonhomie between sovereign and subject, as part and parcel with "ordering the state."[38] But not all *Ryōun shū* poems are product of that mode—and in its preface no effort was made to distinguish a hierarchy of genres or ritual purposes.

Another difference lies in early Heian official attitude toward the nature and importance of achieving the literary version of "imperishable glory." In *Ryōun shū* there is no mention of the singular style or unique accomplishments of an individual poet—besides, of course, members of the royal lineage: Heizei, Saga himself, and Saga's successor Junna. Nor is there any particular emphasis on non-royal authorship in the prefaces of the subsequent two royal anthologies. In the early Heian context there appears to have been little official desire to articulate and praise individual talent or style, much less exhort poets (or readers) about the necessity of securing for themselves a personal legacy. In fact, with its identification of four exemplars (among them is sovereign Monmu 文武, who reigned 697–707), the preface to mid-eighth-century *Kaifūsō* gives more attention to the achievement of individual poets than was offered by the anthology prefaces of Saga's time. If Minemori's emphasis epitomizes an early Heian interpretation of Cao Pi, it seems to point to, rather exclusively, the imperishable glory of something collective rather than personal. Minemori's interpretation of Cao Pi's words might even be considered rather statist. In contrast to the writers within Cao Pi's purview, among Saga's poets there is none who is praised for

[37] Chen Shunzhi 陈顺智, *Wei Jin nan bei chao shi xue* 魏晋南北朝诗学, Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2000, pp. 46–48.

[38] For an in-depth exploration of the ritualized poetic matching, see Heldt, 2008.

"setting up the words of a school of thought." Nor does such a thing seem to have been promoted as an ideal toward which a talented writer should strive.

Twenty years after the founding of the Heian capital, what is it about writing's staying power that makes it for Saga the "grand enterprise in ordering the state"? Is it because, if properly preserved, writing contributes to cultural (and therefore political) stability in the wake of an attempted coup? Or is it that the purported durability of writing offers solace to the individual writer's unvoiced anxiety about the inevitability of death? For the non-royal courtier, would the potential for having his legacy secured—say, by inclusion in a royal anthology—render him, while active at court, more willing to "place behind him parochial individual or clan-based interests" (背私), and instead "turn himself toward the public weal" (向公)?[39] Perhaps all of these things are at play.

Insomuch as a literary anthology shapes materials produced on different occasions and places them into a coherent, if selective, vision of the past, the royal commissioning of an anthology can itself be viewed as an official attempt to put things "in order." As such, the structure of *Ryōun shū* as a whole, the manner in which the collection unfurls, one by one, the works most highly esteemed at the time, is worthy of scrutiny. Here again, comparison with *Kaifūsō* is instructive. At first glance, these two anthologies seem to have in common a structure of organizing their poems according to author. This feature places them both in great contrast to later anthologies that arranged their content according to genre, theme, or some combination thereof. But in fact the author-based sequences furnished by the two anthologies are quite different. *Kaifūsō*, as its preface clearly states, is organized around the fundamental principle of "chronology with no regard for rank" (略以時代相次不以尊卑等級). True to that dictum (to offer but one example) poems by the sovereign Monmu do not appear until #15. In contrast, the author-based sequence of *Ryōun shū* conforms fastidiously to the early Heian system of ranks, beginning with the retired sovereign, Heizei, and proceeding downward: Saga, Crown Prince Junna, Minister of the Left Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu 冬嗣, and so on. While *Kaifūsō*'s author-based sequence presents itself as a kind of literary timeline based on poets' lives, Saga's first anthology, in contrast, manifests itself as a literary monument to the precise, interlocking system that prescribed each courtier's relationship with the sovereign (foremost) and also with the others imbricated in the hierarchy of ranks. In sum, the structure of *Ryōun shū* mimics the ontology of ordered political relations among individuals under the *tennō*-centered system.

An editorial policy of that sort, orderly though it may have been, caused a peculiar dilemma to arise for the compliers: how to sequence poets in possession of exactly the same rank? Close study of *Ryōun shū*'s sequencing by Abe Yoshio suggests that in these cases a principle of chronology was established, but not one relating to an individual poet's date of

[39] Such is the terminology of Article 15 of the early seventh-century *Seventeen Article Constitution* 十七条憲法. Michael Como rightly points out that, despite the longstanding convention of translating *kenpō* as "constitution," given the nature of the text the more accurate rendering would be "admonishments." See his *Shōtoku*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 202, n. 37.

birth or an individual poem's date of composition. Rather, for solving their problem Minemori and his colleagues assigned priority to the date on which the individuals in question *acquired their rank*; the earlier the promotion, in other words (compared to one's poet-peers), the earlier one's appearance in the sequence. Abe contends that his principle, applicable to affairs broader than just an anthology of poetry (such as seating at ceremonies) likely was formulated to preempt outbreaks of competitiveness between courtiers of basically equal standing.[40] Structurally, then, in certain cases even the underlying "chronology" of *Ryōun shū shi* is derived from the poet's recorded official interaction with the sovereign. As a whole, *Ryōun shū* showcases the political mechanism that calibrates the distance between the sovereign and the individual poem-provider: the closer to the sovereign, the more important the individual. A by-product of this arrangement is how the poets themselves stack up against each other, vis-à-vis their relationship to the sovereign. In *Ryōun shū*, then, the "pecking order" of individual poets is based on criteria quite different from Cao Pi's. Arranging an anthology thus may not be exactly what Cao Pi had in mind by *monjō keikoku*, but one certainly can appreciate *Ryōun shū* compiler Minemori's efforts to use the architecture of a poetry collection to replicate and affirm the orderly state.

The Cost of Good Writing

Even as we identify this Kōnin-era inflection of Cao Pi's words as showing a greater preference for poetry as a collective achievement and political order, methodological sensitivity to potential variances among acts of reception dictates that, in a different moment, the invocation of Cao Pi's words might carry other nuances. Case in point: based on the fact that the preface to *Bunka shūrei shū*, the second royal anthology, lacks explicit reference to Cao Pi and further identifies "beauty" 綺麗 as a laudable feature of recent *shi*, Kojima Noriyuki argues that, compared to *Ryōun shū* and the later *Keikoku shū*, the ideological orientation of *Bunka shūrei shū* is concerned less with the political utility of literature and more with (apoliticized) literary aesthetics. Another piece of evidence called upon to support the characterization of *Bunka shūrei shū* as being more belletristic and less political than its predecessor is the compilers' decision to depart from a rank-based principle of organization for the anthology in favor of one that is thematic.[41] Setting aside the conceptual problems engendered by an assumption that "political utility" and "stylistic beauty" operate in ebb and flow (that is, as one strengthens the other necessarily diminishes), it is admittedly curious that, when viewed on a timeline, *Bunka shūrei shū*

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[40] Abe Yoshio 阿部芳夫, "Chokusen sanshū ni okeru sakusha no joretsu ni tsuite" 勅撰三集における作者の序列について, *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雑誌, 98.4 (April 1997), pp. 18–29.

[41] Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之, *Kaifūsō*, *Bunka shūrei shū*, *Honchō monzui* 懐風藻 文華秀麗集 本朝文粋, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文學大系, 69, Iwanami, 1964, p. 21. A chart that lays out the basic features of the three early Heian royal anthologies can be found in Helen Craig McCullough, *Brocade by Night:* 'Kokin Wakashū' *and the Court Style in Japanese Classical Poetry*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 160.

appears to be wedged between two quite conspicuous usages of Cao Pi's phrase. Put another way, by 827, the time that *Keikoku shū* was compiled, what need would there have been to return so conspicuously to the notion that writing served to "order the state" by entitling the new collection as such?

One clue might be offered by the preface of *Bunka shūrei shū* itself: "Thanks to the great knowledge of the Sovereign and the perspicacity of the Crown Prince, not a month has passed without writings being composed" 豈非□□儲聰，製文之無虛月.[42] For those associated with the production (and preservation) of writing, Saga's vigorous sponsorship meant that these were heady times. Yet other voices are recorded too, expressing skepticism and dismay about the expenses that so many poetry gatherings incurred. Criticism of this sort is all the more potent when it comes not from some easily dismissed, poetry-hating philistine but instead a poet and Saga stalwart such as Fujiwara no Sonohito 園人:

> 右大臣従二位兼行皇太弟傳藤原朝臣園人奏、去大同二年停正月二節、迄于三年、又廃三月節、大概為省費也、今正月二節、復于旧例、九月節准三月、去弘仁三年已来、更加花宴、准之延暦、花宴独余、比之大同、四節更起、顧彼禄賜、庫貯罄乏、伏望九日者不入節会之例、須臨時択定堪文藻者、下知所司、庶絶他人之望、省大庫之損。
>
> Minister of the Right, Second Rank Lower and Tutor to the Crown Prince, Fujiwara Ason Sonohito, submitted to the court: "In the year Daidō 2 [807] the *sechi* 節 gatherings typically held on the Seventh and Sixteenth Days of the First Month were canceled, and in the subsequent year the *sechi* of the Third Day of the Third Month was canceled, all in an effort to rein in spending. At present the two *sechi* of the First Month have been revived, and the formerly abolished *sechi* of the Third Day of the Third Month and the Ninth Day of the Ninth Month have been restored. Since Kōnin 3 [812] a Flower Banquet has been added [to the calendar]—this is one more Flower Banquet than was held during the Enryaku era [782–806]. Compared to the Daidō era [806–809], four *sechi* now have been reinstated. Because expenditures from these various *sechi* are an excessive financial burden, I humbly request that the *sechi* of the Double Nines not be held, and that, instead, with notification given to the appropriate officials, gifted literati be chosen and asked to compose poems on an [off-calendar] impromptu basis. I request that [*sechi*-related] expenditures cease and the outflow from the Treasury be halted."[43]

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[42] Kojima, pp. 192–193. Two characters in the original are obscure. My translation of them is based on Kojima's conjecture.

[43] *Nihon kiryaku* 日本紀略, Kōnin 5 (814) 3.4. For a punctuated original text paired with a modern Japanese translation, see Morita Tei 森田悌, *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀, vol. 2, Kōdansha, 2007, pp.

In sum, powerful though Saga's initiatives may have been, they were not without their detractors. The unambiguous view of literary gatherings as little more than a financial burden imbues the quotation of Cao Pi with a different significance: while in *Ryōun shū* its invocation seems to launch a grand new era of writing, its reuse in *Keikoku shū* very well may have been *reactive*, positioned as an answer to internal debates about the value of literary gatherings, and prompted by discussions more concerned with the mundane realities of limited financial resources than the elaboration of a philosophy of writing. At a historical moment when literature enthusiasts were on the defensive, Cao Pi's wisdom—combined with that of the many other continental advocates of writing invoked by the *Keikoku shū* preface—constituted rhetorical weaponry for arguing, to sympathizers and skeptics alike, the extreme importance of court-sponsored literary activity, despite its high costs.

Taking Advantage of the Classics

It is possible, then, that the repeated Heian quotations of Cao Pi were motivated by different factors on different occasions. A separate, methodologically nettlesome question pertains to multiple possibilities of allusive *technique*: did Saga and his assistants truly study "Lunwen" and execute their own selection of the key phrases or, instead, simply follow precedent established by Tang writers, who themselves often quoted these same lines of Cao Pi's? Some Japanese scholars (Hangai Yoshifumi and Ōtsuka Eiko, for example) advocate the view that early Heian usages of Cao Pi's famous lines are merely quotation of quotation.[44] Among the evidence Hangai adduces in favor of this argument is the following excerpt from the *Yiwen* 藝文 section of *Pingdai biluelun* 平台秘略論, written by early Tang poet Wang Bo 王勃 (649–676):[45]

> 論曰、易稱、観乎天文、以察時變。傳稱、言而無文、行之不遠。故文章經國之大業, 不朽之盛事。而君子所役形勞神, 宜于大者遠者, 非緣情体物, 雕蟲小技而已。是故思王抗言詞賦,耻為君子; 武皇裁敕篇章, 僅稱往事。不其然乎? 若身処魏闕之下、心存江湖之上、詩以見志、文宣王有焉。

330–333. Conveniently, Morita has integrated the chronologically scattered entries of *Nihon kiryaku* into the appropriate dated sections of *Nihon kōki*.

[44] Hangai Yoshifumi 半谷芳文, "Chokusen san kanshi shū kō – jobun to sho Tō no bunshō kan" 勅撰三漢詩集考—序文と初唐の文章観, *Chūko bungaku ronkō* 中古文学論攷, Volume 2 (1981), pp. 1–10; Ōtsuka Eiko 大塚英子, "'Monjō keikoku' no hikaku bungaku teki ichi kōsatsu—chokusen san kanshi shū no hensan o megutte" 「文章経国」の比較文学的一考察—勅撰三漢詩集の編纂をめぐって, *Kaishaku to kanshō* 解釈と鑑賞, 55:10 (1990), pp. 103–107.

[45] Hangai, p. 5.

> The *Analects* and the *Book of Changes* say [a ruler] should observe the patterns of heaven in order to see cyclical change. *Zuo zhuan* states that without *wen* writing does not go far.[46] Thus writing is the grand enterprise for ruling the country, an imperishable glory. What a superior man pursues assiduously is not simply lyrical expression and physical description, the [literary] "carving of insects,"[47] but also the lofty occupation of governance. Hence Cao Zhi strongly advocated the composition of *ci* and *fu* and was loath to become a superior man; Cao Cao[48] consolidated and improved the institutions of writing and thus complied with the past. How could things be otherwise? If a man serves at court yet his heart lies with the people, he expresses his intentions through *shi*—so said Xiao Ziliang [of the state of Chi].

Here Wang Bo marshals support from the ancients in an effort to affirm the value of *shi*. Cao Pi's famous phrase is embedded within a series of allusions, a style of argumentation from which the authors of the *Keikoku shū* preface may very well have taken cues. Hangai's analysis, based on this passage and other evidence, can be described as follows: 1) Cao Pi's text exists in a long line of "Confucian" declarations of the political value of writing; 2) Chinese historical texts subsequent to Cao Pi, when speaking to the value of writing, tended to rehash a litany of famous quotations, which often included Cao Pi's phrase; 3) the deployment of Cao Pi's phrase in Heian texts composed during the time of Saga's dominance is not a quirky Japanese fixation on the phrase[49] but rather in hermeneutical accord with early Tang patterns of Cao Pi quotation (such as Wang Bo's); and, last, 4) whether in Chinese or early Heian documents, an author's invocation of high-minded notions such as Cao Pi's (often together with other quotations reflecting like sentiment) in fact was just a pretense (*tatemae*) to continue writing poetry—although its appearance in Saga's edict to alter the educational system (Hangai observes) may also mean that at times it served as real inspiration for reform.

Hangai's argument is compelling, and one need not subscribe to each and every one of its elements in order to appreciate its implications. Did Minemori and subsequent early Heian theorists of writing quote Cao Pi directly, or did they simply mimic others who quoted Cao Pi? If the latter, it could be argued that the purveyors of the longstanding

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[46] That is, it will not achieve a lasting significance via transmission from one generation to the next.

[47] A reference to Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong*, similar to what appeared in the education reform edict introduced above.

[48] Father to Cao Pi and Cao Zhi, Cao Cao 曹操 reigned as the King of Wei 魏王 from 216 until his death in 220. See Kawai Kōzō 川合康三, *Sōsō* 曹操, Chikuma shobō, 1986; reprinted 2009.

[49] In this regard Hangai, p. 7, argues explicitly against the interpretation of the reception of Cao Pi and *monjō keikoku* in the early Heian that Gotō Akio 後藤昭雄 offers in his, "Ono no Minemori shōron" 小野岑守小論, *Nihon bungaku* 日本文学 28:7 (1979), pp. 14–20 (reprinted in his *Heian chō kanbungaku ronkō* 平安朝漢文学論攷, Ōfūsha, 1981, pp. 54–63).

popular characterization of Japanese-as-imitators have been right all along. Nonetheless, the similar manner of quoting Cao Pi—as well as a style of rhetoric that strings together a series of quotations from diverse sources—places the practices of reading, composition, and allusion prevalent among Minemori *et al.* into much closer proximity to relatively recent (for them) trends among Tang literati. Yet there still lingers the question of whether Minemori's reading of Cao Pi was *hermeneutically substantive*, if one can call it that: did he and other early Heian readers *truly* understand and appreciate Cao Pi's "Lunwen" in its entirety, or was theirs just a shallow, piecemeal, and opportunistic reference? In response to such a question, one might counter: is it fair to ask that about Minemori, while not asking the same about Wang Bo? Ultimately it may be impossible to adjudicate the exact impact of Tang and Six Dynasties patterns of quotation on the allusive practices of early Heian writers—after all, exposure to such patterns does not necessarily preclude fuller encounters with "Lunwen" or other texts in their entirety, especially as *Wen xuan* was adopted as a standard text in the curriculum of the Heian university.

Conclusions

Hangai's remark about the possibility that Cao Pi's phrase was employed simply as *tatemae* is salutary not because of the superficiality and opportunism that it implies but rather because it reminds us that, in the grand history of large-scale poetry collections in East Asia, prefaces often contain lofty sentiments that have dubious relevance to the poems that follow. Yet insomuch as Saga's enthusiasm for poetic give-and-take with his subjects and Minemori's principles for collating *Ryōun shū* poems both functioned as perpetual affirmation of successful rule, one could argue that the conduct of Saga and his coterie followed Cao Pi's phrasing to the letter. Writing was indeed an important component of the larger set of rituals and institutions intended to "order the state"—even if not everyone, on every occasion, agreed with Saga that poetry events should be carried out on the scale of a "grand enterprise." Perhaps for Saga and Minemori, Cao Pi's grandeur was simply irresistible: Kojima notes that the term *ryōun* 凌雲, in addition to its hallowed philological lineage as a metaphor for superlative writing, also, according to a certain commentary on the preface of *Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠 (*New Songs from the Jade Terrace*), is a proper noun, denoting a "platform" purportedly constructed by none other than Cao Pi himself, the *Lingyuntai* 凌雲臺.[50] If Minemori was aware of this reference, then his self-conscious yoking of Saga with Cao Pi at the time *Ryōun shū* was compiled is even stronger than the already spirited quotation of "Lunwen" suggests.

Monjō keikoku, and the acts of reception that its invocation implied, on one hand can be said to encapsulate the very essence of Saga's early Heian poetic and political milieu, a Cao Pi-inspired merger of supreme political and literary authority. On the other hand, the sheer

[50] See Kojima Noriyuki, *Kokufū ankoku jidai no bungaku* 國風暗黒時代の文学, Hanawa shobō, 1968, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 1248-1251.

volume of other quotations, among the prefaces and contents of the three royal anthologies as well as in numerous other Heian documents, means that there are many more stories of reception to be told. Ultimately, the case of "Lunwen" suggests that the allusive use of imported texts during the early Heian period embodied simultaneity of "outward" and "inward" visions. That is, Saga and the literary practitioners in his orbit exhibit an intensely cosmopolitan awareness of greater East Asian textual culture, proving themselves to be dynamic participants in its readerly and writerly traditions. At the same time, in terms of function and impact, the quotation of Cao Pi and other continental luminaries are rhetorical gestures whose significance remains foremost fiercely local.