



Makurano Soushi and Japanese Culture in Heian Period วรรณกรรมเรื่อง มะคุระโนโซชิ และวัฒนธรรมญี่ปุ่นในยุคเฮอัน

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Abstract

Since the early centuries Japan had a strong influence from Chinese dynasty, and started to be broke away from Chinese influences when envoy to China was canceled in 9 th century. Then Japanese style culture which was adapted from China to Japanese nature and life style called “Kokufu bunka” appeared and gave big influences in various fields. Japanese literature was greatly advanced by the appearance of Hiragana, or Japanese characters.

The development of Japanese culture was based on the wealth of the aristocracy. They married their daughters to higher rank aristocracy in order to elevate their status and provide them an education and good skills in cultural activity such as composing Japanese poetry and playing musical instruments. Many works of writing were written by these highly educated female aristocracy such as Sei Shounagon and Murasaki Shikibu.

This article describes a study of the Japanese literature called Makurano Soshi, one of the excellent writings which represent writings in early 11 century in Japan and the Japanese culture and society of its background, and political situation in the time of writing as well.

Keywords

High Education, Female Aristocracy, Culture in Heian Period

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บทคัดย่อ

ในบทความนี้ผู้วิจัยมีความประสงค์ที่จะศึกษาวัฒนธรรมญี่ปุ่นในช่วงศตวรรษที่ 8-12 หรือที่เรียกว่า ยุคเฮอัน ซึ่งเป็นยุคแรกที่วัฒนธรรมญี่ปุ่นปรากฏขึ้นเนื่องจากในช่วงแรกของศตวรรษนั้น วัฒนธรรมญี่ปุ่นได้รับอิทธิพลมาจากวัฒนธรรมจีน ผู้คนแต่งกายด้วยเครื่องแต่งกายแบบจีน และพักอาศัยในบ้านทรงจีน ที่ตกแต่งด้วยเฟอร์นิเจอร์แบบจีน ด้วยสาเหตุจากความเลื่อมของการปกครองในประเทศจีนทำให้ญี่ปุ่นหยุดส่งทูตไปเจริญสัมพันธไมตรีและอิทธิพลของวัฒนธรรมจีนในญี่ปุ่นลดลงและเกิดวัฒนธรรมในแบบของตนเอง ที่เรียกว่า Kokufubunka ที่เหมาะสมกับธรรมชาติและความเป็นอยู่ของญี่ปุ่นในราวปลายศตวรรษที่ 9

การเติบโตของวัฒนธรรมญี่ปุ่นนั้นมีพื้นฐานมาจากความมั่งคั่งของชนชั้นขุนนางเป็นหลักการแต่งงานกับชนชั้นขุนนางที่มีฐานะสูงกว่าถือเป็นการยกระดับฐานะของตน สุภาพสตรีจากตระกูลขุนนางชั้นกลางและชั้นสูงจะได้รับการศึกษาและมีความเชี่ยวชาญในการแต่งบทกวีและเล่นเครื่องดนตรี โดยเกิดนักประพันธ์ที่โดดเด่น เช่น Sei Shounagon และ Murasaki Shikibu และได้รับการถ่ายทอดทักษะด้านวัฒนธรรมอันดีงาม จะเห็นได้ว่ามีงานวรรณกรรมหลายชิ้นที่ถูกเขียนขึ้นด้วยสุภาพสตรีชนชั้นขุนนางเหล่านี้ ผู้เขียนได้แนะนำวรรณกรรมเรื่อง มะคุระนะโซชิ โดย Sei Shounagon และได้วิเคราะห์เนื้อหาเพื่อที่จะศึกษาสังคมและวัฒนธรรมในยุคเฮอันที่เป็นฉากหลังของวรรณกรรมชิ้นนี้ในบทความนี้จะขอเรียกชื่อวรรณกรรมชิ้นนี้แบบทับศัพท์ภาษาญี่ปุ่น ว่า Makurano Soshi ซึ่งเป็นวรรณกรรมที่ยอดเยี่ยมโดยเป็นวรรณกรรมที่สะท้อนวัฒนธรรมและสังคม และสถานการณ์ทางการเมืองในศตวรรษที่ 11 ของประเทศญี่ปุ่น

คำสำคัญ

การศึกษาระดับอุดมศึกษา สุภาพสตรีชนชั้นขุนนาง วัฒนธรรมในยุคเฮอัน

Introduction

Heian period started in 794 when the Emperor Kanmu moved his capital to Heiankyo, or Kyoto in the present time, then ended in 1192 when Samurai took the reins of government. It was the period of the prosperity of aristocracy, and Japanese culture had greatly developed in this period.

Since Japan built the political system centered on the Emperor in 6th century, adapting the law and the political system of Chinese dynasty, Japan was strongly influenced by Chinese culture. They built the capital on the model of the capital of Chinese Tang dynasty, the attire and the residence of aristocracy was all Chinese style. They read and wrote official documents in Chinese then borrowed Chinese characters when they wrote documents in Japanese since they didn't have their own yet.



They were eager to send envoys to Chinese Sui and Tang dynasty to import advanced culture and technology at frequent intervals during the 7th and 8th centuries. The envoy to China could be a very risky journey but it provided a huge return to Japan in these centuries. The envoys were greatly reduced to only 2 times in the 9th century after several shipwrecks and the last envoy to Tang dynasty was canceled in 894 and discontinued after the Tang dynasty collapsed in 907. The big inflow of Chinese culture by the envoy stopped but trading between Japan and China was started by private merchants. In the 9th century, the return became not worth the risk, because Japanese culture had already begun to develop independently from the original and the influence from Chinese culture had been diminished.

For example of the cultural development, Japanese style architecture (Shinden-zukuri) started to appear in architecture. They began to adapt Chinese style architecture to the climate of the capital, which had a humid summer and a cold winter and rainfalls through the year. In order to avoid humidity, they used wood instead of the stone, brick and mortar in materials used in Chinese style architecture. They built the wooden floor that elevated off the ground, and used removable paper slide doors and rattan blinds to separate rooms instead of the walls to let the wind pass through the building for the humid and hot summer. They began to take their shoes off at the entrance of the building to keep it clean, and sat and slept on the mattress on the wooden floor so that Chinese style chairs and beds went out of use. The changes in the architecture lead to another change in the lifestyle of the aristocracy in Heian period.

The development which had one of the biggest influences on Japanese culture was the appearance of Hiragana, or Japanese characters. Before Heian period, they used Chinese characters to represent Japanese pronunciation. It was called Shakuji which meant "borrowed characters" in English, and it was used when they write a document or composed poetry in Japanese. Then it was modified more easier and it became simplified form called Sōshōtai during early Heian period, and by the early 9th century, Hiragana was organized almost the same as in the present day.

It soon became popular among female aristocracy. It made writing easier and free and they enjoyed writing poetry, a diary or stories with their own language. Japanese literature blossomed, and many excellent works of literature were written by female aristocracy during Heian period such as Makurano Sōshi, or "The Pillow Book" in English by Sei Shōnagon, and Genji Monogatari, or "Tales of the Genji" by Murasaki Shikibu. The first work of literature of diary was Tosa Nikki which was written in Hiragana and it is generally believed that it was written by male aristocracy Kintō Tsurayuki who was popular poet at that age, and it gave big influence on the female aristocracy.

But male aristocracy considered it as informal writing at first, used it in personal letter or poetry and only Chinese characters were used for formal documents.

Makranosoushi, The Essay Book Written 1000 Years Ago

Makurano Soushi is the oldest essay book in Japan and one of the excellent examples which represent writings in Heian period, in the early 11th century. The original has been lost and several versions of manuscript remain in the present time. It was written by a court lady called Sei Shounagon. She served for the Empress Teishi from 993, just after ascending to become the Empress, to 1001, the Empress passed away after a difficult childbirth of second princess. She was born into a family of poets and was highly educated in Chinese and Japanese poetry from a young age. Her father was the famous poet Motosuke Kiyohara, “Sei Shounagon” was the name used in the imperial court (Nyoubouna) and her real name was not on record. “Sei” was taken from her family name and “Shounagon” was a position name, so she was probably related to someone in the position of Shounagon in her family. The aristocracy during Heian period tended to avoid using a real name (Imina) because they believed that the real name was linked to their soul and they could be controlled by any person who knew their real name. They usually used the name which was taken from their residence or position in the public and their real name would not be spoken in public and also not recorded in writing. Because she was exceptionally bright, a quick minded person with a deep knowledge of Chinese and Japanese poetry and writing, she was hired by the Empress’ family as a tutor to support cultural activity in the imperial court since the Empress Teishi was young, at 14 years old. The Empress’ father served as the regent to the Emperor Ichijou and he was at the peak of power in aristocratic society when Sei Shounagon entered into the imperial court in 991. She went on to become the Empress’ favorite lady and had a good relationship and supported the Empress Teishi in hardship after her father’s death.

Sei Shounagon started writing essays when she was in imperial court and kept on writing after she left the court. In Later centuries, her writing was found and published. The article is written in ancient Japanese grammar with mixed Hiragana and Chinese character. I would like to choose some of the more typical articles from each group and study the culture through her description. The article can be sorted into 3 groups which are a reminiscence group, a portrait group and an example list group. In the reminiscence groups, she reminisced about the impressive events, mostly the events related to the Empress Teishi and her family, and the events which Sei Shounagon won the popularity and so on. In the portrait group, she described a beautiful scene such as the



scenery or things that she had an interest in. In the example list group, she compiled a list of examples according to the subject such as things, annoyed her, things that looked cute, and so on.

The Portrait Group

Article No. 1 (Matsuo & Nagai, 1974)

Spring, at dawn. The edge of mountains is getting white and light while a wisp of purple cloud trails above.

Summer, at night. The full moon night, of course, but even on a dark night which fireflies hover around is nice. A rainy night is also nice.

Autumn, at dusk. As the sun gets closer to the edge of mountains, crows start to get back to the nest, and it is impressive to gaze at them in threes, fours, or pairs. A flight of wild geese in the distance is also quite nice. A sound of the wind blowing and a sound of insects singing after the sunset are quite nice, of course.

Winter, early morning. No need to talk about a snow morning, but a white frost, or without it, in very cold morning is quite nice. The ladies prepare a fire in the brazier in hurry and bring them inside the building. It is quite typical winter morning. It gets warmer at midday and the charcoal in the brazier turn to white then it looks bad.

This is the first article of Makurano Soushi and Sei Shounagon describes the best time of day for each season. The capital Heiankyo, or Kyoto in the present, has distinguish four seasons. Since the early centuries, Japanese have seen the beauty in the changing seasons and expressed it in works of poetry.

For the best time of day in spring, she described the scenery of the sun rise. She saw the beauty as the darkness changing its color every minute, and the sunlight began to leak from behind the edge of the mountains. It is quite suitable as a representation of spring, the season in which all creatures and plants wake up after the long cold winter. She presented an impression of the beauty, expressing the whole dramatic minutes in short a sentence. It is a common technique used in Japanese poetry (waka), which captures the impressive scenery or moment using only 31 characters, and suggests at her high skill of composing Japanese poetry.

Japanese poetry was actively composed by aristocracy during the Heian period and composing poetry of the beauty in an impressive scene containing things such as flowers, animals, the weather and seasons. Some words used to describe articles such as the full moon, the sound of the wind, the sound of insects singing and snow are introduced with the expression “of course”

or “no need to talk about” because they are quite often used in Japanese poetry and very popular to add beautiful impressions of the seasons. These words are called “Kigo”, words of the season, for example, Japanese apricot (Ume), cherry (Sakura), young herbs (Wakana), and a bush warbler (uguisu) for the spring, and wisteria (Fuji), citrus (Tachibana), lotus (Hasu), rain (Samidare) and a cuckoo (Kakkou) for the summer. The singing insects such as a cricket (Koorogi), a katydid (Kirigirisu) or a bell cricket (Suzumushi) remind us of the cool weather in the Autumn. Japanese people have enjoyed listening to these insects as part of their culture since the early centuries, they kept them in cages and would carry them into the room or release them in the yard to enjoy the sounds of the season.

In contrast to spring, the best time of day in autumn is at dusk, the moments before the sun set. She was impressed by the beauty of the sunset with crows and wild geese. In Japanese text, the feeling toward crows and wild geese are clearly distinguished by using the word “Ahare” and “Wokashi”. Both words mean “impressive” but “Ahare” is the expression of the feeling to be touched or be moved, and the emotion is often mixed with the feeling of pathos such as sadness, sympathy or loneliness. “Wokashi” is the feeling of your interest being aroused, curiosity and it’s usually mixed with positive feelings such as nice or smart as opposed to sadness. In autumn part, she described that crows’ flying back to the nest are impressive (Ahare), with the scene of the sunset which is getting darker every minute, her emotion was probably mixed with the loneliness. She described a flight of wild geese is quite nice (Wokashi), It shows that she was impressed and got interested in the beautiful shape of a flight. The feeling of “Ahare” is generally seen in the works of Japanese poetry and writings during Heian period but in Sei Shounagon’s writing, the feeling of “Wokashi” appears more often. Let’s take a look at Article No. 133, a good example of the beauty of “Wokashi”

Article No. 133 (Matsuo & Nagai, 1974)

In the morning after all-night rain in September. I saw a number of rain beads remained on the chrysanthemum petal as bright sunshine came in. It was nice and interesting. On broken webs over bamboo fence and under the edge of a roof, the rain beads lined like the string of pearls. It looked really wonderful.

After a while, the sun rose higher, I saw the twigs of bush clover slowly moved up after released a heavy load of rain beads to the ground. It was quite interesting. Then I also felt interesting that the other people might not pay attention to it at all when they saw it.



This is a beautiful portrait of the rain beads seen in the morning after rain. Her keen observation eye was on the rain beads. She described the scene with the feeling of “Wokashi”. The underlined words are the translation of “Wokashi” which shows her keen observation on the beauty is based on curiosity.

The chrysanthemum in this article, must be prepared for the Chouyou festival, or the chrysanthemum festival, held on 9 th day of the 9 th month, It was one of the five seasonal festivals held in the odd months. They held a big party in the imperial court to enjoy looking at flowers and having special food or drink which related to the seasons. The chrysanthemum was a non-native flower, also imported from China in early Heian period. It was a rare and distinctive flower for that time. On the day of the Chouyou festival they drank a rice wine, putting the chrysanthemum petals in the cup. The festival for the seven herbs (Jinjitsu), or Haruno Nanakusa, was held on the 7th of the 1st month, and seven herbs in rice porridge would be served. On the 3rd of the 3rd month for the peach (Jyoushi), or Hinamatsuri in present time, there would be a rhombus-shaped rice cake (Hishimochi) as the delicacy. The 5th of the 5th month for blue flag (Tango), they had a rice cake wrapped in an oak leaf (Kashiwamochi). The 7th day of the 7th month is for bamboo (shichiseki), or Tanabata. These festivals became popular for ordinary people in later centuries and it is a part of Japanese culture still in the present time. They were originally adapted from Chinese culture and used to be held as formal events in the imperial court for high-ranking aristocracy,

Article No. 208 (Matsuo & Nagai, 1974)

*Crossing a river in an ox carriage in a bright moon, Splashing water shine like
bits of crystal in every step the ox went on.*

She describes the scene of the full moon ride in an ox carriage. The splashing water caught her eyes and it is obvious that feeling of “Wokashi”, or curiosity aroused and motivated her to describe this beautiful moment. She expressed the scene in short words and presented whole the impression of the beauty, in a similar way as in the spring part in the article number 1, showing the influence from Japanese poetry.

The feeling of “Ahare” is generally seen in the works of writings during Heian period and to express “Ahare”, the beauty caused the feeling of pathos, was the basic motivation for them. But the articles in Makurano Soushi are dominated by the feeling of “Wokashi”. The beauty caused curiosity and interest, was strong motivation on her writing, and it made her writing distinguished.

The Reminiscence Group

The articles in the reminiscence group had interesting episodes related to the Emperor, the Empress and other high-ranking aristocracy. These episodes are usually lacking in description of circumstance which was common knowledge in aristocracy so that the reader would need to know historic events or the relationship of the people to follow these episodes. There were two big events that changed the Empress Teishi's life. One was her father, the regent Michitaka's death in 995 and other was Shoshi's ascending the Empress in 1000. First I would like to look at article number 132 which describes the regent Michitaka and his family in prosperity. It was in 994, a year before his death.

Article No. 132 (Matsuo & Nagai, 1974)

Kurodo, the northern entrance of the Emperor's residence, was packed with the court ladies. They are waiting for the regent in the line along the corridor. After a while, saying "Wonderful ladies, you would laugh at this old man", the regent walked through the ladies and arrived at the entrance. A lady opened the rattan blind in front of him showing the layers of colorful silks in her sleeve. Gondainagon, the son of the regent, was waiting for him. He wore in formal attire that has a long piece of cloth (Kyo) trailing behind him and it made him look beautiful and solemn. He knelt down to the regent and helped put on the boots. It was quite impressive that the regent let the high-ranking person such as Gondainagon serve for the boots. Outside, Yamanoino Dainagon, the eldest son of the regent, and other high-ranking officers got in their positions along the way. They were all dressed in formal black attire and stood motionless on the white ground. After a while, the regent came out from the building. He looked quite elegant. He adjusted the sword on his belt and started walking. Miyanodaibu, the younger brother of the regent, was standing near the entrance. When the regent came closer, he bowed and knelt to the regent. It was quite impressive. I thought he would not need to show his respect. The regent looked so admirable. He must be a person who performed good deeds in his previous life.

On that day, a lady called Chunagonnoki wore her Buddhist rosary and behaved better than usual because it was a death anniversary of someone she knew. Another lady asked her to borrow the rosary for a while, saying that she wanted to do good deeds in Buddhism to be an admirable person in the after life. We began to laugh. Her Majesty smiled at us and said that it would be much better than being the regent if she were able to be the Buddha. It felt quite nice to hear that.

I told Her Majesty about the way Miyanodaibu bowed and knelt to the regent again and again, Her Majesty said, "Oh, your favorite man again." and laughed at me. But if Her Majesty had known the prosperity of Miyanodaibu in the future, she would have seen why I had felt something special for him.

She wrote about the event of the regent's departure from the Emperor's residence and the conversation with the Empress. It might be a day with a special occasion though there is no information of this.

The regent, Michitaka Fujiwara was at the peak of power in the aristocratic society at this time. His eldest son Michiyori took the position of Dainagon, chief councilor of state and third son Korechika took Gondainagon, extra chief councilor of state. He married his daughter Teishi to the Emperor Ichijou and succeeded to ascend the Empress. Sei Shounagon described that his appearance was impressively admirable and according to her description of the attire of the high-ranking officers and court ladies, they treated the regent with full respect.

In Heian period, the attire of both male and female aristocracy was specified in detail in the law of attire to show their position and the rank clearly. The design and the color of the attire depended on the position and rank. Both male and female attire were loose and decorative and that had a unique expression of beauty, such as very long length of the attire which was designed to be trailed along. Both male and female put on a special long piece of cloth trailing behind them for formal ceremonies. It was called "Shitagasaneno kyo" for male and "Mo" for female, and dressed in the formal occasion.

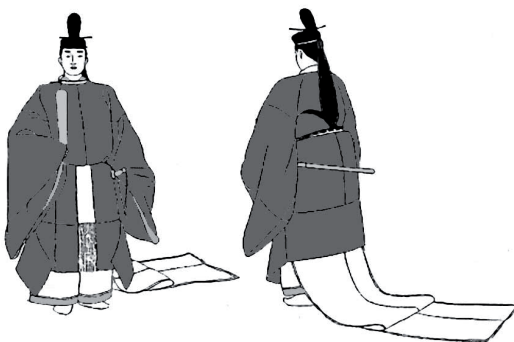


Figure1: Male attire for formal occasion (Sokutai syouzoku)

Source: Fuzoku Hakubutsukan, 1998



Figure 2: Female attire for formal occasion (Nyoubou
Source: Wako Genji, 2013

Since Sei Shounagon served for the Empress, the attire for her position was the best one, called Nyoubou shozoku, or attire of high lady, which had more than 10 layers of colorful silks for formal occasions. The number of layers depended on the season and the occasion, and the color combination of layers must be chosen from examples in the code, depending on the season and the occasion and they always competed with one another in beauty of the colors in the layers for fame and popularity.

Sei Shounagon referred to the man called Miyanodaibu who will have prosperity later. His name is Michinaga Fujiwara, younger brother of the regent Michitaka, who built the greatest years of the prosperity of Fujiwara family, marrying his 4 daughters to the Emperor and had 3 daughters ascend the Empress. He was in the position of Miyanodaibu, or high secretary for the Empress, which is lower than the sons of the regent and didn't have a strong presence yet at the time of this episode, but soon he was elevated to a higher position and began to compete for power with Korechika for the post of the regent after Michitaka died of a disease. The Empress' family had a great down fall after his death after Korechika was involved in the violent scandal against the retired Emperor Kazan and he was punished by relegation and sent to Dasaifu in the Kyusyu island. He and the family quickly lost power and popularity in society. The Empress Teishi decided to be a Buddhist nun as her brother Korechika was arrested in front of her and left the imperial court. Having one misfortune after another, her residence was lost when it burned in a fire and she then lost her mother to disease in the same year. While at the same time, Michinaga ascended the Sadaijin, the Senior Minister of State. He got authority to check all documents before the Emperor read (Nairan) and had the power of governing more than the regent would have. These big down fall of the Empress' family after Michitaka's death was not written in Makurano Soushi as if there was nothing special to refer to though it definitely made an impact on the Empress who she served for, and this was entirely intentional. (Tabata, 1986, 21 ; Kobayashi, 2015, 213)

In the article, Sei Shounagon refers to the prosperity of Miyanodaibu in the future. It shows that she knew it when she wrote this article. She probably had strong impressions in her memory such as those of the powerful and solemn regent, the cheerful young Empress, Michinaga with great ambition and felt reluctant to accept that the situation had all changed as she reminisced the days she served for the Empress Teishi after she left the court. She must write this article as a record of the heyday of the Empress' family.

The next article is about the episode of the Emperor Ichijou in 1000, 6 years later from the previous article, article No. 132. It was few days before Shoushi's ascending the Empress which



raised the situation having two Empresses for one Emperor first time in history. At this time, the Emperor Ichijou had the Empress Teishi come back to the court, overriding strong objections from high-ranking aristocracies. When the regent Michitaka had power in the court, nobody approach to marry a daughter to the Emperor but after his death and the Empress left to be a Buddhist nun, the Emperor Ichijou married to Gishi, Genshi. Sonshi and Michinaga's daughter, Shoushi and they lived in the wives's residence (Koukyu) The Empress Teishi was not allowed to live in the wives' residence (Koukyu) and lived in the small building of Chuuguushiki, the office of the secretaries served for the Empress, far from the Emperor's residence outside the court. The situation around the Empress had changed and it could be frustrated and depressive time of the Empress and her ladies, but Sei Shounagon described the time they spent in Chuuguushiki as cheerful and bright time with the episodes of funny and interesting activities to diminish the negative atmosphere. (Mitamura, 1980, 39) The Emperor visited her often and soon the Empress became pregnant. She moved to a residence of low-rank aristocracy (Sanjounomiya) which would not deserve for the Empress in ordinal situation for preparation. Since the Empress had lost power and the presence in the imperial court, she was not able to be supported by high-ranking aristocracy. After the Empress gave the birth to the first prince, the Emperor let her stay with him for the ceremony of 100th day after the birth of the prince. It should be the Empress' happiest time since her father's death even though it was only temporary.

Article No. 241 (Matsuo & Nagai, 1974)

The residence of Ichijou was called Imadairi, or the court at the present time, used as the residence outside the imperial court. The building of His majesty was called Seiryoden and Her Majesty lived in the northern building. There were two bridges to connect them in the west and east and there was a lovely courtyard surrounded by them.

One peaceful fine day, about the 20th of February, His Majesty was playing a flute on the western bridge. Takatono Hyoubu who served as a flute instructor stayed by His Majesty and duetted the song called Takasago again and again. It was wonderful. All ladies move close to the blind and watched them through it.

His majesty and Takatono had a break and talked about something. They looked elegant in every move. While I watched them, I felt peace and happiness then I could forget about "Picking a parsley" (This was quoted from old Japanese poet, to express misfortune on Her Majesty indirectly.)

There was a man called Suketada who served as a secretary. He was bad-mannered and had a rude way of talking so nobody like him. They called him "rude boy" and they made fun of him by singing a song of his rudeness. One day, His majesty started to play this song when I served by the side. I asked His Majesty to play louder but His Majesty said, "Well, he would hear if I play louder." and kept playing softly. After a while His majesty changed the place. His Majesty said, "Let's play it now. That man is not around here." and started playing louder for me. It was wonderful.

This is a reminiscence of the event of Emperor Ichijou's playing a flute. It was about the day of the ceremony of the 100th day after the birth of the prince (Momokanogi). It was during one of the ceremonies after the birth of a baby in aristocracy's family. In this ceremony, they had a piece of a rice cake (Mochi) put into a baby's mouth and let a baby practice the first baby food. They believed that the rice cake had the power to help a child's growth and they also had a ceremony in which they put a rice cake on a child's head on new year's day until the child grew up to 5 years old. The child mortality rate during Heian period was high (Harada, 2011, 66) and the daily practices to protect a child from evil spirits were quite popular among aristocracy such as throwing rice around the residence or shooting a bow without an arrow at midnight to exorcise evil spirits.

The Emperor had moved to the residence of Ichijou temporarily since the court had been damaged by fire in the previous year. The residence of Ichijou seems to be the typical residence of the aristocracy in Heian period called Shindenzukuri which has the main building in the center and a building in the North with connecting bridges. It usually has a pair of buildings in the East and West and the garden which expressed the beauty of nature with flowers, trees, a pond, a stream or even a small mountain for having cultural activity such as a poetry or music party. The skill in playing musical instrument was one of the basic educations which was required in aristocracy, the same as composing poetry in Chinese. The flute was a popular instrument among male aristocracy. Sei Shounagon referred to the flute as the most fashionable instrument for men and a man with flute was always attractive in the article number 207.

The beautiful sound of the flute echoed endlessly in the warm peaceful day and the ladies gazed at them through the blind. It is a poetic and beautiful scene. The Empress probably listened to the flute with the court ladies but there was no description about the appearance of the Empress in this article, in spite of the fact the day was peaceful and should be the Empress's happiest day after her father died. Later part is the episode which tells about the Emperor Ichijou's character and



good relationship with Sei Shounagon. The absence or loss described by the Empress Teishi in the article is a common feature of the articles about the event which happened after her father, the regent Michitaka's death, and it gave the impression that the situation of the Empress was getting serious and talk was avoided about the subject.

After 5 days, the ceremony of the 100th day after the birth of the prince, Michinaga, in the position of the Senior Minister of State which is the highest at that time, declared that he had his daughter ascend the Empress, alleging that the Empress Teishi once had become a Buddhist nun and had a problem joining a holy ritual in the imperial court. (Mitamura, 1980, 38)

When Teishi's father, Michitaka approached to have Teishi ascend the Empress (Kougou) in order to elevate his status in 990, the title of the Empress (Kougou), the Empress Dowager (Koutaigou) and the Grand Empress Dowager (Taikoutaigou) had been all held by previous Emperors' wives. At that time, the Empress was called by two names, one was "Kougou" which was taken from the title of the Empress, the other was "Chuuguu" which was taken from the name of the office "Chuuguushiki" which served for the Empress. Both of "Kougou" and "Chuuguu" were generally used to address the Empress. Michitaka insisted that the title of the Empress must belong to the present Emperor's wife, and established a new title "Chuuguu" for his own daughter Teishi. After he had Teishi ascend the "Chuuguu" Empress, he ascended the regent for the young Emperor and had the power of governing in his hand. At this time, "Chuuguu" belonged to present Emperor's wife, Teishi and "Kougou" belonged to retired Emperor Enyu's wife, Jyunshi.

Following the precedent which was set by Teishi's father, Michinaga had Shoushi ascend the "Chuugu" Empress, title for the present wife, pushing Teishi off to the "Kougou" Empress which was nominal title. The "Chuguu" Empress Shoushi entered to the residence of Ichijou and stayed there as the first wife, then Teishi got back to her residence (Sanjounomiya), the residence of the aristocracy where she gave birth to the prince.

The event of the Shoushi's ascending the Empress (Chuuguu) wasn't told in Makurano Soushi, in the same way that the negative event after the father's death, but it must have been the hardest time for the the Empress Teishi and her ladies. In article number 225, 226 and 227, Sei Shounagon wrote articles about the Empress Teishi a few months later from the Shoushi's ascending the Empress. She quoted poetry which was composed by the Empress Teishi in these articles to express the Empress's feelings. Instead of describing the conversation or detail about the Empress' appearance, she described how they spent the 5 th day of the 5 th month (Tango) festival in quiet residence (Sanjounomiya). In number 225, The Empress composed poetry about the glamorous

party in the imperial court. “On the day everybody’s busy with flowers and butterflies, you understand the feeling in my heart” (*the translation from Japanese poetry in article number 225*)

In the number 226, As the Empress Teishi’s nanny who had been served since she was a baby left her to Kyusyu island, the Empress gave her plenty of fans as a farewell gift and wrote poetry on one of them. She compared the sadness in farewell, and the hard situation which she was in to the depressing rain. “You are going to move to Hiyuuga in the sunshine but remember that I am crying in the depressing rain.” (*the translation from Japanese poetry in article number 226*)

In number 227 , After Sei Shounagon left for the temple to stay for a short period, the Empress sent a letter containing poetry which expressed serious loneliness. “Every time I hear the evening bell from a temple near a mountain, I have emotional pains of missing you” (*the translation from Japanese poetry in article number 227*)

Though Sei Shounagon never expressed the feeling of “Ahare”, the feeling of pathos, such as sadness or helplessness during the situation which the Empress Teishi got involved in, it is only seen in these articles which described the event a few months before The Empress Teishi passed away. (Kawatou, 2005, 7-8)

The Example List Group

In the example list group, she compiled a list of examples according to the topic. It shows Sei Shounagon’s personal taste, a part of daily life and culture in Heian period. The article is well described in detail by her keen observation based on feeling of “Wokashi”.

Article No. 155 (Matsuo & Nagai, 1974)

Cute things

A baby’s face which someone draws on a small fruit.

A baby sparrow which comes to me when I make the sound of a mouse.

The way the baby, about 2 or 3 years old takes a close look at some dust and picks it up with his little fingers then shows it to an adult when he crawls in a hurry on the floor.

The way the girl with bob hair stares at something as she tilts her head and lets her fringe cover her eyes.

A boy from high-ranking aristocracy walking in formal dress.

A baby who is fallen asleep in the crook of an arm. Furnishing goods for dolls.

A little lotus leaf taken from the pond.



All little things are cute.

A fat baby with light skin about 2 years old crawls around, putting on a big and thin purple clothes with a strap to adjust the size. A child walking in very short clothes with large sleeves is also cute.

A boy about 8, 9 or 10 years old reads aloud in a child voice.

A chick with long legs and white fluffy feathers which looks like she is wearing a short clothes keeps on cheeping as she follows someone back and forth. Chicks walking with a parent are also cute.

A baby duck.

A glass vase.

The examples in this list are mainly children or baby animals. She seems to love children and has very good observations of them. Bobbed hair was the general hair style for young girls. They kept their hair short until they grew up to 8 years, then they started to grow their hair long. Adult female aristocracy usually let their hair grow down to the feet since they considered the hair represented the beauty of a woman.

When sons of the high-ranking aristocracy grew up to be 10 years old, they were allowed to visit the Emperor's residence to learn manners in imperial court. They wore formal attire, the same as adults. The boy she referred to must be one of them. Aristocracy's children learned the basic skill of writing Hiragana, playing musical instruments, and Japanese poetry, and boys also learned Chinese poetry since Chinese characters were used in formal documents, the skill of reading and writing were required by male aristocracy. The boy in this article might be reading aloud a Chinese poetry.

Article No. 25 (Matsuo & Nagai, 1974)

Annoying things

A visitor starts talking endlessly when I am busy. If it is a person of low rank, I will just send them away. But if it isn't, it will not be that easy. It is quite annoying.

A wisp of hair dipped in ink.

An inkstick that has a piece of stone mixed in makes a bad noise when I grind on the inkstone.

An exorcist who recites a spell in a very sleepy voice. Once we had an urgent sick person then we called the exorcist to get the evil spirit away. But he was absent



so we had to look for him around and it took a very long time. Finally we found him and took him to the sick person. He settled down and started reciting a spell in very sleepy voice. I thought that he had fought with evil spirits lately so he had got tired.

A person who is not especially talented gives a smug grin as she tells something not special. It is quite annoying.

A person who sits next to the brazier and flips the hands over above it. He must be too old to be shy. He would put the feet on the edge of the brazier and rubs his feet then starts talking. He would use a fan to blow the dust before he takes a seat next to other people and settles down awkwardly in a wrong manner. This must be the behavior of a person in worthless rank but I have actually seen a person in good rank called Shikibunotaifu act like this.

A drunk man who talks a loud, rubs around the mouth, touches the beard if he has one, offers another cup of Sake, It is absolutely annoying. Says "Drink more." And shudders his body, shakes his head, has his mouth loosely opened, and starts to sing a children's song or something. I have seen an admirable person in high rank act like this. It is not acceptable at all.

A person who is envious, always tells a tale of woe, gossips about someone, is keen to know even a little thing and holds a grudge if it isn't told, then always acts like they know everything about everything. Quite annoying.

A child starts crying when I ask.

A number of Crows fly and caw around.

A dog barks at the man who is hiding to see the woman in a secret relationship.

A man starts snoring after hiding in the closet. A man wearing a formal tall hat when he visits the woman then hits the hat on something and makes a noticeable sound. Annoying.

A man who makes a rustle as he ducks under the rattan blind hanging at the entrance to the room. It's annoying. If the rattan blind has a fringe on it, it will make a louder sound but, if he carefully lifts it up, it will not make a sound at all. Even a paper slide door makes a sound if treated roughly. Annoying.

The buzzing of a mosquito. When I am about falling asleep, it always flies over my face and introduces herself in a sad small buzzing voice. Quite annoying.



A person in an ox carriage with bad noise from the wheel. It is quite annoying.
He must be deaf. If I were in that cart, I would curse the owner of the carriage.
A person who interrupts me when I tell a story. It doesn't matter if it is a child or an adult, all intrusive people are quite annoying,
A running rat.
Once I let children come into my room and play. I treated them quite nicely and let them take a look around and they behaved nicely. Later, they were used to visiting my room and visit quite often, then always made a mess with my belongings. Quite annoying.
Once the person whom I hated and didn't want to see at work or home visited me. I pretended to be asleep because I didn't want to see him. The maid came to call me. She looked at me with amazed eyes and shook me roughly. Quite annoying.
A newly arrived court lady advised someone with known-it-all face.
A man sneezes when he mumbles a spell.
A man who is not the head of the family sneezes loudly.
Fleas are quite annoying. They jump around under the clothes then try to push up.
A howling of dogs followed by another howling. It sounds like a sinister spell.
A person who never closes the door.

This is a long list, mostly of the people in bad behavior who annoyed her by displaying improper behavior. Since she was highly educated and learned good manners, she couldn't overlook a bad-mannered or careless people. Noises also strongly annoyed her since it was against the slow and elegant style of the time. The article could be taken as negative complaining list but it isn't. Her description is comical and cheerful, and it probably draws chuckles as you read on because some examples in this list are very familiar in the present time. She criticized improper behavior of people in good rank. I felt that she overreacted a little to the man for the bad manner of warming his hands and feet but it was probably the way they should not behave. She also referred to the drunk man with good observation and let us know the drunk man is the same no matter when or where.

Exorcism and fortune telling were very popular in aristocratic society in Heian period and had a big influence on their life. As in the example, they believed the reason they got sick or had bad luck was the work of evil spirits and to avoid these evil spirits they followed fortune telling in every move of their daily life. They decided the day for the ceremony, meeting people, visiting

somewhere or even taking a bath by fortune telling. They often had the instruction called “Imibi”, or forbidden day in English, they had to shut the gate of the residence and stayed inside for days or weeks, canceling all activities no matter who they were.

She referred to the ox carriage with the loud noise. Aristocracy used the ox carriage as transportation in Heian period. They dressed up the carriage to show their authority and wealth. There was a code for the decoration of an ox carriage depending on the owner's rank and the occasion. The noisy carriage was not only annoying but also could damage their reputation. In Japan, a horse was never used to carry the carriage until Japan adapted Western culture in the 19th century.

In Heian period, aristocracy was in polygamy. They generally didn't live with the wives and visited in a wife's residence at night. They didn't need to hide if he visited his wife at all, but it seemed that sometimes they visited someone in secret. She described some example of unstylish visiting of a clumsy man in an humorous description.

Article No. 39 (Matsuo & Nagai, 1974)

Elegant things

The layered look which is put a transparent white clothes over light purple clothes.

An egg of a wild goose.

Shaved ice with Amazura syrup in a new metal bowl.

A crystal Buddhist rosary.

Wisteria flowers.

A plum flower which is covered by snow.

A very cute child eating a berry

This is a short but impressive list which is filled with elegant and rare things. The elegant layered look in this list is girl's attire for summer time for the high-ranking aristocracy. Light purple was a special color and used only for high-ranking people. The wild goose was generally popular for its beautiful figure during flight. Since it was a migratory bird for the winter, it would be very rare to see its egg in Japan. It is a big surprise that they enjoyed shaved ice 1000 years ago but it was only for special occasions for special people.

Since the early centuries, they used the ice house (Himuro) to keep ice through year. They built the ice house in a cave or under the ground and stored the ice in the winter and used the ice in the summer. During the Heian period, there were 6 ice houses around the capital Heiankyo, or Kyoto, and 4 ice houses in the rural areas. They were under the control of the government and



provided the ice in the hot and humid summer to the imperial family and high-ranking aristocracy. The Amazura syrup which was put on the shaved ice in this article was also rare and valuable because of its low production. The sweetener was hard to find since the sugar was not yet imported to Japan at that time.

Conclusion

In Heian period, Japanese culture developed independently from Chinese influence. Hiragana, or Japanese characters, were created and it brought drastic developments in writing. Female aristocracy started to compose poetry and stories in their own language using Japanese characters. As the background of the developments in writing, the political marriage was common practice in aristocracy. They married their daughters to higher rank aristocracy in order to elevate their status and provide them an education and good skills in cultural activity. The Empress Teishi's marrying to the Emperor was good example of the political marriage, there were strong power struggle to the position of the regent among high-ranking aristocracy. In order to boost the reputation and the presence of young Empress at 14 years old, Sei Shounagon and other court ladies which had high education and a skill of the cultural activity were hired to the Empress.

The features of her writing seen in Makurano Soushi were those of an excellent sense of beauty and a keen observation which was based on the feeling "Wokashi" and a good ability in expression when she presented the impression of the beauty in short words, in the same way in composing Japanese poetry. These features made her writing distinguished and outstanding.

In the articles reminiscence group she described the prosperous time of the Empress Teishi and her family with her love and respect. Since the Empress' father died in 950 the situation all changed and her family experienced a big down fall, but it was not told in Makurano Soushi. In the article after father's death, she described the episode of the Emperor Ichjou or high-rank male officers more frequently and the Empress Teishi came to have less presence in the article. Some episodes of the ladies gave a cheerful atmosphere, but the Empress Teishi gradually faded away from the articles. Sei Shounagon skipped some important events which happened to the Empress Teishi, such as the death of her father, her entering the role of Buddhist nun, or Shoushi's ascending to the Chuuguu Empress because these events were not appropriate when the motivation was to reminisce and to record the prosperous time of the Empress Teishi.

She described the comical and entertaining articles in her example lists. The motivation on the example lists could be entertain readers, to draw a smile, a chuckle or a laugh from the

reader. I think these articles were originally written in order to entertain the Empress Teishi and ladies who had to accept the changes after negative events, trying to cheer them up and provide positive feelings of laughter and smiles.

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