

# PERFORMATIVE LOCI OF SHOKU NIHONGI EDICTS, 749-770

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Ross Bender is an independent scholar in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He wishes to thank Wayne Farris for reading and commenting on drafts of this paper, and for his warm encouragement. Thanks for various sorts of assistance are also due to Cappy Hurst, Peter Nosco, Victor Mair, Futaba Terufumi, and Deborah Co.

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SEE ALSO: [“Performative Loci of the Imperial Edicts in Nara Japan, 749-70” in \*Oral Tradition\* 24:1 \(2009\)](#)

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## Introduction

Nara's hackneyed image as Japan's "first permanent capital" in the minds of Western historians has been steadily undermined by the realization that in fact Nara was anything but. Shōmu Tennō's mid-century capital shuffling was described in 1991 by William Coaldrake as a reversion to the "peripatetic palace syndrome", and a "brief revival of the indigenous notion of a capital as impermanent."<sup>1</sup> Joan Piggott discussed Shōmu's attempts to build capitals at Kuni and Shigaraki in terms of both factional struggles at court as well as religious pilgrimage, and recounted the sovereign's "frequent royal progresses around the extended core."<sup>2</sup> Wayne Farris' analysis of the archaeological record emphasized the portability of the Nara court and capital, detailing the remarkable way in which the major structures were packed up like monumental tents and transferred to new locations.<sup>3</sup>

Similar attention has not been given to the following reign, that of the "Last Empress" Kōken 孝謙天皇/ Shōtoku Tennō 称徳天皇.<sup>4</sup> My study will argue that this sovereign was on the road to perhaps a

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<sup>1</sup> Coaldrake 1991, pp. 50-51.

<sup>2</sup> Piggott 1997, pp. 254-263, especially 258-9.

<sup>3</sup> Farris 1998, pp.123-200.

<sup>4</sup> "Saigo no Jotei". Takinami Sadako, 1998. Joan Piggott 2003 more precisely terms her the "last classical female sovereign." This study treats her reign as a unitary period, following Takinami's biography. As will be seen, during the brief interregnum of Junnin 淳仁, the "Deposed Emperor", Kōken was arguably still very much in control.

greater degree than even her predecessor. I will demonstrate this by analyzing the imperial edicts recorded in the eighth century chronicle *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 for her reign. By comparing the contexts, contents, and text-types of the various edicts, I will illuminate the performative loci of imperial rule in this critical segment of late Nara history. The picture that emerges is that of a peregrinating monarch ruling by edict from not only the Heijō palace in Nara, but also from the grand Buddhist temples, mansions of the upper nobility, and temporary palaces in the course of magnificent royal progresses.

### **Imperial Edicts -- Senmyō 宣命, Choku 勅 and Shō 詔**

“The naiki presented the text to the Minister, the Minister submitted it to the Emperor. This being over, the Minister selected a capable man to read it, who received it and went back to his proper place. The Prince Imperial rose in the Eastern side of his seat and faced the West. Then everybody present from the princes downward rose and did likewise. The semmyō no taifu (herald) went to his appointed place and read the semmyō. Its contents were ... Then he said: Everybody obey this. The Prince Imperial first of all said ‘Aye’. Then everybody from the princes downward said likewise ‘Aye’. The Prince Imperial made obeisance. Then everybody present from the princes downward did the same. This was repeated as many times as semmyō were read. The ceremonial was always the same.”<sup>5</sup>

This translation by J.B. Snellen from the article on *Daijōsai* 大嘗祭 in the *Jōganshiki* 貞觀式 is perhaps the most detailed description in English of the court setting for the reading of an imperial edict, a *senmyō* 宣命. The *Jōganshiki*, however, a collection of court

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<sup>5</sup> Snellen 1937, p. 166.

“procedures”<sup>6</sup>, was not completed until 871, while the *senmyō* first appear early in the chronicle *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀, compiled in 797. The image presented of the performance of an edict is that of an extremely formal ceremony in the palace, a routinized ceremony which “was always the same.” While this was apparently the case by the late ninth century, this paper will show that the *senmyō* and other edicts of the Nara period were presented in an extremely diverse variety of settings.

The *senmyō* were introduced to the world of Western scholarship in Sir George Sansom’s pioneering but unfinished article “The Imperial Edicts in the Shoku Nihongi” (1924), and since that time what little attention has been paid to them in the West has identified the term *senmyō* as an “imperial edict.”<sup>7</sup>

These edicts, written in a unique form of “Old Japanese”<sup>8</sup>, were famously interpreted in a lengthy commentary by Motoori Norinaga in the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Their linguistic peculiarity, akin to that of *Kojiki*, *Man’yōshū*, *Norito*, and *Bussokusekika*, accounted for Norinaga’s special interest. However, *Shoku Nihongi* also contains a much larger number of edicts recorded in the Chinese of the text of the chronicle, which are called *choku* 勅 and *shō* 詔 (both glossed as

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<sup>6</sup> Felicia Bock’s translation of “shiki”. Bock 1970.

<sup>7</sup> There is a complete German translation by Herbert Zachert, 1950 (*Semmyō : die kaiserlichen Erlasse des Shoku-Nihongi*) and a rough English translation of #30-62 by John Kenneth Linn in a 1950 Yale dissertation (*The Imperial Edicts of the Shoku-nihongi*).

<sup>8</sup> R.A. Miller, 1967, 34.

<sup>9</sup> *Motoori Norinaga Zenshu*, vol 7, 1971, 185-482. “*Shokugi miyomiyo no mikotonori no tokigoto bumi.*”

“*mikotonori*” by Norinaga). The latter have received no attention in Western historiography.

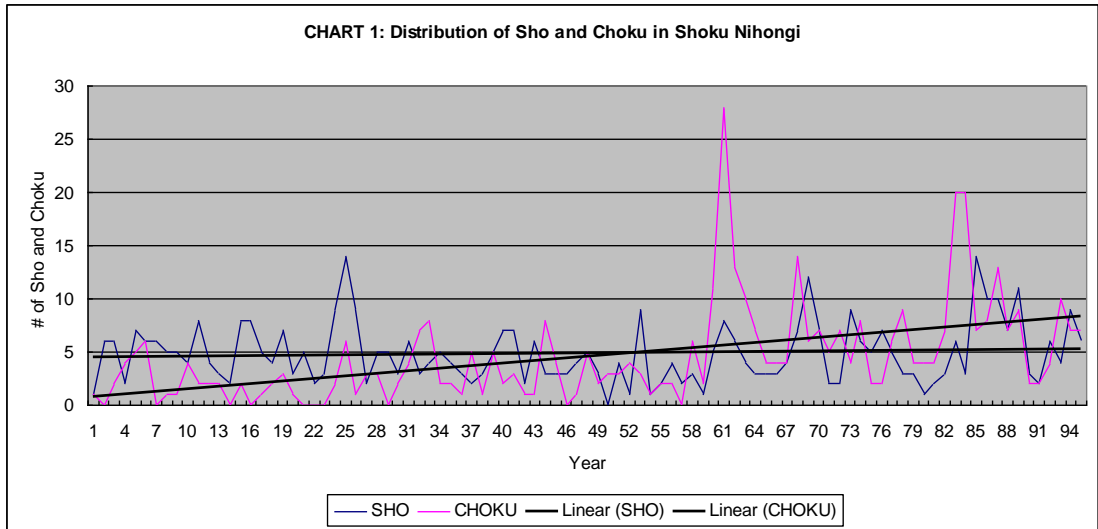
Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, in his introduction to Volume 4 of the *Shoku Nihongi*, comments on the great number of *senmyō* issued during the reign of Shōtoku Tennō.<sup>10</sup> In fact the total number of *senmyō* issued during the years 749-770, the reign of the Last Empress, comprise more than half (34) of the total 62 *senmyō*. But the annals of this reign are also peppered with the less well-known *choku* and *shō*.

Four hundred thirty-five *choku* and four hundred sixty-three *shō* are recorded in the *Shoku Nihongi*.<sup>11</sup> The distribution over the 94 years [697 (Mommu 1) —791 (Enryaku 10)] covered by this official chronicle, the second of the *Rikkokushi* 六国史, is shown in Chart 1 below:

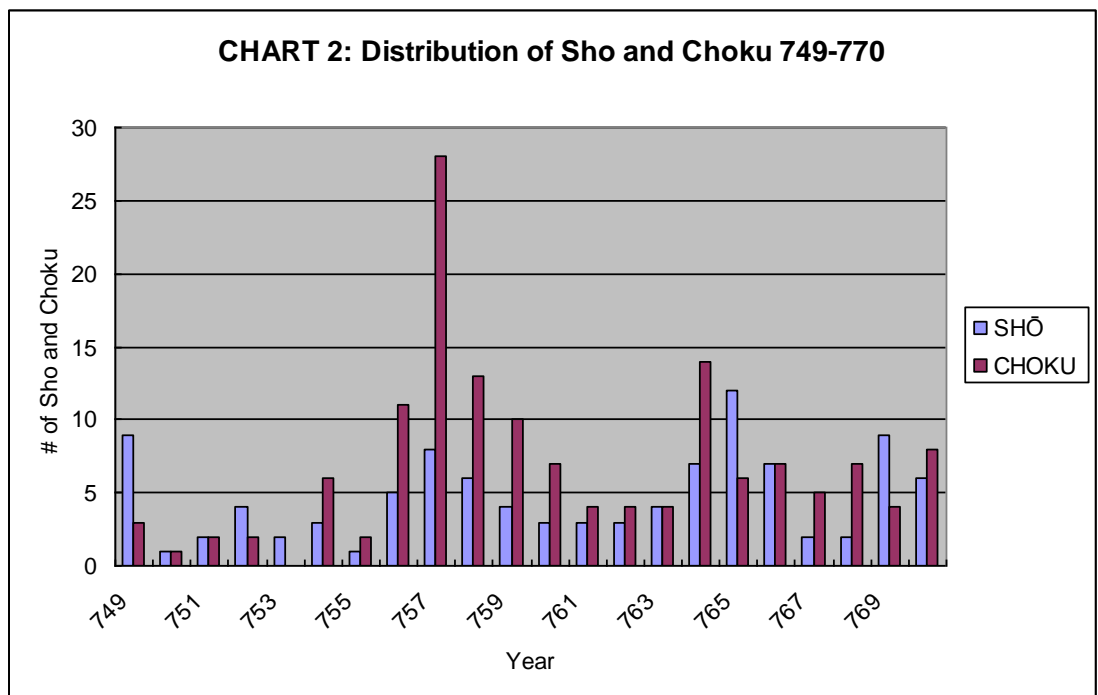
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<sup>10</sup> *Shoku Nihongi* 1995, 4: 3-4. The 5-volume edition of SN edited by Aoki et al was first published from 1989-1998 as Numbers 12-16 in *Shin Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* and reprinted 2000-2005. A supplemental volume in SNKBT, or *bekkan*, containing an index and chronological tables was published in 2000. Modern Japanese translations of *Shoku Nihongi* include those by Naoki Kōjirō (4 vols, 1986-1992), Rokurō Hayashi (7 vols, 1989), and Ujitani Tsutomu (3 vols, 1992-1995.) In this study I have relied on SNKBT and Naoki’s translation. The SNKBT collated edition provides voluminous headnotes, footnotes and endnotes. It presents the *kanbun* text on the right pages with the *yomikudashi* on the left.

<sup>11</sup> *Shoku Nihongi Sakuin* 1967. This index gives references to the occurrence of the characters in the Chinese text of the *Kokushi Taikei* edition of SN by Japanese-style date – *nengo*, year, month, day. This is in some respects easier to use than the more recent SN *sakuin* in the *bekkan* of the *Shin Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* edition, which presents page number references to all inflected endings of the characters in the *yomikudashi*. Charts 1 and 2 are based on the *Kokushi Taikei* index. A precise count obviously awaits the publication of an authoritative digitized version of SN.



This chart graphically highlights the rise in the number of *choku* during the latter part of the eighth century. The linear regression trendline in the chart show the *choku* rising dramatically over the Nara period. The trendline for the *shō* is almost flat. Furthermore, a closeup for the period 749-770 (Chart 2) shows more clearly the peaks of the number of *choku* during the reign of Kōken/Shōtoku.



It will be noted that the spikes in production of *choku* correlate very closely with two major political upheavals of the period – the conspiracy of Tachibana Naramaro 橘奈良麻呂 and the revolt of Fujiwara Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂. These graphs thus both illustrate a precipitous rise in court activity during the events surrounding the Naramaro and Nakamaro rebellions. That not only the *senmyō* but also the *choku* and *shō* rose to their highest point during the reign of Kōken/Shotoku provide the rationale for a focus on this period.

Hayakawa Shōhachi 早川庄八, in two relatively recent works, demonstrates the importance of the *senmyō* for understanding the evolution from oral transmission (*kōtō dentatsu* 口頭伝達) to “documentization” (*monjoka* 文書化) during the eighth century. In his *Shoku Nihongi* (1993) he analyzed two early *senmyō*, paying special attention to the performative context, the setting of the edict in the imperial palace at Fujiwarakyō, where the emperor in the Daigokuden 大極殿, facing south, addressed the ranks of nobility and officials drawn up in order of their importance.<sup>12</sup> In *Nihon Kodai no Monjo to Tenseki* 日本古代の文書と典籍 (1997) he scrutinized the edict announcing Shōmu Tennō’s 聖武天皇 accession and highlighted its place in the progression of documents which evidence Japan’s development as a literate society during the Nara period.<sup>13</sup>

It is Hayakawa’s emphasis on the performative context of the edicts

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<sup>12</sup> Hayakawa 1993, 9-18.

<sup>13</sup> Hayakawa 1997, 18-21.

which I wish to develop in this study. Over the last century there has been an enormous interest in Western scholarship concerning the process by which oral societies become literate. This discussion, summarized in very rough fashion in Appendix B, has concentrated fundamentally on the Homeric epics and the birth of literacy in ancient Greece. Although anthropological research has also examined a wide variety of modern societies in which this transition is taking place, the debate has only just begun to focus on similar shifts in the history of East Asia.

The Imperial edicts – *senmyō*, *choku* and *shō* – quite obviously comprise necessary source material and primary data for any examination of Japan’s route from orality to literacy. While documents such as the *mokkan* 木簡 have aroused considerable excitement in Western historians in recent years<sup>14</sup>, the fact is that the *Shoku Nihongi*, the most fundamental and coherent source for the eighth century, has been neglected. It is hoped that this very basic spadework will assist in beginning to remedy this neglect.

The term *senmyō* is actually found only twice in *Shoku Nihongi*, in 728 and in 779.<sup>15</sup> It appears once in *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀<sup>16</sup> and a total of 20 times throughout the *Rikkokushi*. Motoori Norinaga classified the 62 edicts in Old Japanese appearing in *Shoku Nihongi* under this

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<sup>14</sup> Piggott, 1990. Farris 1998, 201-232.

<sup>15</sup> SN Jinki 5.3.11 (728), SN Hōki 10.4.21 (779).

<sup>16</sup> Although the term itself appears once in *Nihon Shoki*, the edicts in *senmyōtai* do not appear until *Shoku Nihongi*. Sakamoto 1991, pp. 19-21.

rubric.<sup>17</sup> In fact, since two such edicts often appear on the same date in the chronicle, some authorities come up with a different total number for the set.<sup>18</sup> But the most recent collated edition of *senmyō*<sup>19</sup> follows Norinaga in using the canonical number of 62, and these edicts are described as being in “*senmyōtai*” 宣命体 in modern editions of *Shoku Nihongi*.

However, in all instances but one, what are now known as *senmyō* are introduced as “*shō*” in *Shoku Nihongi* during the period under consideration. Norinaga differentiated between the *shō* and *choku* on one hand and the *senmyō* on the other using the criterion that the former were written in Chinese as opposed to the “large and small character style” of the *senmyō*, and also made a distinction in content based on a late 10<sup>th</sup> century document known as the *Saikyūki*.<sup>20</sup>

The canonical description of what constitutes a *shō* or a *choku*, and also the circumstances which ideally surround the production of the edicts, is to be found in the *Kushikiryō* 公式令 section of the Ritsuryō 律令 Code. (See Appendix C.) As is well known, the Ritsuryō

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<sup>17</sup> Motoori Norinaga *Zenshu* 1971, vol.7, p. 189. The constituents 宣 and 命 appear separately in some edicts and are glossed “*noru*” and “*mikoto*” respectively by Norinaga. *Noru* generally means “to proclaim” and *mikoto* “a command”. The latter term has a long history in classical Chinese, ranging in meaning from “command” to “fate” or “life”. See e.g. Ted Slingerland, “The conception of ‘ming’ in early Confucian thought: ‘ming’ as uncontrollable external forces”, 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Ueda Masaaki counts 32 through the time of Junnin in his article on *senmyō* in *Nihon Kodaishi Daijiten* (2006), p. 379.

<sup>19</sup> Kitagawa, 1982. Earlier editions of the *senmyō* include Kurano Kenji, 1936 and Kaneko Takeo, 1941; both have recently been reprinted.

<sup>20</sup> Norinaga 1971. *Saikyūki*, 西宮記

Code which was promulgated in Taihō 1 大宝 (701 AD), is not extant. What survives, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century documents *Ryō no Gige* 令義解 and *Ryō no Shuge* 令集解 is thought to be in fact the code drafted in Yōrō 2 養老 (718). The situation is complicated by the fact that *Shoku Nihongi* records the actual promulgation of the Yōrō Code much later, in the year 757.<sup>21</sup>

The received text of the *Kushikiryō*, Section 8 of the *Ritsuryō*, describes several aspects of the idealized production of edicts.<sup>22</sup> The first two articles of the *Kushikiryō*, *Shōshoshiki* 詔書式 and *Chokushishiki* 勅旨式, spell out in detail the procedures for drafting the *shō* and *choku*. The *shō* are described first, and the officials involved in drafting these edicts are more eminent than those who sign the *choku*. For example, the hierarchy of those who must sign off on the *shō* include ideally the *Daijodaijin* 太政大臣, the *Sadaijin* 左大臣, the *Udaijin* 右大臣, and then the *Dainagon* 大納言. For the *choku* the series of officials is less exalted. The *Nakatsukasashō* 中務省 is responsible for drafting the edicts issued by the emperor, for copying and forwarding them to the *Dajōkan* 太政官 for review and proclamation.

One problem with this “idealized” process is that, as with the rest of what is today known as the *Ritsuryō*, it is very difficult to know to what extent the law was actually put into practice. As will be seen,

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<sup>21</sup> R.J. Miller 1978, p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> *Ritsuryō* 1976 pp. 365-369

*Shoku Nihongi* itself gives only rare hints as to the actual process of drafting. Another problem with discussions of the *senmyō* and their production is that commentators tend, like Norinaga, to use sources from the Heian period or later for their information. Snellen, for example, cites the *Engi Naishiki*, the *Sandaijitsuroku*, and the *Shokugenshō* by Kitabatake Chikafusa.<sup>23</sup> Certainly such information will be useful for a complete historical picture, but this study will confine itself to the actual appearances of *shō* and *choku* in *Shoku Nihongi*, to attempt to control the evidence by limiting it to one fairly homogeneous primary source.

One difficulty can be seen in the formats provided for the prefaces to the *shō* in *Kushikiryō*. The document does not contain the term *senmyō*, but the prefaces which it provides are those found in what have come to be known as the *senmyō*. These are the following five types, as glossed in the 1976 Iwanami edition of *Ritsuryō* (Norinaga's glosses differ somewhat):

1) Aramikami to amenoshitarasu hinomoto no subera ga

ohomugotorama to sonokoto sonokoto.

明神と御宇らす日本の天皇が詔旨らまと云云

2) Aramikami to amenoshitarasu sumera ga ohomugotorama to

sonokoto sonokoto.

明神と御宇らす天皇が詔旨らまと云云

3) Aramikami to ohoyashimanokuni shirasu subera ga

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<sup>23</sup> Snellen, p. 165.

ohomugotorama to sonokoto sonokoto

明神と御大八州しらす天皇が詔旨らまと云云

4) Subera ga ohomugotorama to sonokoto sonokoto.

天皇が詔旨らまと云云

5) Ohomugotorama to sonokoto sonokoto 詔旨らまと云云<sup>24</sup>

The problem here is that the *Kushikiryō* specifies two types of imperial edict – the *shō* and the *choku* – but its format for the former are the elaborate prefaces which characterize what have come to be known as *senmyō*. In practice the *Shoku Nihongi* edicts are all introduced as either *shō* or *choku*, but there is no distinction in the *Kujikiryō* for edicts which are to be “oral”, as it is assumed the *senmyō* were, or written. Neither is a distinction raised between those which are to be written or issued in Chinese and those to be phrased in the native language. Hayakawa Shōhachi emphasizes the ritual context in which all imperial pronouncements were made, describing the setting in the palace, and arguing that even edicts written in Chinese were often read orally.<sup>25</sup>

The usual understanding is that the *shō* were to be concerned with more important matters than the *choku*. While this seems to be implicit in the *Kushikiryō* instructions for the production of edicts, the distinction is still considered to be unclear.<sup>26</sup> Kakehi’s discussion of what constitutes *shō*, *choku* and *senmyō*, found in his discussion of the

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<sup>24</sup> *Ritsuryō* 1976 p. 366.

<sup>25</sup> Hayakawa 1993, pp. 1-72.

<sup>26</sup> *Nihon Kodaishi Daijiten* 2006, “Mikotonori”, p. 525.

“Retired Emperor’s edicts”<sup>27</sup>, helps to elucidate the very hazy definitions of each particular type of edict. Among his conclusions is that the *senmyō* were in fact a subset of the *shō*.

The term *shō* is used over 100 times in *Nihon Shoki*, but only about a dozen in *Kojiki*. *Choku* appears at about half that frequency in *Nihon Shoki* and only once in *Kojiki*.<sup>28</sup> One immediately noticeable difference, besides the paucity of the terms in *Kojiki*, is that in *Nihon Shoki* the *choku* begin in the Age of the Gods, while the *shō* begin to appear only in the reign of Emperor Jimmu. In contrast to *Shoku Nihongi*, there are more *shō* than *choku* in *Nihon Shoki*. A complete history of the development of imperial edicts would obviously have to take these issues into consideration, but is beyond the scope of this article (as is the complete pre-749 history of the *Shoku Nihongi* edicts).

To summarize, there were two basic types of imperial edicts recorded in *Shoku Nihongi*: the *shō* and the *choku*. The *senmyō* is the designation most famously given by Norinaga to those *shō* recorded in the peculiar *senmyōtai*. Although Norinaga established the number 62 as the canonical number of *senmyō*, Ueda and others point out that some of the *senmyō* which Norinaga counted separately were in fact issued on the same day, and might be counted as one.<sup>29</sup>

In this article I refer to *shō*, their subset *senmyō*, and *choku* all as

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<sup>27</sup> Kakehi 2002, pp. 203-207.

<sup>28</sup> *Nihon Shoki Sakuin* 1970; *Kojiki Sakuin* 1959.

<sup>29</sup> *Nihon Kodaishi Daijiten* 2006, “Mikotonori”, 525.

“imperial edicts” or “imperial rescripts”. I deal pragmatically with these edicts as recorded in *Shoku Nihongi*, rather than with idealized definitions of what comprises an edict presented in the received text of the *Ritsuryō*, Heian formulations such as *Saikyūki*, or in Norinaga’s commentary.

## **A Comparison of the Shō and Choku 749-770**

### **Contents of the Edicts**

*Shoku Nihongi* records 100 shō and 139 choku for the years of Kōken, Junnin and Shōtoku. (In addition there are 4 references to past shō and 12 references to past choku). As noted above, all but one of the 34 senmyō are in fact introduced as shō. The content of these 239 edicts is extremely varied, but I have roughly categorized them in Table 1 below. Note that many of the edicts pertain to more than one category; this is by no means an exhaustive list of edict contents.

**TABLE 1: CONTENT OF SHŌ AND CHOKU**

<b>SHŌ</b>		<b>CHOKU</b>	
Promotions	24	Misc Regulations	59
Appointments	13	Buddhist Affairs	21
Tax Relief	11	Nakamaro	14
Buddhist Affairs	10	Tax/Debt Relief	13
Naramaro	9	Amnesty	13
Misc Regulations	8	Promotions	10
Foreign Envoys	8	Naramaro	9
Dōkyō	7	Illness of Emperor	5
Exile/Pardon	6	Appointments	5
Nakamaro	6	Omens	5
Amnesty	4	Foreign Envoys	4
Death of Officials	3	Dōkyō	2
Abdication/Accession	2		

Table 2 shows the most frequent items of content in the edicts, comparing the *shō* and *choku* and presenting them as totals and percentage of all edicts:

**TABLE 2: MOST FREQUENT CONTENTS OF EDICTS**

<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>SHŌ</b>	<b>CHOKU</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>% of all 239 Edicts</b>
Misc regulations	8	59	67	28
Promotions/Appointments	37	15	52	22
Buddhist Affairs	10	21	31	13
Tax Relief	11	13	24	10
Nakamaro	6	14	20	8
Naramaro	9	9	18	8
Amnesty	4	13	17	7
Foreign Envoys	8	4	12	5
Dōkyō	7	3	10	3

As will readily be seen, both types of edict dealt with the same administrative areas. However, as can be noted in Table 2, there was a great difference in the coverage of certain types of subjects addressed. The *choku* were used overwhelmingly for what may be considered routine administrative matters (miscellaneous regulations). The *shō* were used over twice as frequently to make promotions in the official ranks and appointments to important posts. Buddhist affairs were the subject of twice as many *choku* as *shō*, and amnesties were announced much more frequently in the *choku*.

Edicts were used most often for miscellaneous regulations, promotions and appointments, Buddhist affairs, and tax relief. While a significant number of pronouncements were made concerning Nakamaro and Naramaro, Dōkyō appears only ten times in the edicts. Other administrative matters such as amnesties and the dealings with foreign envoys were also part of the material treated in edicts, although significantly less often than the top four categories.

Table 3 provides examples of what I have categorized as “miscellaneous regulations.” (The fourth column gives volume and page number in the SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi*.)

**TPSH** – Tempyō Shōhō 天平勝宝

**TPHJ** – Tempyō Hōji 天平宝字

**TPJG** – Tempyō Jingo 天平神護

JGKU – Jingo Keiun 神護景雲

HK – Hōki 宝亀

TABLE 3: MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS

EDICTS	YEAR	DATE	SN P#	CONTENTS OF EDICTS
CHOKU	752	TPSH 4.11.7	3.127	Punishment of gunji for appropriating gov't property
CHOKU	754	TPSH 6.2.20	3.141	Order to Dazaifu to repair signage in harbors, islands
CHOKU	754	TPSH 6.10.14	3.149	Ban on excessive gambling, suguroku
CHOKU	756	TPSH 8.7.14	3.167	400 guards to be added to Chuefu
CHOKU	756	TPSH 8.11.7	3.169	Warning to officials re receipt/disbursement of gov't property
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.6.9	3.191	Regulation of private armies; limits on men, horses
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.8.23	3.227	Land grant for maintenance of University (Daigakuryō)
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.10.6	3.235	Grant of food, medicine to traveling tax collectors
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.11.9	3.235	Regulations for hakase, medical doctors
SHŌ	758	TPHJ 2.1.5	3.245	Despatching investigators to provinces
SHŌ	758	TPHJ 2.2.20	3.247	Regulations against excessive drinking, banqueting
CHOKU	759	TPHJ 3.5.9	3.311	Order to set up “ever normal granaries”
CHOKU	759	TPHJ 3.6.22	3.321	Officials to study Ritsuryō, kyaku, shiki
CHOKU	759	TPHJ 3.11.9	3.335	Sending troops to Michnooku – military emergency
CHOKU	760	TPHJ 4.3.16	3.349	Order to mint new coins -- Bannentsūhō
SHŌ	761	TPHJ 5.1.7	3.371	Rewards to those involved in Imperial progress
CHOKU	761	TPHJ 5.8.1	3.383	Regulating duties of provincial governors
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.10.30	4.53	Prohibits those without rank to pay for exemptions from duty
CHOKU	765	TPJG 1.3.2	4.75	Transfers grain from storage to drought stricken areas
CHOKU	765	TPJG 1.6.13	4.85	Rewards officials who sold grain during famine
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.10.15	4.93	Imperial progress to Prince Kusakabe's tomb
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.10.26	4.95	Ki governor permitted to return home as progress enters Izumi
CHOKU	766	TPJG 2.2.20	4.111	Establishes grain storage in Ōmi Province
CHOKU	767	JGKU 1.6.5	4.165	Punishment of local official due to Inspector's report
CHOKU	768	JGKU 2.3.1	4.197	Orders report from Tōkaidō Inspector
SHŌ	769	JGKU 3.10.30	4.267	Imperial progress to Yugi no Miya in Kawachi
SHŌ	770	HK 1.3.28	4.277	Rewards dancers and singers after the banquet

Although I have listed “Promotions and Appointments” as a separate category, in fact these appear so often in the edicts as to qualify as a routine matter of government administration. The *shō* in particular are full of these entitlements, sometimes made as rewards for specific service, but often simply announced in very long lists, occasionally as many as 25 or 30 at once. Most often these promotions are simply appended to a *shō*. Those appointed or promoted range all the way up from persons without rank to those in the very highest, such as Imperial Princes or figures like Nakamaro. It does not seem that there is a distinction in terms of court rank as to who is promoted in *shō* or *choku*, although this might prove to be an avenue of research to pursue in more detail. Also significant is that many promotions and appointments are simply listed in the chronological entries without being designated as the contents of *shō* or *choku*. (Snellen’s translation gives the flavor of these exhaustive and tedious lists.)<sup>30</sup>

Tax relief, amnesties, and dealings with foreign envoys can be separated out as distinct categories; together they comprise 22% of the edicts’ contents. Tax relief is sometimes stated in terms of exemption from rice tax or corvee labor. At times it is in response to natural disasters such as typhoon or drought. Occasionally it is allowed to provinces through which royal processions have recently travelled, presumably since a royal progress was an event in which a region was informally and severely taxed. Corvee was exempted in particular to

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<sup>30</sup> See for example Snellen, p. 223.

those areas involved in the intensive construction efforts on the northeastern frontier in the later days of this period after the completion of major building projects.

Amnesties were somewhat akin to tax relief as government measures to alleviate disaster or obviate discontent. However, they tended to be proclaimed much more specifically in times of the illness of one of the royal family, for example for Shōmu's illnesses in 751 and 756, Kōmyō Kōgō's 光明皇后 in 753, Miyako's 宮子 in 754, and during Shōtoku Tennō's terminal illness in 769 and 770. In 754 a great amnesty was proclaimed along with the new calendar and a change of *nenjo* 年号. Amnesties were also granted after the Naramaro and Nakamaro incidents. Most of the amnesties were designated "*taisha*" 大赦 or "Great Amnesty", corresponding to the "Acts of Grace" in the Tang dynasty. Minor or conditional amnesties were also granted. In fact even the Great Amnesties were almost always conditional, being applicable only to those who had not committed the Eight Great Crimes or "Abominations."<sup>31</sup> At times a death sentence was commuted to exile.

In 750 and again in 754 amnesties were coupled with the imperial order to perform Buddhist ceremonies based on the Yakushi 薬師sutra, and in 766 an amnesty was announced for Buddhist reasons,

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<sup>31</sup> McKnight 1995, p. 417, n.3: "The *shih-o*, or "Ten Abominations," were a grouping of ten particularly heinous crimes that included those that endangered the emperor or the state, crimes committed by subordinate family members or bureaucrats against their superiors, crimes that endangered the family, and crimes that involved black magic." The ten had been reduced to eight at some point in the development of Japanese law.

although not in connection with a particular sutra. These instances serve to demonstrate how intertwined the performance of Buddhist rites and the conducting of Buddhist business was with what we may consider more typical administrative measures of government. The fact that these comprise 13% of the edicts during the period 749-779 shows how important an aspect of routine state management Buddhism had become.

During and after Shōmu's illness and death in 756, it was commanded that Buddhist monks recite sutras, images be erected, and the Tōdaiji 東大寺 make special preparations for the posthumous rituals. Buddhist monks were rewarded for their services in attending to Shōmu's illness. Imperial edicts ordered sutra readings during Kōmyō's and Shōtoku's terminal sickness. However, sutra readings were not merely prophylactic measures during times of illness, but a fairly routine matter of state. Sutras mentioned in the edicts are the *Yakushikyō* 藥師經, *Bonmōkyō* 梵網經 (See Appendix D), *Konkōmyōkyō* 金光明經, *Saishōōkyō* 最勝王經, and *Daihannyakyō* 大般若經. (The reading of the latter was once scheduled by officials at the *Onyōryō* 陰陽寮, or Yin-Yang Bureau.) In addition to special rituals devoted to *Yakushi Buddha* (*Yakushi keka* 藥師悔過, *Yakushikyōe* 藥師教会) a *Kichijōten keka* 吉祥天悔過 was ordered celebrated in the provincial temples (*kokubunji*). Shōtoku Tennō herself performed the latter rite in the palace in 769.<sup>32</sup> An idea of the regulations of Buddhist

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<sup>32</sup> SN JGKU 3.1.8 (vol. 4, p. 227). *Keka* was a rite of repentance during which sins were confessed before a particular deity with the prayer for good weather, good crops, healing or other desired results. *Kichijōten* was an Indian deity, the queen of *Bishamonten*, one of the Four Heavenly

affairs covered in the edicts can be gleaned from Table 4 below:

**TABLE 4: EDICTS CONCERNING BUDDHIST AFFAIRS**

EDICT	YEAR	DATE	SN P#	CONTENTS OF EDICT
CHOKU	750	TPSH 2.4.4	3.105	Yakushi keka; great amnesty; death sentences reduced
SHŌ	751	TPSH 3.4.22	3.113	Promotions, appointments to Buddhist hierarchy
SHŌ	751	TPSH 3.10.23	3.113	Prayers for Shōmu's illness; quote from Yakushikyō
CHOKU	754	TPSH 6.11.8	3.151	Yakushikyōe; quotes from Yakushikyō; great amnesty
CHOKU	756	TPSH 8.5.24	3.163	Promotions to Buddhist priests for prayers for Shōmu
CHOKU	756	TPSH 8.6.3	3.165	Messengers to 7 circuits; build B statues at kokubunji
SHŌ	756	TPSH 8.6.8	3.165	Bans killing of living things for one year
SHŌ	756	TPSH 8.6.10	3.165	Repair kokubunji; build B statues, pagodas
CHOKU	756	TPSH 8.12.30	3.171	High officials to major temples; order Bonmōkyō reading
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.1.1	3.175	Edict ordering 800 men to take tonsure
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.1.5	3.175	Bonmōkyō to be read in all provinces re Shōmu's death
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.1.28	3.237	Grant of konden to support Tōdaiji monks
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.12.8	3.239	Grant of konden to support Yamashinadera
CHOKU	758	TPHJ 2.7.4	3.255	Killing banned till end of year due to Kōmyō's illness
CHOKU	758	TPHJ 2.7.28	3.255	KonkomyōkyōSaishōōkyō to be copied, read at temples
CHOKU	758	TPHJ 2.8.18	3.281	Daihannyakyō to be read; quotes from the sutra
CHOKU	762	TPHJ 6.4.23	3.407	Donation of 50 households to Okadera in Echizen
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.10.11	4.47	Bans hunting, killing except on Shinto shrine lands
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.11.23	4.101	Senmyō 38; discusses B in relation to Shinto re Niinamesai
SHŌ	766	TPJG 2.10.23	4.141	Sets monthly stipends for new B officials
CHOKU	767	JGKU 1.1.8	4.149	Kichijōten Keka at all Kokubunji
CHOKU	770	HK 1.7.15	4.289	Sutras to be read in Daigokuden on Shōtoku's illness

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Kings. They are both depicted in the *KonkōmyōSaishōōkyō*. Maekawa Akihisa in “*Dōkyō to Kichijōten Keka*” (1970) describes how the edict ordering the rite in the *kokubunji* came soon after the appearance of the Buddha relic at the statue of *Bishamonten* in Sumidera, an event which resulted in Dōkyō's elevation to *Hōdō*. See Nemoto 2003 (53-61) for a detailed discussion of both deities, their relationship to *dharani*, and illustration of charms picturing each deity.

By contrast, only two mentions of Shinto<sup>33</sup> prayers can be detected in the edicts – one each on the occasion of Shōmu’s death and Kōmyō’s illness.<sup>34</sup> There is an interesting edict in 764 which prohibits the killing of animals *except* on Shinto shrine lands. *Senmyō* # 38 and #46<sup>35</sup>, on the occasion of the *Ninamesai* 新嘗祭, give some insights into this central imperial rite. The former in particular has unique importance in presenting the rationale for a Buddhist monarch who has taken the tonsure to participate in a rite sponsored by Shinto officials. However, except for the theology implicit and explicit in the language concerning the “Imperial Sun Succession” (*amatsuhitsugi* 天つ日嗣) and references to the emperor as a “Manifest God” (*akitsukami* 現つ神) in two of the *senmyō*,<sup>36</sup> the imperial ancestral cult appears elsewhere only in references to the *misasagi* 陵 upon the death of sovereigns and in one of Shōtoku’s royal progresses (*miyuki* 行幸). Of course, there is frequent reference in the chronological entries to the cults of Hachiman and Ise, to imperial messengers bearing *mitegura* 幣 to these and other shrines, and to the institution of the *Saigū* 齋宮. But I am speaking here only of the contents of the edicts.

As for Confucianism, one is also struck by the paucity of direct

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<sup>33</sup> On the use of the term “Shinto”, see Breen and Teeuwen’s analysis of Kuroda Toshio’s position in *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami* 2000, pp. 4-7, and their conclusion on p. 7: “If we accept Kuroda’s argument in its most extreme form, and adopt his stance that there was no distinct ‘Shinto’ tradition of thought during the pre-modern period, we render ourselves unable either to explain the process of amalgamation that dominated pre-modern Japanese religion, or to see the Shinto tradition that rose to prominence in the Edo and modern periods in its proper historical context.” Kuroda 1981.

<sup>34</sup> TPSH 7.10.21 (vol 3, p. 155); TPHJ 4.3.13 (vol. 3 p. 349).

<sup>35</sup> TPJG 1.11.23 (vol 4, p. 101); JGKU 3.11.28 (vol. 4, p.271).

<sup>36</sup> The translations are from Sansom 1924. In Bender 1979, pp.149-151, I discuss the relevance of this terminology (or lack of it) in the *senmyō* of the period.

references to administration of Confucian institutions in the edicts. There are two references to Confucius,<sup>37</sup> the second an order to change the master's name to *Bunsen'ō* 文宣王<sup>38</sup> There is mention of the Classic of Filial Piety (J. *Kōkyō* 孝經)<sup>39</sup>, and to filial piety in general. An edict grants a request from from Dazaifu for new copies of *Shih Chih* 史記, *Han Shu* 漢書, and *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書.<sup>40</sup> A long *choku* in 757 lists the Chinese classics which are to be studied by scholars, medical doctors, calendrical and divination officials, and astronomers in the provinces and provides sustenance land to support these scholarly activities.<sup>41</sup>

Of particular interest is the appearance of omens noted in the edicts. The miraculous appearance of multicolored clouds noted in *Senmyō* 42 is given enough importance that the reign name is changed to *Jingo Keiun*.<sup>42</sup> In 768 white birds, white turtles, and a white horse are reported and commented on in the edicts<sup>43</sup> and at the end of Shōtoku's reign omens of a white deer and a white bird appear.<sup>44</sup> The appearance of these animals recall the turtle omens which led to the naming of the early Nara year periods as *Jinki* 神龜 and *Reiki* 靈龜; the *nengo* (*Hōki* 宝龜) of Shōtoku's successor Kōnin 光仁天皇 is based upon a turtle omen. One might judge these as indications of the influence of ancient Chinese system of portents and divination; Michael Loewe

<sup>37</sup> TPHJ 2.10.25 (vol. 3, p. 291).

<sup>38</sup> JGKU 2.7.30 (vol. 4, p.211).

<sup>39</sup> TPHJ 1.4.4 (vol. 3, p. 177).

<sup>40</sup> JGKU 3.10.10 (vol. 4, p. 263).

<sup>41</sup> TPHJ 1.11.9 (vol 3, p. 235).

<sup>42</sup> JGKU 1.8.16 (vol. 4, p.171).

<sup>43</sup> JGKU 2.6.21 (vol. 4, p. 203); 2.9.11 (vol. 4, p. 215)

<sup>44</sup> JGKU 3.11.28 (vol. 4, p. 271); HK 1.5.11 (vol. 4, p. 283)

comments for example that turtle shell divination had become systematized by the Han dynasty.<sup>45</sup>

However, it should be noted that the appearance of the multicolored clouds, which is given a great deal of coverage during the months before the *nengo* was changed to *Jingo Keiun* may also be a sign of the influence of the Great Cloud Sutra which was popularized by the Empress Wu Ze Tian (J. Sokuten Bukō 則天武后).<sup>46</sup> On the basis of this sutra Great Cloud Monasteries were built throughout China, and this may be one strand of inspiration for Shōmu's founding of the *Kokubunji* 国分寺. The system of omens and portents points to the difficulty of disentangling Buddhist from Confucian elements in the imperial ideology of the Nara period, and for that matter of distinguishing them from what may have been elements of ancient religion both in Japan and China, which might be labeled ancient Shinto or Taoism.<sup>47</sup>

Twelve entries in the edicts describe visits from Silla 新羅 and “Koma” 高麗<sup>48</sup> envoys and in one case the report of a returned envoy

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<sup>45</sup> Loewe and Blacker 1981, p. 45.

<sup>46</sup> Guisso 1978, pp.36-50.

<sup>47</sup> One question might be whether “filial piety” is a specifically Confucian sentiment, another in what sense the systems of divination and omens in 8<sup>th</sup> century Japan was “Confucian.” On attempts to discern the Confucian nature of the Nara state see McMullen 1996, “The Worship of Confucius in Ancient Japan”, which deals primarily with the ceremony of *sekiten*, and Holcombe 1999 “The Confucian Monarchy in Nara Japan”; Piggott 2003 argues that patriarchal Confucian influences doomed the pattern of female emperorship in ancient Japan.

<sup>48</sup> “Koma” is the name used in *Shoku Nihongi* for the kingdom of Parhae (J. Bokkai 渤海) which flourished from roughly the year 700 to the early 10<sup>th</sup> century in the area of Manchuria and northern Korea. When the northern kingdom of Koguryo was destroyed by Silla and Tang China, remnants of the Koguryo ruling house and population founded this new state, and hence it was referred to by the Japanese as “Koma”, the old designation for Koguryo.

from China. Five of these (four *shō* and one *choku*) concern the visit of a delegation from Silla to Kōken's court in 752. The Silla Prince's audience with the Emperor is described in the *shō*; his statement to the throne, and the Emperor's response, are quoted. A *choku* in the following month gives instructions for a farewell banquet for the delegation at Naniwa no Murotsumi, an official facility used for housing foreign envoys.<sup>49</sup>

Visits from Parhae envoys to the court of Junnin are noted in edicts of 759 and 760.<sup>50</sup> Again the Emperor receives the ambassadors in audience and his official response is recorded. During the former visit a *choku* directs that Fujiwara Nakamaro host a banquet at his mansion for the embassy, and that dancing girls be despatched from the palace to liven up the festivities. A final embassy from this state is noted in 763, when the ambassador reports on the disordered conditions in China, due to the An Lu Shan rebellion.<sup>51</sup> Both Silla and Parhae are described as presenting tribute to the Japanese court, but an interesting difference is that the Japanese emperor invests the Parhae ambassadors, but not the Silla envoys, with official Japanese rank.

These few fragments give a tantalizing picture of foreign relations during this period. Charlotte von Verscheuer has translated the *Shoku Nihongi* passages pertaining to foreign contacts in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> TPSH 4.6.14 (vol. 3, p. 121); TPSH 4.6.17 (vol. 3, p. 123); TPSH 4.7.24 (vol. 3, p. 125).

<sup>50</sup> TPHJ 3.1.3 (vol. 3, p. 303); TPHJ 3.1.27 (vol. 3, p. 305); TPHJ 4.1.5 (vol. 3, p. 343); TPHJ 4.1.7 (vol. 3, p. 345)

<sup>51</sup> TPHJ 7.1.7 (vol. 3, p. 425-7); TPHJ 7.2.4 (vol. 3, p. 427)

centuries<sup>52</sup> and her translations of the items from 750 to 770 can be found on pages 268-281. She presents not only the edicts but day to day information about appointments to the embassies to China, makeup of the embassies, tribute goods, and ships. In particular, her coverage of the Parhae embassies I have noted above<sup>53</sup> describes the court's concern over the fate of Fujiwara Kasei, the Japanese envoy who remained in China for many years and became a Tang official, and also the Parhae envoy's reports about the disorder on the continent.

## **The Court in Turmoil -- Naramaro, Nakamaro and Dōkyō<sup>54</sup>**

The Nara period was an era of remarkable growth but also of remarkable turbulence. The eighth century was bracketed by a shift of the capital to Nara at the beginning and to Nagaoka, then Kyoto, at the end. It was also marked by the restless movement of Shōmu Tennō among four capitals in the 740s. It began with the subjugation of indigenous peoples, the Hayato 準人, in Kyushu and ended amid a decades-long series of wars against the Emishi 蝦夷 in the northeast. It witnessed a lethal epidemic beginning in 735 that apparently wiped out a third of the populace and, according to William Wayne Farris, depressed the level of population for the rest of the period and on well

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<sup>52</sup> Von Verschuer 1985.

<sup>53</sup> Von Verschuer 1985, pp. 271-277.

<sup>54</sup> For the narrative of this period see inter alia Aoki 1973 "Emi Oshikatsu" pp.463-506 and "Dōkyō to Jotei" pp. 507-538; Yokota 1959; Kishi 1969; Bender 1979; Takinami 1998; Piggott 2003.

into early medieval times.<sup>55</sup>

At court, the century witnessed almost continuous intense challenges to the newly formed state, which experienced the massacre of Prince Nagaya 長屋王 in 729 and the revolt of Hirotsugu 広嗣 in 740. A major succession dispute followed Shōmu's death in 756, ensuing in the suppression of Tachibana Naramaro's 橘奈良麻呂 conspiracy in 757. The enthronement, dethronement, exile and apparent assassination of the "Deposed Emperor" Junnin<sup>56</sup> were closely linked to the major rebellion of Fujiwara Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂 in 764 and its suppression. The Dōkyō 道鏡 incident of 769 and the death of Shōtoku Tennō in 770 resulted in a dynastic shift back to the Tenchi 天智 line which involved the assassination of at least one imperial consort.<sup>57</sup>

It is difficult, to say the least, to evaluate such political instability in any quantitative terms and compare it to other periods in Japanese or world history. But the period 749-770 seems particularly marked by upheaval at the court, as is indicated by the frenetic activity marked by spikes in the number of *choku* and *shō* pictured in charts 1 and 2 above.

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<sup>55</sup> Farris 1985 pp. 64-69; Farris 2006, p. 264.

<sup>56</sup> *Junnin Haitei* 淳仁廢帝. Note that this is Junnin's formal designation in *Shoku Nihongi*. Kōken Tennō is styled "*Hōji Shōtoku Kōken Kōtei*." After her reaccession to the throne she is termed "*Takano Tennō*". Sakamoto 1991, p. 103 notes that in *Shoku Nihongi* it is only these three sovereigns for whom the Chinese names are used, rather than the Japanese.

<sup>57</sup> Toby 1985. "Why Leave Nara? Kammu and the Transfer of the Capital", *Monumenta Nipponica*.

These twenty years began with the abdication of Shōmu Tennō who had ruled for 25 years. Upon the enthronement in 749 of his daughter Kōken (Abe Naishinnō 阿倍内親王), only living heir of his marriage to the Fujiwara empress, Kōmyō Kōgō 光明皇后, the reign name was changed briefly to Tempyō Kampō 天平感宝, and then after a period of months to Tempyō Shōhō. While the great period of cultural efflorescence symbolized by the reign name Tempyō lasted for 20 Years (729-749), the following period, the reign of the Last Empress, unfolded under five different reign names – after Tempyō Kampō and Tempyō Shōhō came Tempyō Hōji, Tempyō Jingo, and Jingo Keiun. These four-character era names, unique in Japanese history, may perhaps be seen as symbolic of the turmoil typical of the period.

The period before Kōken's enthronement saw a series of moves to consolidate Fujiwara power after the death of Shōmu's first son, Motoi Ō 基王, at the age of less than a year, the death of his son Asaka Shinnō 安積親王 by his secondary consort, Agata Inukai Hirotoji 景犬飼広刀自, at age 17, and the failure of any of his tertiary concubines to produce a male heir. The formal declaration of Kōmyōko as Kōgō, itself unprecedented, since she was not of imperial lineage, and the installation of Abe Naishinnō (Kōken) at age 21 as Crown Prince (Kōtaishi 皇太子) were moves to deal with the succession issue, always a major source of political instability in Nara Japan.

After the death of Fujiwara Fuhito's 不比等 high-ranking sons in the epidemic of 735-737, the son of Agata Inukai Tachibana Michiyo, Tachibana Moroe 橘諸兄, was appointed first as *Udaijin* then in 743 as *Sadaijin*. But after Moroe's resignation and death in 757 the equation of power was again unbalanced. Moroe's son and putative heir Tachibana Naramaro was ensnared by accusations of treachery amid a complicated series of events that followed the Retired Emperor Shōmu's death in 756.

More detailed information on the kinship network which formed the context for this period may be found in Appendix E. The reader may find this discussion useful, though confusing, in placing three of the most important players during the period 749-770 in their kinship context, since all three were cousins of a sort by Western standards. Kōken/Shōtoku Tennō and Fujiwara Nakamaro were both grandchildren of Fujiwara Fuhito. Tachibana Naramaro was a grandson of Agata Inukai (Tachibana) Michiyo 県犬飼橘三千代, who was later a consort of Fuhito. Much of the struggle during this era may be viewed as a continuing succession dispute among the brood birthed by Fuhito and Michiyo. Shōtoku Tennō was the undisputed winner.

### **Tachibana Naramaro**

The conspiracy of Tachibana Naramaro and at least four other high court officials was hatched in the aftermath of Shōmu's death in 756. Shōmu was found to have left a sort of will, a posthumous edict (*ishō*

遺詔) in which he designated Funado Ō 道祖王 as Crown Prince (Kōtaishi) to succeed Kōken.<sup>58</sup> Funado was a son of one of Temmu Tenno's many sons, the Prince Niitabe 新田部, and the younger brother of Prince Shioyaki 塩焼. Within a year Funado had been deposed, and another of Temmu's grandsons, Prince Ōi 大炊, the son of Prince Toneri 舍人, named as Crown Prince. Leaving aside the question of the authenticity of this *ishō*, which is likely impossible to determine (*Shoku Nihongi* assumes its validity), the incident speaks to the instability of the line of succession.<sup>59</sup>

Takinami notes that Shōmu had been increasingly concerned about the succession since the death of his single male heir by Kōmyō (Prince Motoi) in 728. She views Shōmu's designation of Kōken as Crown Prince in 738 as one in a series of steps to ensure the continuation of the line of Kusakabe 草壁, Temmu's son and Mommu's father. Her view is that the enthronement of Mommu's mother as Gemmei Tennō in 707, and then Mommu's sister as Genshō Tennō in 715 were the beginning of complex maneuvers to ensure the safety of Shōmu until he was old enough to succeed to the throne after he had attained his majority.<sup>60</sup>

In fact Shōmu was 24 at his enthronement. Takinami points out that Mommu had been only 15, extremely young by historical standards,<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> SN TPSH 8.5.2, (vol 3, p. 159).

<sup>59</sup> See Saitō Tōru's essay (1995) on other *ishō* and their relation to the problem of succession in early Japan.

<sup>60</sup> Takinami 1998, pp.43-72.

<sup>61</sup> Takinami 1998, chart p. 9.

and views Gemmei's and Genshō's "regency" and then abdication as efforts to preserve Temmu's dynasty through the Kusakabe line.<sup>62</sup> At any rate, the fact that Shōmu's putative designee as Crown Prince was shunted aside within a year demonstrates the volatility of the succession issue throughout the reign of Kōken.

The Tachibana Naramaro incident actually never got beyond the stage of a conspiracy. In fact Kōken's edict on the second day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Tempyō Hōji 1 (757) (*Senmyō* 16) and the edict by the Empress Dowager 皇太后 Kōmyō which followed on the same day merely warn against suspicious activity which had been reported. (*Senmyō* 17). After the edicts were read the *Naishō* Fujiwara Nakamaro was ordered to deploy troops to detain Ono Azumabito 大野東人 and other suspects and to surround the mansion of Prince Funado in the Right Capital.

On the third day Kōmyō summoned the five main conspirators (Shioyaki Ō, Asukabe Ō 安宿王, Kibumi Ō 黄文王, Tachibana Naramaro, and Ōtomo no Komaro 大伴古麻呂) to Nakamaro's mansion, where both she and Kōken were in residence. In this edict (*Senmyō* 18) she issued a second warning, after which it is recorded that all the conspirators exited by the south gate, bowing profusely and apologizing.

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<sup>62</sup> Also see Hurst 1976 pp. 36-50 for a detailed discussion of abdication prior to the "Insei" period, and his views on its significance as a way of "ensuring a successful transfer of the title..."

On the 4<sup>th</sup> day a *shō* was issued ordering the Chunagon Fujiwara Nagate 永手 to interrogate Ono Azumabito and others, and a lengthy account of their testimony follows, providing in great detail the particulars of the conspiracy. It was revealed that Naramaro, and a varying number (according to each witness) of other conspirators had met secretly in the previous month at Naramaro's residence, taken a vow to surround Fujiwara Nakamaro's mansion and kill him, put aside the Dowager Empress, overthrow the Emperor, and put one of the four princes on the throne. This was to have happened on the night of the second day of the seventh month.

Then six of the conspirators, including Princes Funado and Kibumi, who were first stripped of their royal status, were beaten to death with the "heavy stick" (Wallace Johnson's term – a punishment for the worst of the Eight Abominations.)<sup>63</sup> Following that a large number of suspected conspirators were banished. Oddly, Naramaro's fate is left unclear, although Aoki and others speculate that he died in prison. In any event, a *choku* is listed on the 8<sup>th</sup> day prohibiting the use of spells to communicate with the souls of the dead conspirators.

The edicts surrounding the Naramaro incident, beginning with the death of Emperor Shōmu and his posthumous edict are listed in tabular form in Appendix F. Note the preponderance of *choku* concerning this event, but also the number of *senmyō* that were issued. Although the

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<sup>63</sup> Johnson and Twitchett, 1993, pp. 119-135, and McKnight 1995 give a vivid description of interrogation, trial and punishment as prescribed by Tang law. The extremely long entry for TPHJ 1.7.4 (vol.3, pp. 203-211) presents an extraordinary glimpse of that law as applied in Nara Japan.

incident itself is extremely confusing, partly due to the great detail given in *Shoku Nihongi* regarding the interrogations, the aftermath reveals quite clearly that Fujiwara Nakamaro had emerged uncontested as the superior officer at court, closely allied with the Dowager Empress Kōmyō in support of Emperor Kōken. It was in the eighth month of this year, however, that Kōken abdicated and Junnin took the throne. (*Senmyō* 23 and 24, 2.8.1 (vol 3, p. 261).

## **Fujiwara Nakamaro**

Fujiwara Nakamaro was a grandson of Fuhito by his eldest son, Muchimaro 武智麻呂. It was in the aftermath of Shōmu's death and the quarrel over Funado and appointment of Ōi Ō as Crown Prince that Nakamaro emerged as a major player on the political stage. In 757, in the fifth month of Tempyō Hōji 4, Emperor Kōken and Empress Dowager Kōmyō moved from the Heijō平城Palace to take residence in Nakamaro's mansion, the Tamura no Miya 田村宮, several blocks to the south. It was while the court was in residence there that the Naramaro drama unfolded. Later that same month Nakamaro was appointed to the position of Shibi Naishō 紫微内相, an extracodal title which was part of a revamping of the bureaucracy under the preeminence of Nakamaro.

The Shibi Chudai 紫微中台 formally became the designation of the palace office of Empress Dowager Kōmyō in 749. The name derived from an office in the reign of Wu Ze Tian, the Empress of the Zhou Dynasty which formed a notable interregnum during the Tang. Wu Ze

Tian holds the notable distinction of being the only woman ever to reign as Emperor of China. Her reign is seen by Nemoto Seiji, among others, as an inspiration and foreshadowing in certain aspects of Kōken's reign. Nemoto argues that the influence of priests such as Genbō who studied in China during or soon after her reign must inevitably have contributed to the program of state sponsorship of Buddhism under Shōmu and Kōken.<sup>64</sup>

The rank of *Shibi Naishō* corresponded roughly to that of *Daijin* 大臣, and signified Nakamaro's rise from a base in Dowager Empress Kōmyō's household office to national prominence. In the following year, 758, Kōken named Nakamaro *Shibi Taihō* 紫微太保 (corresponding to *Udaijin*) and awarded him the Chinese-style name Emi Oshikatsu 惠美押勝. In 757 the Yōrō Code, of which Nakamaro's grandfather Fuhito had been a primary designer, was promulgated. The *Shoku Nihongi* does not go into detail about the effects of this promulgation, although an edict of 759 orders officials to study the code.<sup>65</sup> It is evident that the rise of Nakamaro gave him the wherewithal to honor the work of his eminent ancestor. After Kōken's abdication and Crown Prince Ōi's enthronement as the Emperor Junnin in 758, Nakamaro continued his rise and in 760 was named *Shibi Taishi* 紫微太師, corresponding to *Daijōdaijin*, the highest bureaucratic office in the Ritsuryō system.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Nemoto 2003, pp. 43-45.

<sup>65</sup> SN TPHJ 3.6.22 (vol. 3, p.321).

<sup>66</sup> SN TPHJ 4.1.4 (vol 3, p 341).

Construction on the Horagū 保良宮 in Ōmi province was ordered early in 759. This was envisioned not merely as a temporary “detached palace” as it is sometimes termed, but as the “Northern Palace.” The court (both Junnin and Retired Emperor Kōken) moved to Hora in 761. Following an apparent quarrel between the two in 762, both monarch and Retired Emperor returned to Nara, Junnin to the Palace and Kōken to the Hokkeji 法華寺<sup>67</sup>. As Retired Sovereign, Kōken issued *Senmyō* 27, stating that hereafter Junnin would handle only ceremonial affairs whereas she would attend to the major business of state.

In a *shō* of the second month of 763 Nakamaro was ordered to prepare a feast for Parhae envoys at his residence. The next edict to deal with Nakamaro was a *choku* of the eighth month of 764 stripping him of his titles and lands and pronouncing him a rebel. The speedy suppression of his revolt is reflected in the edicts listed in tabular form in Appendix F. As can be observed, the dethronement and exile of Junnin was one of the consequences of Nakamaro’s revolt, as was the restoration of the bureaucratic titles of the pre-Nakamaro era.

## **Dōkyō**

Fewer edicts were issued directly naming the Buddhist priest Dōkyō than those concerning the Naramaro and Nakamaro incidents. As can readily be noted in the table in Appendix F these edicts comprise mainly appointments to the offices in his rise to power. The obvious immediate context for his rise was the defeat of Nakamaro. However,

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<sup>67</sup> Takinami 1998, p.114.

the broader context is the state policy of support of Buddhism which is reflected in Table 4 and was discussed in detail above.

The significance of the Dōkyō incident and its relation to the demise of the archaic pattern of female sovereignty continues to be a tantalizing puzzle.<sup>68</sup> In 2003 the Buddhist historian Nemoto Seiji published a lengthy essay on Dōkyō in which he emphasizes that the priest's rise to power was not an evil aberration but a logical outcome of the steady growth of Buddhist involvement in matters of state in the Nara period. He argues that while Gyōk 行基 is traditionally pictured as the “good” priest and Dōkyō as his wicked counterpart, in fact they were in many respects more alike than different. Nemoto also highlights the role of incipient esoteric Buddhism, in the form of the *dharani* 陀羅尼 such as were distributed in the *hyakumantō* 百万塔, and in the influence of the cults of *Kichijōten* and *Bishamonten*. 毘沙門天.<sup>69</sup>

I have written [previously](#) about the incident particularly in the context of the native cult of Hachiman, when I argued that the edicts of the period reflect a rise of the Buddhist state ideology to the detriment of the native doctrine of divine rule.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> For an extremely detailed textual analysis of the Shoku Nihongi entries concerning Dōkyō, see Nakanishi Yasuhiro 2002, pp. 226-251. In a 2002 article “‘Shoku Nihongi’ to Jitsuroku” Nakanishi demonstrates his method of analyzing the use of grammatical particles to demonstrate that the Monmu Tennō segment of *Shoku Nihongi* was based on a coherent independent annal which was adopted by the compilers. For a brief example of his methodology see the section on *miyuki* below (p. ?). See also his 1993 article “‘Shoku Nihongi’ to Dōkyō Jiken”.

<sup>69</sup> Nemoto 2003.

<sup>70</sup> Bender 1979.

## Palaces, Pilgrimages, and Royal Progresses

The Last Empress was perennially on the road. Like Shōmu Tennō before her, she founded new capitals and spent much of her time travelling about her domain. She governed from Heijō Palace (the first and second), from the mansions of relatives and high officials, and, particularly in her latter years, from Buddhist temples. Just as Shōmu attempted to establish new capitals (Kuni, Shigaraki) so did Kōken/Shōtoku (Hora, Yugi no Miya 由義宮), and with a similar lack of success. During a major royal progress, she commanded that a whole series of temporary palaces be constructed for her. She was a peripatetic Emperor par excellence. The peregrinations of these two great Emperors of the mid-Nara period give the lie to the old saw of Nara being the “first permanent capital”.

An examination of the twenty-odd years of the Last Empress’ reign reveals an emperor who roamed restlessly over her empire. During the years 749-770 the emperor roved – from Tōdaiji, to Heijō Palace, to the Naniwa 難波 Palace, to the mansion of Fujiwara Nakamaro, to Hora no Miya, to the Hokkeji, to the great temples of Nara, to Oharida no Miya 小墾田宮, to temporary palaces in Kawachi, Izumi and Kii Provinces, to the home temple of Dōkyō’s clan, and back to Nara. It is clear that the Nara period appears on close examination not so much as an epoch when a “permanent capital” was founded, but during which archaic patterns of royal travel, and of Imperial rule from a wide variety of loci punctuated the Imperial reign.

A listing of all of the locations from which Kōken/Shōtoku ruled would be tedious, but I would like to raise one major issue in this connection. Namely, not only the physical site of imperial rule, but also the seat of ultimate state authority during the entire reign is extremely problematic. A brief listing of the *senmyō* issued during the period demonstrates this fact.

**TABLE 5: SENMYŌ FROM KŌKEN/SHŌTOKU’S ACCESSION UNTIL HER DEATH<sup>71</sup>**

Shōmu Tennō	1
Shōmu Dajōtennō	1
Kōmyō Kōtaigō	2
Kōken Tennō	7
Junnin Tennō	1
Kōken Daijō Tennō	4
Shōtoku	18
Total	34

First, even after Kōken’s official accession to the throne in 749, she was in the shadow of her father, the retired Emperor Shōmu, and her mother, the formidable Fujiwara Empress Dowager Kōmyō. Although *Senmyō* #14, announcing Shōmu’s abdication and her accession is

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<sup>71</sup> This count is based on Kitagawa 1982, the most recent and authoritative collated edition. Sakamoto 1991, p. 124 gives different attributions. In Bender 1979, p. 150, my table was based on Kenji 1945.

counted by Kitagawa as a joint edict<sup>72</sup>, in fact Kōken did not give a *senmyō* in her own right until 757, during the Naramaro affair. As we have seen, both Kōken and her mother were residing in Fujiwara Nakamaro's mansion on that occasion, and only after Naramaro's conspiracy was quashed did she return to the Heijō Palace. It is also symptomatic of the confusion as to locus of authority that the Naramaro incident resulted from a succession dispute caused by a posthumous *shō* from Shōmu naming Funado Ō as crown prince.

Another major problem which becomes evident upon reading over the *choku* and *shō* during the “reign” of Emperor Junnin is that it is very difficult to ascertain which edicts are his, and which are issued by the supposedly retired Emperor Kōken. To give just two examples, there is the *choku* of 758 in which she refers to her grandfather Fujiwara Fuhito and another in 759 when she states “I am like the mother of the empire”<sup>73</sup>. Further, Retired Emperor Kōken and the reigning Emperor Junnin traveled together to the new “Northern Capital”, Hora, in 761 but then, after a falling out, returned to Nara in 762, Junnin to the Chūgūin 中宮院 of the Heijō Palace, and Kōken to the Hokkeji.<sup>74</sup> From this point it is impossible at times to determine which sovereign is issuing edicts.

In fact, it is questionable to what extent Junnin ever really held power in his own right – one piece of evidence is that there was a lack of the

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<sup>72</sup> Kitagawa 1982, p. 30.

<sup>73</sup> TPHJ 2.8.9 (vol 3., p. 279): TPHJ 3.5.9 (vol. 3, p. 309).

<sup>74</sup> TPHJ 6.5.23

customary change in era name after his accession. In the text of *Shoku Nihongi*, Junnin is never referred to as “*Tennō*”, but rather as “*mikado*”.<sup>75</sup> The annals for his reign are designated in the *Shoku Nihongi* as those of the “Deposed Emperor – *Junnin Haitei*.”<sup>76</sup> (It was not until Meiji that he received the official title of *Tennō*.)

*Senmyō* #45, in 769 after the Dōkyō incident, is problematic. The language is confused, and Linn, following Motoori, believes that it should come after *Senmyō* #35 (765) in chronological terms.<sup>77</sup> *Senmyō* #46 is extremely brief, concerning preparations for the *Ninamesai*. *Senmyō* #47 was actually issued after the announcement of Shōtoku’s death. This posthumous edict announces Prince Shirakabe 白壁 as her successor, and the aged Crown Prince was hurriedly enthroned as Emperor Kōnin two months later. The evidence of the last three *senmyō* indicates, *prima facie*, that Shōtoku lost control of the government rather quickly after the resolution of the Dōkyō incident, and that *Udaijin* Fujiwara Nagate and *Sadaijin* Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 handled the transition of power during her illness, which began in the second month of Hōki. It might even be asked whether she held any power at all after the Dōkyō incident.

The site, seats and loci of power during the late Nara period are shifting and uncertain. The classic biographies of Dōkyō (Yokota

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<sup>75</sup> *Tei* 帝

<sup>76</sup> *Haitei* 廢帝

<sup>77</sup> Linn 1950, p. 48.

Ken'ichi) and Fujiwara Nakamaro (Kishi Toshio) emphasized the degree to which each of these notable individuals held the reins of power, and now Takinami Sadako has highlighted the astonishing authority and command of the redoubtable Last Empress herself in the midst of conspiracies, unending succession disputes and outright rebellion. If there are still obvious questions about who was in charge at any given point during this period, it is at least possible to examine some of the settings where edicts were given, and it is to the examination of these performative loci that I turn in the next section.

## **Performative Loci**

In the first<sup>78</sup> of his collection of four essays titled Shoku Nihongi (1993), Hayakawa Shōhachi begins by underscoring the fundamental importance of visualizing the ceremonial contexts of many entries in the chronicle, and of understanding that edicts were originally delivered orally.<sup>79</sup> He examines two *shō*, one from 698 (Mommu 2) and the other from 702 (Taihō 2).<sup>80</sup> The first is an edict bestowing rank upon provincial officials and the second on high Buddhist clergy. In each case he paints a picture of the various officials standing in ranks facing north toward the emperor, who proclaimed the edict facing south.

He notes that even in the case of edicts written, like the *shō* and *choku*,

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<sup>78</sup> “Gishiki – Seimu to Kōtō Dentatsu”, 儀式一政務と口頭伝達pp. 1-72.

<sup>79</sup> Hayakawa 1993, p. 9.

<sup>80</sup> Hayakawa 1993, pp. 9, 18.

in Chinese, it is not possible to judge whether it was in fact delivered orally, like the *senmyō* which he assumes to have been spoken in Old Japanese.<sup>81</sup> But in either case it is necessary first to understand the ceremonial setting.

In this essay, and again in much greater detail in his 1997 opus<sup>82</sup> Hayakawa discusses the process by which oral transmission (*kōtō dentatsu*) became “documentized” (*monjoka*). In the introduction to the latter book he explains that by the early eighth century the oral *senmyō* were appearing side by side with the classical Chinese *shō* and *choku*.<sup>83</sup> The introductory section “*Senmyō o yomu*” parses the edict given upon Shōmu’s accession in 724.<sup>84</sup> The body of this magisterial work is devoted to a study of the process by which oral documents were written down, beginning with an examination of the transmissions of commands through stages of the bureaucracy.

I would like to pursue in a preliminary way Dr. Hayakawa’s insights that it was ritual (*gishiki*) which was the fundamental context for the imperial edicts of the eighth century, that the performative sites of the edicts must be examined in detail, and that they must be understood in the process of the movement from oral transmission to documentization.

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<sup>81</sup> Hayakawa 1993, p. 14.

<sup>82</sup> Hayakawa 1997.

<sup>83</sup> Hayakawa 1997, p. 5.

<sup>84</sup> Hayakawa 1997, pp.18-21.

## Palaces

The outlines of the Heijō palace have been established by postwar archaeological works and the visitor to Nara today can stroll in the huge park-like site where the Last Empress, Dōkyō, Fujiwara Nakamaro, Kibi Makibi and the myriad of other officials, noblewomen, and common people worked. In fact portions of the palace, notably the *Suzakumon* 朱雀門 (south gate), have been rebuilt and in 2010, on the 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Nara a reconstruction of major palace buildings will be unveiled. A 2001 account based on the work of the Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjō, along with a very helpful map depicting possible locations of buildings within the earlier and later Heijō palaces may be found in *Kodai Toshi Heijōkyō no Sekai* by Tateno Kazumi.<sup>85</sup> But, as William Wayne Farris noted in his essay on early Japanese capitals, “Pending conclusive evidence, which is unlikely to appear, Japanese archaeologists and historians will continue to argue about the dating and plan of the Heijō Palace.”<sup>86</sup>

The *Daigokuden* 大極殿 is mentioned some 50 times in *Shoku Nihongi* and 9 times during the period under consideration. It was the site of New Year’s Day ceremonies for 7 of the 14 New Year’s Days for which there is an entry in the chronicle. The *Daigokuden* was the

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<sup>85</sup> Tateno 2001, pp 28-34, diagram p 31.

<sup>86</sup> Farris 1998, pp. 165-173, Figure 3.13.

site of the ceremony of Shōmu Tennō's abdication and Kōken's accession recorded in *Senmyō* # 14 in 749.<sup>87</sup>

During the first month, the emperor typically invited the high officials (fifth rank and higher) to banquets in various locations in the palace compound – *Dairi* 内裏, *Chōdō* 朝堂, *Tōin* 東院, *Daianden* 大安殿, *Kōmon* 閣門. After the banquets the New Year's list of promotions and honors was frequently announced in an edict.

A paraphrased summary of the calendar for the first month of the year 754 (TPSH 6, vol. 3, p. 137) gives an idea of the festivities:

**First day:** Banquet at the *Dairi* for officials fifth rank and higher.

**Fifth day:** The emperor went<sup>88</sup> to Tōdaiji, where 20,000 lanterns were lit. A *choku* was read announcing spring, the calendar, and a great amnesty (*taisha*).

**Seventh day:** Banquet at the *Tōin* for officials fifth rank and higher. A *choku* was read announcing promotions.

**Sixteenth day:** At the *Daianden* a *shō* was read announcing promotions.

The calendar for the first month of 769 (JGKU 3, vol. 4, p. 227), when the Hōō 法王 Dōkyō's power was at its peak, shows a similar pattern, although no edicts are recorded at this time. Note that the priest by this time had his own palace within the Heijō palace compound:

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<sup>87</sup> TPSH 1.7.2 (vol. 3, pp. 83ff).

<sup>88</sup> The verb here is *miyuki* which was used for short as well as major progresses.

**First day:** Court cancelled due to rain.

**Second day:** Court held in *Daigokuden*.

**Third day:** Hōō Dōkyō held court in the *maedono* 前殿 of the *Saigū* 西宮 (Western Palace).

**Seventh day:** Tennō went to Dōkyō's palace (*Hōō no miya*) and held a banquet for officials fifth rank and higher.

**Eighth day:** Tennō went to the *Tōnai* 東内 in the palace and performed *Keka* for *Kichijōten* for the first time<sup>89</sup>

**Seventeenth day:** Tennō went to the *Tōin* and gave a banquet for midlevel officials. There was a banquet at the *Chōdō* for the heads of the various civil and military offices and for the Emishi from Michinoku. The Emishi were given gifts and awarded low rank.

Thus the first month was typically a time for court ritual, banqueting and edicts announcing promotions. The samples of the calendar listed here took place in the *Heijō* Palace compound, with the exception of *Tōdaiji*. As noted above, the Last Empress also spent significant amounts of time in the palaces of other major capitals, notably *Hora* and *Naniwa*, and in her last year in the new capital of Yugi (or Yuge) no Miya, which apparently was never completed. Note that in addition there were imperial visits to temporary palaces (*karimiya* 仮宮) constructed especially for the *miyuki* 行幸 (royal progresses; see below). Again, Farris's chapter on the early capitals is essential for understanding the pattern of imperial movement and capital building and transfer during the seventh and eighth centuries.

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<sup>89</sup> See note 51 above.

## Temples

Since its construction and the completion of the *Daibutsu* in 752 the *Tōdaiji* played an occasional role as an impressive setting for court ritual. The great temple was the setting for the famous *Senmyō* 15 (TPSH 1.12.27, vol.3, p. 97) in which Shōmu Tennō addressed the god Hachiman:

“The nun and priestess of the Great God Hachiman, Ason Ōmiwa Morime, worshipped at Tōdaiji. (Her palanquin was of a purple color, like that of the imperial palanquin.) Emperor Kōken and the retired emperor and empress also proceeded to the temple. On this day, great numbers of government officials and various members of the aristocracy all gathered at the temple. Five thousand priests prayed, performed ceremonies of veneration of the Buddha, and read sutras. The music of Great T’ang, Palhae and Wu, and the Gosechi and Kume dances, were performed. The the Great God Hachiman was awarded the first rank, and Himegami the second. Sadaijin Tachibana Moroe presented an edict and read it to the god.”<sup>90</sup>

Particularly during the latter part of Shōtoku Tennō’s reign, the great temples of the capital were the destinations of imperial visits and the sites for a variety of court activities. Below is an extract from the calendar for the first three months of 769 (JGKU 3, vol.4, pp.149-157):

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<sup>90</sup> Translated in Bender 1979, p. 135. Note that the reading “Ōmiwa” 大神 is given in SNKBT; the pronunciation “Ōga” for the name of this clan developed at some later date.

**First month, eighteenth day:** Tennō goes to *Tōin*; *shō* announcing promotions.

**Second month, fourth day:** Tennō goes to *Tōdaiji*, promotions.

**Second month, eighth day:** Tennō goes to *Kōfukuj* 興福寺; performance of music and conferral of rank on temple personnel.

**Second month, fourteenth day:** Tennō goes to *Tōin*, receives *kamuyogoto* 神寿詞 from Izumo Kuni no Miyatsuko. 出雲国造<sup>91</sup>

**Third month, second day:** Tennō goes to *Gangōji* 元興寺, presents gifts.

**Third month, third day:** Tennō goes to *Saidaij* 西大寺 *no Hōin* 法院, literati summoned to winding water banquet; presents gifts.

**Third month, ninth day:** Tennō goes to *Daianji* 大安寺, promotion.

**Third month, fourteenth day:** Tennō goes to *Yakushiji*, presents gifts; awards rank.

Although it is not recorded that an edict was issued on the occasion of each of these temple visits, the pattern of utilizing the grand temples for court ceremonial is clear. Again, in the section on Royal Progresses below we will see this pattern repeated in lesser provincial temples.

## Mansions

Scattered through the record are notations of visits to mansions of high officials. Particularly notable are the Tennō's visit to the mansion of the *Sadaijin* Fujiwara Nagate in 769 (JGKU 3.2.3, vol. 4, p. 229) upon

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<sup>91</sup> See Piggott 1989, pp. 68-69 for a description of this ritual.

which occasion he was promoted to the Junior First rank. Later that month Shōtoku went to the mansion of the *Udaijin* Kibi no Makibi and awarded him the Senior Second rank. These two officials had been mainstays of her earlier administration and were to oversee the transition of power after her death.

But the most famous of such sojourns was Kōken's residence in the Tamura Mansion of Fujiwara Nakamaro, located south of the palace in the left capital. In 757 (TPHJ 1.5.4) Kōken and the Dowager Empress Kōmyō moved there due to repairs at the *Heijō* palace. Their two month stay at *Tamuradai* saw a peak in the production of edicts. (See Chart 2, also here). On TPHJ 1.5.8 Kōken proclaimed Nakamaro the *Shibi Naishi* and also issued a *choku* ordering the promulgation of the *Yōrō Ritsuryō*, which had been the handiwork of their grandfather Fujiwara Fuhito. It was while the court was in residence at Tamuradai that the conspiracy of Tachibana Naramaro was unmasked and ruthlessly suppressed. The alternating edicts from both Tennō and the Dowager Empress were handed down almost daily from TPHJ 1.7.2 until 1.7.9. Finally, on the twelfth of the month Kōken returned to the *Nan'in* 南院 of the *Daigokuden* in the Heijō palace and there issued *Senmyō* # 19 announcing the details of Naramaro's plot and the exile of high officials.

***Miyuki*** 行幸

After Nakamaro's resounding defeat in 765, the newly re-enthroned

Shōtoku embarked on a royal progress through Kawachi and Izumi Provinces to Kii. It is tempting to view this as a triumphal procession. *Shoku Nihongi* does not designate it explicitly as such, although it was during this *miyuki* that the news of the exile Junnin's death was formally reported to the court. More importantly, the route of the progress wound its way through Dōkyō's home province of Kawachi, where he was awarded the rank of *Daijōdaijin Zenshi*.

In 765 it was announced that the Emperor was planning a major *miyuki* to Kii Province which would pass through Kawachi and Izumi, and *karimiya* 仮宮, or temporary palaces, were commanded to be prepared along the route.<sup>92</sup> Three days later the highest officials – *Sadaijin* Fujiwara Nagate and *Udaijin* Kibi Makibi – were appointed to oversee the temporary office in charge of the *miyuki*. On TPJG 1.10.13 more appointments were made to this office, particularly to the army and cavalry officers who would accompany the procession. The procession started out on this day and reached *Oharida no Miya*. 小壘田宮<sup>93</sup> On 1.10.15 when the Tennō reached *Mayumi no Misasagi* 檀山陵, the tomb of her ancestor Prince Kusakabe, she issued a *shō* ordering her courtiers and military to dismount, furl their banners and pay homage to the mausoleum.

The following day the caravan reached Kii Province and on the seventeenth day rested at the *Kamakaki* 鎌垣 *karimiya*. The next day it

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<sup>92</sup> TPJG 1.9.21; see vol.4, pp. 91-101 for the narrative

<sup>93</sup>Site of Suiko Tennō's palace.

proceeded to the island of *Tamatsushima* 玉津嶋, which Shōmu had visited on his inaugural *miyuki* in 724 to worship the god.<sup>94</sup> On the 19<sup>th</sup> a sort of base camp was established facing the sea. Music and dance were performed and a temporary market opened for the local merchants. At this point several low-ranking local officials presented coins and grain and were rewarded with promotions to Junior Fifth, Lower Rank. At this place, on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the report of Junnin's death reached the Tennō. She issued a *shō* remitting taxes and proclaiming an amnesty and gifts for those in the vicinity of the *karimiya*. The edict did not mention the death of the former sovereign.

On 1.10.25 the *miyuki* turned back toward the capital and stayed the night at *Kishimura* 岸村 *Karimiya*, still in Kii Province. Upon reaching the *Fukehi* 深日 *Karimiya* in Izumi Province the next day, the Ki governor turned back to his home province. The Tennō proclaimed a *shō* awarding him gifts for his hospitality. On the 27<sup>th</sup> the procession stopped for the night at *Niihari* 新治 *Karimiya*, and the next day arrived in Kawachi Province. The night of the 29<sup>th</sup> was spent at the *Yuge* 弓削 *Karimiya* in Kawachi.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> the emperor worshipped the Buddha in *Yugedera* 弓削寺, the home temple of Dōkyō's clan. Music and dance of Tang and Parhae were performed in the temple garden. The next day (TPJG 1.

Intercalary 10. 1) gifts were awarded to *Yugedera* and the *Chishikij* 知識寺. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> the climax of the *miyuki* was reached when the

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<sup>94</sup> See Appendix G for a Man'yōshū poem celebrating his visit.

Tennō proclaimed a *senmyō* at *Yugedera* appointing Dōkyō to his highest office to date, that of Daijōdajin Zenji. After the edict, worship, music and dance were performed at the temple.

The following day the emperor issued a *shō* granting tax relief, gifts, and an amnesty to the elderly and to local officials, and promotions to the latter. The procession continued to *Inaba* 因幡 *no Miya*, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> day returned to Heijō palace, where the officials were ordered to venerate Dōkyō in his new role. In the aftermath of the *miyuki* gifts were awarded to the cavalry officers who had accompanied it, and promotions and gifts given to Yamato and Kawachi officials who had assisted the progress. The special temporary *be* which had provided clothes and weapons for the *miyuki* were ordered discontinued.

This record of a major royal progress demonstrates the portable rule of Shōtoku Tennō, the way in which the court picked up and went on the road, and the context for the imperial edicts at temporary palaces and temples along the way.<sup>95</sup>

## Conclusion

This essay has examined the types of imperial edict during a 20-year segment of the late Nara period, the reign of the “Last Empress” Kōken/Shōtoku Tennō. I have explained that two basic types of edict,

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<sup>95</sup> Nakanishi 2002, in a textual analysis of the *miyuki* in Shoku Nihongi, has investigated the specific language used to describe these progresses and has elucidated the patterns exhibited in the different volumes of SN.

the *shō* and the *choku*, are found in the *Shoku Nihongi* record of this reign. Both text types are primarily written in Chinese, with the complicating factor that a subset of the *shō*, namely the *senmyō*, are written in what has been identified as Old Japanese. The edicts in fact constitute the backbone of the chronicle, their contents comprising a narration of the major political events at court during the period.

The edicts in *Shoku Nihongi* were written and proclaimed during a time when the ancient oral edicts were being replaced by written rescripts. An examination of the loci where the edicts were announced demonstrates vividly the many different settings in which they were performed. The Last Empress is revealed as a powerful woman in the tradition of the female sovereigns before her, dealing with a turbulent court which was almost never at peace or free of succession disputes, conspiracies and rebellions, ceaselessly pronouncing rescripts chastizing the rebels and rewarding her supporters.

J.B. Snellen pointed out in 1937 that in the *senmyō*, unlike the *norito* written in similar language, the sovereigns as manifest gods address their subjects in incantatory celestial tones. These archaic pronouncements, oracles preserved in the *Shoku Nihongi*, give some idea of the grandeur of the ancient language, the language which so enchanted Motoori Norinaga. But what of the *choku* and the *shō*, preserved in the Chinese of the eighth century chronicle? These edicts were employed in the most mundane circumstances of the routine administration of government. Certainly some of them must have been

delivered orally, in the circumstances and settings which this study has explored. In these most vivid of contexts – rebellion, treason and fratricide – the edicts carry the storyline of a turbulent court. The edicts conjure up visions of the grand ceremonies in the Heijō palace, the magnificent Buddhist temples and noble mansions which served as backdrops for court ritual and entertainment, and the spectacle of grand processions in which the whole court moved across the realm and camped in temporary palaces.

Missing from the record is the humdrum process of the scribes brushing edicts, forwarding them up and down through the bureaucracy, and then presenting them to be voiced as the words of the sovereign. We can glimpse in the twenty years under consideration here the process of a charismatic oral culture moving inexorably into a routinized literate society. We see the heralds declaiming the words of the sovereign to grand audiences in Old Japanese, as well as the written edicts preserved in amber in Chinese in the chronology of daily life.

Among the many unanswered questions which this study has raised is that of the specific mechanism by which the edicts were transcribed and handed down from the emperor through the bureaucracy, and the specific personnel involved in that process and in the actual proclamation of the edicts. The whole body of edicts in the Shoku Nihongi, some 900 of them, constitute an important field of excavation of a document which is only now beginning to be closely examined,

particularly in the West.

Certainly the history of eighth century Japan should be ranked with the numerous studies of ancient Greece as an epoch in which orality made its uncertain and wavering progress into literacy. The long history of Japan's development into a powerful and technologically advanced 21<sup>st</sup> century state gives the lie to claims in the orality/literacy debate that the introduction of the alphabet in some mysterious way changed mind and society and led to the wonders of modern science and Western dominance. That this era has been ignored in Western historiography is testimony to Occidental scholarship's deplorable and wanton ignorance of the processes by which the Muse began to write in exotic cultures.

## **APPENDIX A: MAPS**

The best maps of the locations described in this paper are to be found in the recent *Nihon Kodaishi Daijiten*, edited by Ueda Masaaki, 2006.

### **I: THE KINAI**

*Nihon Kodaishi Daijiten*, Shiryōhen, p. 70

### **II: HEIJŌKYŌ**

*Nihon Kodaishi Daijiten*, Shiryōhen, p. 84

### **III: HEIJŌ PALACE**

*Nihon Kodaishi Daijiten*, Shiryōhen, p. 85

## APPENDIX B: ORALITY, LITERACY, TEXT, RITUAL AND PERFORMANCE

In the late 1920s and early 30s Milman Parry advanced the hypothesis that the Homeric poems had been composed initially as oral epics and were only later written down.<sup>96</sup> This seminal insight led to a debate as to how traditional oral cultures enter into literacy which has been unfolding, branching, and propagating for nearly a century, and which promises extravagantly to open yet new perspectives as to how the mind itself operates.

Parry, together with Alfred Lord<sup>97</sup>, also studied 20th century Serbian bards who possessed a remarkable ability to recite epic-length poetry by memory. Jack Goody in 1968 collected essays from anthropologists working in an extremely broad geographical range (*inter alia* China and India, Thailand, Sudan, Ghana, Melanesia) and speculated on "The Technology of the Intellect" and "The Consequences of Literacy."<sup>98</sup> The theme of the debate was styled Orality and Literacy by Walter Ong in his 1982 book of that title.<sup>99</sup> The classicist Eric A. Havelock characterized it with the rather more elegant style "The Muse Learns to Write" in 1986.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Papers collected in Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. Adam Parry, 1971.

<sup>97</sup> Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 1960.

<sup>98</sup> Goody, *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, 1968.

<sup>99</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 1982.

<sup>100</sup> Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*, 1986.

Remarkably, although a myriad theses have been put forward as to precisely what happens to the human mind and society when a culture makes the transition to writing, the very terms of the debate have yet to be precisely defined. To paraphrase Gertrude Stein, what is orality, and if you know what orality is, what is literacy?<sup>101</sup>

Rosalind Thomas points out some of the pitfalls in defining “literacy” in her 1992 study Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece. “We might define literacy as the ability to read and write, but read and write *what?*” she asks.<sup>102</sup> A person might be able to read road signs, but not a newspaper, printed material but not handwriting, a familiar or memorized passage but not totally new texts; one might be able to write one’s name but nothing else, etc. etc. Contemporary tests of literacy are totally useless to assess literacy in ancient Greece. Thomas astutely points out that the term “orality” is an analog or back-formation from “literacy” and “is often idealized, invested with the romantic and nostalgic ideas connected with folklore, folk culture, and folk tradition, or the ‘noble savage.’”<sup>103</sup>

In her very useful survey of the debate thus far, Thomas distinguishes broadly between theories of the general or “autonomous” effects of literacy, and those which attempt to study its actual historical path.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> “What is poetry and if you know what poetry is what is prose.” *Lectures in America*, 1935.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas 1992, pp. 8-9.

<sup>103</sup> Thomas 1992, pp. 6-7.

<sup>104</sup> Thomas 1992, pp. 15-28.

To summarize very crudely, the former are theories which account for the effects of the introduction of writing as a mechanistic change in mentality – for example, that the Greek adoption and adaptation of the alphabet was responsible for the development of rationality, philosophy and ultimately science. Included in this stream of thought would be some anthropological studies of modern societies and psychological studies of the function of memory in the human brain. Historical studies on the other hand, she argues, have the potential to be more nuanced and to describe a whole range of oralities and literacies as a society changes.

The above summary is of course only an inadequate sketch of what has become a very broad and ramified debate over a period of almost eighty years. But what is immediately noticeable is how this very sophisticated discussion has not yet taken into account East Asian scripts and more to the point the Japanese transition from an oral to a literate culture in its adoption of Chinese writing.

Partly this is due to the fact that Western knowledge of Japanese script and history is still so relatively recent, and the “Oriental” is still so exotic. Witness the rather baffling observation by Thomas that “The Japanese have a fundamentally different approach to the written word from the Western, for whereas we would tend to think writing makes the spoken word permanent, the Japanese think knowledge resides in writing – Chinese characters – rather than the mere spoken word;

knowledge can *only* be expressed by writing and the spoken word is inadequate.”<sup>105</sup>

The orality/literacy meme has begun to crop up in studies of ancient China, although under the rubric of “text” and “ritual”. Mark Edward Lewis in his monumental study Writing and Authority in Early China (1999) rather emphatically excuses himself from the debate at the outset:

“This book is about the uses of writing to command assent and obedience in early China. It does not deal explicitly with the opposition between the written and the oral, nor does it attempt to assess the changing forms or degree of literacy. Instead it examines the types of writing employed in state and society to generate and exercise power.”<sup>106</sup>

But Martin Kern, in the collection of essays which he edited in 2005 titled Text and Ritual in Early China, specifically addresses the questions of orality and literacy. He asks, “What are the specific functions of the written text? How should we imagine the relation and balance between oral and written textual practices? What are the social contexts of texts?”<sup>107</sup> Michael Nylan, in the lead essay in the same

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<sup>105</sup> Thomas 1992, pp. 22-23.

<sup>106</sup> Lewis 1999, p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> Kern 2005, p. IX.

volume addresses herself to the concept of “text, ritual and the culture of public display.”<sup>108</sup>

These and other chapters are concerned with the performative contexts of ancient texts, the ritual contexts in which texts were composed and displayed. Kern’s earlier monograph The Stele Inscriptions of Ch’in Shih Huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation described the great imperial progresses of the “First Emperor”, the extraordinarily grand and conspicuous processions to the frontiers of the new empire and the texts which were inscribed on stone monuments proclaiming the authority of the new monarch.<sup>109</sup>

Gary L. Ebersole, in his 1989 study Ritual Poetry and the Politics of Death in Early Japan attempted to locate poetry from the *Man’yōshū* in its performative context, particularly in the ritual of temporary enshrinement before final burial of emperors and high officials, known as *mogari no miya*. He explicitly drew on the orality/literacy debate for his methodology of “imaginative recreation” of the ritual background of oral poetry:

"Paradoxically, perhaps, the only access to the oral stage of early Japan is through written texts that have survived. These texts, however, were not intended to serve as ethnographic monographs, and the oral poems incorporated within them are frequently preserved out of their generative and performative loci and,

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<sup>108</sup> Kern 2005, pp. 3-49.

<sup>109</sup> Kern, 2000.

moreover, sometimes in altered form. Nevertheless, because the earliest texts, including the *Kojiki*, the *Nihonshoki*, and the *Man'yōshū*, come out of Japan's transition from a primarily oral culture to a literate one, at least among the intelligensia and in the court, they preserve enough evidence of the oral aspects of the culture to permit certain generalizations. The textual evidence, however, must be supplemented by and interpreted in light of what scholars have learned about orality since the pioneering work of Milman Parry in the 1920's.

"The work of historians of religions often involves the informed imaginative recreations of earlier ritual performances based upon limited textual evidence."<sup>110</sup>

.In recent editions of the journal Oral Tradition, three scholars have addressed the performative contexts of Japanese classical literature. Haruo Shirane in "Performance, Visuality and Textuality: The Case of Japanese Poetry" examines the nuanced and multilayered artistic context surrounding a single famous haiku by Bashō.<sup>111</sup> C. Andrew Gerstle explores the informal clubs and associations which grew up around the texts and performances of the Kabuki theater.<sup>112</sup> And Elizabeth Oyler describes the contemporary village performances of episodes from the *Heike Monogatari* (the online edition of the journal includes video of such a drama.)<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ebersole 1989, p. 18

<sup>111</sup> Shirane, 2005. <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/20ii/shirane>

<sup>112</sup> Gerstle, 2005. <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/20ii/gerstle>

<sup>113</sup> Oyler, 2006. <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/21i/oyler>

Thus it is evident that the discussion of the themes of orality and literacy, the interaction between texts and the rituals and performances which surround them, has begun to extend beyond the original parameters of classical scholarship on ancient Greece and anthropological dissections of twentieth century oral cultures. Equally significant in this connection has been the production of studies of the history of Japanese books and writing.<sup>114</sup> Two recent dissertations have addressed the beginnings of the kana systems and the origins of Japanese writing during the first to eighth centuries.<sup>115</sup> Victor Mair in his article “Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages” hypothesized a common impetus for Japanese and Korean national scripts in the process of translation of Buddhist texts from India and Central Asia into Chinese.<sup>116</sup>

The Nara period is clearly a time when Japan was caught up in a transition from orality to literacy. The edicts which were spoken and written, the places and occasions upon which they were issued, and the matters which were addressed are primary data for beginning to understand this shift.

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<sup>114</sup> Habein 1984. Seeley 1991. Kornicki 1998.

<sup>115</sup> Case 2000. Lurie 2001.

<sup>116</sup> Mair 1994.

## APPENDIX C: RITSURYŌ

The Ritsuryō is based on Chinese law (*ritsu* = *lu* 律; *ryō* = *ling* 令). Shiga Shuzō, in his article “A Basic History of T’ang Legislative Forms” sketches the background of Tang promulgations in 637, 653 and 737. He emphasizes that the concept of law in ancient China was that of the commands of an absolute ruler, and traces the history of the term “lu” back to the Warring States period. The term “ling” was originally a general term for a directive from a ruler, but the first emperor of the Ch’in created the terms “*chih*” (J. *choku*) and “*chao*” (J. *shō*). In the Han the term *ling* “came to be used as a designation of various compilations of extracts from imperial edicts.” However, the *lu-ling* system itself first developed after the Han and was eventually codified under the Sui dynasty as the “*K’ai Huang lu-ling*”. This began what Shiga terms the “classical age” of the system, in which the law comprised the *lu* (Codes), *ling* (Statutes), and two sets of secondary codes known as *ko* 格 (J. *kyaku*) (Regulations) and *shih* 式 (J. *shiki*) (Ordinances).<sup>117</sup>

Although the “T’ang Code” (*Ku T’ang-lu shu-yi*) compiled under T’ai-tsung (r. 627-649) has survived and has been translated by Wallace Johnson<sup>118</sup>, only portions of the *ko* and *shih* from this period have been recovered. The Japanese legal scholar Niida Noboru recovered and reconstructed a great portion of the Statutes.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Shiga 1992, pp. 100-105.

<sup>118</sup> Johnson 1979. Johnson and Twitchett 1993.

<sup>119</sup> Niida 1938, cited in Crump 1953, p.101.

To what extent the Yōrō Ritsuryō is based on T'ang law is a matter of debate. James Crump<sup>120</sup> argued emphatically that the *ryō* were quite different from their Chinese counterparts, and gave some examples of instances where the *ritsu* also differed. It is worth quoting his conclusions:

“...the sinicized government represented by the Yōrō Code is such a fine example of the Japanese ability to improvise around a foreign idea that the term “borrowed”, when it is applied to the form of the Yōrō bureaucracy, is next to useless.

(1952, p.47)

“The Yōrō Ritsu, even in its fragmentary condition, shows quite clearly that the Japanese had examined T'ang penal law carefully and eliminated concepts which were either in too violent contrast with Yamato tradition, or which would have been patently ridiculous.”

(1953, p.100)

Despite these variations, which Crump attributes *inter alia* to Korean transmissions and alterations, evolutionary changes, and specific changes to meet the Japanese situation, the *lu-ling* with the *ko* and *shih* are recognized as the broad foundation for Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese law.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Crump 1952, 1953

<sup>121</sup> McKnight 1995, p. 410.

## APPENDIX D: BONMŌKYŌ

### *Bonmōkyō* 梵網經

One aspect of the Buddhist state ideology which should be emphasized here is the prominence of the *Bonmōkyō*, or the Brahmajala (Brahma's Net) sutra. This short sutra primarily comprises rules for the ordination of those taking the Bodhisattva vow, and was apparently considered part of the Kegon (Avatamsaka) Sutra by Nara times.<sup>122</sup> Serge Elisséeff in 1936 pointed to this sutra's critical importance in the formation of Nara state ideology. It was during Shōmu's visit to the Chishikidera in 740 when he was inspired to erect a huge statue of Locana (Roshana) Buddha, sitting on the lotus throne and expounding the *Bonmōkyō*.<sup>123</sup> After the deaths of Shōmu and Kōmyō it was ordered read for the repose of their souls.<sup>124</sup>

The *Bonmōkyō* was translated into English in 2004 by Martine Batchelor, with a foreword by the Dalai Lama. The explanation of the name of the sutra is given in the text:

“Then the Buddha observed the parasol which was made from the net of Lord Brahma and declared, ‘All the numberless worlds are similar to the holes in this net. Each individual world is unlike any of the others. There are infinite differences between them. The teachings of the Buddha are also like this.’”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Bowring 2005, p. 85.

<sup>123</sup> Elisséeff 1936, pp. 88-89.

<sup>124</sup> TPSH 8.12.30 (vol. 3, p. 171); TPHJ 1.1.5 (vol. 3, p. 175); TPHJ 5.6.8 (vol. 3, p. 381)

<sup>125</sup> Batchelor 2004, p. 53.

The famous passage which explains the significance of the Daibutsu statue in Todaiji, and to which Elisséeff points as the political meaning for Shomu, is as follows:

“Now, I, Rocana Buddha, am seated on a lotus throne  
Surrounded by one thousand flowers on each of which are found  
A thousand Shakyamunis and one hundred million worlds.  
And in each of these worlds appears a Shakyamuni.  
At exactly the same time each one of them sits beneath the bodhi tree  
And realizes awakening.  
Likewise, Rocana Buddha is the fundamental body of these hundred  
thousand million Buddhas.”<sup>126</sup>

In summary, the ideology of Kōken/Shōtoku’s reign was heavily influenced by Buddhism, and the evidence of her edicts demonstrates that Japan at the time may fairly be described as a Buddhist state. Not only are a broad variety of Buddhist texts quoted in her edicts, but the practical management of the state was inextricably entwined with the construction of temples and images, the regulation of the priesthood, the appointment and enrollment of monks at all levels, and the provision of lands for maintenance of Buddhist institutions. It is difficult to assess in quantitative terms the influence of the native cults and of imported Taoism and Confucian, but the term “state Buddhism” quite accurately describes the religious ideology and practice of the last female Emperor.

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<sup>126</sup> Batchelor 2004, p. 54

## APPENDIX E: KINSHIP

### Designations of Court Women and Kinship Relations

The narrative of court politics at Nara is still relatively unfamiliar to Western historians. But it is impossible to understand the tangle of rivalries and conspiracies without some grasp of the kinship networks among the major players. At this point it is important to look back in some detail at the relationships among the major figures in court politics in the age surrounding Shōmu's abdication and death.

As Yoshie Akiko has emphasized, the structure of marriage, if it can in fact be called marriage, in the Nara period is anything but clear. Her article "Gender in Early Classical Japan: Marriage, Leadership and Political Status in Village and Palace" examines patterns of "fluid" and "duolocal" marital relationships. She concurs with Yoshida Takashi's conclusion that "marital relationships were not stable unions continuing over time but temporary pairing arrangements that could easily be dissolved by either party."<sup>127</sup>

This is extremely relevant in the case of Agata Inukai Michiyo 県犬飼三千代, later given the surname Tachibana 橘, who was the mother of Tachibana Moroe by Prince 美努. In a later liason with Fujiwara Fuhito, she bore him the empress of Shōmu Tennō, Kōmyōko 光明子. As the consort of Fuhito, she was the "step-mother" of his

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<sup>127</sup> Yoshie 2005, pp. 442-443

famous four sons – Muchimaro, Fusasaki, Inukai and Maro, and of Miyako 宮子, the consort of Emperor Monmu. While Western-style kinship terms are ambiguous to say the least as applied to the imperial ménage of the Nara period, it is important to note that Michiyo was the maternal grandmother of both Tachibana Nakamaro and the Empress Kōken/Shōtoku, and the “step-grandmother” of Fujiwara Nakamaro. In other words, the major players in the politics of the reign of the Last Empress were first cousins after a fashion.

According to Takinami, Agata Inukai Hirotoji 県犬飼広刀自, who was a consort of Emperor Shōmu, was of the same family as Michiyo, although the precise relationship is unclear. Takinami argues that she, along with Shōmu’s formal Empress, Fujiwara Kōmyōko, functioned as dual *kisaki*.<sup>128</sup> Kōmyō, who was awarded the title of Kōgō in 729, was the mother of Prince Motoi 基王, who died as an infant, and of Kōken, who eventually was enthroned as Emperor. Hirotoji, however, produced both a daughter, Inoue Naishinnō, who became the Ise Saigu, and a son Asaka Shinnō 安積親王, who died at age 17 in 744. Takinami’s interpretation is that, at least during Shōmu’s reign, the arrangement was that the Kōgō produced the formal heir, while Hirotoji produced the Saigu.

While the designation of Kōgō in Shōmu’s time seems to thus have had the connotation of potential parent of the Crown Prince, the titles

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<sup>128</sup> Takinami 1998, pp. 26 ff. 后, although Takinami uses kana, rather than this character.

awarded to consorts and mothers of emperors are not completely understood. Shōmu's mother Fujiwara Miyako 宮子 (d. 754), was given the formal style Taifunin 大夫人 upon his enthronement. However, although she was in fact Monmu's chief consort, she was never awarded the title Kōgō. When Kōmyō was to be designated as Kōgō, there was some concern and opposition, since traditionally only women of the royal family could receive this title.

Finally, "Hirotoji" was almost certainly not the given name of Lady Agata Inukai. Yoshie's discussion of the term "toji" makes clear that this was a many-faceted term of respect for women of both the commoner and aristocratic classes, having the sense of an independent woman "acting outside the confines of the conjugal unit."<sup>129</sup> Takinami, while labelling both Kōmyō and Hirotoji as "kisaki", indicates that Hirotoji's position was lesser in the sense of not holding the title Kōgō.

In addition to emphasizing the uncertainty about the precise designation of the ranks of women in Shōmu's menage, we should also stress the imprecision of using Western kinship terms to designate the players in court politics of the latter Nara period. The fact that Shōmu married his "maternal aunt" (Kōmyō was his mother Miyako's younger sister) helps to muddy the waters considerably, which were already less than pellucid due to the fact that, among other things, Temmu Tennō had married his niece, Jitō Tennō (daughter of his brother Tenchi.) The Japanese royal penchant for marrying close relatives, including half-

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<sup>129</sup> Yoshie 2005 pp. 451-2.

brothers and sisters, were one of the factors in making the application of Chinese law less than a perfect fit in Japan. As James Crump noted, “... the only incest taboo in Japanese law ... is the prohibition of intercourse with one’s father’s or grandfather’s concubine.”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Crump 1953, p.100.

## APPENDIX F: EDICTS CONCERNING NARAMARO, NAKAMARO AND DŌKYŌ

### Edicts Surrounding Naramaro's Plot

EDICT	YEAR	DATE	SN P#	CONTENTS OF EDICT
SHŌ	756	TPSH 8.5.2	159	Shōmu's ishō appointing Funado Crown Prince
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.3.29	177	Funado stripped of Crown Prince title
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.4.4	177	Ōi named Crown Prince
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.5.20	187	Nakamaro named Shibi Naishi
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.7.2	197	Senmyō 16: Koken warns nobles re Naramaro
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.7.2	197	Senmyō 17: Kōmyō warns nobles re Naramaro
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.7.3	201	Udaijin FW Toyonari et al ordered to investigate
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.7.3	201	Senmyō 18: Kōmyō summons 5 nobles to Nakamaro's mansion
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.7.4	203	Plot by Naramaro et al described
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.7.4	203	Chokushi sent to question Naramaro
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.7.8	211	Prohibits summoning souls of dead conspirators
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.7.8	213	Orders surrender of any remaining conspirators
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.7.9	213	Udaijin FW Toyonari to hand over rebel son Otonaha
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.7.12	213	Senmyō 19: Kōken summons officials, describes Naramaro's plot
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.7.12	213	Toyonari demoted to Dazai Ingai no Sochi
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.7.16	217	Order to surrender hidden weapons
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.7.27	219	Senmyō 20: Kōken pardons Prince Shioyaki
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.8.2	219	Strips Kōken's breast mother of rank for involvement in plot
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.8.4	219	Senmyō 21: Kōken exiles Hata who supported Naramaro
SHŌ	757	TPHJ 1.8.4	219	Senmyō 21: Kōken awards promotions to loyal supporters
CHOKU	757	TPHJ 1.8.4	219	Chunagon Tajihi Hirotari permitted to retire at age 77
SHŌ	758	TPHJ 2.1.5	243	Kōken urges loyalty in aftermath of Naramaro plot

### Edicts Surrounding Nakamaro's Revolt

EDICT	YEAR	DATE	SN P#	CONTENTS OF EDICT
SHŌ	761	TPHJ 5.10.6	3.393	Repairs to Heijō Palace; Kōken, Junnin go to Hora Palace
CHOKU	761	TPHJ 5.10.28	3.393	Hora designated "Northern Palace"; tax relief for Kinai
SHŌ	762	TPHJ 6.6.3	3.409	Senmyō 27: Kōken says she will deal with major state affairs
SHŌ	763	TPHJ 7.2.4	3.427	Orders Oshikatsu to prepare feast for Koma envoys
SHŌ	763	TPHJ 7.9.4	3.439	Dismissing Shōsōzu Hōkin, appointing Dōkyō to position
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.9.11	4.21	Strips Nakamaro of titles, lands – Nakamaro's revolt
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.9.12	4.23	Orders troops to suppress Nakamaro
SHŌ	764	TPHJ 8.9.20	4.31	Senmyō 28: Rewards for ending revolt; Dōkyō to be Daijin Zenshi
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.9.22	4.35	Appoints Dōkyō as Daijin Zenshi
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.9.22	4.35	Restores bureaucratic titles to pre-Nakamaro times
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.9.28	4.37	Rejects Dōkyō's refusal of office, restates app't as Daijin Zenshi
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.9.29	4.37	Again announces defeat of Nakamaro, recaps events
SHŌ	764	TPHJ 8.10.7	4.39	More promotions for those who defeated Nakamaro
SHŌ	764	TPHJ 8.10.9	4.43	Senmyō 29: Deposing Junnin, exiling him to Awaji
SHŌ	764	TPHJ 8.10.9	4.43	Senmyō 30: Exiles Princes Fune and Ikeda for Nakamaro support
SHŌ	764	TPHJ 8.10.14	4.47	Senmyō 31: Kōken explains why she declines to app't Crown Prince
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.10.16	4.49	Great amnesty, tax relief due to end of Nakamaro's revolt
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.10.21	4.51	Specific amnesty for prisoners in capital, with exceptions
SHŌ	764	TPHJ 8.11.28	4.57	Restates change of bureaucratic titles to Keiun years
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.1.7	4.61	Senmyō 32: Shōtoku explains nengo change due to Nakamaro's revolt
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.2.14	4.73	To Awaji governor asking for report re rumors of Junnin's death

SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.3.5	4.77	Limits nobility's private weapons, retainers
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.3.5	4.77	Senmyō 33: Warns against attempts to restore Junnin to throne
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.4.15	4.81	Grants Toyonari's request to return lands (since relative was traitor)
CHOKU	767	JGKU 1.3.17	4.157	Promotions for 19 guards who helped suppress Nakamaro

### Edicts surrounding the Dōkyō Incident

EDICT	YEAR	DATE	SN P#	CONTENTS OF EDICT
SHŌ	763	TPHJ 7.9.4	3.439	Dismissing Shōsōzu Hōkin, appointing Dōkyō to position
SHŌ	764	TPHJ 8.9.20	4.31	Senmyō 28: Rewards for ending revolt; Dōkyō to be Daijin Zenshi
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.9.22	4.35	Appoints Dōkyō as Daijin Zenshi
CHOKU	764	TPHJ 8.9.28	4.37	Rejects Dōkyō's refusal of office, restates app't as Daijin Zenshi
SHŌ	764	TPHJ 8.10.14	4.47	Senmyō 31: Kōken explains why she declines to app't Crown Prince
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.8.1	4.87	Senmyō 34: Exiles Prince Wake for threatening Dōkyō
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.8.1	4.87	Senmyō 35: Quotes Dōkyō, punishes three officials
SHŌ	765	TPJG 1.INT10.2	4.97	Senmyō 36: Dōkyō named Daijō Daijin Zenshi
SHŌ	766	TPJG 2.10.20	4.135	Senmyō 41: Dōkyō named Hōō; relic at Sumidera
SHŌ	769	JK 3.9.25	4.251	Senmyō 44: Exiles Kiyomaro, Hokun for "false" Hachiman oracle

## APPENDIX G: TAMATSUSHIMA

From Saiga's plain, where we serve  
At the palace everlasting  
Of our august Sovereign reigning in peace,  
The island lies athwart in the sea.  
White waves gambol along its clean shore  
When the wind arises.  
Men gather the dainty seaweed  
When the tide is low –  
So precious since the age of the gods,  
This Tamatsu-shima, Island of Jewels!

### *Envoys*

Shall I not miss the dainty seaweed  
On the rugged island beach  
When it is hidden under the flood-tide?

As the tide flows into Waka Bay,  
The cranes, with the lagoons lost in flood,  
Go crying towards the reedy shore.

*The Man'yōshū*, Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai  
Columbia University Press, 1965, p. 191

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