

CHAPTER 3

THE RECEPTION AND REFORMULATION OF “BUNGAKU”: FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD

3.1 From Early Times to the Medieval Period

3.1.1 “Bungaku” in Antiquity

Among surviving documents, the word “bungaku” first occurs in the Yōrō Code 養老律令 (718), where it designates a tutor in the Classics appointed to the household of a prince. Since the Yōrō Code is a revision of the Taihō 大正 Code (701), one may assume that the same usage, apparently derived from that current in Han China, occurred in the latter. Subsequent codes adopted it as well.¹

In contrast, the earliest surviving use of the word in the sense of scholarly accomplishment in general (*gakugei ippan*) is to be found in the preface of *Kaifūsō* 懷風藻 (751), a collection of kanshi (Japanese poetry in Chinese).² In praise of the way kanshi flourished during the reign of Tenji Tennō 天智天皇 (r. 661-671), the text says, “He gathered together those given to bungaku and often enjoyed with them the pleasures of wine.”³ The date of *Kaifūsō* corresponds to the early Tang in China, but the work is almost entirely under the influence of *Wenxuan* 文選. The poetic style is that of the Six Dynasties, and the ideas in it are those of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. It is possible to take this occurrence of “bungaku” as referring above all to Confucian learning, since Tenji Tennō himself is said to have studied the way of the Duke of Zhou 周公 and Confucius, but it probably combines the meanings of learning in general and of letters (Jp. *bunshō*, Ch. *wenzhang*).

Books written in Chinese first entered Japan in very early times. The earliest recorded example is probably the collection of works brought back from Korea to Japan by Jingū Kōgō 神功皇后 ca. 200 CE, according to *Nihon shoki*. However, the date usually given for the official transmission of Chinese writing to Japan is 285, when, in the sixteenth year of the reign of Ōjin Tennō 応神天皇, the Kudara 百濟 scholar Wani 王仁 (Wang In) offered the court the ten scrolls of *Rongo* 論語 and one of the Thousand Character Essay 千字文. Wani’s descendants and those of other such

1 As the *locus classicus* of “bungaku” in this sense in Japan, *Daigenkai* 大言海 cites *Shikiin ryō no gige* 職員令義解; *Daikanwa jiten* 大漢和辞典 cites *Keryō shikiin ryō* 家令職員令; and *Nihon kokugo daijiten* cites *Shikiin ryō no gige* 1 and *Shōryōshū* 性靈集 4.

2 In its entry on “bungaku,” *Nihon kokugo daijiten* cites as the *locus classicus* for the sense of “liberal arts, learning,” etc. the preface to *Kaifūsō*, the “Go-Uda Tennō” 後宇多天皇 section of *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記, and *Endō tsugan* 艶道通鑑 1, 8.

3 Kojima 1964, pp. 59-60.

immigrants are said to have served as official recorders of court history. It is also said that even in later times Yūryaku 雄略 Tennō consolidated his power by conferring major responsibility on such immigrants,⁴ while in 513 and 516, under Keitai 繼体 Tennō, immigrant doctors of the Five Classics from Kudara were appointed in turns to the post of professor. In the reign of Suiko 推古 Tennō and after, the court became the center of major development in the arts, although Buddhism played as great a part in the process as Confucianism. It is Prince Shōtoku 聖徳太子 who enthusiastically accepted Buddhism as a new field of artistic and intellectual endeavor and who actually placed it at the center of his policy. However, he was able to do so only after overcoming considerable resistance.

The Soga 蘇我 clan, who supported the Buddhist faith, clashed violently with the Mononobe 物部, who opposed it, and in this struggle the young prince is recorded as having joined the Soga forces. Earlier, he appears to have studied Confucianism with the Koguryo 高麗 scholar Kakuka (K. Gagga) 覺袞 and Buddhism with the Koguryo monk Eji (K. Hyeja) 慧慈. Since a good many immigrants lived in Japan and served the court, it may be that Shōtoku could not only read and write, but also could actually speak Chinese. He is traditionally credited with having written the *Sangyō gisho* 三經義疏, a set of commentaries on the *Lotus*, *Vimalakirti*, and *Srimala Devi* sutras (*Hokekyō* 法華經, *Yuimagyō* 維摩經, *Shōmangyō* 勝鬘經). Despite the possible presence of later additions in the work, it is probably the oldest surviving book written in Japan. Thereafter the studies pursued by the aristocracy covered—with inevitable differences of emphasis—Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism, to which could be added Taoism and yin-yang lore (*onmyōdō* 陰陽道). Needless to say, there sometimes arose friction between these different streams of thought.

When the Tang dynasty replaced the Sui, traffic between China and Japan became more frequent, and the influx of immigrants grew. The transfer of culture from China reached a peak in the reign of Tenji Tennō, the period in which one may discern the origins of Japanese kanshi. The poems in *Kaifūsō* are presented in chronological order of composition, without regard to the poet's social rank. The first one, composed in praise of Tenji Tennō by Tenji's son Prince Ōtomo 大友 (later Kōbun 弘文 Tennō, r. 671-672), is therefore considered the earliest example of Japanese kanshi.⁵

In short, in eighth-century Japan the concept of “bungaku” was derived from that current in Six Dynasties China and combined the notion of scholarly accomplishment in general with that of letters (*bunshō*). What distinguished the Japanese concept from its Six Dynasties counterpart was the inclusion of Shinto and the relatively high status accorded Buddhism. However, as in the Chinese case, the center of “bungaku” remained Confucian studies. Moreover, the fact that eighteen of the sixty-four poets who contributed to *Kaifūsō* are represented also in *Man'yōshū*

4 According to Inokuchi Atsushi (*Nihon kanshi gaisetsu* 日本漢詩概説, p. 2), the memorial from a Yamato sovereign conjectured to be Yūryaku 雄略, and included in the “Yimanzhuan” 夷蠻 section of both *Nanshi* 南史 and *Songshu* 宋書, may be (if it has not been retouched) the oldest surviving example of Chinese prose (*kanbun* 漢文) written in Japan.

5 According to *Nihon shoki*, kanshi was first composed by Ōtsu no Miko 大津皇子, and *Kokon chomonjū* 古今著聞集 as well as the Chinese preface to the *Kokinshū*, among others repeat this claim. However, it is erroneous. *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集, Emura Hokkai's 江村北海 *Nihonshi shi* 日本詩史, and *Dai Nihon shi* 大日本史 trace its origins to Ōtomo no Ōji 大友皇子.

vividly suggests the rising importance of Japanese poetry, in parallel with that of kanshi.

However, there is no evidence that poetry in Japanese was ever called either “bungaku” or “bunshō.” In other words, “bungaku” continued to refer solely to poetry and prose in Chinese, and to learning centered on Confucian studies; while, separately, there seems to have existed also the idea of “poetry” (*shiika* 詩歌), that is to say kanshi and waka, as a distinct genre. (This hybrid concept, peculiar to Japan, needs to be well understood if one is to grasp clearly the later meaning of *bungaku*, lest failure to do so confuse the discussion.) (See Figure 5.)

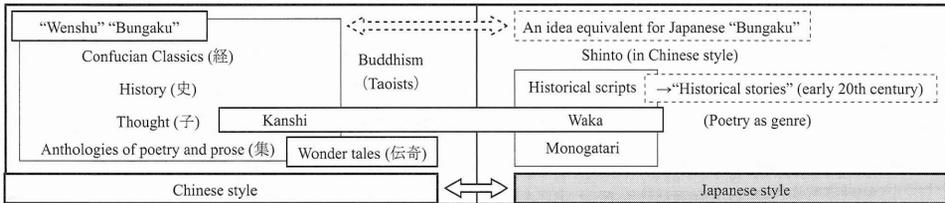


Figure 5 The Position of “Bungaku” in Ancient Japan

Kojiki 古事記 (712), the *Fudoki* 風土記 gazetteers of the provinces (713), and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720) were composed in the Nara period. The *Kojiki* preface, by Ō no Yasumaro 太安万侶, is a memorial to the sovereign, said to be in the form found in the early Tang *Wujing zhengyi* 五經正義, and couched in rhymed parallel prose (*pianliti* 駢儷體). The work was compiled and written for the imperial house, and its version of the Japanese creation myth betrays Taoist influence.⁶ The myths and legends included in the work are apparently based on oral traditions. Among the *Fudoki* gazetteers *Hitachi fudoki* 常陸風土記 is written in particularly good Chinese, in that it precisely follows established Chinese patterns of expression, while the others are in that sense more or less inferior. *Nihon shoki*, patterned as it is on the Chinese official histories, was studied as their Japanese counterpart by regional officials everywhere. The work is characterized by a consistent aim to legitimize the imperial house and the aristocratic houses clustered around it, and it may have provided powerful regional families with material that they reworked into their own accounts of their origins (*ujibumi* 氏文). However, under the heading “According to another document” (*issho ni iwaku* 一書に曰く), the work also records alternate versions that give it considerable folkloric interest. This editorial policy may well reflect the federative character of ancient society.

These works reveal a great deal about the level and type of knowledge current among the central aristocracy and the governing local powers in the period when the Taihō and Yōrō Codes were promulgated and when the social system of ancient Japan took shape. It is not difficult to imagine immigrant groups living in every region and some among them, as regional powers themselves or in close association with such powers, taking responsibility for written documents. The language spoken by the people at large in the Japanese archipelago of ancient times is no doubt referred to as Early Japanese (*kodai nihongo* 古代日本語 or *wago* 和語), but it differed greatly from region to region, and it must have incorporated many borrowings from ancient Korean, with which it

6 On the influence of *Wujing zhengyi*, see Inokuchi 1972, p. 6; on that of Taoism, see the works of Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司.

shared a good deal in grammar and vocabulary. The immigrants who arrived over so many years from the Korean peninsula and the Chinese continent must have brought their own dialects with them as well. In contrast, their written language was Chinese, which probably served as a sort of lingua franca and thus also facilitated communication with the educated classes in China and on the Korean peninsula. Naturally, only a very limited stratum of society had the ability both to speak and to read and write, and since this ability must have varied widely from individual to individual and from period to period, the services of interpreters must often have been required. Consequently, this common language must have been a somewhat debased form of Chinese, quite different from that employed by highly educated people in China.

In order to understand documents written in this “common language,” Buddhist texts, and so on, those with only a low-level knowledge of Chinese seem quite early to have started grasping their meaning according to the rules of Japanese grammar; to have attributed to verbs, adverbs, etc. their Japanese meaning; and so to have cultivated the practice known as *kundoku* 訓読 (reading Chinese according to the rules of Japanese, yielding a heavily sinified Japanese style known as *yomikudashi* 読み下し). Among the poems in the late Nara-period *Man'yōshū*, there has also been noted a slow shift away from the practice in the early books of writing Japanese words with their Chinese meanings, and toward writing them with Chinese characters used only for their phonetic value. In ancient Chinese too, there are instances of proper nouns, or dialect words, being written phonetically rather than for meaning. If this method was adopted in Japan, then it must have begun with proper nouns and then been extended to Japanese words in general.

3.1.2 “Bungaku” in Heian Times

The major task at the start of the Heian period was to rebuild and strengthen the ritsuryō system. Kanmu 桓武 Tennō (r. 781-806) gave particular support to Confucian studies. He also welcomed Saichō 最澄 (767-822), who returned from China at that time, and displayed interest in esoteric Buddhism, the most recent form of Buddhism then current. The composition of poetry and prose in Chinese, under Tang influence, flourished as never before during the reigns of Saga 嵯峨 (r. 809-823) and Junna 淳和 (r. 823-833). Imperially commissioned anthologies of kanshi (*Ryōunshū* 凌雲集, ca. 814; *Bunka shūrei shū* 文華秀麗集, 818), as well as one combining poetry and prose (*Keikokushū* 経国集, ca. 827), were compiled. The title *Keikokushū* comes from a passage in Cao Pi's 曹丕 statement in *Dianlun lunwen* 典論論文 that “*Wenzhang* is a great task for the governing of the realm [経国], and a deathless enterprise.”

Within the field of learning (*gakumon*), divided as it was into the four “paths” of *meikeidō* 明経道 (Confucian classics), *meihōdō* 明法道 (ritsuryō law), *kidendō* 紀伝道 (history and letters [*bunshō*]), and *sandō* 算道 (divination and calculation), the status of *meikeidō* sank in relation to the others, while that of *kidendō* (centered on *Hanshu*, *Shiji*, *Sanguozhi*, and *Wenxuan*) rose. Thus, as the inclusion of *Wenxuan* suggests, the *kidendō* category embraced also the study of letters and was commonly referred to as *monjōdō* 文章道 [also *bunshōdō*]. The instructors were known as *kiden hakase* 紀伝博士 (doctors of *kiden*) or *monjō hakase*, while the students were called *kidenshō* 紀伝生 or *monjōshō* 文章生. Later on, learning came commonly to be termed *keishi* 経史 (classics and history). No doubt the redefinition of learning in China, from the Six Dynasties

period on into the Tang, as well as changes in the conception of “bungaku,” were transmitted to Japan, where they continued to evolve.

Kūkai 空海 (774-835), who returned to Japan after Kanmu’s death, exerted himself to establish and propagate Shingon 真言 Buddhism. The word “bungaku” appears in two of his written works, in the sense of a tutor appointed to a prince’s household. These works are *Sangō shiiki* 三教指帰 (797), the dramatically constructed work in which Kūkai first introduced Confucianism, then brought in Taoism to critique it, and finally critiqued Taoism to demonstrate the superiority of Buddhism; and *Shōryōshū* 性靈集 (early 9th century).⁷ However, his *Bunkyō hifu ron* 文鏡秘府論 (early 9th century) contains a discussion of *bunshō* (*monjō*, letters), in the fourth fascicle of which he offers an extended treatise on *buntai* (Ch. *wenti*) 文体, of a kind popular since the Six Dynasties period: a detailed analysis of the different types of “letters” (*bunshō*, *monjō*). This can be said to demonstrate that the conception of “bungaku” as the study of “letters” had reached Japan, and that it was in the process of becoming entrenched.

After Kūkai, many other monks came to excel at Chinese poetry and prose, and this phenomenon no doubt further eroded the idea that Confucianism was central to such pursuits. It is therefore no surprise that from among the court’s “doctors of letters” (*monjō hakase*) there should have appeared a figure like Miyako no Yoshika 都良香 (834-879), whose *Honchō shinsen den* 本朝神仙伝, a collection of stories about Japanese immortals, shows strong Taoist influence.

During this time Japanese poetry came so close to dying out that the period came later on to be called “the era of eclipse of native ways” (*kokufū ankoku jidai* 国風暗黒時代). The introduction of Tang wonder tales (*denki* 伝奇) to Japan no doubt served under these circumstances to stimulate the production of tales based on popular legends, created by aristocrats who had come into contact with such material in the provinces. A likely example is *Taketori monogatari* 竹取物語 (The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter).

As the mid-Heian approached, the idea of “governing the country” (*keikoku* 経国) clearly faded from the minds of government officials. Sugawara no Michizane’s 菅原道真 (845-903) abolishment of embassies to China marked the beginning of a new era of respect for “native ways.” The imperial order to compile *Kokinshū* (905), given to Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (872?-945), thus marked an epoch-making change. The kanbun preface to the work, written by Ki no Yoshimochi 紀淑望 (?-919) begins,

Feelings arise from intention, and song takes form in words For moving heaven and earth, stirring spirits and gods, transforming human relations, and harmonizing husband and wife, nothing surpasses Japanese poetry [waka].⁸

These sentiments are said to be derived from the Mao 毛 preface to *Shijing*, but *Yijing*, *Li*, and *Yue*, as well as the later literary tradition founded upon them, are filled with similar ones, to the effect that song expresses the feelings of all things; that song pleases the gods in their sacred realm; and that song improves all people below. The “spirits and gods” mentioned are thought not to have

7 NKBT 71 (*Sangō shiiki*, *Shōryōshū*), pp. 84, 257. For *Bunkyō hifu ron*, see Ōsone 1992, p. 431.

8 Okumura 1978, p. 379.

been denizens of the netherworld in China either, at least until the advent of Buddhism. In other words, Ki no Yoshimochi applied Chinese ideas about poetry directly to poetry in Japanese.

Yoshimochi's Chinese preface laments that since the days of Ōtsu no Miko (663-686), Chinese poetry has overwhelmed Japanese; that Japanese poetry has forsaken true feeling for gaudy and shallow display; that in recent times people have sought only profit and advantage; and that they have wholly forgotten poetry in Japanese. The text notes a blank period of "ten reigns and one hundred years" after *Man'yōshū* was completed in the reign of Heizei 平城 Tennō (r. 806-809), during which "Japanese poetry has been abandoned,"⁹ and it plainly espouses the goal of filling this gap. This declaration of an ambition to realize Chinese ideals in Japan, in a Japanese way, is in the spirit of the contemporary *ritsuryō* codes, and it never questions the identification, current at the time, of Chinese poetry and Japanese poetry as belonging to a single genre. No doubt this attitude betrays a clear awareness that Japanese poetry, being written in phonetic kana rather than in characters, nonetheless contrasts with Chinese. However, the text shows no sign of any notion that poetry in Japanese is Japan's "bungaku." "Bungaku" refers solely to the magnificent examples of "letters" that have come to Japan from China.

Ki no Tsurayuki's kana preface, which amounts to a transposition of Yoshimochi's Chinese preface into Japanese, turns "transforming human relations" into "It is song [poetry] that smoothes the relations between men and women, and soothes the heart of the fierce warrior."¹⁰ This statement suffers somewhat from the way it attenuates the beneficial, harmonizing effect on human relations that the Chinese attributed to poetry and song. The text laments the frivolity of contemporary poetry in Japanese and quotes old examples to show what this poetry should be, but although it readily cites with poems in praise of the emperor, it lacks the admonitory tone of the Chinese preface and seems removed from considerations of government. Poems (*kudai waka* 句題和歌) based on those of Bai Juyi, which enjoyed considerable popularity at the time, appear also to have been consciously excluded from *Kokinshū* proper.¹¹

Roughly a century later, Sei Shōnagon 清少納言 wrote in section 84 of *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子,

That a learned Doctor is most impressive needs no saying . . . Impressive too is the praise he receives for composing a prayer, a memorial, or the preface for a poetry collection.¹²

The "Doctor" in question is no doubt a doctor of letters. What matters about his learning, however, is less his knowledge of Confucian philosophy or Chinese usages than his ability to compose a Buddhist prayer, a petition to the emperor, or the preface to a collection of poetry in Chinese or Japanese. Section 197 of *Makura no sōshi* reads,

9 Okumura 1978, p. 383.

10 Okumura 1978, p. 382. Okumura (pp. 407-408) took this passage as expressing "the pantheism of ancient Japan" as well as the contemporary desire for an orderly *ritsuryō* state, and considered it an unconscious Japanization of Chinese ideas about poetry.

11 Murakami Tetsumi 1994, p. 106.

12 SNKBT 25 (*Makura no sōshi*), Iwanami Shoten, 1991, p. 114.

Writings [*fumi* 文]: The *Collected Works* [*monjū* 文集, of Bai Juyi 白居易], *Monzen* 文選, [especially] *fu* in the new style [*shinpu* 新賦]. *Shiji* 史記, [especially the first chapter,] “Gotei hongji” 五帝本紀. Prayers [*ganmon* 願文], memorials [*hyō* 表]. A petition [*mōshibumi* 申文] written by a Doctor.¹³

Apart from the literary and historical texts mentioned, the author also indicates admiration for a formal document such as an application for promotion (*mōshibumi*), composed for the applicant by a professional. All these texts, poetry or prose, are of course in Chinese.

The taste thus expressed by Sei Shōnagon was probably not peculiar to her, but instead was doubtless shared by the courtiers of her time. It suggests that Chinese poetry and prose, too, then formed a part of an aristocratic woman’s education, although perhaps mainly through explications of the works of Bai Juyi or through such compilations as *Senzai kaku* 千載佳句 by Ōe no Koretoki 大江維時, a collection of outstanding Chinese couplets.¹⁴ Centuries later Yoshida Kenkō 吉田兼好 wrote in *Tsurezuregusa* 徒然草 (ca. 1330),

Writings: the moving scrolls of *Monzen*, Bai Juyi’s *Collected Works*, the words of Laozi 老子, the book of Zhuangzi 莊子.¹⁵

All these “writings” are again in Chinese.

The Six Dynasties parallel prose style, particularly in its contrasting couplet form, seems to have been especially appreciated in Heian times. When read aloud in the Japanese manner, the rhyme schemes essential to Tang and later poetry were lost, so that despite being respected in writing in Japan, they had no real appeal there.¹⁶ In the Heian period Bai Juyi was prized above Li Bai 李白 (701-762) and Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), and many Japanese poems are derived from his work. No doubt he was easier to read than the other two poets mentioned, but his thought, which combined Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism (although in his later years he inclined more and more to Buddhism) appealed more to the aristocracy of the time.

Noteworthy collections of poetry in Chinese are *Fusō shū* 扶桑集, compiled by Ki no Tadana 紀齋名 (966-999), and *Honchō reisō* 本朝麗藻, compiled by Takashina no Moriyoshi 高階積善 in the first decade of the eleventh century. However, their prestige cannot be compared with that of the twenty-one imperially commissioned anthologies of Japanese poetry between *Kokinshū* and the late-Muromachi *Shinshoku kokinwakashū* 新続古今和歌集. No doubt Fujiwara no Kintō’s 藤原公任 *Wakan rōei shū* 和漢朗詠集 (1013), an anthology of paired Chinese and Japanese verses to be sung at parties, indicates the mood of the period.

The aristocracy may have given up devoting that much time to studying Confucianism and Chinese lore, but official documents continued to be written solely in Chinese. There was therefore a need for a practical book of model styles and forms of Chinese composition, in various genres, by

13 SNKBT 25, p. 245.

14 Murakami Tetsumi 1994, p. 145.

15 SNKBT 39 (*Hōjōki*, *Tsurezuregusa* 方丈記・徒然草), Iwanami Shoten, 1989, p. 90.

16 Ōsone 1992, pp. 444-51.

Japanese writers. This is the sort of consideration that appears to have encouraged the compilation of *Honchō monzui* 本朝文粹 (1066) by Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡 (989-1066). Although patterned on the Chinese *Wenxuan*, this work nonetheless includes examples of such materials as the kanbun prefaces to poetry collections, or Buddhist dedicatory prayers, which never existed in China. Some aspects of the official documents selected are also unique to Japan.¹⁷

However, Fujiwara no Akihira's period of study at the official academy was prolonged, since he seems not to have been from a family hereditarily specialized in Confucian scholarship, and his juniors were often promoted ahead of him. His own success in life therefore came only very late.¹⁸ The concept of "bungaku" became disassociated from Confucian studies even earlier in Japan than in China and leaned even sooner toward the study of "bunshō" (*monjō*), but even at this stage the separation seems to have been far from complete.

3.1.2.1 The Rise of "Japanese Bungaku," and the Stratification of "Official History"

Despite variations in degree over time, the reading and writing knowledge of educated Japanese continued for a very long time to superimpose two languages, Japanese and Chinese, upon each other. In ancient times, even Shinto priests studied Confucianism and wrote in kanbun, as *Kogo shūi* 古語拾遺 (807) by Inbe no Hironari 齋部広成 makes clear. The two *Kokinshū* prefaces, one in Japanese and the other in Chinese, highlight this linguistic duality. Phonetic writing of Japanese, using the kana syllabary, began with Japanese poetry and can be observed also in early works like *Takekoto monogatari* and *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語. However, such texts were not written in kana only. For example, in *Genji monogatari*, Chinese characters are used for female titles like *nyōgo* 女御 ("consort") or *kōi* 更衣 ("intimate") that never existed in China. Moreover, the Japanese of that period and later contains many Chinese loan words that for most speakers must have gone unrecognized as such. An example is the Japanese word *uma* 馬 ("horse"), which is directly derived from the Chinese *ma*. Naturally, analogous instances could be cited for English and many other languages as well, not excluding Chinese itself.

In *Wabungaku no seiritsu* 和文学の成立 (1998), Furuhashi Nobuyoshi 古橋信孝 traced the development of literature written principally in kana from the prefaces (*kotobagaki* 詞書) of *waka* to full-scale *monogatari*. It seems reasonable to assume that there existed in Heian times, in a spirit of conscious opposition, a degree of preference for "bungaku in Japanese" (*wabungaku* 和文学) over its Chinese counterpart, and that this tendency led to the writing even of history in Japanese. An example is *Eiga monogatari* 栄花物語 (early 11th century), which celebrates the glory of Fujiwara no Michinaga. However, such works naturally include Chinese lexical items as well.

Ever since the twentieth-century assimilation of European notions of linguistic art, works like *Eiga monogatari* have been classified by scholars as *rekishi monogatari* 歴史物語 (historical tales). However, historians still cite them as valuable historical sources. This seems appropriate. In contrast with the *Rikkokushi* 六国史, the six "official histories" (*seishi* 正史) of the imperial

17 Ōsone 1992, pp. 430, 436. Ōsone suggested that Akihira meant his work to complement the kanshi anthology *Fusō shū* 扶桑集 in such a way that both together would provide a full-scale Japanese counterpart to *Wenxuan*.

18 Ōsone 1992, pp. 432-33.

house, written in kanbun, these, their successors, are the “official histories” of the regental house, consciously composed this time in kana. While dynasties rose and fell in China, in consonance with the doctrine of the “mandate of heaven” (*tenmei* 天命), Japan multiplied its “official histories,” period by period, in order to uphold the unbroken continuity of the imperial line. Seen in this light, *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (13th century) and *Taiheiki* 太平記 (14th century) are, correspondingly, the “official histories” of the warrior houses under the Ashikaga 足利 regime. According to Hyōdō Hiromi, they may be said to champion the “warrior myth” of service to the imperial house by recounting the origins of warrior power and the alternation of the Minamoto 源 and the Taira 平 in this role.¹⁹

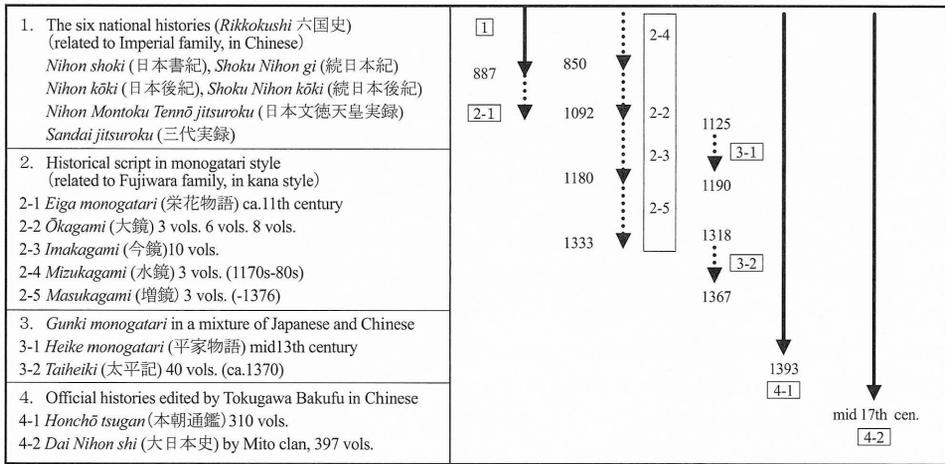


Figure 6 The Layers of Official Histories

The woman author Arakida Rei 荒木田麗 (1732-1806) continued the *rekishi monogatari* tradition into the Tokugawa period with her *Ike no mokuzu* 池の藻屑 (1771). However, the Tokugawa bakufu’s *Honchō tsugan* 本朝通鑑, which championed the legitimacy of Tokugawa power, and the *Dai Nihon shi* 大日本史 compiled by Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628-1700), were both written in kanbun. This choice was due to the renewed prestige of “bungaku” in this linguistic medium during the Tokugawa period. It is possible to see the *kokugaku* 国学 (national learning) movement led by Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801) and others as a reaction against this trend, and as an effort to continue the tradition of “Japanese bungaku.” However, no evidence allows one to decide whether or not the authors of the many Japanese writings of the time did so in conscious awareness of the contrast with Chinese.²⁰

3.1.3 “Bungaku” in the Medieval Period

The fourth fascicle of *Kokon chomonjū* 古今著聞集 (ca. 1254), a Kamakura-period collection

¹⁹ Hyōdō 2000.

²⁰ On the formulation and reformulation of the concept of “history,” see 8.3.6, below.

of anecdotes compiled by Tachibana no Narisue 橘成季, is entitled “Bungaku.” It begins with the Chinese myth of how Fu Xi 伏羲 invented writing; continues by relating how Confucius propagated the five virtues of benevolence 仁, righteousness 義, decorum 礼, wisdom 知, and good faith 信, and so caused the way of “bungaku” to flourish; and quotes the *Meibunshō* 明文抄 (ca. 1232) compiled by Fujiwara no Takanori 藤原孝範 to the effect that “There is nothing so worthy as *bun* 文 for spreading morality and guiding the people, and nothing so good as *gaku* 学 for instructing and improving them.” After this introductory praise of “bungaku,” Narisue went on to recount how the Kudara scholar Wani transmitted Chinese writings to Japan; quoted *Nihon shoki* on how Ōtsu no Miko founded the tradition of Chinese poetry there;²¹ and gave thirty-five anecdotes concerning, first, poetry written by Bai Juyi in China and various doctors of letters in Japan up to the early Kamakura period, and, second, study of the classics and history.

Some of these anecdotes betray the influence of yin-yang lore. For example, no. 117 describes how the deities of pestilence bowed before the house of Sugawara no Michizane. However, most concern poetry, whether Chinese or Japanese, and Confucian philosophy. In almost all instances the word *bun* 文 refers to kanshi. The anecdotes with a strongly Buddhist tone seem mainly to have been added from such works as *Gōdanshō* 江談抄 and *Jikkishō* 十訓抄.²² Some items, such as no. 118, recognize differing modes of *bun*, and the work as a whole fairly reflects the condition of “bungaku” in the Heian period, during which the term referred both to the study of history and the classics, and to the study of letters. Item no. 121 looks back nostalgically to the days when courtiers banqueted, composed kanshi, and played music as they pleased. It leaves a clear impression of longing for a bygone era of courtly culture.

The late Heian *Konjaku monogatari shū* and the early Kamakura *Uji shūi monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語 display a strong Buddhist coloring, but *Kokon chomonjū*, compiled in the thirteenth century by a man proficient at poetry in both languages and at the *biwa* 琵琶 as well, is more encyclopedic in character.²³ The “Bungaku” section is preceded by “The Gods” (*jingi* 神祇), “Buddhism” (*shakkyō* 釈教), “Government and Loyal Ministers” (*seidō chūshin* 政道忠臣), and “Affairs of State” (*kuji* 公事), and is followed by “Japanese Poetry” (*waka* 和歌), “Music and Dance” (*kangen kabu* 管弦歌舞), “Calligraphers” (*nōsho* 能書), and so on. The fifth position assigned to “Bungaku” no doubts corresponds accurately to the position of *bungaku* in the late Heian period.

If the “Bungaku” section of *Kokon chomonjū* fairly represents a sort of afterglow of *bungaku* in the Heian period, then the *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記 (1339) of Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 no doubt stands in roughly the same relationship to the “Japaneseness” (*kokufū* 国風) of all Heian culture. Chikafusa, who championed the legitimate imperial line in the midst of the wars between the northern and southern courts, argued that Japanese history had been sustained as a matter of historical fact by the virtue of the imperial house, thanks to the irreducible principles of its “single lineage” (*isshusei* 一種性) and its “absence of personal bias” (*mushi* 無私). In fascicle 2, under the heading “Go-Uda Tennō 後宇多天皇,” Chikafusa used the word “bungaku” in the following

21 See note 5, above.

22 Nishio 1983, pp. 496-97. The “Bungaku” section of *Kokon chomonjū* displays a particularly Buddhist tone in items no. 113, 136, and 140, but chronologically speaking these items are earlier than the others around them, and Nishio counted them among later additions to the text.

23 Nishio 1983, vol. 1, pp. 493-94.

passage: “In bungaku, for example, I can think of no emperor after Go-Sanjō 後三条 who rivaled him in ability.”²⁴ Go-Sanjō Tennō (r. 1068-1072) is well known to have contained the spread of Fujiwara influence, but he is also recorded as having excelled at letters. The immediately preceding passage in Chikafusa’s work concerns Buddhist matters, and one may therefore take this mention of “bungaku” as referring to kanshi and kanbun.²⁵ *Jinnō shōtōki* extols a clear grasp of Confucian principles. Medieval Shinto scholars often sought the foundations of Shinto in Confucianism.

In medieval times, Japanese poetry and Buddhism were no longer linked together, as they had been in the late Heian period. Instead there was a growing tendency to discuss waka in terms of Shinto, as demonstrated by various, more or less far-fetched interpretations of the *Kokinshū* kana preface. For example, Sōgi 宗祇 wrote in his *Kokinwakashū shō* 古今和歌集抄,

‘Yamato uta’ [大和歌] means ‘greatly [大きに] to come into harmony [和<]’ . . . It means the two deities’ [Izanagi and Izanami] achievement of yin-yang union. This is the harmony of yin and yang and of the ten thousand things. That is waka 和歌.²⁶

Medieval treatises on poetry and the performing arts abound in such tortuous interpretations, but it was not customary to discuss such things under the heading of “bungaku.” The term continued as before to refer to kanshi and to such things as official documents written in kanbun, and it does not appear in connection with writings felt to be peculiarly Japanese. In the Muromachi period, however, it appears in the noh play *Oimatsu* 老松 by Zeami 世阿弥 (1363?-1443?):

Bungaku flourished throughout the land in the reign of the Tang emperor, and flowers therefore bloomed brighter in color and richer in fragrance. Once bungaku had been abandoned, their perfume dwindled and their colors faded. Now, because the plum tree is said to love *bun* 文, it has been dubbed “the *bun*-loving tree” (*kōbunboku* 好文木).

“The Tang emperor” of this legend is usually identified as Wu Di 武帝 or Ai Di 哀帝 of Jin 晋.²⁷ *Oimatsu* is a god play that celebrates the magical power of the pine and the plum in connection with the legend of the great scholar Sugawara no Michizane, and its use of “bungaku” harks back to the most classical Chinese usage.

In Kamakura and Muromachi times, kanshi was the special province of the Gozan 五山 Zen monks of Kyoto and Kamakura. Monks occupied a secure position in this post-Heian world, and it is therefore no wonder, as Emura Hokkai 江村北海 (1713-1788) acknowledged in the mid-

24 Varley 1980, p. 234; *Jinnō shōtōki*, NKBT 87, Iwanami Shoten, 1965, p. 166.

25 Emura Hokkai wrote similarly of Go-Sanjō Tennō 後三条天皇 in his *Nihonshi shi* and lamented the brevity of his reign. See Emura 1991, p. 46.

26 Hino 1983, p. 352, n. 1. The kana preface to *Ryōdo kikigaki* 両度開書 states similarly, “*Yamato uta* are so-called because *yamato* 大和 means ‘greatly to harmonize’”; and “In the name *Yamato*, 大 means the entire sweep of time from antiquity to the present. 和 means the harmony of the age of the gods, which endures until today. It is because it encompasses all things that it is called 大” (Katagiri 1971-1987, pp. 811-12).

27 *Yōkyoku shū* 謡曲集, vol. 1, NKBT 33, Shōgakusan, 1973, p. 101 and n. 24.

Tokugawa period, that its kanshi and kanbun should be known together as “Gozan bungaku.”²⁸

Kamakura and Nanbokuchō Zen monks, especially those of the Gozan temples, went to China quite often, and they were familiar not only with Buddhist texts, but also with the Confucian classics, historical works, and poetry. The Rinzaï monk Chūgon Engetsu 中巖円月 (1300-1375), who laid the foundations of Gozan bungaku, was honored during a visit he made to Yuan China, and after his return he expounded the Confucian philosophy of government to Go-Daigo 後醍醐 Tennō. Such monks also made a concerted effort to import block-printed books of all kinds and founded a flourishing printing industry as well, especially at the Kyoto Gozan temples. They published Confucian and other such works as well as Buddhist writings, thus increasing the number of readers of Chinese books in general. It is also in this period that the Japanese acquired a taste for the Tang poet Du Fu and the Song poet Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036-1101).²⁹

Later on, at the end of the period of internecine wars during which the Zen monks forgot kanshi, and both Japanese poetry and fiction more or less died out, Portuguese missionaries compiled, to assist them in their task, a Japanese-Portuguese dictionary entitled *Nippo jisho* 日葡辞書 (1603). This work contains the following entry for “Bungacu”:

Fumi manabu [to study *bun* 文]; to cultivate a beautiful style for writing books and letters; or, the study of style.³⁰

Testimony such as this might suggest that bungaku had by then parted company with learning (*gakumon*) and come to refer exclusively to “letters” (*bunshō*)—not only kanshi but also writing in Japanese. However, to take this position would be to interpret the word “bungaku” too much in the sense in which “literature” was understood at that time in Europe. In the late sixteenth century, the English word “literature” and its counterparts in other European languages seems to have meant “a beautiful style” above all with respect to Greek or Latin. Considering that, for the *Nippo jisho* compilers, vernacular Portuguese and elegant Latin must have stood in about the same relationship to each other as, for the Japanese, vernacular Japanese and dignified Chinese, it is likely that the “beautiful style” in question refers to kanshi and kanbun.

Moreover, just when *Nippo jisho* defined “bungaku” as having to do with “cultivat[ing] a beautiful style,” the content of the term was about to be reconceived in such a way as to bring it back into closer association with Confucian studies than ever before.

28 SNKBT 65, *Nihonshi shi, Gozandō shiwa*, p. 75. However, Emura Hokkai used this term only once and spoke elsewhere of *Gozan no shigaku* 五山の詩学 (Gozan poetry). It should be clear that Emura did not apply the term *shigaku* 詩学 (study of poetry) to all of kanshi, but distinguished sharply between “bungaku” and “Gozan *shigaku*.” It is customary now to assume that “Gozan literature” means the kanshi and kanbun included under that heading in the sense of linguistic art—in part, perhaps, because in the late Meiji period intellectuals came to hold Zen in high esteem and so revived a term that had been current earlier, in the Tokugawa period. Kamimura Kankō’s 上村觀光 *Gozan bungaku shōshi* 五山文学小史, and the first two volumes of his edited work, *Gozan bungaku zenshū* 五山文学全集, were all three published in Meiji 39 (1906).

29 Murakami Tetsumi 1994, pp. 148-54.

30 *Hōyaku Nippo jisho* 邦訳日葡辞書, Iwanami Shoten, 1980. The same dictionary’s entry for “bungei” gives: “*Fumi no guei*; to cultivate the art of writing beautiful letters [epistolary compositions].”

3.2 Bungaku in the Tokugawa Period, and Consciousness of Genre

3.2.1 The Re-establishment of “Bungaku”

Perhaps it was Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534-1582) who gave the first impetus toward the re-establishment of “bungaku.” After his violent confrontation with Ashikaga Yoshiaki 足利義昭 (1537-1597), during which he set fire to Kyoto, he stated in his “Kyōchū shioki-bumi” 京中仕置文 (1573):

Those deserving of the highest esteem are those who give their utmost to studying the Confucian way and nurture a profound desire to rectify the realm, or those who are loyal, filial, righteous, and constant.³¹

As though to whitewash his own treachery, Nobunaga displayed a will to restore, by Confucian means, order to a society in chaos, and to establish good government. Twenty years later Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1542-1616) invited Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561-1619), a Zen monk turned Confucian scholar, into his service to lecture on *Zhenguan zhengyao* 貞觀政要, a record of conversations between Emperor Taizong 太宗, who founded the three-centuries-long Tang dynasty, and his ministers. Later on, Seika made a Japanese version (*wakun* 和訓) of the *Shisho* 四書 (Four Books), then of the *Gokyo* 五經 (Five Classics) as defined by the great Song Confucian thinker Zhu Xi 朱熹. After moving his capital to Edo, and on Seika’s recommendation, Ieyasu employed Seika’s disciple Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583-1657) to promote Confucian studies and so established the basis for more than 260 years of Tokugawa government. Thereafter the Hayashi family provided the hereditary line of official Confucian scholars.

In this way, “bungaku” became the title for each domain’s official scholar, whose function was to lecture on the classics and to take responsibility for official documents. Professors of Confucian studies in the domain schools, too, were called “bungaku,” although in some cases such Chinese titles as *saishu* 祭酒 were also used.³² This practice ended in the early Meiji period, when the Tokugawa-period domains were abolished and replaced by the modern prefectures. Those who held this title were not necessarily specialists in Neo-Confucian philosophy, since some taught Confucianism in general, as well as “letters,” that is to say, kanshi and kanbun composition.

Confucian scholars of many different kinds emerged in the early Tokugawa period. Nakae Tōju 中江藤樹 (1608-1648) and Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619-1691) studied the Ming Confucianism of Wang Yangming 王陽明. Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1618-1682), who stood in opposition to the official Hayashi-family scholars, moved toward Shinto studies based on Neo-Confucian principles. Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657-1725), a disciple of Kinoshita Jun’an 木下順庵 (1621-1698), served the bakufu and exhibited extraordinary ability in the areas of government and economics. There were also Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢 (1658-1734), who excelled at kanshi, and Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋 (1627-1705), who moved from the teachings of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming

31 From *Tōdai ki* 当代記, vol. 1, p. 17.

32 For “bungaku” as the title of a domain official, *Daigenkai*, *Daikanwa jiten*, and *Nihon kokugo dai-jiten* all cite Emura Hokkai’s preface to *Yōsuikan shū* 邀翠館集.

to a radical critique of them based on the classical texts themselves. Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666-1728), carried all before him, introducing among other things the philological methods of the Ming period and championing the Tang style in kanshi; while such disciples as Dazai Shundai 太宰春台 (1680-1747) and Hattori Nankaku 服部南郭 (1683-1759) carried on after him. Finally, Confucianism influenced other such thinkers as Miura Baien 三浦梅園 (1723-1789), who founded a unique school of logic, and Ishida Baigan 石田梅岩 (1685-1744), who propagated his own style of practical ethics, known as *shingaku* 心学.

Such Confucian thought was at first principally Neo-Confucian in character. The scholars of the Hayashi house, as well as other Neo-Confucian thinkers, followed Zhu Xi, especially in his *Shijingyun xu* 詩經伝序, in devaluing the composition of poetry and in holding that the presence of evil poems in the *Shijing* demonstrates Confucius's wish to warn against evil. Their critique of poetry therefore upheld the principle of "promoting virtue and condemning vice" (*kanzen chōaku* 勸善懲惡).

In his "Kinsei jusha no bungakukan" 近世儒者の文学観, Nakamura Yukihiro described the view of "bungaku" taken by Neo-Confucian thinkers in exactly these terms, and he quoted Hayashi Razan (from *Razan Hayashi Sensei bunshū* 羅山林先生文集) as follows:

Because the Way exists, *bun* 文 exists. In the absence of the Way, there is no *bun*. *Bun* and the Way are one in nature (*ri* 理) but different in manifestation. The Way is the root of *bun*, while *bun* is the branches of the Way. The branches are small and the root is large. Therefore it is solid and firm.

And:

Bun spreads knowledge of the Way; the Way does not spread knowledge of *bun*. Outside of *bun* there is no Way, outside of the Way there is no *bun*. Therefore *bun* is a vessel that accommodates all of the Way.

Nakamura further explained that "the Way" (*michi* 道) refers to the ethical path defined by Neo-Confucianism (in other words, to virtue), and that *bun* means letters (*bunshō*) and broad learning (*hakugaku* 博学). He also stated that these passages by Hayashi Razan are derived from one in *Zhuzi wulei* 朱子語類, a record of Zhu Xi's sayings.³³ The early modern (*kinsei* 近世, Tokugawa period) concept of "bungaku" arose in conformity with Neo-Confucianism.

Nakamura Yukihiro's study of the early modern concept of "bungaku" has remained highly influential, but its discussion of "promoting virtue and condemning vice" contains a fundamental flaw. After quoting the second passage above from Hayashi Razan, Nakamura continued, "Implicit within this *bun* is "bungaku" in the modern sense, still unable to achieve autonomy from its Confucian matrix." Can this really be true? Nakamura continued,

"In the minds of the people of the early modern period, all literary works were

33 Nakamura Yukihiro 1958, p. 3.

divided into two groups, analogous to social classes. The first of these consisted of traditional *bungaku*, which was comprised of poetry and prose in Japanese, as well as poetry and prose imported from China. The second consisted of material that originated in late medieval times and assumed definite form in the early modern period: *haikai*, *kabuki*, *jōruri*, *kana zōshi*, *ukiyo zōshi*, and other new varieties of early modern fiction. For the people of early modern times, the former was “elegant *bungaku*” (*ga bungaku* 雅文学) and the latter “vulgar *bungaku*” (*zoku bungaku* 俗文学).³⁴

This distinction between “elegant” and “vulgar” reflects the social order, and it doubtless existed. However, there was another powerful distinction to take into account: that between the “imported” (foreign) and the native. There was also the distinction between what was “*bungaku*” and what was not.

For early modern Confucianists, the term “*bungaku*” referred consistently to the “letters” (*bunshō*) essential to Confucian studies—in other words, to *kanshi* and *kanbun*. Illustrative examples are those of Itō Jinsai, who in *Dōjimon* 童子問 (a work of his later years) used the word in the sense of learning based on wide reading; and of Ishida Baigan, who in *Tohi mondō* 都鄙問答 used it to refer similarly to broad learning.³⁵ There had existed from early times an idea of poetry that brought both *kanshi* and *waka* together under that heading, but there is no evidence that *waka* was ever seen as belonging to “*bungaku*.” In fact, it is quite impossible that *haikai*, *kabuki* scripts, *ukiyo zōshi*, and so on should ever have been distinguished as members of that class.

Of course, thinkers of the Neo-Confucian enlightenment period did discuss *waka* and tales (*monogatari*). As Nakamura Yukihiko pointed out, Yamazaki Ansai, Fujii Ransai 藤井懶齋 (1628-?), and others called *Genji monogatari* and *Ise monogatari* “excessively licentious and immoral, and lacking in any attempt to condemn vice.” Precedent for such a judgment can be found in *Genji ipponkyō hyōbyaku* 源氏一品経表白, written in the late Heian period by the monk Chōken 澄憲 for the sake of Murasaki Shikibu and her readers, all of whom had fallen into hell. This sort

34 Nakamura Yukihiko 1958, p. 9. Nakamura prefaced his essay by stating that its purpose was to examine the evolution of the idea of “*bungaku*” throughout the early modern period, in the Confucian milieu that constituted the core of the literary world of the time. He then warned that he would not discuss the opinions of Confucian scholars one by one, in detail, but would instead concentrate on their critique of Japanese literature. It is clear from the start that the basis for his discussion is the notion of “Japanese *bungaku*” that took shape in the Meiji period. The discussion is permeated by the idea that “*bungaku*” gradually freed itself from Confucian strictures and then went through the process of modernization. Nakamura saw the “promoting virtue and condemning vice” position taken by early Tokugawa Neo-Confucians as enlightened emancipation from religion; the Genroku emphasis on human feelings (*ninjōronteki bungakukan* 人情論の文学観) as a humanistic spirit of freedom; the Kyōhō stress on elegance and taste (*fūgaronteki bungakukan* 風雅論の文学観) as a romantic and antiquarian aversion to political philosophy and moral virtue; and late Tokugawa ideas of freshness of inspiration (*seishinronteki bungakukan* 清新論の文学観) as liberation of the individual. This view assumes a gradual evolution toward the modern concept of “*bungaku*” and ignores the notion of “*bungaku*” actually current at the time. Another useful reference on the subject is Noguchi Takehiko 1967.

35 Itō Jinsai 1966, p. 80; Ishida Baigan in NKBT 97, pp. 376, 378, 472.

of attitude is based on the doctrine of “wild words and fancy language” (*kyōgen kigo* 狂言綺語), which, despite making a clear, hierarchical distinction between kanshi on the one hand and waka or monogatari on the other, nonetheless lumps them all together under the heading of profane works. However, this represents no more than a Buddhist differentiation between sacred and profane writing. In other words, it suggests no other kind of distinction between different types of works. In the meantime, despite the Neo-Confucian warning that a taste for kanshi amounts to “toying with things and missing what matters” (玩物喪志), this warning did nothing to undermine the concept of “bungaku” itself.

3.2.2 The Dissolution and Re-establishment of “Bungaku”

However, in the Genroku period there emerged a trend that did indeed threaten to undermine the standards of “bungaku.” In the second section (“Ninjōteki bungakukan” 人情的文学観) of his “Kinsei jusha no bungakukan,” Nakamura Yukihiro discussed how *Joshi kun* 女子訓, a work attributed to Kumazawa Banzan, suggests a new emphasis on human feelings. According to *Joshi kun* the key purpose of *Shijing* is no longer a moral one; instead, it is to convey the full truth of human feelings, so that in this domain the reader comes to “know the true from the false.” The Confucian judgment that *The Tale of Genji* is licentious and immoral then denies this great purpose. Thus, Nakamura concluded, “the way [*Joshi kun*] sets *Genji* beside *Shijing* reveals a new trend in the understanding of what is meant by bungaku.”³⁶ However, it is inconceivable that Kumazawa Banzan should have classed *Genji monogatari* with “bungaku.” His statement means only that Confucians criticize *Genji* because they misunderstand *Shijing*.

A matter worth discussing is the tendency seen among Itō Jinsai and his disciples. Nakamura pointed out that they took their criticism of “promoting virtue and condemning vice” further than Kumazawa Banzan; that they saw in *Shijing* a work meant to “perfect the human character in peace and warmth thanks to full understanding of human feelings”; and that Japanese poetry, to the extent that it, too, conveys the truth of human feelings, shares the same nature as poetry in Chinese. Nakamura further drew attention to a passage in *Kogaku Sensei bunshū* 古学先生文集 that says, “Chinese poetry celebrates the vulgar [*zoku* 俗] world”; and to another from *Dōjimon* (fascicle 2), which clearly suggests that poetry, fiction, and drama are all “vulgar.” Therefore, some among Itō Jinsai’s disciples praised Ihara Saikaku, others admired Chikamatsu Monzaemon, and still others favored Chinese vernacular novels—all of which, in Nakamura’s view, manifests the idea that “literature in its entirety gives expression to the emotions.”³⁷

As indicated by the passage already quoted, in his late work *Dōjimon*, Itō Jinsai used the term “bungaku” exclusively in the sense of learning in general; nor can one imagine his disciples calling Saikaku’s *ukiyo zōshi*, Chikamatsu’s *jōruri* scripts, or Chinese vernacular novels “bungaku.” However, it is undeniable that lowering Chinese poetry to join the company of the “vulgar” implied the emergence of a tendency to embrace within a single genre, or category, all verbal art based on familiarity with human feelings. Nakamura called this “an artistic approach meant for life as it is

36 Nakamura Yukihiro 1958, pp. 11-12.

37 Nakamura Yukihiro 1958, pp. 13-14.

actually lived,” centered on “the fundamental nature of what it means to be human.”³⁸

However, it is doubtful that this tendency to break down the hallowed distinction between “elegant” (*ga* 雅) and “vulgar” (*zoku* 俗) could ever have led to the formation of any conception of linguistic art. This is because the “Tokugawa peace” gave rise to an almost unlimited concept of “pastime accomplishments” (*yūgei* 遊芸). As Ueda Akinari 上田秋成 (1734-1809) wrote in his *ukiyo zōshi* work *Shodō kikimimi seken zaru* 諸道聽耳世間猿 (1776),

Talk about pastime accomplishments, I go for them all. Japanese poetry, Chinese poetry, tea, incense, kemari, shamisen, Chinese painting are all on the list. The martial arts are out of the picture, though, and I’ve never once tried sumō.³⁹

The speaker, naturally a samurai, is contrasting in a play of words *yūgei* with *bugei* 武芸 (the military arts). The pastimes he lists are all elegant enough, with the exception of the shamisen, but of course, they are by no means confined to language. Thus the concept of *yūgei* encompasses almost anything, be it kanshi or kanbun, waka, haikai, senryū 川柳, *gesaku* fiction, literary musings, noh, painting, tea, kabuki, jōruri, dance (*buyō* 舞踊), *hauta* 端唄 singing, *shinnai* 新内 ballads, and so on. One would think that there might have arisen from all this a sub-category covering pursuits based on language alone, but words were so intertwined with music and writing so intertwined with painting that a strong motive would have been needed for this to occur. If that motive had existed, a name for the new category would undoubtedly have appeared. However, the learned Nakamura Yukihiko mentioned no candidates, nor was he able to cite a single instance in which the term “bungaku” was used to designate anything but kanshi and kanbun. This strongly suggests that no awareness of language pastimes as a separate category ever emerged.

The inclusion of kanshi in this ever-expanding category of *yūgei* probably means that it had escaped from the confines of Confucian studies. Nakamura stated that during the transitional Kyōhō era (1716-1736), under the eighth shogun Yoshimune 吉宗, “there arose a tendency toward autonomy for the various arts and sciences,” and that there appeared in addition “so-called *bunjin* 文人 (literati), who hung out their shingles as teachers of kanshi and kanbun, as well as aficionados who, under the influence of a craze for all things foreign, enjoyed studying Chinese language and Chinese vernacular literature.”⁴⁰ For such reasons as this, and because of the emphasis that the highly influential school of Ogyū Sorai placed on Chinese letters in general and on elegance of expression in Chinese, Nakamura characterized this period as that of “literature as an elegant pursuit” (*fūgateki bungakukan* 風雅の文学観).

In that period many people were undoubtedly disposed to take pleasure in kanshi. *Tōshisen* 唐詩選 (a late sixteenth-century Chinese anthology of poetry), as edited by Hattori Nankaku, became a best seller and eclipsed the hitherto popular *Santaishi* 三体詩, an anthology of Tang poetry dating from the late Southern Song. *Tōshisen* was enormously popular from the start and came out in a wide variety of editions that are believed to have sold a total of at least 100,000 copies by the late Edo period. Many related publications, such as *Tōshisen wakun* 和訓 (a Japanese translation),

38 Nakamura Yukihiko 1958, p. 17.

39 Ueda Akinari *zenshū*, vol. 7, p. 65.

40 Nakamura Yukihiko 1958, p. 19.

Tōshisen gahon 画本 (illustrated), or *Tōshisen kokujikai* 国字解 (glossed in Japanese) did well too. This was the period when kanshi became widely accessible to the people at large.⁴¹

Nakamura then quoted a passage of Dazai Shundai's *Dokugo* 独語, to the effect that poetry in China and Japan have always been the same, in the sense that they give expression to the fundamental aspects of human nature. On this subject he continued,

To consider Japanese poetry, *Shijing*, and Tang poetry fundamentally the same amounts to claiming that contemporary creative literature and the peculiar excellence of *Shijing* are equal. This idea, which sums up the features of the encyclopedist's cast of mind, provides a solid conceptual foundation for the independence of *bungaku* from Confucian studies.⁴²

He also wrote,

There survived in the Genroku view of *bungaku* a schematic notion that subsumed *bungaku* within the sum of thought (*shisō* 思想) inherited from the middle ages. In Kyōhō times, however, this understanding had changed into the modern schema, according to which the category of *bungaku* subsumes that of thought, however deeply colored that thought might be (in this case) by Confucianism. This is the main basis for the kanshi poet's or the *burjin*'s autonomy from Confucianism.⁴³

Here, the "thought" in question is Buddhism (for the middle ages) and Confucianism (for the Tokugawa period), and the idea that it subsumed "bungaku" suggests the subordinate position of the latter.

The thesis that "bungaku" achieved "autonomy" from Confucianism, or that there emerged a "modern schema" according to which "bungaku" subsumed thought, presupposes (as stated above) that a conception of linguistic art already existed, even if it was long subsumed under the heading of thought. It therefore clearly betrays the influence of modern ideas and cannot be said to conform to the thinking of the period under discussion. In the age of "bungaku as an elegant pursuit"—the position favored above all by Ogyū Sorai and his followers—there did arise a tendency to divorce kanshi from Confucian studies, but that by no means signifies the independence of "bungaku" itself. Why?

Nakamura further stated, concerning the Kyōhō era, that the Genroku rejection of the "vulgar" and its championing of "elegance" (*fūga* 風雅) led to a distinction in "bungaku" between the vulgar and the elegant that was never as clear in any other time.⁴⁴ He also pointed most perceptively to that period's antiquarian taste for the classics. This admiration for elegance followed from the spread of the influence of Ogyū Sorai and his school, and it was always centered on the world of kanshi. At the conceptual level it meant only that within "bungaku," which combined letters

41 Murakami Tetsumi 1994, pp. 148-58, 190-208.

42 Nakamura Yukihiro 1958, pp. 21-22.

43 Nakamura Yukihiro 1958, p. 25.

44 Nakamura Yukihiro 1958, p. 26.

and Confucian studies, there arose a tendency to value the former over the latter. Therefore this tendency was inseparable from the utter contempt felt for everything outside “bungaku,” including many things that from our own standpoint belong to the realm of the language arts: haikai, fiction, kabuki, jōruri, and so on. If anything, it rejects any attempt, such as the one made by Itō Jinsai and his followers in the Genroku era, to include bungaku (kanshi and kanbun) in a single category with other varieties of linguistic art. That is one reason why “bungaku” did not gain independence from Confucianism. The other is what Nakamura called a tendency toward an “encyclopedic frame of mind” (*hyakka zenshoteki na shisōkai* 百科全書的な思想界).

The tendency of all the arts toward independence easily leaves the impression that kanshi broke off from Confucian studies as a separate genre, but in reality it never gave rise to the idea of including kanshi in a single category embracing all other language-based genres—that is to say, to the idea of linguistic art proper. The various genres may increasingly have gone their separate ways, but if any notion bound them together after all, it must have been no more than the exceedingly tenuous one of “pastime accomplishments” as distinguished from “military arts.”

How then, in the period when these changes were affecting the position of kanshi, was the word “bungaku” used by people other than Confucian scholars? In *Endō tsugan* 艶道通鑑 (1715), the first of the entertaining genre known as *dangibon* 談義本, Masuho Zankō 増穂残口 (1655-1742) wrote as follows in the chapter entitled “The Loves of the Gods” (*jingi no koi* 神祇之恋):

It’s a shame the way some people fail all their lives at bungaku, then turn into silverfish and wreak havoc in [Confucian] bookshops.⁴⁵

Endō tsugan deplors the might of Confucianism, which upholds decorum (*rei* 礼) at the expense of loving harmony (*wa* 和); defines such harmony, that is to say, the intimate union of man and woman, as the essence of Japan (*wakoku* 和国); recalls the pleasures of husband and wife; and, championing the intercourse enjoyed by the primordial pair, Izanagi and Izanami, as the root of loving harmony, amusingly discusses love ancient and modern in order to promote Shinto. The far-fetched proposition that male-female union is the essence of Japan goes back to the linked verse master Sōgi, as noted above, and it is hard to tell how seriously the author meant it. However, there is no doubt about the unprecedented vehemence with which Masuho Zankō condemned both Confucianism and Buddhism.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, he supported his claim that male-female union (*shikidō* 色道, “the way of intercourse”) is the foundation of humanity by referring to a passage in *Yijing*.⁴⁷ *Yijing* had tended to be approached in the light of Taoist philosophy ever since the Six Dynasties period in China, and in Japan, anti-Confucian Shinto thinkers easily cited it to buttress their own theories.

Although conceptions of kanshi changed a great deal among Confucian scholars themselves, outside the Confucian world they changed not at all. In fact, it would not be unreasonable to say that the poetic theory and the general literary classicism of the Kyōhō era, favoring as they did elegance of expression, tended to restore “bungaku” to its traditional usage.

⁴⁵ *Kinsei shikidō ron*, p. 222.

⁴⁶ Nakano 1976, p. 413.

⁴⁷ NST 60, p. 210.

3.2.3 History of Poetry (詩史) and Discourses on Poetry (詩話)

In the mid-Tokugawa period Emura Hokkai completed his *Nihonshi shi* 日本詩史 (1771, in five fascicles); *Nihon shisen* 日本詩選 (1774, ten fascicles) and *Nihon shisen zokuhen* 日本詩選続編 (1779, eight fascicles). *Nihonshi shi* is at once a history and a critique of Japanese kanshi and kanshi poets. No doubt Emura Hokkai had Chinese models in mind for some aspects of his work, but there seems to have been no precedent in China for an enterprise combining history with criticism.⁴⁸ The term “bungaku” appears frequently in his pages, often as the title of a domain’s official Confucian scholar. In one instance, however, he lamented the decline of “bungaku” after the Hōgen and Heiji eras (1156-1160) and the counterpart triumph of poetry in Japanese.⁴⁹ Having earlier noted the beginnings of this phenomenon following the death of Go-Sanjō Tennō, he remarked that after Hōgen and Heiji the court seriously lost authority, and “bungaku” went into sharp decline, surviving only as a vestige of what it had once been. Being a Confucian scholar, Emura Hokkai was probably glad to date the decline of Confucianism, kanshi, and kanbun as late as possible. However, the Confucian scholar and court physician Takekawa Kōjun 武川幸順, who wrote the preface to Hokkai’s work, fiercely condemned the decline of both court and bungaku and displayed utter contempt for waka. Emura Hokkai did not have the court access enjoyed by Takekawa Kōjun, but he appears to have shared the latter’s outlook, since he wrote in his work, “Imperial rule and bungaku thrive together.”⁵⁰ The idea that Confucianism supports government and flourishes with it pervades the whole work.

Concerning the Confucian scholars of the early Tokugawa period, Emura observed that “Bungaku passed from [Fujiwara] Seika to Mokuan.⁵¹ The son of Naba Kassho 那波活所 (1595-1648), one of Seika’s chief disciples, Mokuan 木庵 (1611-1684) was the official scholar (bungaku) of the Kii domain. In this case the “bungaku” that passed to him probably refers to *bun* and *gaku*, “letters” and “knowledge of the classics,” since the term in that sense, or similar expressions with the same meaning, occurs elsewhere in Emura’s work. For kanshi and kanbun alone he tended to use such words as *geibun* 芸文 or *bungei* 文芸.

Emura Hokkai’s ideal Confucian scholar combined knowledge of the classics with ability at letters. He called those who leaned toward the former “classics scholars” (*keiju* 経儒) and the more literarily-minded ones “devotees of letters” (*bunshi* 文士).⁵² *Nihonshi shi* covers both, and it displays an attitude sufficiently broad-minded to recognize the kanshi of the Gozan monks (who themselves were often well-versed in Confucian studies). It treats the history of Confucian studies, kanshi, and kanbun in Japan from early times to the author’s own. In that sense it is Japan’s first history of “bungaku” (*bungaku shi* 文学史), although in this case “bungaku” carries the meaning

48 Ōtani 1991, pp. 597-98.

49 SNKBT 65, p. 54. In his “‘Bungaku’ to iu meishō” 「文学」という名称, Kobori Keiichirō 小堀桂一郎 stated, concerning the meaning of “bungaku” before it gained currency as a translation term, that already in the late eighteenth century Emura Hokkai used it (when not referring to a domain official) in almost the same sense as we do today. In reality, however, Emura Hokkai probably referred only to appreciation kanshi for itself, apart from its association with Confucianism.

50 SNKBT 65, p. 83.

51 SNKBT 65, p. 86.

52 SNKBT 65, p. 111.

it had in Emura’s time, rather than the modern one. In this connection it is worth noting that in *Dai Nihon shi* 大日本史, begun in 1657 on the order of Tokugawa Mitsukuni and completed in 1860, the “bungaku den” 文学伝 section covers Confucian studies, kanshi, and kanbun in a very similar way.

The emergence of the full diversity of Confucian trends and the full flowering of kanshi provoked the Kansei prohibition against heretical studies (1780), which for a time imposed at least a superficial Neo-Confucian unanimity. However, under these circumstances study of the classics sank in prestige, with the result that kanshi seems to have flourished even more. From the Bunka and Bunsei eras (1804-1830) and on into Tenpō (1830-1844), the hitherto prevailing antiquarian mood, and the vogue for Tang poetry dating from the time of Ogyū Sorai, changed to interest in the fresher poetry of the Song. There arose the so-called Seirei-ha 生靈派, a school of thought that championed the celebration in kanshi of the human “spirit” (*seirei*), that is to say, of the heaven-bestowed nature inherent in each person; in which it was akin to the romantic movement in Europe. Its leaders were Kan Sazan 菅茶山 (1748-1827) in the Kansai and Kikuchi Gozan 菊池五山 (1769-1849) in Edo. A comic tanka poem (*kyōka* 狂歌) by Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749-1823), citing masters in fields from painting to cooking, credits Gozan with being the city’s leading kanshi poet. Gozan’s *Gozandō shiwa* 五山堂詩話 was especially well known, as confirmed by a joke of the time:

“What’s a good word play on ‘Gozan’?”

“Old biddy [baba 婆].”

“Why?”

“Because an old biddy’s full of *shiwa* [“wrinkles” 皺, “discourse on kanshi” 詩話].”

Shiwa, that is to say, critiques of kanshi and kanshi poets, were printed in large numbers, which shows how popular kanshi had become among the people at large.

Nakamura Yukihiro called this period one that aspired to freshness of inspiration in literature (*seishinronteki bungakukan* 清新論の文学観) and wrote,

The chief article of faith of this school [the Seirei-ha] was the injunction to be true to one’s own inspiration and to avoid following any particular teaching or style.

He concluded,

Thus one sees the literarily-minded person’s self-conscious refusal to be led astray by anything whatsoever arising in the consciousness of actual writers. The kanshi groups of the Bakumatsu period followed each its own path without ever converging again as in the past.⁵³

Elsewhere, men as expert in letters and in painting as Rai San’yō 賴山陽 (1780-1832), the

53 Nakamura Yukihiro 1958, pp. 32-33.

author of *Nihon gaishi* 日本外史, Tanomura Chikuden 田能村竹田 (1777-1835), and Watanabe Kazan 渡辺崋山 (1793-1841) rose to prominence, and the arts and scholarship of Confucianism reached a new level of brilliance. Other such figures to cite are the woman kanshi poet Ema Saikō 江馬細香 (1787-1861) and Nishijima Rankei 西島蘭溪 (1780-1852), who at the age of twenty discussed Tokugawa-period kanshi in his *Shishisai shiwa* 孜孜齋詩話 (ca. 1800). *Shishisai shiwa* mentions a Confucian scholar named Watanabe Shōan 渡辺正庵 (1632-1699) who, in the aftermath of the battle of Sekigahara 関ヶ原 (1600), opened a private, village school in the Kyushu province of Hyūga. In so doing, Rankei uses the word “bungaku” to mean both learning (*gakumon*) and letters (*bunshō*), just as Emura Hokkai had done earlier. Speaking of the desolation apparent everywhere after the recent wars, he continued, “And of course in a remote region like this, the villagers know nothing of bungaku [i.e., of *bun* and of *gaku*]. It was in vain that Shōan daily gave them his instruction.”⁵⁴ Still later, the late Tokugawa Confucian Kaiho Gyoson 海保漁村 (1798-1866) wrote in *Gyoson bunwa* 漁村文話, his outline history of Chinese prose up to Song times, “The way of letters [*bunji* 文辞] and that of government [*chikei* 治経] are fundamentally one.”⁵⁵

The discussion so far has made it clear how confidently one may state that the meaning of “bungaku” remained closely associated with Confucian studies throughout the Tokugawa period. However, in a postscript to his work Gyoson felt obliged to answer this revealing question: “Sir, you have spent your life studying writings on government. How, then, can you now write such a work as this?” As knowledge and practice of kanshi and kanbun spread among the people at large, so too did the assumption that these two were distinct from Confucian studies proper. That is why Gyoson had felt the need to affirm their unity. Thus one glimpses in his work the collapse of the traditional union between Confucian studies and letters, as well as one Confucian’s desire to preserve it.

3.2.4 Consciousness of Genre

Tsuzaka Tōyō 津阪東陽 (1757-1825), of the Tsu domain, was well versed in both political philosophy and Chinese poetry and prose, and from the Kansei era (1789-1801) nearly into Tenpō (1830-1844) he published a wide variety of books on the latter topics. *Yakō yowa* 夜航余話, a work of his later years, deserves particular attention. The first of its two fascicles, written in kanbun intermixed with katakana so as to be readable in Japanese (*kanbun kundokutai* 漢文訓読体), discusses Chinese poetry, emphasizing the qualities of dignity and resonance. The work is an educational essay on kanshi for people unable to read kanbun.

The second fascicle, however, written in Japanese in the customary mix of Chinese characters and hiragana (*wakan konkō buntai* 和漢混交文体), gives appreciations of paired kanshi and waka, and compares them, sometimes unfavorably, with haikai. This part can no longer be classified simply as an essay on kanshi. In the first fascicle the author wrote of haikai: “Being vulgar and frivolous, this pursuit naturally has nothing to do with rites or manners. The way of poetry can have nothing in common with it.”⁵⁶ However, this very statement clearly reveals an intuition that kanshi,

54 SNKBT 65, p. 246.

55 SNKBT 65, p. 462.

56 SNKBT 65, p. 289.

waka, and haikai all belong to a single genre.

In the Genroku era Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694) sought the way of haikai in the traditional values of kanshi and waka. Since renga 連歌 (linked verse) originally involved collective composition of kanshi, it is no wonder that this wish to look back over poetic values hallowed in the past should have prompted the idea that haikai and the older poetry were continuous. Tsuzaka Tōyō himself praised Bashō’s style in the preface he wrote to one of Bashō’s collections.

In Tsuzaka’s time, Yosa Buson 与謝蕪村 (1716-1783) wrote in the preface to *Shundei kushū* 春泥句集 (1777), a haikai collection by Kuroyanagi Shōha 黒柳召波 (1727-1771), “There is no reason to feel poetry [*shi* 詩] and haikai are far apart.” *Shundei kushū* was edited posthumously by Shōha’s son, and Buson published in his preface to it a recreation of a dialogue between himself and Shōha. In it Buson declared, “What impresses me in haikai is the use of vulgar language to transcend the vulgar”; and to Shōha, who was versed in kanshi, he recommended “adopting the tone of kanshi” (*shi o katarubeshi* 詩を語るべし) for that purpose. When Shōha objected that “Kanshi and haikai do not have quite the same goal,” Buson replied that, even in painting, one who aims to eschew vulgarity has no choice but to read suitable books. That is when he remarked, “There is no reason to feel poetry and haikai are far apart.” Shōha understood immediately.⁵⁷

All this shows that in the early nineteenth century kanshi and haikai were still generally seen as constituting different worlds, but that at the same time there had already emerged a tendency to treat them as belonging to the same genre.⁵⁸ Even some Confucian scholars expert in the classics agreed, as *Yakō yowa* shows. This attitude served as a receptor when the European concept of “poetry” or “poésie” was introduced into Japan.

Nakamura Yukihiko wrote in his section on freshness of inspiration in *bungaku* that the taste of Chinese literati, as well as criticism of it, became widely known in Japan during the Kyōhō era. He discerned behind the way Confucian-educated intellectuals were beginning to favor vulgar “*bungaku*” and to write such *gesaku* works as *sharebon* 洒落本, *kibyōshi* 黄表紙, and early *yomihon* 読本, a breakdown of the distinction between “elegant” and “vulgar.” “The *gesaku* category stilled existed,” he wrote, “but the taste for the pleasures of the solitary eccentric brought it to a higher level, and the distinction between higher writing and lower writing tended inevitably to fade away.” The Confucian scholar Seita Tansō 清田儋叟 (1721-1785) critiqued *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸伝 and Chinese criticism of it, *Genji monogatari*, and the works of Bashō, thus (according to Nakamura) demonstrating that, for him, “*Bungaku* seems already to have embraced both China and Japan, both ancient and modern.” Nakamura then went on to remark, “Rather than claim that the pervasive Tokugawa-period distinction between higher and lower writing dissolved, it would be truer to say that this distinction was refashioned into something approaching the modern one between “pure” and “popular” literature.⁵⁹

It is quite true that there was a strong tendency among late Tokugawa-period Confucians toward interest in the “vulgar,” and there is no doubt that, as in the case of Buson, one notes the emergence of a fusion between “elegant” and “vulgar,” or even of a reversal of their relationship. The infinitely accommodating category of “pastime accomplishments” suggests this. It is no

57 [*Yosa*] *Buson zenshū* 蕪村全集, vol. 4, p. 174.

58 Ibi 1991, p. 647.

59 Nakamura Yukihiko 1958, pp. 33-35.

wonder that “bungaku” in this period should already have come to embrace both China and Japan, both ancient and modern.

However, the traditional concept of “bungaku” as including the classics, kanshi, and kanbun lived on among Confucian scholars. For them, only the elegance transmitted from China qualified as “bungaku.” Even if waka and Heian-period monogatari could conceivably be counted as belonging to the same world, the conception of “bungaku” did not so thoroughly collapse as to include that of countless vulgar pastimes. Even if one can find in this period the first signs of the notion of linguistic art, the established order of “elegant” and “vulgar,” and the distinction between Chinese or native, appear still to have governed the proper definition of “bungaku.” *Gesaku* fiction remained *gesaku* and no more. If the “elegant” and “vulgar” order (*gazoku no chitsujo* 雅俗の秩序) was really refashioned into something approaching the modern distinction between “pure” and “popular” literature, this could only have happened on the basis of an established idea of linguistic art. Nakamura’s thesis is completely anachronistic.

What deserves attention instead is the idea, encouraged by the increasing confusion between “elegant” and “vulgar,” and even their inversion, that kanshi, waka, and haikai all belonged together. When seen in the light of the later distinctions between genres, this idea appears to mark and to encourage their first beginnings.

During the Tokugawa period, an awareness of the *shōsetsu* as a genre was in the process of coalescing. An example can be found in Kyokutei Bakin’s 曲亭馬琴 *Kinsei mono no hon Edo sakusha burui* 近世物之本江戸作者部類 (1834). Bakin collected old fantasy tales (*otogi-banashi* 御伽噺), but the work in question dates from the time when he was writing *Nansō Satomi hakken-den* 南総里見八犬伝 (1814-42), and the *kinsei* of its title designates recent times, that is to say, the late Tokugawa period. Bakin divided Edo *gesaku* fiction into *akahon* 赤本, *sharebon*, *chūhon* 中本, and *yomihon*, and he critiqued the author and the style of each example. In the preface to the second fascicle he wrote, “*Akahon*, *sharebon*, *chūhon*, and *yomihon* are all different, but they are all *gesaku*.”⁶⁰

In this case, the term *akahon* covers a wide assortment including *akahon*, *kurohon* 黒本, *aohon* 青本, *kibyōshi* 黄表紙, *gōkan* 合巻, and so on—works that progressed from picture books for children up to small-format illustrated books for adults. According to Kimura Miyogo in the comments appended to his edition of *Kinsei mono no hon Edo sakusha burui*, Bakin was justified in including them under a single heading by the fact that the wholesale book distributors had long been doing the same thing.⁶¹ Let us see what Kimura made of Bakin’s ideas of genre.

Bakin’s work on *Kinsei mono no hon Edo sakusha burui* began when Kimura Mokurō 木村黙老 (1774-1856), an elder of the Takamatsu domain residence in Edo, asked him to complete whatever might be missing from a *Wakan shōsetsu mukuroku* 和漢小説目録 that Mokurō had compiled. Mokurō also asked him to write a work to be entitled *Kinrai gesakusha hentai enkaku* 近来戯作者変態沿革. The expression *hentai enkaku* refers to an outline history. Bakin divided the book he wrote into two major sections, one on Japan (“*Yomihon ruisho meishō*” 読本類書名抄) and one on China (“*Tōzan haishi ruisho mei*” 唐山稗史類書名). He mentioned this division

60 Kimura Miyogo 1971, p. 122.

61 Kimura Miyogo 1971, p. 259.

in his diary for the middle of the first month of Tenpō 5 (1834).

Bakin’s remarks suggest that China and Japan both shared the term *shōsetsu* (Ch. *xiaoshuo*), and that this term was intelligible in the atmosphere of Bakin’s time. As representative of the *shōsetsu*, Bakin cited *baishi* 稗史 (Jp. *haishi*) in China and (naturally enough for a *yomihon* author)—*yomihon* in Japan. In the finished work the term *mono no hon* 物之本 refers to *shōsetsu*-like works, as Bakin explained when he wrote that in recent years it had come into use for a monogatari-like work.⁶² No doubt Bakin’s pride as a *yomihon* author influenced his opinion, but his awareness of continuity between monogatari and *yomihon* is nonetheless clear. It is true that Bakin wrote harsh words about Ihara Saikaku, but it is also true that on a trip to Osaka he visited Saikaku’s grave. Naturally, he was also aware of early Tokugawa-period *ukiyo zōshi*. If he confined his list to works produced in Edo, that is because Edo was his home ground.

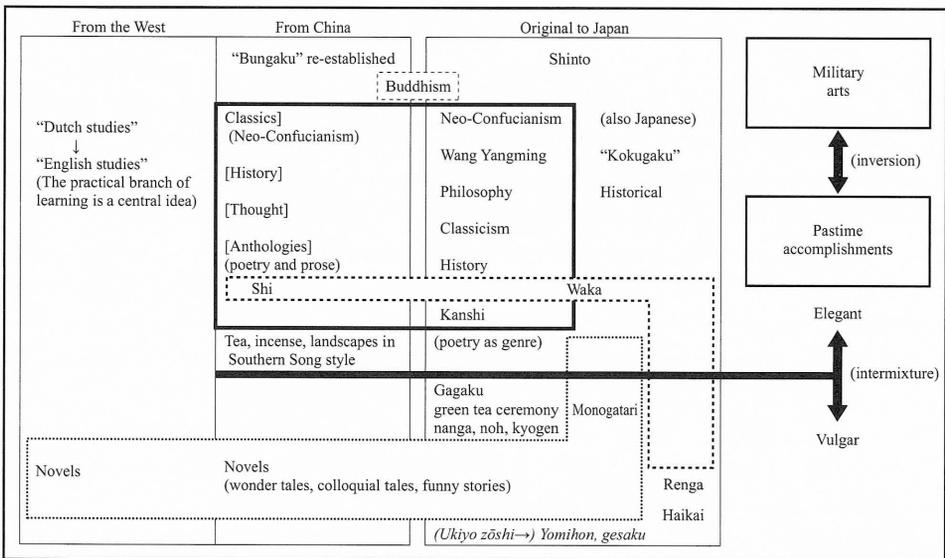


Figure 7 The Position of “Bungaku” in the Late Tokugawa Period

Thus late Tokugawa-period Edo produced something more than a simple critique of works and authors: despite the limited period and territory it covers, something more akin to a concerted history of the *shōsetsu*. The idea of the *shōsetsu* assumed by this work, however vague, must also have been fairly widespread at the time, and it functioned as a receptor for the European idea of the “novel,” or *roman*, when this idea entered Japan just after the Meiji Restoration. The term *shōsetsu* then came into widespread use.

Judging from the list of works included in the first fascicle, *Kinsei mono no hon Edo sakusha burui* was originally meant to consist of four fascicles, of which the third would be devoted to Edo *jōruri* playwrights and the fourth—a “supplement” (*furoku* 付録)—to *ukiyo-e* artists, perhaps because many of these also wrote the texts for *akahon*. Concerning the playwrights, Bakin

62 Kimura Miyogo 1971, p. 252.

complained that despite the quality of their work, their names were never associated with the titles of their plays. He appears to have wanted this practice changed to conform to that current for *yomihon* and other *gesaku* works, as well as kabuki scripts. Presumably his intended third fascicle acknowledged the monogatari-like character of jōruri scripts, while his planned supplement for ukiyo-e artists took into account the mix of media and genres characteristic of the time.

In *Kinsei mono no hon Edo sakusha burui*, many *akahon* authors also appear as the authors of *sharebon* and *chūhon*. Perhaps this phenomenon does not quite amount to a mixture of genres, but it is also true that the kabuki playwright Tsuruya Nanboku IV 鶴屋南北 (1755-1829) is also listed as an *akahon* author. With respect to kabuki, there had existed since the Genroku era publications known as “illustrated theater scripts” (*e-iri kyōgen-bon* 絵入り狂言本) that gave the complete script of the play as first performed. Thereafter it was thanks to these books that most spectators acquainted themselves with the play as a whole, when they went to the theater. Conversely, a number of Bakin’s *yomihon* were turned into kabuki plays. Needless to say, kabuki and jōruri scripts acted as receptors for the European notion of “drama” when it entered Japan in the early Meiji period.

In short, the European idea of linguistic art, as a single category embracing poetry, drama, and the novel, did not arise in Japan. However, the conditions for accepting it were more or less in place. The tendency for even kanshi to escape from Confucian control, and for “pastime accomplishments” to be seen as a single genre, facilitated establishing connections with various smaller genres and constituting what might be called median ones. This phenomenon appears to signify that an awareness of genres corresponding to poetry, drama, and fiction took gradual shape throughout the Tokugawa period. As for criticism, it was represented by annotation of Confucian and Buddhist classics, treatises on poetry and monogatari, and other sorts of critical essays on a wide variety of subjects.

However, during this period Confucian letters and kanshi acquired a concerted history of their own (Emura Hokkai’s *Nihonshi shi*). It is true that chronologies of kabuki history were compiled in the late Tokugawa period, but these excluded *noh*, *kyōgen*, and *jōruri*.

One might object that no concerted history of any other genre appeared because no one like Emura Hokkai emerged to undertake the task. However, there is a reason for that. Only kanshi and *kanbun* could be seen as constituting the “letters” (*bunshō*), that is to say, the “*bungaku*” associated with Confucianism. Other, lesser genres might fragment and then come together again, but the resulting complex mixture of genres kept the boundaries of the mix fluid, so that no broad awareness of anything corresponding to European-style linguistic art ever emerged. Moreover, all these other genres remained lower in standing than kanshi, with the result that any proper history of them would have seemed like work for a mere dilettante. (See Figure 7.)

3.3 Cultural Nationalism in the Tokugawa Period

3.3.1 Aspects of Cultural Nationalism

Any consideration of the way in which the European concept of “literature” was received in Japan must take into account the accompanying notion of “national literature” and the degree to

which the ground was already prepared for it, too, in Japan. We have already noted the existence of Emura Hokkai's *Nihonshi shi*. In its background there no doubt lay, already formed, a degree of cultural nationalism among Tokugawa-period Confucians—one quite capable of receiving its Western counterpart.

A now almost forgotten but once famous anecdote concerns the early Tokugawa Confucian scholar Yamazaki Ansai. Ansai asked his disciples, “What would you do if Confucius came from China at the head of a great army, with Mencius as his deputy, to attack Japan?” When the disciples had no reply he supplied his own answer: “It would be the subject's duty to take Confucius prisoner and to cut Mencius down. That is the way of Confucius and Mencius.” Ansai turned to Shinto studies based on Neo-Confucianism. In the same early Tokugawa period, Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行 (1622-1685) wrote that the “rites” and “the way of the sage” were more alive in Japan than in China.⁶³

Elsewhere, the Wang Yangming scholar Kumazawa Banzan criticized Neo-Confucian moralistic interpretations, holding instead that the poetry of *Shijing* respects genuine human feelings. Meanwhile Itō Jinsai, who had turned from Neo-Confucianism to ancient studies (*kogaku* 古学), and Ogyū Sorai, who for anti-Neo-Confucian reasons introduced to Japan the philological methods of the Ming, taught that the poetry of both China and Japan had always given expression to human feelings. Sorai's disciple Dazai Shundai wrote, “Kanshi and waka are both the same in that they are at one in singing of human nature.”⁶⁴ Perhaps these men can be said to have championed the universality of Confucianism. From the standpoint of cultural nationalism their scholarship was condemned as adulation of China, and their reverence for the classics was dismissed as mere antiquarianism. Thus there clearly existed in the Tokugawa period thinkers who, while revering Confucianism, criticized universalism and insisted on Japanese uniqueness. This trend of thought had complex consequences.

As for Shinto, Kitabatake Chikafusa posited as a “fact” in his *Jinnō shōtōki*, during the fourteenth-century conflict between the Northern and Southern courts, the incontestable continuity of the imperial line from the age of the gods on down; and on that basis he upheld the legitimacy of the southern court. Mid-Tokugawa Shinto thought appealed to this “fact” to argue Japan's superiority over China, where dynasties had repeatedly come and gone. Matsuoka Obuchi 松岡雄淵 (1701-1783) made that claim in his *Shintō gakusoku Yamato-damashii* 神道学則日本魂 (1733). Still, pre-*kokugaku* 国学 Shinto remained under strong Confucian influence, Matsuoka himself declaring that the unbroken continuity of the imperial line was in accordance with the teaching of *Zongyong* 中庸 (The Mean). In other words, the argument's foundation was still to be found in Confucian writings.⁶⁵

In the Tokugawa period Keichū 契沖 (1640-1701) initiated serious study of *Man'yōshū* and *Kokinshū*. He was succeeded by Kamo no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵 (1697-1769), whose work brought *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* new prominence and gave rise to the school of thought known as *kokugaku*. At the same time, Masuho Zankō held in his *Endō tsugan* that Shinto was founded neither on Confucianism nor on Buddhism, but instead on the logic of “harmony,” that is to say, the “way of

63 “Takkyō dōmon” 謫居童問, in *Yamaga Sokō zenshū*, vol. 12, p. 335.

64 Hino 1983, p. 252, n. 2.

65 Hino 1983, p. 414, n. 1.

love” between men and women. The strength of nationalism among the people of the Genroku era can be gauged by the popularity of Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s jōruri play *Kokusen ’ya kassen* 国性爺合戦 (The Battles of Coxinga, 1715). However, this work probably also appealed to popular taste for exoticism featuring as it does a half-Japanese, half-Chinese hero who accomplishes mighty feats in China.

Nakamura Yukihiko described the Genroku view of *bungaku* as centered on human feelings, which indeed constituted Itō Jinsai’s ethical standard. Hattori Nankaku, an anti-Neo-Confucian scholar in the school of Ogyū Sorai, wrote that the untempered emotions of women and children properly evoked the poet’s sympathy and lent elegance to the arts.⁶⁶ Meanwhile Hori Keizan 堀景山 (1688-1757), a teacher of Motoori Norinaga, held that “The greatest and most urgent of all human feelings is the desire between a man and a woman.”⁶⁷ Needless to say, however, for the Neo-Confucian Keizan this desire should exist only between husband and wife. Keizan agreed with the sages, who held it to be the most awesome and dangerous of all feelings. According to Hino Tatsuo, the keynote of Tokugawa-period popular culture was an appeal to the *mono no aware* (pathos) of erotic love and love between parent and child.

Against the background—Confucian emphasis on human feelings, Shinto championing of sexual love, and a rising tide of nationalism—there appeared a trend of thought closely resembling the modern European conception of linguistic art and apparently calling for the liberation of eros. It was different from the Western idea of “belles lettres” or “polite literature,” and it did not reject popular literary culture. Motoori Norinaga’s *Isonokami no sasamegoto* 石上私淑言 (1763) begins as follows, in answer to the question, “What is *uta* 歌 [song, poetry in Japanese]?”

Broadly speaking, it means first the thirty-one syllable verse form [tanka 短歌], but it also includes *kagura* songs 神楽歌, *saibara* 催馬楽, linked verse 連歌, *imayō* 今様, *fūzoku* 風俗, and the sung sections of *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 and of *noh* plays, as well as our modern *kyōka* 狂歌, *haikai* 俳諧, *kouta* 小歌, *jōruri* 浄瑠璃, *warabe-uta* 童べうた (children’s songs), *hayari-uta* はやり歌 (popular songs), *usuzuki-uta* 臼づき歌 (rice-pounding songs), and *kobiki-uta* 木びき歌 (log-sawing songs). Indeed anything sung, with words nicely arranged in pattern and rhythm, is *uta*. Among all these varieties there is a distinction to be made between elegant and vulgar, but every single one of them is *uta*.⁶⁸

Kagura songs were those sung during Shinto rites at court, while *saibara* and *fūzoku* were folksongs adopted into the musical repertoire of the aristocracy. As Norinaga explained a little later in the same text, he included *Heike monogatari*, *noh*, and *jōruri* because of the musical character of their delivery. His statement implies a clear awareness of *uta* as a genre. Its defining characteristics are that it is “sung, with words nicely arranged in pattern and rhythm,” and that the words generally follow the 5-7-5 syllable pattern, which Norinaga called a “natural wonder” (*jinen no myō* 自然

66 Hino 1983, p. 46, n. 1; p. 202, n. 1.

67 Hino 1983, p. 83, n. 8; p. 140, n. 5. Nakamura Yukihiko, too, (“Kinsei jusha no bungakukan,” p. 28) observed that Keizan’s position announced Motoori Norinaga’s view of *mono no aware*.

68 Hino 1983, p. 251.

の妙).⁶⁹ This is the sort of thing, beyond proof or logic, to which Norinaga attributed the highest value. He wrote, “Poetry [*shiika* 詩歌] is the way in which the afflicted heart gives expression to sorrow.”⁷⁰ One struck by pathos draws out his words of lament, and when these are given rhythm they naturally follow the 5-7-5 pattern.

For “give expression” (to sorrow) Norinaga employed the verb *nagamu* 詠む, which he understood to mean “draw out the voice.” To draw out the voice in a consecutive utterance is thus to produce *uta*; and Norinaga’s use of the term *shiika* in this definition suggests that he meant to include Chinese poetry as well. Thus he echoed the definitions of poetry given in such ancient Chinese texts as *Shujing* and *Li*. In his case, however, he was arguing the superiority of Japanese poetry over Chinese, on the grounds that “one finds deep in the human heart” “a great many frail, womanish feelings,”⁷¹ the direct expression of which the Chinese Confucian tradition, particularly the Neo-Confucian insistence on “promoting virtue and condemning vice,” inevitably distorted and denatured. No doubt he was protesting against the Neo-Confucian warning that indulgence in composing poetry amounted to “toying with things and missing what matters.” At any rate he clearly championed, rather than government and morality, recognition of the independent value of natural human feelings. It is as though, in him, modern Western artistic ideals, complete with their baggage of cultural nationalism, had spontaneously emerged in Japan. But is this really so?

3.3.2 The Thought of Motoori Norinaga

Even before *Isonokami no sasamegoto*, Norinaga had already reacted in his *Shibun yōryō* 紫文要領 (1763) against the repression, through education, of the “true feelings” (*kokoro no mama* 心のまま) that are the whole point of poetry and monogatari. He wrote,

Since Confucianism and Buddhism are dedicated to giving people instruction and guidance, they often issue stern warnings that violate human feelings, considering in many respects that to act in accordance with one’s heart is bad and that to pursue practice by suppressing one’s feelings is good. Monogatari are not meant to offer that sort of instruction and have nothing to do with good and evil as defined by Confucianism and Buddhism. In them the only good is to be in accord with human feelings, and the only evil is to clash with them.⁷²

And again,

Confucianism stands on its own position, and so, too, does Buddhism. Likewise monogatari stand on what is proper to them. To judge one by the standards of the other is absurd. *Uta* and monogatari are to be discussed in terms of what is proper

69 Hino 1983, p. 255.

70 Hino 1983, p. 412.

71 Hino 1983, p. 408.

72 Hino 1983, p. 83.

to each.⁷³

Human feelings, not moral instruction, are proper to waka and monogatari. Norinaga leaves no doubt that he wishes to draw a sharp line between government and morality on the one hand, and waka and monogatari on the other. He also suggests a clear distinction between *uta*, which express feeling in a voiced pattern of words, and monogatari, which convey true feelings through invented situations. And as the most urgent and poignant of all feelings—of all experiences of pathos (*mono no aware*)—*Shibun yōryō* proposes illicit love.

Thus there is no deeper experience of *mono no aware* than that caused by love. In the “Kashiwagi” chapter of *Genji monogatari*, Kashiwagi, already ill because of [his love for] Onna Sannomiya, is near death when he sends her this poem:

When the end has come, and from my smoldering pyre smoke rises at last,
I know this undying flame even then will burn for you.

She replies:

I would rise with you, yes, and vanish forever, that your smoke and mine
might decide which one of us burns with the greater sorrows.

This one, among all the loves evoked by this monogatari, is the most profoundly affecting . . . Thus anyone, however chaste, who knows *mono no aware* will now and again experience feelings difficult to endure . . . Since erotic desire is impossible for anyone to avoid completely, the cultivated person who knows what it means will not severely condemn it in others. It is the boor who will do that.⁷⁴

This is bold advocacy for the liberation of eros in opposition to morality. However, we have already seen that it is not exclusively Norinaga’s invention. The interpretation of *Genji monogatari* as a manifestation of intense human feeling, and the attribution of value to that feeling, is normally held to have originated in Kumazawa Banzan’s *Joshi kun* 女子訓 and *Genji monogatari shō* 源氏物語抄, and to have received clear expression in Keichū’s *Genchū shūi* 源註拾遺 (1696). Norinaga, who inherited this position, went a step further by placing the greatest emphasis on illicit love, thus celebrating a liberated eros over morality. However, this is only an appearance. After repeating his position Norinaga concluded,

I do not intend to praise erotic love as something wonderful. What I am praising is experience of *mono no aware* . . . I do not praise Kashiwagi for having died of love.

73 Hino 1983, p. 240.

74 Hino 1983, pp. 147-49. The translations of the poems are from Royall Tyler, tr., *The Tale of Genji*, 2001, pp. 676-77.

I feel compassion for sorrow deep enough to cause a man's death.⁷⁵

What Norinaga praised is therefore not love itself. It was instead the suffering and depth of feeling associated with love that for him were beautiful. He repeated this position in *Isonokami no sasamegoto*:

One who has his heart set on doing something forbidden tries to restrain himself, knowing that he must not. Then his emotions become pent-up and fester within him until his position becomes impossible; and that is when the most deeply moving *uta* is likely to emerge. . . . It is the function of teaching, for those who govern, to prohibit whatever is wrong, and illicit love is therefore profoundly to be shunned. However, *uta* has nothing to do with that teaching. Its essence being *mono no aware*, it follows an entirely different path, so that right and wrong are no longer an admissible standard for discussing it. This does not mean that one then praises wrong conduct as right. One simply acknowledges the emotional force of the resulting poem.⁷⁶

Norinaga's insistence on recognizing, in the beauty of feeling expressed in poetry and monogatari, a value utterly different from that of government and morality, might conceivably be taken as a declaration of independence for the literary arts. It could also be interpreted as a radical severing of any relationship between poetry and monogatari on the one hand, and government and morality on the other.

However, that would be inaccurate. The tendency for kanshi to part company with Confucian studies had already become apparent in the school of Ogyū Sorai, and it meant nothing more than a shift in the center of gravity of “bungaku,” in the sense in which the term was then current. Norinaga's opposition of human feelings, as expressed in poetry and monogatari, to the Confucian and Buddhist moral wisdom of China, was by no means a declaration of independence for the literary arts. His cultural nationalism, which sought the foundation of Confucianism and Buddhism in Shinto, also sought the root of government and morality in waka, which, properly speaking, should be quite distinct from both. He wrote in *Isonokami no sasamegoto*:

Our land, being the land of Amaterasu Ōmikami, is beautiful and wondrous, superior to all others. Its inhabitants' deeds and words are therefore honest and graceful, and the realm is secure and at peace. For that reason it suffers no such frequent troubles as those that afflict others.

The [Japanese] gods are different in nature from the buddhas or sages of other lands, and they are not to be thought of in any commonly accepted way. The mind of the gods cannot be fathomed by the human mind, either for good or for evil. All things between heaven and earth issue from this mind and are the work of the gods. The gods therefore are not as humans imagine them to be, and they differ completely,

75 Hino 1983, pp. 159-160.

76 Hino 1983, pp. 425-26.

in a great many ways, from what is taught in Chinese books.⁷⁷

Norinaga's claim that the gods are, as it were, unknowable,⁷⁸ and his illusions concerning the origins of "our land," reject the "frequent troubles" that afflict other lands, especially China, together with all that is "taught in Chinese books," and are intended to turn Japanese *mono no aware* into an absolute. According to Norinaga, China and Japan were once the same. The poetry of *Shijing* "differs not at all from the *uta* of our land. This is quite natural, since the human heart moves everywhere in the same ways."⁷⁹ Thus Norinaga agrees with Kumazawa Banzan, Itō Jinsai, and Ogyū Sorai that the poems of *Shijing* are naive expressions of feeling. However, he then goes a step further to claim that Japanese *uta* were originally the same—in fact, that although Japanese poetic expression has changed since then, Japanese poetry, unlike the poetry of China, has never become contaminated by "that officious teaching" (*sakashidachitaru oshie* 賢しだちたる教へ).⁸⁰ Norinaga's position on this subject is as baseless as his ideas concerning the origins of "our land."

Next, Norinaga begins to discourse even on the moral efficacy of *uta*. *Uta* do not preach from the outside but bring the listener to understanding from within, so that people "come to grasp every truth and understand things in depth." That is what makes *uta* precious, in that they "move both gods and humans."⁸¹ As Hino Tatsuo perceptively observed, what mattered for Norinaga was therefore not to sing actual, modern feelings, contaminated as these were by admixtures of Confucian and Buddhist thinking, but to return to the thoughts and feelings of antiquity, even at the cost of misrepresenting one's real thoughts and feelings in the present. Such was the foundation of Norinaga's criticism.⁸²

Isonokami no sasamegoto and *Shibun yōryō* are of a piece in the sense that Norinaga rejected in them all such foreign teachings as Confucianism and Buddhism. He championed instead the expression of genuine feeling on the basis of his faith in the age of the gods and of the groundless belief that the spirit of that age was latent in *waka*. To read *Shibun yōryō* as a declaration of the independence of "bungaku" from morality (*dōtoku* 道德) requires an assumption that Confucianism and Buddhism represent morality and that *Genji monogatari* is literature. It is probably more accurate to gather that what mattered for Norinaga was the truth of the feelings of the people of ancient times, continuous as these feelings were with those experienced in the age of the gods. In Norinaga's time there was indeed no such thing as a concept of linguistic art.⁸³

77 Hino 1983, p. 414, pp. 462-63.

78 Hino Tatsuo suggested that Norinaga derived his critique of Neo-Confucianism and his view that the gods are unknowable ultimately from Ogyū Sorai (Hino 1983, p. 462, n. 1).

79 Hino 1983, pp. 443-44. Hino saw here the influence of Ogyū Sorai's reading of the *Songs*.

80 Hino 1983, p. 463.

81 Hino 1983, p. 454.

82 Hino 1983, p. 551. Nakamura Yukihiko wrote that the "archaism and longing for the spirit of the past" visible in Kamo no Mabuchi and Motoori Norinaga could properly be called "classicism" (*ko-tenshugi* 古典主義) ("Kinsei jusha no bungakukan," p. 26).

83 Hino Tatsuo observed that as Norinaga's criticism of Confucianism grew more severe, he abandoned in *Isonokami no sasamegoto* the apparent declaration of independence for *bungaku* that appears in *Shibun yōryō* (*Motoori Norinaga shū*, pp. 534-35). However, it can hardly be said that the young Norinaga, either, had any idea of an opposition between government and morality, and linguistic

As Hino Tatsuo pointed out, the idea that Japan’s unique tradition has lived on in waka since the age of the gods was shared, almost contemporaneously, by Motoori Norinaga in *Isonokami no sasamegoto* and by Kamo no Mabuchi in *Kai kō* 歌意考 (1764). This idea is based on four propositions.

- (1) Waka represents a poetic form unique to Japan.
- (2) Waka poems appear in the Japanese myths.
- (3) Waka “use the natural sounds of our land, without any admixture of Chinese words” (Kada no Arimaro 荷田在満 in *Kokka hachiron* 国家八論, 1742).
- (4) There runs through waka the spirit of reverence for the ancient language.⁸⁴

Among these, (1) and (2) are undeniable. With respect to (3), however, regional differences in pronunciation suggest that the idea of a single pronunciation peculiar to Japan is untenable; besides which pronunciation evolved a great deal in antiquity as well, until the current fifty sounds were reached in the eighth century. Regarding (4), it is clear that the sounds and sentiments of waka certainly did not pass unchanged from ancient times to the Tokugawa present. After all, the techniques and aesthetic principles of waka took shape over a long period, from early times through the middle ages, in dialogue with those governing Chinese poetry itself. Moreover, waka contains many Buddhist concepts and lexical items in translated form. In short, item (4) represents a newly formed “tradition.” Norinaga’s thought is the product of a period that gave a new meaning to the Japanese “age of the gods.”

Norinaga gave even stronger expression to nationalism in his *Naobi no mitama* 直毘靈 (1771), *Tamakushige* 玉くしげ (1789), and *Kojiki den* 古事記伝 (1764-98). In *Tamakushige* he wrote, “It is Amaterasu Ōmikami who rules heaven, therefore in all the cosmos there is none who can stand beside her”; and, “No country, if not illumined by this great deity, can stand for a single hour or day.”⁸⁵

3.3.3 “Bungaku” in the Years Leading Up to the Meiji Restoration

From the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries, study of Western knowledge—especially medicine, but also astronomy, natural history, navigation, military technology, and so on—flourished increasingly under the title of *rangaku* 蘭学 (Dutch studies). Many Confucian scholars not only took up such studies themselves, but even abandoned Confucianism for them. However, from the Tenpō era (1830-1844) on into the last years of the Tokugawa regime (the Bakumatsu period), a growing sense of crisis was created by the power of the foreign countries that

art. That interpretation, like Nakamura Yukihiko’s contention that the shift in the center of gravity of “bungaku” toward kanshi represents the independence of literature from thought, is possible only under the influence of the modern concept of “literature.”

84 Hino 1983, p. 552, n. 2.

85 Motoori Norinaga *zenshū*, vol. 8, pp. 310-311. Norinaga devoted his *Shinreki fushinkō ben* 真曆不審考弁 to proving the superiority of the Japanese calendar over the Chinese and also the Dutch. However, his general attitude toward Dutch studies remains unknown.

were demanding Japan open its doors to the world. The British defeat of China in the Opium War (1840-1842) especially shocked the warrior class. The “Tokugawa peace” collapsed, and the time for negotiations at last arrived.

The *kokugaku* movement gave rise to the idiosyncratic Shinto thought of Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776-1843), who adopted aspects of Christian teaching, and for whom the turmoil of the times gained a considerable following. In fact, every sort of Shinto thought flourished. So great was the momentum of this trend that it forced widespread reform of village festivals, originally established throughout Japan by the mountain ascetics (*shugenja* 修験者) of the middle ages, in order to bring them into conformity with ancient Shinto practice.

At the same time, both streams of Neo-Confucianism (Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming) flourished among the warrior class, so much so that one feature of the Bakumatsu period was the rising fervor represented by the term *shisei* 至誠 (“profound sincerity”).⁸⁶ This fervor manifested itself in various ways. One example is Watanabe Kazan, who was in touch with *rangaku* scholars and who himself studied conditions in Western countries. Kazan was jailed in 1839 for his opposition to the tide of “expel the barbarians” sentiment (*jōi ron* 攘夷論). As a student of Wang Yangming thought, he deeply lamented the state of Japan and revered purity of conduct (*sessō* 節操). In contrast, the Mito 水戸 scholar Fujita Tōko 藤田東湖 (1806-1855), a well-known partisan of the movement to “revere the emperor and expel the barbarians” (*sonnō jōi* 尊王攘夷), published in 1845 a kanshi collection in which he championed Japan as “the land of the gods” and celebrated loyalty and patriotism as the way “profound sincerity,” which he held to be continuous with the true spirit of the cosmos. Meanwhile, Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠 (1809-1869) of Kumamoto wrote in *Shōzan kankyo zatsushi* 沼山閑居雜詩 (ca. 1857), “Although the Three Teachings [Confucianism, Buddhism, Shinto] are available to all, they do nothing to unite people’s hearts. Shinto and Buddhism are empty talk, while Confucianism has fallen into mere literary art (*bungei*) and has nothing to do with government or genuine teaching.”⁸⁷ In this case, *bungei* stands in opposition to *bugei* 武芸 (the military arts) and clearly designates kanshi, to which, according to Shōnan, Confucian scholars devote far too much time. Shōnan was not alone in deploring this phenomenon, since the same criticism was widespread among those who became political leaders at the time of the Restoration.⁸⁸

The following discussion of “bungaku” dates from roughly that period. The participants are Tamamushi Sadayū 玉虫左太夫, of Sendai domain, and Li Bang 麗邦 (Jp. Reihō), the Chinese proprietor of a medicine shop in Hawaii. It took place in 1860.

Tamamushi: At present, bungaku flourishes only in your country and mine. Western learning has been entering Japan lately, however, and it does great harm to the Way of the sages. Is that happening in your country as well?

Li Bang: Bungaku is now in the same condition in both our countries. Western learning gravely violates the five relationships [defined by Confucianism] and is

86 See for example *Sagara Tōru chosaku shū*, vol. 2, p. 56.

87 Quoted in Hirakawa 1985, pp. 128-29.

88 See Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, section 2 (“Shoki bungaku kakushin no taisei” 初期文学革新の大勢), chapter 1 (“Jisei to bungaku” 時勢と文学), subheading 2 (“Bungaku muyō ron” 文学無用論).

completely worthless. As far as I can see, people in recent years turn away from morality, take pleasure in anything new, and are captivated by any nonsense. A great change is upon us, and one who cleaves to the teaching of the sages can only sigh.⁸⁹

Tamamushi had gone to the United States in 1860 as a member of the seventy-man Japanese delegation to the ratification ceremony for the US-Japan Treaty of Friendship and Commerce. On his way back the delegation stopped in Hawaii, where he and Li Bang engaged in a written dialogue that Tamamushi published in his diary of the trip.

“Bungaku” in this dialogue clearly refers to Confucian studies. Such was its manifest meaning in 1860, in a conversation between two reasonably well educated men, one Chinese and the other Japanese.⁹⁰ While interest in European science and technology mounted day by day among Chinese

89 Quoted in *Isoda Kōichi chosaku shū*, p. 89.

90 Isoda Kōichi placed this dialogue at the beginning of the first chapter (“Yakugo ‘bungaku’ no tanjō” 訳語「文学」の誕生) of his *Rokumeikan no keifu*. He wrote on p. 10,

It is difficult to define the meaning of the word “bungaku” as it is used here, but one can at least affirm that it stands in opposition to *yōgaku* 洋学 [Western studies], and that it is linked to “the way of the sages” [*seidō* 聖道] and to the “five relationships” [*rinjō* 倫常]. It is of profound interest that for Tamamushi, who had left Japan on a political mission connected with the US-Japan treaty, ‘bungaku’ was something that ran counter to the “opening of the country” [*kaikoku* 開国]. When he said, “Western studies harm the Way of the sages,” he no doubt meant by “Way of the sages” not only the ancient Confucian tradition of China, but also a Japanized Confucianism rooted in national, spiritual values. When one realizes that, for him, “bungaku” stood in opposition to practical realities, it becomes plain that his concept of “bungaku” is one of the origins of the concept current in modern Japan. Since that concept is entirely different from the Western one of “literature,” the modern Japanese concept of “bungaku” itself can be said to be the product of the encounter between the long tradition of “bungaku,” which includes Confucianism, and “literature.”

Isoda recognized a degree of difficulty in understanding the meaning of “bungaku” in this exchange between Tamamushi and Li Bang, but when seen in historical perspective the matter is simple enough. Moreover, Isoda showed no interest in the fact that the two men used the term in order to reach a historical common ground. One may therefore question whether their use of “bungaku” really implies an attitude that runs counter to “opening the country”; that is to say, whether it really stands in opposition to *realpolitik*. Confucians of the Bakumatsu period quite clearly held that study of Confucian principles of government was necessary precisely because the opening of the country would challenge the very foundations of national identity. That is the very attitude that produced the Imperial Rescript on Education (Kyōiku Chokugo 教育勅語, 1880), which combined Shinto and Confucianism in a doctrine of loyalty and patriotism. It is indeed possible to find within the modern Japanese conception of “bungaku” an element of opposition to practical politics. However, nothing of its origins can be discerned in the Confucianism of Bakumatsu Japan. If anything of the Confucian tradition is to be found in the modern concept, it is no doubt the last half of the statement from the *Dianlun lunwen* 典論論文 by Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226) that “*Wenzhang* is a great task for the governing of the realm, and a deathless enterprise”: i.e., a faith that even for one opposed to the current powers, *wenzhang* endures. The hope that even one defeated in the game of practical politics can have his name endure thanks to “*wenzhang*” can be found for example in *Kaifūsō*, in the poems of seventeen men associated with Prince Nagaya 長屋王, who had been punished by Shōmu Tennō 聖武天皇. The same hope passed into waka as well. For example, in his Japanese preface to *Kokinshū*, Ki no Tsurayuki mentioned those who have left their name to later ages thanks to waka.

and Japanese intellectuals in the period after the Opium War, Tamamushi Sadayū and Li Bang merely lamented this trend and feared it might mean the end of the age-old Confucian tradition. It seems never to have occurred to them that the West had its own “teaching of the sages.”

One Confucian scholar who showed an unusual interest in Western technology is Sakuma Shōzan 佐久間象山 (1811-1864), the probable author of the famous aphorism, “Eastern ethics, Western techniques” (*Tōyō dōtoku, Seiyō geijutsu* 東洋道德、西洋芸術).⁹¹ In this example, *geijutsu* means both learning (*gakumon*) and technology (*gijutsu* 技術). Thus Eastern intellectuals in fact tended to achieve a grasp of Western civilization mainly through science and technology. More broadly speaking, they saw in Western civilization a body of practical learning (*jitsugaku* 実学) founded on a kind of rationalism entirely different from that of the East. Neo-Confucianism is usually seen as a dualistic philosophy of “principle” (*ri* 理) and “material force” (*ki* 氣), but “principle” often predominated, and among Japanese Confucians it served easily as a receptor for a mode of learning that aimed to discover the laws underlying natural science, i.e., the material world. Of course, the increasingly this-worldly orientation of thought from the mid-Tokugawa period on, as well as the sense of crisis engendered by pressure from foreign powers, undoubtedly played their part as well.

It is noteworthy in this connection that Tamamushi Sadayū and Li Bang were both conscious of Confucianism as a tradition shared by China and Japan. This awareness no doubt signals the beginnings of a sense of solidarity aroused by fear that the Eastern spirit was under threat. Neither took into account the way Confucianism had changed between the Song and the Qing, or the further refractive forces that had affected it in Japan; they simply regarded it as both countries’ hallowed tradition. It is no doubt possible to see this solidarity as the first stirrings of an Asianism (アジア主義) opposed to the Western powers. Both, however, forgot that in East Asia there was another country that shared the Neo-Confucian tradition: Yi dynasty Korea; or perhaps they considered the Korea of the time too obviously an annex of China to deserve separate acknowledgment. At any rate, it appears that in Bakumatsu times all these factors conspired to encourage equating the word “bungaku” with “the East Asian tradition.”

The “revere the emperor and expel the barbarians” movement of the Bakumatsu period turned the cultural nationalism of Japan’s intellectuals from the anti-China sentiments characteristic of Shinto and *kokugaku* scholars to opposition to the Western powers. Such feelings became the matrix within which the idea of the nation’s cultural identity—itsself a concept derived from the West—took form in Japan. In truth, the great question facing the absolute majority of Japan’s leaders and intellectuals, in the period between the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate and the Russo-Japanese War, was how to build an independent nation capable of resisting these powers. The process was a tortuous one of continual trial and error, but despite many reverses it aimed consistently to promote the modernization of Japan’s might by establishing Japan as a full-fledged nation state, thanks to a return to direct imperial rule (*ōsei fukko* 王政復古) and to the ritsuryō legal and administrative system, and by introducing at the same time the culture and material achievements of the West. The establishment in 1872 of Empire Day (*kigensetsu* 紀元節, celebrating the accession of Jinmu

91 Shigeno Seisai 重野成齋 (1827-1910), inscription on a funerary monument to Sakuma Shōzan; translation from Totman 1993, p. 440.

神武 Tennō), and the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education (Kyōiku Chokugo 教育勅語, 1890), among other such measures, were intended to center the very conception of Japanese culture and history on the emperor, whose hallowed tradition was far older than that of any Western power. Thus there arose a broad current of thought shot through with urges to help Asian countries independently resist the Western powers, and to expand Japanese might onto the Korean peninsula.

Even as Japan shaped itself into a nation state on the Western model and adopted ever more Western culture and technology, it created its own cultural identity (again based on the Western model) and sought to establish its position at the head of a league of Asian powers opposed to the West. As this double or triple strategy unfolded, Japanese culture in its modern form took shape as a blend of many ideas and ideologies, and as site of vigorous conflict. One can cite rebellion among the feudal domains of northeastern Japan; the excessive popular reaction to the violent movement to disestablish Buddhism (*haibutsu kishaku* 排仏毀釈), containing as it did elements of insurrection; military clashes that amounted to civil war (the Seinan War 西南戦争 of 1877); and such coup d'état-like incidents as that of 1881. There was also the increasingly vocal, modern nationalism-from-below movement for freedom and people's rights. The process of the establishment in Japan of the modern Western concept of “literature” took place from start to finish in the context of these major political and cultural upheavals, and its nature can be discerned clearly only when seen in that light. To take the process of modernization merely for one of westernization, accomplished through the adoption of Western culture and material technology, is obviously to accept a radically limiting view. (See Figure 8.)

	“Bungaku”= learning and Chinese poetry, prose	Other
Pre-Heian Early 7th century	Confucian classics, Chinese poetry and prose Parallel development of Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism (Prince Shōtoku)	
Early 8th century Mid 8th century	<i>Kojiki</i> , <i>Nihon shoki</i> (histories in Chinese) <i>Kaifuso</i> (751)	[Awareness of poetry as a genre]
Heian Late 8th century	Confucianism, Esoteric Buddhism (Kanmu) Study of classics and history Chinese poetry and prose flourish	<i>Taketori monogatari</i> (←supernatural tales of the Tang period)
Early 10th century	(eclipse of Japanese culture) Bai Jui's poetry in vogue Discussion of “wild words and fancy language”	<i>Kokinwakashū</i> (ca. 913), first of 21 imperial collections War tales (<i>wakan konkōbun</i>)
Middle ages 13th century	Rise of “Gozan bungaku and Zen,” and Confucianism Printing of Buddhist and Confucian texts, and Chinese poetry	Noh plays, linked verse Treatises on Japanese poetry and other arts; <i>otogi zōshi</i>
Tokugawa 17th century	Neo-Confucian revival, banning of Christianity Kanshi in vogue	Urban popular culture—kabuki, jōruri, <i>ukiyo zōshi</i>
18th century	Ancient studies, philology <i>Tōshisen</i> a best seller Popularization of kanshi Emura Hokkai's <i>Nihonshi shi</i> (1771) Kansei ban on unorthodox learning (1790)	Cultural nationalism (China) Rise of Dutch studies Rise of <i>kokugaku</i> Mix of media and genres [Awareness of kanshi, waka, haikai as single genre] [Awareness of fiction (shōsetsu: monogatari, <i>gesaku</i>) as single category]
Early 19th century	Revival of Neo-Confucianism and Wang Yangming philosophy. Cultural nationalism (the West)	

Figure 8 The Evolution of the Concept of “Bungaku” in Japan Up to the End of the Tokugawa Shogunate