

## The View of History Articulated in the *Dai Nihon Shi* and the Restructuring of the “Mito School”

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In Japanese academia, the Mito school (*Mitogaku* 水戸学) is often divided into the early Mito school and the late Mito school. The compilation of the *Dai Nihon shi* 大日本史 during the time of the early Mito school was based on a Confucian view of history, and in its theories it placed importance on moralistic assessments, while in terms of scholarship investigations of historical sources were conducted throughout the country under the leadership of Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 and this material was read with painstaking care. This tradition of evidential research in Mito domain was continued up until the early Meiji era. As one of the three senior collateral branches of the Tokugawa family, Mito domain, when compared with other domains, presented itself as a source and forerunner of Japanese nationalism. Originally its national polity (*kokutai* 国体) theory did not have any anti-shogunate elements, but since the object of its loyalty was the emperor, there was a degree of tension in its relations with the shogunate. This has for a long time attracted the attention of scholars.

Meanwhile, once the scholarship of Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 began to be viewed with greater importance, the assessment of the Qing dynasty and also of the Confucian scholarship of the late Ming and early Qing in Japanese academic circles underwent considerable change. Such assessments deeply penetrated the intellectual class. There has long been debate about whether or not the Sorai school exerted any influence on the late Mito school and the compilation of the *Dai Nihon shi*. Sorai's scholarship was the exact opposite of the early Mito school in character, but did it really have an influence on the late Mito school? And if it did have any influence, what sort of influence would this have been? These are the questions that first need to be resolved.

In this article, I take up for consideration Tachihara Suiken 立原翠軒, the director of Mito domain's Shōkōkan 彰考館, as a scholar who pursued pluralistic scholarship in the growth of the undertakings of the Shōkōkan. Taking into account the realities of his position as tutor to his domanial lord and advisor on domanial affairs, I examine the historical background to the compilation of the *Dai Nihon shi*, the formation of its view of history, the relationship between the Mito school and the school of Ancient Learning (*kogaku* 古学), the consistencies and differences between the early and late Mito school, the interrelationship between the Sorai and Mito schools, and the question of whether or not there was a “middle-period Mito school” with a view to clarifying the significance of the Mito school in modern Japan.

Keywords: “middle-period Mito school,” Tachihara Suiken, Fujita Yūkoku, Mito school, Sorai school

## Do Flowers “Bloom” or “Laugh”? One Aspect of Sino-Japanese Cultural Exchange

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In classical Chinese poetry, the verb for expressing the blooming of flowers is *kai* 開 or *fa* 發. In Japanese, on the other hand, although there is the word *kaika* 開花 (“efflorescence, coming into flower”), the verb meaning “to flower, bloom” is usually *saku* 咲く. The character *xiao* 咲 used for *saku* is a variant of *xiao* 笑, which means “to laugh” and does not have the meaning “to flower.” Why, then, is the Japanese verb *saku* written with the character *xiao*, meaning “to laugh”?

It has already been discussed by Kakimura Shigematsu 柿村重松 and Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之 how the poetry of ancient Japan adopted many words and expressions from Chinese classical works and, in particular, how it was strongly influenced by the more or less contemporary Chinese poetry of the early Tang. They have also pointed out that the distinctively Japanese sensibility towards the beauty of nature, including flowers, birds, and the moon, was probably modelled on the personification of flowers and birds in the heptasyllabic songs or ballads (*gexing* 歌行) of Lu Zhaolin 盧照隣 and Luo Binwang 駱賓王, two of the four great poets of the early Tang.

Meanwhile, in the history of Chinese literature, the early Tang was a period that saw the tremendous popularity of the heptasyllabic *gexing*, a distinctive form of song or ballad with a richly lyrical character. But in present-day research on the history of Chinese literature, which focuses primarily on so-called new-style poetry (*jintishi* 近体詩), the early Tang tends to be neglected.

In Japan, however, the popularity of the *gexing* style of poetry of the early Tang was conversely regarded as the orthodox style of Chinese poetry and had an enormous influence. In this article, I suggest that the use in Japan of a character meaning “to laugh” in the sense of “to flower” may originally have been a poetic expression meaning that a flower “laughs,” resulting from the assimilation of the personification of flowers and birds in early-Tang poems in the *gexing* style.

Keywords: *Kaifūsō*, *Kanringakushishū*, Kakimura Shigematsu, early-Tang *gexing* style, personification of flowers and birds

## Bai Letian and Yoshikawa Eiji

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Yoshikawa Eiji 吉川英治 may be described as a national writer of the Shōwa era, and in the *Shin Heike monogatari* 新・平家物語, one of his representative works, he touches on the influence of Chinese poetry on Japanese culture. He points out that literature, painting, arts and crafts, religion, intellectual thought, and so on were “transplanted” from China to Japan, and once they had passed through a process of “harmonization with the cultural conditions of this country,” they blossomed and flourished as if they had been in Japan from the very beginning.

This can in fact also be said about Yoshikawa’s own novels, and the influence of Chinese works, especially the poems of Bai Letian 白樂天, appears in various forms in many of his works, starting with the *Shin Heike monogatari*. There are direct examples of this, such as his quoting of the “Ballad of the Lute” (“Pipa xing” 琵琶行) in the *Shin Suikoden* 新・水滸伝, and also somewhat unusual examples, such as his quoting of a Tang poem in the *Sangokushi* 三国志. Unlike the works of a mediocre writer, Yoshikawa’s historical novels possess a life that ensures that they will continue to be read for a long time, and it may be supposed that such expressions deriving from Chinese poems underpin the refined style of his writing and constitute one of the appealing features of his novels.

Keywords: comparative literature, popular fiction, modern Japanese literature, “Song of Eternal Sorrow,” “Ballad of the Lute”

## Muro Kyūsō's Poems about the Mid-Autumn Moon: The Reception of Chinese Poetry of the High Tang and the Formation of Images of Confucian Retainers

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In his essay “The Moon: Memento of the Generations” (“Tsuki wa yoyo no katami” 月は世々の形見), written by Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢 in his later years and included in vol. 5 of his *Shundai zatsuwa* 駿台雑話, Kyūsō rejects frivolous banquets and superficial poems concerned with merely admiring the sight of the mid-autumn full moon, and drawing on poems by Li Bo 李白 (“Bajiu wenyue” 把酒問月) and Qu Yuan 屈原 (“Yuanyou” 遠遊), he argues that, when looking at the moon that shines upon all generations, one should think about people of the past who might have known one or people of the future who might know one. In this article, I focus on some poems written in 1713 and the circumstances in which they were composed with a view to exploring the provenance of the above arguments.

In 1713 a mid-autumn banquet was held at the residence of Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 in Edo. On the occasion of this banquet, Kyūsō wrote a series of five heptasyllabic quatrains in response to a poem by Hakuseki in pentasyllabic regulated verse, and then Hakuseki wrote a further five rhyme-matching poems in response to Kyūsō's poems. In this poetic exchange, Li Bo and Qu Yuan are understood as figures who initially entered government service in the imperial court and were in a position to remonstrate with their lord, but eventually they lost his favour or trust and left the court. A background factor in this view was the fact that, following the death of the sixth shogun Ienobu 家宣 the previous year, Hakuseki had lost a lord to whom he could speak without reserve and consequently his influence in the shogunate had suffered a marked decline.

The “blocking out of reality” (Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫) has been emphasized as a characteristic of the reception of the poetry of the high Tang in the school of Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠. But it has become clear through this examination of the reception of Li Bo by Kyūsō and Hakuseki and the circumstances surrounding Ienobu's death that while in the earlier school of Kinoshita Jun'an 木下順庵 the interest in rhetorical devices in its reception of the poetry of the high Tang was no different from that of Sorai's school, there is found a tendency to understand the poems of the high Tang by linking them to reality. In the links between the poetry of the high Tang and reality there are aspects connected to the moralistic interpretation of high-Tang poems, but in the series of poems examined in this article the image of the ideal Confucian retainer is shaped not by abstract moral concepts but by exploring the careers of poets of the high Tang and the way in which they lived their lives. A biographical or historical interest in poets of the high Tang is one characteristic of the reception of the poetry of the high Tang among students of Kinoshita Jun'an that awaits further investigation in the future.

Keywords: Muro Kyūsō, Arai Hakuseki, Tokugawa Ienobu, Li Bo, Qu Yuan