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## Dances by Courtier Boys in the Heian Period

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This paper discusses dancing by courtier boys in the first half of the Heian Period (ninth and tenth centuries) in order to throw a light on how such dances were depicted and in what context they were taken into *The Tale of Genji*. In this paper, we will take an overview of boys' dancing in the Heian imperial court, to help us understand boys' dancing in *The Tale of Genji*. Boys' dancing seen in *The Tale of Genji* is not covered in this paper, but will be covered in a following article.

Courtier boys or “Tenjō no Warawa (or Warawabe) 殿上童” are sons of the noblemen of the fifth rank or above<sup>1</sup> and these boys, before coming of age, are often allowed to serve in the Seiryōden 清涼殿 (that is, the Emperor's apartment). Admittance to the Seiryōden means becoming a “privy chamber gentleman” and was considered a special privilege for officials of the fifth rank or above.

The system of Tenjō no Warawa was established during the reign of Emperor Uda 宇多 (r. 889-898) and the maximum number of the boys who became Tenjō no Warawa was ten; this number was later increased to fifteen or sixteen though. In the imperial court, these boys participated in various court events; typical tasks given to these boys included carrying decorative ornaments into the venue of poem contests and score-keeping at court games. The appearance of the little boys, who were elaborately dressed up, helped enhance the celebratory atmosphere of the events, but the most important job of these boys was dancing. For court games, such as noblemen's archery, one boy on each of the teams, i.e. the Left team (or first playing team) and Right team (or later playing team), was assigned to do the victory dance when their side won. Dances by aristocratic boys also became an integral part of the celebrations in the cases of the decennial celebration of longevity of the Emperor's father or mother. Court people knew that the Emperor's father or the Emperor's mother would be very happy to see his or her grandchildren dancing for him or her. The audience was often moved to tears when a little boy danced beautifully. When a boy danced very well, a garment was often given in praise of the excellent performance. It was considered the biggest honor if the garment given was the one that the Emperor had been wearing on that occasion. If the Emperor himself was very young, these Tenjō no Warawa might have had the honor of having their coming-of-age ceremony at the court on the same day as the Emperor's own ceremony. In short, these Tenjō no Warawa, under the umbrella of their influential grandparents (or sometimes parents), were very privileged boys who could serve very close to the Emperor.

We assume that the main aristocratic characters in *The Tale of Genji* had all served as prestigious Tenjō no Warawa in the early days of their lives although the tale does not make particular mention of it. If the boy had not been admitted to the privy chambers, the assignment as a dancer gave a very good chance to get the privilege. In the chapter Spring Shoots I of *The Tale of Genji*, Hikaru Genji obtained privy chamber privilege for his grandsons when the boys were assigned to dance on the occasion of the fiftieth birthday celebration of ex-Emperor Suzaku-In 朱雀院.

## I. Findings in previous research

Preceding research by FUKUTŌ Sanae<sup>2</sup> and UEDA Yasuyo<sup>3</sup> have illustrated the following, and confirmed some historic aspects of dancing of courtier boys:

1. The first example of aristocratic boys' dancing appeared in the records in the first year of Jōwa 承和 or 834, when Emperor Ninmyō 仁明天皇 made imperial boys dance for his parents, i.e. Retired Emperor Saga 嵯峨上皇 and his mother, Tachibana no Kajiko 橘嘉智子. Several records of dancing by aristocratic boys' can be found during the ninth century.
2. Boys' dances were performed mainly in the imperial court, but boys' dances were also performed in religious ceremonies, too, mostly on the order of the Emperor, or sometimes in the residences of the top noblemen.
3. From the fourth decennial longevity celebration of Emperor's Mother Takaiko 高子 in the third month of the sixth year of Gangyō 元慶 (882), boys' dances became an integral part of longevity celebrations for retired Emperors and Emperors' Mothers. In contrast, decennial longevity celebrations for the Emperor currently on the throne were official state ceremonies, and therefore, dances were undertaken by the professional court musicians and dancers who belonged to the official music department (Utaryō 雅楽寮) rather than by little boys.
4. Boys chosen to dance in the presence of Emperor or Empress were selected from those who had been admitted to the Emperor's apartment in the Seiryōden 清涼殿. Boys who had not yet been admitted to the Seiryōden might be granted admittance prior to the performance day or gain admittance on the merits of dancing well.
5. For Sumai 相撲 wrestling games by boy wrestlers, the victory dance was always danced by an aristocratic boy. Victory dances for polo and other court sports (whose players were noblemen) were also performed by aristocratic boys. If the Left side team (or first playing side) won, Ryōō 陵王<sup>4</sup> was danced as a victory dance, and if the Right team (or second playing side) won, the victory dance was *Nasori* 納蘇利.
6. Ryōō 陵王 and *Nasori* 納蘇利 were very popular dances for boys, and these two were also danced on the occasions of religious ceremonies and decennial anniversaries as well as victory dances for game events. In the case of religious ceremonies, however, the dancers were most likely to be the children of professional musicians and/or temple personnel. *Suikoraku* 醉胡樂 (an alternative name for *Konju* 胡飲酒), *Manzairaku* 万歳樂, *Ōjō* 皇聲, and *Kishunraku* 喜春樂 were popular boys' dances at decennial anniversary performances. *Saikyūki* 西宮記 records that *Shunnōden* 春鶯囀, *Manzairaku* 万歳樂, *Sanju* 散手, *Ōjō* 皇聲, Ryōō 陵王, *Nasori* 納蘇利, and *Kishunraku* 喜春樂 were danced by children on the occasion of the fifth decennial birthday anniversary of Empress Mother Onshi or Yasuko 穩子<sup>5</sup> in the third month of the fourth year of Jōhei 承平 (934).
7. Boys' dancing was popular for court events during the tenth and first half of the eleventh centuries, especially in those events which had entertainment elements. However, the boys' dancing soon came to possess political implications. It was a privilege to dance in the presence of the Emperor, and it was an honor if the dancer received a commendation from the Emperor, which often took the material form of garments. Therefore, a good performance by the boy was of great concern to his family. Commendation from the Emperor would serve as a display of the strengthened ties of the family to the Emperor, and it would also mean a brighter future for the boy from the start of his service to the Emperor. Thus dancing lessons become an important subject of learning for aristocratic boys; parents would hire the best teachers possible and they saw to it that their son practiced with utmost diligence.

8. In the early days, a training studio was established in the Sahyōefu 左兵衛府 and the boys who had been selected from the families of the fifth rank or above took lessons for one to two months before the performance. Later, the noble families hired masters for themselves and boys were trained in their residences. On the twenty-seventh day of the third month of the sixth year of Gangyō 元慶 (882), according to Volume 12 of *Saikyūki* 西宮記, Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 established a music studio in his residence to prepare the dances for the fourth decennial birthday anniversary of Emperor's Mother Takaiko.

## II. How young did the boys begin dancing?

The youngest dancers seem to have been seven to eight years old.<sup>6</sup>

The following are a few examples from the old records that mention young dancers:

- On the twenty-seventh day of the third month of the sixth year of Gangyō 元慶 (882), eighteen children from the families of the rank five or above danced one after another, and among them, Prince Sadakazu 貞数親王, who was the eighth son of Emperor Seiwa 清和天皇, and who was also a grandson of Ariwara no Yukihiro 在原行平 in his mother's line, danced *Ryōō* 陵王 commendably at the age of eight for the fourth decennial birthday celebration of Emperor's Mother Takaiko 高子 and the audience was moved to tears. (*Saikyūki* 西宮記 Volume 12, Kōtaigō Onga no Koto 皇后御賀事)
- On the nineteenth day of the fourth month in the first year of Kanpyō 寛平 (889), Fujiwara no Tadahira 藤原忠平 danced *Nasori* 納蘇利 at the age of ten in the presence of Emperor Uda 宇多天皇 during a customary reception given by the defeated team (Makewaza 負態 party) of an archery game of the noblemen. (*Ononomiya Nenjū Gyōji* 小野宮年中行事 三月, and *Gunsho Ruijū* 群書類従 Vol. 84)
- On the nineteenth day of the tenth month in the fourth year of Enchō 延長 (926), during the Emperor's excursion to the Ōigawa River at the foot of Arashiyama 嵐山,<sup>7</sup> Prince Masaakira<sup>8</sup> 雅明親王 danced *Manzairaku* 万歳楽 very well at the age of seven. Emperor Daigo 醍醐天皇 was so touched that he took off his garment and bestowed it on the prince. The prince respectfully bowed and expressed his gratitude in the formal dance-like courtesy (*haimu* 拜舞). Masaakira died three years after this event at the age of ten. (*Saikyūki* 西宮記 臨時 乙 1<sup>9</sup>)
- On the seventh day of the tenth month of the third year of Kōhō 康保 (966), Fujiwara no Sanesuke 藤原実資 at the age of ten danced *Nasori* wearing a coronet on his head. He danced so well that he was given an *akome*<sup>10</sup> garment which the Emperor had been wearing himself; The Minister of Left, who was Sanesuke's grandfather and adoptive father, could not withstand his joy, stood up and danced to express his utmost gratitude. (*Saikyūki* 西宮記 康保三年十月七日条)
- In the first year of Chōhō 長保 (1001), two sons of Michinaga 道長 danced on the occasion of the decennial birthday anniversary for Tō Sanjō-In (or Higashi Sanjō-In) Senshi 東三条院詮子 (mother of Emperor Ichijō 一条天皇). The two boys were Yorimichi 頼通 and Yorimune 頼宗. The older boy Yorimichi 頼通 was ten years old and he was a son of Michinaga's primary wife Rinshi 倫子, and the younger son Yorimune 頼宗 was nine years old and a son of his secondary wife Meishi 明子.

### III. Boys' dances were of serious concern to the adult noblemen, too

As seen before, boys' dances possessed political implications, and consequently, the boys' performances and how they were commended often created quite a stir here and there.

- 1) When Fujiwara no Sanesuke danced *Nasori* and his grandfather Saneyori stood up and did the gratitude dance in the previous example, *Saikyūki* and later *Kokon Chomonjū* (古今著聞集 242, Kangen Kabu 管絃歌舞) pointed out that he omitted the bowing part (再拜) and reproachfully wondered why.<sup>11</sup>
- 2) Commendations were of great concern to the aristocrats, and therefore, they often needed to be “politically correct” as givers, too. Fujiwara no Sanesuke 藤原実資 was not very happy and criticized Fujiwara no Akimitsu 藤原顯光 for his lack of knowledge about the commendation precedence. Yorimichi, the older son of Michinaga, was given a brocade garment from the Emperor for dancing *Ryōō* 陵王 well in the final rehearsal on the seventh day of the tenth month of the third year of Chōhō 長保(1001) at the decennial birthday anniversary of Empress Mother Senshi 詮子, and “brocade garment” was apparently based on the suggestion of Akimitsu, The Minister of Right 右大臣顯光. As we saw previously, Sanesuke, too, had been applauded for dancing *Nasori* 納蘇利 35 years before, and at that time the *akome* garment Sanesuke received was made of plain cloth; Sanesuke resentfully stated that in the light of past examples, the commendation prize in this occasion should not be a “brocade” one. From this example, too, we see how grave the concerns of the noblemen were about boys' dances and the outcome of commendations. (*Shōyūki* 小右記 Itsubun 逸文 erroneously copied as the second year of Chōhō)
- 3) On the day of the decennial birthday anniversary of Tō Sanjō-In 東三条院 (or Higashi Sanjō-In) Senshi 詮子, Fujiwara no Michinaga's two sons (or nephews to Senshi) danced for her: Tazu 田鶴 (Yorimichi's name as a boy) danced *Ryōō*, and Iwao 巖 (Yorimune's name as a boy) danced *Nasori*. Iwao was praised for his excellent dancing, and his teacher was also rewarded. Michinaga expressed his displeasure with this reward. Iwao's mother was the secondary wife Meishi 明子, and Michinaga probably had wanted Tazu, his heir apparent by his primary wife Rinshi 倫子, to be recognized first. We suspect Emperor Ichijō did it this way because he wanted to reward Iwao more this time to balance it with what Tazu had been given, an exceptional brocade garment, two days before on the final rehearsal day. It was indeed difficult to be “politically correct” when boys' dances were at the same time tugs-of-war between aristocratic families seeking distinctions from the Emperor.

### IV. Boys practiced hard

For adult aristocrats, too, reputable dance masters were called in to residences to give dancing lessons when these men were selected to dance. The tales written during this era depict how the noblemen shut themselves in their residences and prepared themselves for their dance performances. For example, in *The Tale of Genji* we read, “Two Consultants—one the Intendant of the Left Gate Watch, the other that of the Right—were put in charge of the music of Left and Right. Every gentleman had chosen a first-rate master and practiced assiduously at home.” (p.136, *The Tale of Genji* translated by Royall Tyler, Penguin Books, 2003). This was the same with the boy dancers. Dancer boys were chosen to dance one to two months before the event, and the family hired reputable teachers and made sure that their boys spent much time in training day after day until the day of the performance.

- 1) The parents would do anything for the success of their sons' dancing performances.  
We can see a good example in *Kagerō Nikki* 蜻蛉日記.<sup>12</sup> In the first year of Tenroku 天禄 (970), the author's only son Michitsuna 道綱 was chosen to perform a victory dance<sup>13</sup> if their team won an archery game. Michitsuna was also an

archer on the team; the team was to shoot second. The Diary describes how hard her son practiced the dance, how elaborately the costumes and other preparations for the event were done, and how anxious she was about the scores of the game (she herself stayed in her residence and had no chance to actually see the game). Michitsuna was fifteen years old then (but according to today's age counting system, he would have been thirteen years and several months old).

- 2) A passage concerning dancing lessons for boys can also be seen in another fictional work of the Heian Period, *Utsuho Monogatari* うつほ物語 (written before *The Tale of Genji*) in the Chapter Sagano-In; the boys started taking dance lessons from the eleventh month for the sixth decennial birth anniversary of Mother of the Emperor, which was scheduled for the first month of the next year.
- 3) In the chapter Spring Shoots I (Wakana 1 若菜上) in *The Tale of Genji*, there is a passage where the boy dancers were selected for the birth anniversary of the Retired Emperor Suzaku-In, and the boys' families were keen to hire good teachers. Hikaru Genji did not fail to take this opportunity to obtain admission to the court for his grandsons, who were seven years or older.

His Eminence [Suzaki-In] had always loved music. In order to prepare for a large number of dances he *sent to the privy chamber* two sons of His Excellency of the Right and three of the Commander's, including one by the Dame of Staff—in other words, all the little ones over the age of seven—and he also chose the sons of His Highness of War, those of all the Princes who mattered, and those of the highest nobles, to whom he further added any good-looking sons of privy gentlemen who were likely to dance well. This was to be an outstanding event, you see, and everyone involved did his very best. The music and dancing masters never had a moment's rest. (*The Tale of Genji*.<sup>14</sup> Italics added.)

## V. Not all the boys performed up to expectations

Not all the boys lived up to their parents' expectations. Boys will be boys; there were boys who did not behave themselves. For instance, Fukutari 福足, a son of Fujiwara no Michikane 藤原道兼, was known to be a very naughty boy. He was to dance for the sixtieth birthday celebration of his grandfather Kaneie 兼家. The parents coaxed Fukutari to take dance lessons. They were naturally very worried, and prayed to the gods for the successful performance of their son. On the dancing stage on the very day of the celebration (in 988), however, Fukutari tore off his costume and shouted "I will not dance!" His father turned pale, and audience gasped. Then, Michitaka 道隆, Fukutari's uncle, walked quietly up to the boy while the audience watched him wondering whether he would try to force the boy to dance or drag the disgraceful boy down from the stage in anger, but Michitaka held the boy close against him, holding the boy's hands warmly, and led the boy in the dance. The audience was impressed with the thoughtfulness of Michitaka, who helped the boy and saved the embarrassing situation. (*Ōkagami* <sup>15</sup>)

## VI. Did a boy lose the opportunity to perform a dance if his team lost the game?

Boys who were chosen to do the victory dance surely rehearsed the dance over and over again. However, the victory dance was only to be danced when their team won. In *Kagerō Nikki*, we see the author sigh and say to herself that all of her son's hard practice would go to waste if his team lost. If the team lost, would all the practice really prove to be useless? YAMAMOTO Kana in her paper pointed out that in the case of the official Sumai 相撲 event, Ryōō 陵王, the Victory dance of the Left, was danced even when the Left team lost the game; in this case, Ryōō 陵王 was danced after the Victory dance of *Nasori* by the winning Right team, but *Nasori* of the Right team was not danced unless the Right team won in the official Sumai event. I wondered then if the boys of the defeated teams would not have the opportunity at

all to show the dance which they had practiced so hard for more than a month or two, except the lucky ones of the Left team in the official Sumai event. Parents would be disappointed if their son did not have a chance to perform after hiring an expensive teacher and having him rehearse the dance over and over again. We should also remember that these parents are high-ranking officials of the imperial court.

In this connection, there are a few records showing that the boy of the loser side, too, was given an opportunity to perform his dance. Sometimes, he danced *after* the victory dance was done by the winning team (just as in official Sumai events), and in other case, the dance was performed during the reception that was hosted by the loser team.

The following are some of the old records that refer to performance of a “victory dance” by the losing team.

- A courtiers’ archery game was held on the twelfth day of the third month of the first year of Kanpyō 寛平 (889), and the reception by the losing team (Makewaza 負態) was given on the nineteenth day of the fourth month. There, ten-year-old Fujiwara no Tadahira, a son of Mototsune, danced *Nasori* very well and was given a reward. (*Ononomiya Nenjū Gyōji* 小野宮年中行事 三月 in *Gunsho Ruiju* 群書類従 vol. 84)
- In the Courtiers’ archery game, aristocratic boys would do victory dances. In his *Gōke Shidai* 江家次第 (section on Tenjō no Noriyumi no Koto 殿上賭弓事), Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房 mentions that the defeated team’s *Nasori* was also to be danced.<sup>16</sup>
- *Hokuzanshō* 北山抄 states (in the section of Tenjō no Noriyumi no Koto 殿上賭射事)<sup>17</sup> “When the victory dance is finished by the winning team, the boy from the defeated team is to dance.”

*Gōke Shidai* (in the late Heian Period) and *Hokuzanshō* (written in mid Heian Period, early eleventh century) were ceremonial instruction manuals of events rather than the mere records of day-to-day happenings. From these records, we may conclude that the boy of the defeated team was often given an opportunity to show the fruits of his efforts.

## VII. Did the Left team always win?

The victory dance for the courtiers’ archery game gave a good opportunity for aristocrats’ boys to be stars. We might ask how victory or defeat in the game was decided. The paper by YAMAMOTO Kana looked into the details of official Sumai 相撲 Meshiawase 召合 games (tournament of wrestlers who had been selected from all over Japan) and official Noriyumi Archery 賭弓 of the first month. The archery games of Tenjō no Noriyumi 殿上賭弓, on the other hand, have yet to be studied in detail. While the official Noriyumi archery was played by imperial warriors and often took place in the first month of the year, Tenjō no Noriyumi was a more casual event and played by privy chamber gentlemen, and it often took place in the third month of the year.

The passage that depicts Tenjō no Noriyumi in *Kagerō Nikki* states that Michitsuna’s team was about to lose, but that thanks solely to the achievement of Michitsuna, his team managed a draw. A question arises, if a team has lost the first innings, could the scores of just one player of a later or of the last inning overturn the defeat?

Whereas in other games, such as official archery games by warriors or Sumai wrestling, a win or defeat is decided by the winning number of innings, in the courtiers’ archery games, win and defeat is said to depend on the total number of the hits of all players. In one example of Yuba Hajime (弓場始) in spring in the first year of Kowa 康和 (1099), in which the shooters were noblemen, only one shooter out of ten hit the mark in the center.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, in a game where there were

only a few hits, it would be possible that one or two good hits by Michitsuna in the last part of the game could turn the losing game into a draw.

We see some descriptions in old records which state that the games can be extended if the Left side is not doing well. We may note that in *The Tale of Genji*, Yugiri 夕霧, presumably<sup>19</sup> the Commander of the Left, had got his staff to prepare to give the victory banquet at his Rokujō-in residence *prior to* the day of the Noriyumi.

The banquet that followed the New Year's archery contest was to take place at Rokujo, and His Excellency prepared it especially carefully because he wanted His Highness to come, too. All the adult Princes attended on the day. Those born to Her Majesty were handsome and distinguished, but His Highness of War did indeed stand well above them. The Fourth Prince, known as His Highness of Hitachi, was an Intimate's son, which perhaps explained why he seemed so much less prepossessing than the others. *As always*, the Left won decisively. The contest ended sooner than usual, and the victorious Commander, His Excellency himself, then withdrew.<sup>20</sup> (Italics added.)

It is true that the games were sometimes extended when the Left or first-shooting team was not scoring well. But it is hard to believe in a pre-designated defeat of the second shooting team (or the Right team) from the very vivid descriptions in *Kagerō Nikki* about how anxious the mother of Michitsuna was about the outcome of the game. *Hokusanshō* Vol. 3 shows that in the third year of Tengen 天元 (980), the second-shooting team won five times and that the game was extended. In this example, the target was removed when a shooter of the second-shooting team was to aim and shoot; the author of *Hokusanshō* criticized this target removal as unprecedented act and not justifiable.<sup>21</sup>

The above example, in 980, was only ten years after the courtiers' archery event described in *Kagerō Nikki*. We do not see an indication of the pre-designated victory of the Left (or First-shooting team) in a description in *Shōyūki* 小右記 either. *Shōyūki* reads that the second-shooting team (corresponding to the Right Team) went to Kamo Jinja shrine 賀茂神社 in the first month of the third year of Shōreki 正曆 (992) and prayed for the team's victory in the upcoming courtiers' archery game in the third month. A prayer for a victory at the shrine one month before the game would look strange if the opposing side had been prearranged to win. Whether the Left team was "always" to win is a matter that needs further investigation.

## VIII. Costumes for boy dancers

Boy dancers usually did not wear masks but wore head coronets. It would have been impractical to provide just-fitting masks for children of different ages and builds. It also must have been hard for the boys to dance with a limited vision through the eyeholes. Then, did boys not wear a mask even when they danced *Ryōō*? *Ryōō* was a popular number for boys to dance on many occasions. In that dance, a frightening mask was an essential item, because according to the story associated with its origin, the master warrior covered his handsome face with the mask on the battlefield where ferociousness was more desired than grace and beauty.

*Gōke Shidai* 江家次第 states under the heading of "Courtiers' Archery" in Volume 19 that *Ryōō* is to be danced by a boy, without a mask, but with a coronet instead. *Saikyūki* 西宮記 (臨時8) also recorded that a boy by the name of Fujiwara no Chikamitsu, who was then a Ko-doneri (courtier boy 小舎人), danced *Ryōō* wearing the costume and a coronet on the seventh day of the tenth month in 966. *Bugaku Zusetsu* 舞楽図説 (in *Kojitsu Sōsho* 故実叢書) depicts a boy dancing *Ryōō* with a coronet but not with a mask. Thus, we are convinced that boy dancers did not wear masks even when a mask was an important element in the dance theme. The audience, too, would have preferred to see the little boys' adorable



faces while they were making their best efforts to dance well.

Not only the masks but also costumes may have been difficult to prepare for each boy of different age between seven or eight up to fourteen or fifteen. We see in *Shōyūki* 小右記 that Fujiwara no Sanesuke (the author) lent the costume for *Nasori* on the twenty-ninth day of the second month of the fourth year of Shoreki 正曆 (994) to Kawachi-no-kami 河内守 for a boy named Kongōmaru 金剛丸, who had been assigned to dance *Nasori* on the twenty-ninth day of the next month. Sanesuke himself had danced *Nasori* when he was ten.

## Closing remarks

We find many high-ranking noblemen dancing impromptu here and there in *The Tale of Genji*. For instance, during the closing feast after a dedication service for a statue of Buddha Yakushi 薬師仏 by Murasaki no Ue 紫上 in Spring Shoots I 若菜上,<sup>22</sup> Yugiri and Kashiwagi 柏木 came down to the stage at the end of the dance of *Rakuson* 落躑 (an alternative title for *Nasori*), and danced the short closing. I have wondered how these top-class noblemen could have danced without practicing before. Now that we have seen that dancing was an essential subject for top-notch aristocrats from their childhoods, and since *Ryōō* and *Nasori* were standard dances for young boys, it would not have been difficult for Yugiri and Kashiwagi to dance *Rakuson* in any situation. We can also assume that it was not difficult for Michitaka to lead his little nephew Fukutari on the dancing stage. Many noblemen enjoyed dancing themselves at informal banquets. Boys' dancing is an important factor in understanding how the noblemen lived their courtier lives, in which they were to participate in many ceremonies.

## (Endnotes)

- Rank 5 is the minimum requirement to become a privy chamber gentleman. People holding Rank 5 or above are called noblemen (or *kizoku* 貴族) and were given various privileges. People with Rank 3 or above are further distinguished as *kandachime* 上達部 or *kugyō* 公卿, and they held most of the important positions in the government. As an exception, officials who were promoted to the position of *sangi* 参議, aka *saishō* 宰相, joined the regular executive meetings of *kugyō* (which are called 陣定 or 陣座 Jin-no-Sadame or Jin-no-Za) even though they were still at Rank 4.
- FUKUTO Sanae 服藤早苗 (in 平安王朝の子どもたち *Heian Ōchō no Kodomotachi*)
- UEDA Yasuyo 植田恭代 (in 源氏物語の宮廷文化 *Genjimonogatari no Kyūtei Bunka*)
- Ryōō* 陵王 is the same as *Ran Ryōō* 蘭陵王. *Ryōō* is more used as the title of the dance, while *Ran Ryōō* is more often used to refer to the music without dance. There is an exception in the case of Sumai 相撲 wrestling (by athletes), where *Batō* 拔頭 rather than *Ryōō* 陵王 was danced when the Left side won. (YAMAMOTO Kana 山本佳奈. 「儀式書に見る平安時代の勝負儀礼の勝敗と勝負楽」 広島大学大学院教育学研究科紀要 57 号 2008)
- Onshi or Yasuko 穩子 herself seemed to prefer to be called *Chūgū* 中宮 instead of *Kōtaigō* (皇太后). The word *Chūgū* in the eleventh century and onward was used to refer to the formal consort of the current emperor while *Chūgū* in its original usage, until around the time of 穩子 Onshi, referred to any of the *Kōgō(gū)* 皇后 (宮) (empress), *Kōtaigō* 皇太后 (Emperor's Mother or the former empress), or *Tai-Kōtaigō* 太皇太后 (Emperor's Grandmother or the former *Kōtaigō*). An official agency called *Chūgū-shiki* 中宮職 was formed and served any or all of these royal ladies. *Kōtai Bunin* ladies 皇太夫人, too, were sometimes called *Chūgū* since the office of *Chūgū-shiki* was established and served these *Kōtai Bunin* ladies. *Kōtai Bunin* were ladies who were at the rank of *Bunin* 夫人 as wife of the Emperor but whose son had become the Emperor. (Most of these *Kōtai Bunin* were later moved up to *Kōtaigō* 皇太后 by their sons on the throne). In summary, we should be aware that *Chūgū* up to the eleventh century did not always mean the wife of the current Emperor. Japanese high school students generally believe that when some emperors had two official consorts or empresses, the first empress became *Kōgō* 皇后 and the newcomer became *Chūgū* 中宮. This understanding is not accurate. It is true that when powerful Fujiwara no Michinaga wanted to make his daughter Shōshi 彰子 second empress to Emperor Ichijō at the end of tenth century, Shōshi took the name of *Chūgū*, and Teishi, 定子 who had been *Chūgū*, became *Kōgō* 皇后. In the case of Emperor Sanjō 三条天皇, i.e. the Emperor following Ichijō, however, the first empress who was a daughter of Michinaga did not change her name of *Chūgū*, and the new empress was called *Kōgō* 皇后. Seeing that two of Michinaga's daughters took the name of *Chūgū* and that the empresses who had weaker backup were called *Kōgō*, it is suspected that *Chūgū* was preferred at that time for the empress, and I further suspect that Michinaga preferred the title of *Chūgū* for his daughters in the connotation of Emperor Mother so that their imperial sons might become heirs to the throne.
- The age-counting system was different from today until 1873, when the western calendar was adopted. "Seven years old" in the old age-counting system is "six or five years old" in today's age-counting system. In the old age-counting system, a baby is one year old on

- the day of its birth, and everyone adds one year at the beginning of the New Year. Thus, in an extreme case like Emperor Rokujō of the twelfth century, if a child is born on the 28<sup>th</sup> of the twelfth month, it would become a two-year-old on the first day of the New Year.
- 7 Arashiyama is famous for the beauty of its colored leaves in fall.
- 8 Though Prince Masaakira was registered as a son of Emperor Daigo, he was in reality a son of Priest Emperor Uda, who was Daigo's father. It was an open secret to all the courtiers of that time.
- 9 *Saikyūki* 西宮記 臨時乙 被物事「延長四年十月、天皇幸大井、雅明親王、年七歳、舞間、曲節不誤、今上、脱半臂給親王、々々拜舞」
- 10 Usually written as 栞 but here it is written as 阿古女 with the same phonetic pronunciation. 「次納蘇利、小舎人實資、著天冠舞衣、舞畢召實資於床子、脱阿古女衣賜之、左大臣不堪欣感起舞」 *Saikyūki*
- 11 *Saikyūki* 臨時ハ臨時楽：「前例給御衣者拜舞、今夜不拜、依少小之内、舞装難致拜禮歟」  
*Kokon Chomonjū* 古今著聞集 242:「康保三年十月七日、舞御覧有りけるに、小野宮の右大臣童にておはしけるが、天冠をして納蘇利を仕うまつり給ひけり、舞い終りて御倚子のもとにめして、御栞をたまはせければ、左大臣清慎公かしこまり悦び給ひて、立ちて舞ひ給ひけり、拜舞はなかりけり。ゆゑありけるにや。」
- 12 The author was a wife of Fujiwara no Kaneie 藤原兼家, a very influential politician in the tenth Century. Her diary on the whole depicted her unhappy married life, and this part about the performances of her only son (dancing and archery) was an unforgettable happy memory in her life. Two English translations of *Kagerō Nikki* 蜻蛉日記 are available:  
(1) *The Gossamer Years: the Diary of a Noblewoman of Heian Japan* by E. G. Seidensticker, published by C. E. Tuttle, 1964.  
(2) *Kagerō Diary* by Arntzen, Sonya, Michigan monographs in Japanese studies. No. 19. University of Michigan, Center for Japan Studies (June 1997)
- 13 As previously seen, if the first team won, *Ryōō* 陵王 was to be danced by a boy from the winning team, and if the second team, which shot later (後手), won, *Nasori* 納蘇利 was danced by a boy from the second team. Here, Michitsuna had been chosen to dance *Nasori* if the second team won. The following is a quote from Book Two of *The Gossamer Years*, pp. 80-81.  
The First Year of Tenroku (970)  
In the middle of the Third Month an archery meet, a most elaborate one, was held at court. My son was chosen by the After Party and everything was dropped in the excitement of rehearsals, particularly for the dances to be presented by the winners. Everything else was put aside. The house echoed with music, even down to the steps prescribed for receiving prizes. I found it all most impressive.  
On the Tenth the boy held a full rehearsal. Presents from the women's apartments and robes from the men were showered on O no Yoshimochi, the dance master. The Prince was in penance and sent his apologies, but his attendants all came. In the evening, at the end of the rehearsal, Yoshimochi did a butterfly dance. Someone gave him a yellow under-robe, pleasantly in keeping with the season and the occasion, I thought.  
On the Twelfth, the After Party planned a dress rehearsal. Since I had no archery range, they went to the Prince's. The junior officials were there in force, I heard, and Yoshimochi was buried with congratulatory gifts. I wondered how the boy would acquit himself, but late that night he was escorted home in triumph by the Prince and a great many others. The Prince, apparently with no concern for the strange impression it would create, came in behind my screen after a time and told me of the day's events.  
"The boy was most attractive and drew a great deal of praise," he said, "and his dance was extremely moving—everyone felt it. I have a couple of days of penance and won't be able to see to the preparations, but I shall come early on the morning of the meet to help him get ready."  
And even I, despondent though I usually am, was swept up in the happiness of the occasion.  
On the Fifteenth, the Prince came early as he had promised, and with him a great swarm of people to take care of the dancing robes and have last thoughts about the archery and all. Presently they went off with the boy and I spent the rest of the day wondering how everything would turn out. I was afraid all the toil over the dances would be wasted, for it was widely reported that the After Party made an unfortunate choice of archers and was certain to lose.  
The moon was bright that evening, and I left the shutters raised. Gradually they began to come back with reports of what had happened—he had shot so-and-so many points, and his opponent had been a certain captain of the Guards, and someone had failed badly, and someone else had shot well. I was by turns happy and sad. Finally it appeared that the After Party, doomed though it had been to defeat by all the prophets, had scored a series of hits and earned a draw.  
My nephew—he was about the same age as my son—danced in celebration a masked pantomime about a Chinese warrior. They had taken turns practicing their dances at my house and his. The boy danced next and made a remarkably good impression, I was told. He was given a robe by the Emperor.  
Presently the boy came home, riding with the "Chinese warrior" and escorted by the Prince. The Prince was most enthusiastic. The event had added much to his prestige, he repeated over and over again with great emotion, and all of the great figures present had been stirred by the boy's performance. He called in the archery tutor and loaded him with presents, and I forgot my unhappiness for a time in the general triumph. That evening and for the next two or three days, everyone I know, priests even, called and sent messengers to offer congratulations."
- 14 From *The Tale of Genji* translated by Royall Tyler 2001. Penguin Books p. 637.
- 15 Two English translations are available:  
(1) *The Okagami: A Japanese Historical Tale*, translation by J. K. Yamagiwa, published by Tuttle Publishing (October 1978).  
(2) *Okagami*. The great mirror: Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1027) and his times: a study and translation by Helen Craig McCullough, published in Tokyo by University of Tokyo Press.

For Fukutari's episode, see pp.180-181.

Japanese text: Shōgakukan Shinpen edition 34 大鏡 pp. 286-287.

- 16 *Gōke Shidai* 『江家次第』 Vol. 19 (殿上賭弓事, 「勝方亂聲無(舞力) 陵王…中略…負方舞納蘇利」)
- 17 *Hokuzansho* 北山抄 vol. 3 殿上賭射事「或以殿上小舍人為舞人、或又勝方舞後、召負方所儲舞童、令舞之」
- 18 *Chōya Gunsai* Vol.5 朝野群載 卷五朝儀下
- 19 It is not expressly written that Yugiri was the Commander of the Left, and therefore, he could have been the Commander of the Right; but we know he was the Commander of the Left because he hosted the winning team which was the Left. Also, Yugiri was primarily the Minister of the Right then, and when the Minister of the Right held a Commander title, he was usually the Commander of the Left (with a few exceptions in such cases as the Minister of the Left holding the title of Commander of the Left).  
 “Left” was superior to “Right.” Thus, the Minister of the Left was a higher position than the Minister of the Right, and Commander of the Left was higher than Commander of the Right. (Left and Right are the left and the right seen from the south-facing Emperor. An easy example should be the two plants in the imperial palace in Kyoto. The “sakura cherry tree of the Left Guard” stood to the east in the garden south of the Shishinden, the main building of the Palace, while the “tachibana citrus tree of the Right Guard” stood to the west.
- 20 Chapter The Perfumed Prince of *The Tale of Genji* translated by R. Tyler, p. 790.
- 21 *Hokuzan Shō* Vol. 3 (『北山抄』 卷三) 「天元三年、殿上賭弓、五度後勝、仍被延度、射手欲射之間、依無的、不能射、即為前勝、此事共無例、非理。」
- 22 Pp. 603-604 of *The Tale of Genji* translated by Royall Tyler, published by Penguin 2001. Japanese text: Shōgakukan Shinpen edition 23 (源氏物語④) p. 95.

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