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## POETICAL COLLECTION KAIFUSO: HISTORY, POLITICS AND POETICS

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*Abstract:* *Kaifuso*, the very first poetical collection of the verse by Japanese poets, dates back to the year 751 (Nara period) and had been composed prior to *Man'yōshū*. However, this collection of early kanshi isn't often analyzed as an important source for historical or poetical studies. The article attempts to demonstrate *Kaifuso*'s potential for academic studies in these fields and analyze not only poetical value of certain poems, but also political agenda of its compiler by taking a closer look at the traditional biographies of four princes, which are included in the collection.

*Keywords:* *Kaifuso*, kanshi, Nara period, traditional biography, poetical collection.

### ***Kaifuso: opinions, judgments, and points of view***

The *Kaifuso* poetical collection (懷風藻, 751) seems to be one of the least objectified written monuments of the Nara period (710-784), although there is no doubt about its significance for reconstructing the history of ancient Japan. Japanese researchers mostly consider *Kaifuso* from the literary point of view and describe the collection as “the first monument of literary thought in Japan” [Kaifuso... 1985, p. 3] or “the first literary work created in Japan” [Kaifuso 2000, p. 3], which is, of course, fair, considering that this collection of *kanshi* (漢詩) Chinese poetry appeared several years before the huge Anthology of Japanese poetry *Man'yōshū* (万葉集, 759). Japanese scholars view *Kaifuso* poetry

as “discipular” [Kaifuso 2000, p. 389–391], since Japanese poets were not writing in their native tongue but borrowed both the poetic form and the system of images characteristic of the Chinese tradition. A Japanese official living in the last quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century – the 8<sup>th</sup> century could hardly avoid writing poetry: this skill, same as the knowledge of the classic Chinese written language (*wenyan*), was a requirement in their position. Obviously, they were relying on *Wen Xuan* (Selected Works of Literature, first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century 文選) comprising works of 129 poets and covering the period from the 4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD [Duhovnaya kultura Kitaya. 2008, pp. 255–262].

While furthering the idea of *Kaifuso* as “discipular” poetry, researchers unavoidably deny the personal touch of poets (their personal “poetic voice”). Presumably, as of the *Kaifuso* creation date, one can still hardly speak of influence of individual Chinese poets on the work of Japanese authors, as there was influence of the *Wen Xuan* collection as a whole, which comprised poetry of various genres and epochs but was perceived as a homogenous teaching text. The modern academic view of Japanese *kanshi* as a derivative from Chinese poetry as well as Japanese *waka* can be traced back to much earlier traditional interpretations and has not formed overnight. The authoritative *Nihon Shishi* (History of Japanese Kanshi Poetry 日本詩史,) written by Emura Hokkai (1713–1788) in 1771 as probably the first end-to-end history of the genre contains the same idea. According to Hokkai, Japanese poets who composed their poems in the Chinese language were always about 200 years behind poetic trends of the Middle Kingdom [Nihon Shishi... 1991, p. 600]. For instance, Japanese poets of the Nara period were mostly inspired not by poems of the Tang period (618–907), but preferred works written in the periods of the Three Kingdoms, and Southern and Northern dynasties (the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> centuries), and even the influence of the early Tang poetry is deemed to be insignificant. In the first half of the Heian period (794–1185), *kanshi* poets were mostly guided by Tang’s Li Bo (701–762/63) and Bo Juyi (772–846); poetry of the Song dynasty was the guideline in the Muromachi period (1333–1568), and so on and so forth [Nihon Shishi... 1991, p. 31].

While *Nihon Shishi* is both a historical and poetological work, Hokkai is very cautious in his assessments: “It is very hard to judge *kanshi* and to choose the best. The ones confident in their rightness make biased conjectures. The ones trying to avoid harsh judgements become weak and pampered and try to please everyone. Besides, the awe of authority and might, and the state of being blinded by one’s interests, passions, and dislikes mislead both oneself and others. It is not possible to make a true judgment while choosing between [poems] of a younger brother of the Chu wang and the head of a remote county.” [Nihon Shishi... 1991, p. 154]. Giving the *Nihon Shishi* author his due, we should say that he deals with these problems by grouping authors by their social position (sovereigns, princes, aristocrats, Buddhist monks, etc.) and naming the best in each group. Modern students of *kanshi* are somewhat more categorical in their judgements. For example, the comments by Eguchi Takao, who translated *Kaifuso* into the modern Japanese language, often include statements like: “The poem is good <...> perhaps, the author lacked linguistic means of expression” [Kaifuso 2000, p. 255], or “The poem is well composed but the description is a bit too simple.” [Kaifuso 2000, p. 13], etc.

This article does not aim to assess the quality of poetry presented in this collection or the Chinese language skills of the Japanese officials; we would like to shift the emphasis from the formal aspect of research to its substance. A literary analysis of *Kaifuso* appeared to be extremely fruitful from the angle of finding quotations hidden in poems and fragments of prose included in the collection<sup>1</sup>, but it slightly deviates from the goal of revealing the Japanese element. In Russian Japanese studies, the importance of interdisciplinary approach in studying *Kaifuso* was demonstrated by the works of A.N. Meshcheryakov<sup>2</sup> and M.V. Toropygina<sup>3</sup>. In Japanese studies, a recent landmark event in the history of studying this monument

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<sup>1</sup> See more about the *Kaifuso* structure below.

<sup>2</sup> For example, such works by A.N. Meshcheryakov as [Meshcheryakov 2010], [Meshcheryakov 2010a], [Meshcheryakov 2010b]. A.N. Meshcheryakov partially translated the collection foreword and some poems.

<sup>3</sup> [Toropygina 2006] also presents a translation of 16 out of 116 *Kaifuso* poems and comments.

was the publication of the collection “Kaifuso. How Ideas about Nature Developed in Japan” [Kaifuso. Nihontekina shizen wa... 2008], which addressed various aspects of real functioning of the text in the historical context of Nara and subsequent periods. We think this is the most productive approach. To our mind, the language of the narrative and the poetic form of the collection were not an end in itself, but an instrument used by the Japanese political elite of the time to achieve various objectives, including as an element of political struggle. The main part of this article will try to analyze possible political motivations behind the monument, which become clearer when seen through the lens of the specific concept of the past (history) presented by *Kaifuso* and the key notions of the poetry.

### **Kaifuso poetic collection**

The *Kaifuso* poetic collection was composed in 751, which is known from its anonymous foreword. The *Shoku Nihongi* chronicle (Continuation of the Chronicles of Japan 続日本紀) [Shoku Nihongi 2005], which is the main source of information about the history of the Nara period, does not mention this event, as well as the creation of *Man'yōshū* – the chronicle recorded the appearance of texts sanctioned by the government. Neither *Kaifuso* nor *Man'yōshū* belonged to the *chokusenshu*, collections created on the emperor's orders. The first “imperial” *kanshi* collection, *Ryōunshū* (The Cloud-Borne Collection, 凌雲集) was commissioned in the Heian period, in 814. A specific feature of “imperially commissioned” texts, be it a poetic collection or a historical chronicle, is their succession to one another, which becomes clear from their titles<sup>4</sup>, they develop one another in terms of chronology and composition. The fact of “succession” is frequently indicated by their authors in forewords, and the “imperial commissioning” is demonstrated by formal features of the introduction to a collection, which is presented as a report of the official tasked with compiling the collection to the

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<sup>4</sup> This is true of historical chronicles called *rikkokushi* (六国史), “six state stories” and “imperial” *waka* collections.

sovereign. This is how the second state *kanshi* collection *Bunka Shureishu* (Collection of Literary Masterpieces 文華秀麗集, 818) begins: “Your subject, [Prince] Nakao says. *Ryounshu* was composed by the Mutsu governor, your subject Ono-no Minemori. It comprised 92 poems, from the first year of Enryaku [782] to the fifth year of Konin [814]. Less than four years have passed, but more poems were written, and their number exceeded one hundred” [Kaifuso... 1985, p. 192]. The *Ryounshu* foreword says nothing about the *Kaifuso* collection, but this does not mean that the latter was excluded from information exchange. Rather, this is evidence of specific features of the *chokusenshu* in general and the foreword genre in particular.

The *Kaifuso* foreword is anonymous, and the name of its author is yet to be established. The most probable candidates are Omi-no Mifune (722-785), a prominent politician and scholarly writer of the Nara period; official Fuji-no Hironari, whose poems finalize the collection; and statesman Isonokami-no Yakatsugu (729–781), who made a remarkable career (in 780 he was appointed senior state advisor, *dainagon*).

The possible authorship by Yakatsugu could be evidenced by the collection’s title. According to Kojima Noriyuki, the morpheme “so” (藻), which means a poetic collection, is never found in titles of Chinese collections, while *Kaifuso* mentions in the biography of his father, Isonokami-no Otomaro, the *kanshi* collection by Otomaro himself called *Kampiso* (銜悲藻) [Kaifuso... 1985, p. 6]. Ironically, the biography says that the collection “has survived until today.” [Kaifuso... 1985, p. 176]. Regretfully, this is not so, but the similarity of titles is obvious. Both texts contain the morpheme “so”; besides, the characters 銜 and 懷 have a similar meaning of “intimate, secret thoughts.” According to the biography of Yakatsugu given by *Shoku Nihongi*<sup>5</sup>, he was a follower of Buddhism. *Kaifuso* contains as many as four (out of 9) biographies of Buddhist monks, which could be an additional argument in favor of his authorship.

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<sup>5</sup> *Shoku Nihongi*: [781] Ten’o 1-6-24. Hereinafter references to the historical chronicle *Shoku Nihongi* are given through dates of a particular event. Ten’o 1-6-24 means 24th day of the 6th moon of the first Ten’o year.

Despite the existence of arguments for and against the authorship by each of the three persons, we think that the most probable author of *Kaifuso*, judging by the analysis of text of the foreword and biographies, was Omi-no Mifune, a grandson of Prince Otomo (648–672 rr.), a key author of the collection. We will say more about this later.

The collection comprised 120 poems by 64 authors, but only 116 of them survived<sup>6</sup>. All *kanshi* have formal elements of the Chinese *shi* poems: the equal number of feet in a line (penta- or hepta-syllabic), semantic parallelism, and observance of rhyming rules (only even lines are rhymed). There are 109 penta-syllabic poems, and seven hepta-syllabic ones. The *kanshi* have different number of lines, yet the Chinese tradition did not set limits on the poem length, either [Kravtsova 2001; Lisevitch 1979]. Penta-syllabic *kanshi* in *Kaifuso* include: 18 4-liners, 72 8-liners, six 10-liners, ten 12-liners, two 16-liners and one 18-liner. All poems are authored and are arranged in chronological order. Unlike the text of *Wen Xuan*, there are no thematic rubrics. The poets include medium- and high-ranked officials (the lowest rank is the junior sixth rank, upper grade, three persons; the highest rank is the posthumous senior first rank, two persons: Fujiwara-no Fuhito and Fujiwara-no Fusasaki), Buddhist monks, princes. Also, the collection includes three *kanshi* by Emperor Mommu. Most poems come from the imperial family and the Fujiwara clan. The age of 40 authors was given as of the date of their death. The ‘youngest’ author in *Kaifuso* was Prince Otsu (24), and the ‘oldest’ is a professor of the higher imperial school Tori-no Yasutsugu (81). Apart from poems, the collection includes prosaic pieces (the foreword and nine biographies) and several forewords to poems written as rhymed prose. All poems have titles, but they cannot be considered names of works, but rather indicate the theme, the cause, or the circumstances of the creation of the *kanshi*. Eighteen poems out of 116 have a sub-title which says “by the highest commission” (*osho*, 応詔). *Shoku Nihongi* contains information about

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<sup>6</sup> *Kaifuso* published in the Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei series [Kaifuso... 1985] comprises 120 poems, while the 1706 woodcut (Edition of the 2nd year of Hoei) on which this and subsequent publications of the collection were based, comprise 116. Four poems are missing in the earlier collection scroll (by Koremune-no Takatoki 1041).

sovereigns' feasts at which officials were ordered to write poems on given subjects<sup>7</sup>.

It is hard to describe the feasts as poetic tournaments because all participating poets were rewarded according to their court rank and there is no record of choosing the best poem. Perhaps, there was an element of game (which does not rule out competition) in composing *kanshi* during feasts, judging by forewords to some of the *Kaifuso* poems. For instance, the foreword to poem No. 65 (A feast on an autumn day in the mansion of Prince Nagaya honoring guests from Silla) written by Simotsukeno-no Asomi Mushimaro, praises qualities of the host and the beauty of his estate and invites to write poems with a given rhyme. Simotsukeno chose the character (before, previously; Jp. 前): “Dip your brushes in the ink, take the paper, and describe things with words. Express the sorrow of the westward movement in your flowery lines<sup>8</sup>. Preserve the fragrance of the Northern Liang<sup>9</sup>. Let each of you select one character, prepare, and speak up.” [Kaifuso... 1985, pp. 128-131].

May the sacred time be seven hundred!  
May the blessed reign last a millennium!  
Guests from afar are here with us,  
Long hair falling over their shoulders!

Autumnal cicadas buzzing in the foliage,  
Wild geese returning, winding between the clouds;  
Phoenix's is the only lonely song  
Sung as the strings make the sound of parting

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<sup>7</sup> See, for e.g. Shoku Nihongi: [728] Jingi 5-3-3: the sovereign made a feast on the bank of a winding river. Court officials of the rank five and above and writers were invited. They were ordered to compose laudatory songs. All participants were rewarded in accordance with their rank; Shoku Nihongi: [734] Tempyo 6-7-7: writers were ordered to compose poems on the occasion of the 7th day of the 7th moon (Tanabata), etc.

<sup>8</sup> Westward movement – return of the envoys to Silla, also a reference to autumn.

<sup>9</sup> The Wen Xuan was written in the period of the Chinese dynasty Liang (502–557); here the wish to write poems as beautiful as the ones written in the Liang principality.

聖時逢七百  
祚運啓一千  
況乃梯山客  
垂毛亦比肩

寒蟬鳴葉後  
朔鴈度雲前  
獨有飛鸞曲  
並入別離絃

Most of the *Kaifuso* poems were written on the occasion of imperial ceremonies – the sovereign’s decrees, accompanying the sovereign’s palanquin on a trip, hunts, or aristocratic feasts attended by envoys from the Korean state of Silla. There are numerous descriptions of nature, but it is hard to say that the landscape described by *kanshi* is realistic, it is rather a “symbolic space” [Toropygina 2006, p. 81] designed consistent with the system of images characteristic of the Chinese tradition. In other words, the personal experience of *kanshi* authors was rarely reflected in their poems. Researchers even doubt whether the Japanese of the time were familiar with chrysanthemum, the fragrance (and taste, in the case of ‘chrysanthemum wine’ in poems No 51, 71) of which is lauded in the 6<sup>th</sup> *kanshi* of the collection [Sato 2008].

We do not know who was deemed to be the best *Kaifuso* poet in the Nara period, but the Chinese language foreword to the first state-commissioned *waka* collection *Kokinwakashu* (905), written by Ki-no Yoshimochi (died in 919), is of certain interest in this respect: “After Prince Otsu composed the first poems in Chinese, those who were proficient in that art admired and imitated his style. The introduction of the Chinese writing system caused a change in our Japanese customs, which led in turn to the gradual decline of the Japanese poem”. [Kokin Wakashu 1985, p. 257]. Yoshimochi is mistaken – according to *Kaifuso* and the later tradition, the composition of *kanshi* begins with Prince Otomo, not Otsu. Opinions on whose poems were better also differ. Emura Hokkai wrote in *Nihon Shishi*: “In fact, the first author of Chinese poems was Prince Otomo, after him it was Prince Kawashima, and after

him Prince Otsu. <...> Although Prince Kawashima composed the [first] penta-syllabic 8-liner, and Otsu composed a hepta-syllabic poem, none of them were comparable with the talent of Otomo [Nihon Shishi... 1991, p. 45].

The author of *Kaifuso* does not prefer any of the authors and does not dwell on merits and flaws of poems, but mentions four poets and refers to their *kanshi* in the foreword: “The hidden dragon, the sovereign’s son<sup>10</sup>, swirled the cloud crane with the brush of wind, the flying phoenix, the sovereign<sup>11</sup>, sailed in a lunar boat along the foggy coast, counselor Shin lamented that his temples had turned gray<sup>12</sup>, and minister To<sup>13</sup> praised the wise reign” [Kaifuso... 1985, pp. 58-59], which could be seen as the recognition of high quality of the poems or special attention given to their authors.

### ***Kaifuso* political collection**

In our opinion, the author (or authors) of *Kaifuso* were guided by definite political reasons. This is particularly clear from four biographies of princes in the collection that emphasize the issue of succession and the “right” power transition. All biographies remind us of the events known as the Jinshin War (672), which is a “sore spot” of the early Japanese history and the outset of a long confrontation and fierce political struggle, which had various forms and manifestations, including the poetical one.

In 645, Prince Naka-no Oe, the future Emperor Tenji (reigned in 668-671), in front of Empress Kogyoku<sup>14</sup>, his mother, attacked an influential official, Soga-no Iruka<sup>15</sup> with a sword. The empress retired to

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<sup>10</sup> Prince Otsu, poem No 6.

<sup>11</sup> King Mommu, poem No. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Omiwa-no Takechimaro, poem No.18.

<sup>13</sup> Fujiwara-no Fuhito, poem No. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Empress Kogyoku (641-645), mother of Princes Naka-no Oe and Oama (Tenchi and Temmu), for the second time ascended the throne under the name of Empress Saimei (655-661).

<sup>15</sup> See episode description: Nihongi: [645] Kogyoku 4-6-12.

inner chambers of the palace and Naka-no Oe and his assistant, Nakatomi-no Kamatari (614–669) finished their business and killed the official. According to the mythical-historical chronicle *Nihon Shoki* (720), the prince killed Iruka because the latter “intended to tear down heavenly temples and to stop the line of succession to the Sun”.<sup>16</sup> So, one of the first deeds of the future emperor, who ruled the all under heaven from the Omi-Otsu Palace and was mostly known by his posthumous Chinese name given by historians of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Emperor Tenji (天智), the ‘Heavenly Sage’, was murder (See details about Tenji and Temmu in: [Rodin 2012]).

Death and blood were deemed to be the strongest sources of ritual impurity *kegare*, and sovereigns were supposed to avoid any contact with these [Rodin 2011, p. 19]. The killing of Soga-no Iruka was a blatant violation of the court protocol and the traditional notions of the allowed and the forbidden called Shintoism, because the sovereign’s chambers were exposed to ritual pollution. It was inadmissible to unsheathe a weapon in the empress’ presence. Prince Naka-no Oe intentionally broke these rules and had only one excuse: he did so to protect the imperial family and to preserve the right line of succession, “succession to the Sun.”

Prince Naka-no Oe and his uterine younger brother, Prince Oama (Emperor Temmu, 天武, Jp. ‘Heavenly Warrior’, reigned in 672–686), were involved in the most complicated intradynastic conflict, which lasted from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and began with the Jinshin War. Shortly before he died, Tenji appointed his son, Prince Otomo (Emperor Kobun, 671–672) as his successor, yet Otomo was overthrown by Prince Oama, who took the throne as Emperor Temmu. Until the reign of Emperor Konin (770–781), the throne was occupied exclusively by descendants of the Heavenly Warrior. He is known for significant social and political reforms. Before Temmu, sovereigns were called *ookimi*, while now the term *tenno* came into consistent use. In China, the term *tianhuang* meant the heavenly emperor

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<sup>16</sup> Nihongi: [645] Kogyoku 4-6-12.

or the Polar Star, which is located in the north of the sky. According to Confucian ideas, a reign should resemble the Polar Star, which is immobile, while other stars turn around it (See details about titles of Japanese sovereigns in; [Meshcheryakov 2004]). *Tianhuang*, the heavenly emperor and the supreme deity of the Taoist pantheon, lives in the heavenly palace and guides Taoist sages *zhenren* (*mahito* in Japanese). The *mahito* title was the most prestigious one in the titular system *yakusa-no kabane* established by Temmu in 684. In addition, Temmu intensified the development of ideological fundamentals of the state – a decree was issued to compose state chronicles and *Laws of Kiyomihara* (the text did not survive) [Rodin 2011, pp. 21-22]. The emphasis put by Temmu on the ideological aspect of power can be explained by the general course toward the sinicization of society (which continued the policy of Tenji) and the insufficient legitimacy of the sovereign. There were no strict succession rules, but the fact that a brother, not a son of Emperor Tenji took the throne was taken negatively in the historical perspective. For instance, everything was done in 781 to prevent the enthronement of a Temmu descendant, Prince Osabe, who had been designated as the crown prince by then. Prince Shirakabe, a descendant of Tenji, was enthroned in his stead, although his mother did not belong to the Japanese aristocracy, but came from the Takano clan, descendants of the royal family of Baekje [Rodin 2011, p. 22].

In our opinion, the dynastic conflict, which put Temmu and his descendants on the throne, was reflected by most written monuments of the 8th century [Rodin 2012, p. 286]. Authors of chronicles and collections had to keep several factors in mind. First of all, the text had to accommodate the demands of the client and the recipient: in case of chronicles, it was the sovereign representing the state and belonging to a particular branch of the ruling family. Secondly, the text had to accommodate the clans to which the authors and the hypothetical addressees, the Japanese court elites, belonged. Hence, we will not find an open expression of discontent with the reign of Tenji or Temmu, but an analysis of the structure and the symbolic system of the said texts reveals evaluations of their actions.

Although Emperor Tenji was known as the killer of Soga-no Iruka and suffered a defeat from the Korean state of Silla and the Chinese Tang dynasty in 663, he was remembered not for his military deeds but for introducing ideas of Chinese learning and promoting literature, including Chinese poetry *kanshi*. Tenji's image of a perfectly wise sovereign is created by the *Kaifuso* foreword amongst other documents: "<...> It was so until the previous sovereign, Omi [Tenji] received the mandate<sup>17</sup>. He furthered deeds of the sovereign and explained the high intentions; his path accorded with the Heaven and the Earth, and his merits illumed the universe<sup>18</sup>. He also believed that there was no better way to harmonize manners and adjust customs than the written language, and that learning was the shortest way to virtue. He founded a school, called for the talented, established five ceremonies, and endorsed a hundred laws. The laws, regulations, rules, and bans had no precedents since the ancient times by their scope and breadth. The three foundations<sup>19</sup> were calm and shiny, and the four seas were thriving." [Kaifuso... 1985, pp. 58-61].

The *Kaifuso* collection seems to have been composed under the control of the Fujiwara clan, whose founder, Nakatomi-no Kamatari, was a close associate of Tenji. The Fujiwara clan was discontent with the enthronement of descendants of Emperor Temmu and his spouse Jito. Apart from the solid Tenji-Kamatari association, the rejection of Temmu might have been caused by the execution of Kamatari's brother, Kane<sup>20</sup>, during the Jinshin War.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the position of the Fujiwara clan was endangered many times, but the biggest trouble was caused by a grandson of Temmu and a son of Prince Takechi, Prince Nagaya. After the death of Fujiwara-no Fuhito, the second son of Kamatari, the career growth of the clan

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<sup>17</sup> Mandate – 命 – means the heavenly mandate.

<sup>18</sup> 宇宙 (uchu in Japanese) – literally - "eaves and rafters", also the entire space, Heaven and Earth, the past, the present and the future. The word has both spatial and temporal connotations.

<sup>19</sup> Two interpretations are possible: three foundations (Earth, the man, and Heaven), and three groups of people (talented, ordinary, and silly), yet, considering the cosmogonic description, the first variant looks more preferable.

<sup>20</sup> See: Nihongi: [672] Temmu 1-8-25.

members slowed down, and Prince Nagaya took the top position in the official hierarchy in 724 [Meshcheryakov 2010b, p. 307]. The ambiguity of relations between members of the Fujiwara clan and Prince Nagaya is evidenced by the *Kaifuso* collection and the *Shoku Nihongi* chronicle. To our mind, *Kaifuso* may imply the inappropriate behavior of Nagaya and his unrighteous desire to compete with the sovereign.

First of all, in most cases Prince Nagaya's name is written Chinese-style, as *Zhang wang* (長王),<sup>21</sup> which, on the one hand, derives from the characteristics of the collection and, on the other hand, describes Nagaya as a *wang*, i.e a tributary of China, rather than a pillar of the Japanese sovereign. We should also note that the character 王 is often read by researchers as *ookimi* and could serve as a respectful name of an aristocrat or a prince. Secondly, many poems written at poetic assemblies in the prince's mansion ascribe to him qualities which are characteristic only of a ruling sovereign: virtue-*toku*, peacemaking capacities, while the foreword to Poem No. 65 (Feast on an autumn day in the mansion of Prince Nagaya honoring guests from Silla) claims that he set "the unity of written language and the width of roads." Meanwhile, members of the Fujiwara clan were extremely careful about possible interpretations of their actions as an encroachment on the rights of the imperial family. For instance, Fujiwara-no Fuhito rejected the position of the Chief Minister (which was given to him posthumously) because the position had only been given to descendants of sovereigns in the past. According to *Shoku Nihongi*, Nagaya was accused of sorcery and sentenced to death in 729; he was acquitted in 738 after Tachibana-no Moroe's accession to power and another weakening of the position of the Fujiwara clan [Meshcheryakov 2010b, p. 309]. Naturally, we can hardly speak of like-mindedness of all members of the vast Fujiwara clan, which split into four houses in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but the entire clan was rejecting descendants of Temmu, in this case, Prince Nagaya, and glorifying Tenji.

The three princes whose biographies were included in *Kaifuso* were descendants of Tenji, and only one of Temmu. The collection begins with

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<sup>21</sup> See, for e.g. poems No. 50 and 51.

a biography of Prince Otomo (Emperor Kobun). Researchers describe Otomo as the most talented of Tenji's children. He became Japan's first Chief Minister in 670 and headed the State Council Dajokan, which was founded a year later [Nihongi: 671, Tenchi 10-1-5]. A translation of his biography follows:

«The crown prince was the elder son of Emperor Omi<sup>22</sup>. He had a remarkable constitution and a profound and sharp mind. His eyes were bright and illuminating everything around him. Tang Ambassador Liu Degao said when he saw him, 'This prince looks different from other people, he is not from this country!' One night, the prince saw a dream, in which the heaven opened, an old man in red approached the prince and gave him the Sun; he raised it above his head and put into the prince's hands. Suddenly, someone squeezed under the man's arm, stole the Sun, and got away. The prince was very excited when he woke up and asked Inner Minister Fujiwara<sup>23</sup> for an interpretation. He sighed and said, "I am afraid that after 10,000 years of the sacred reign<sup>24</sup> a deceiver will seek to ascend the throne. I do not want this to happen. Your subject has heard that there are no favorites on the Path of Heaven, and that Heaven helps only those who do good. I am asking for multiplying the prince's virtue-*toku* with his deeds. Then there will be no disasters and misfortunes. I have a daughter, and all I wish is that she becomes your spouse and helper". They soon became family, and it was wonderful.

As soon as the prince reached the age of service, he was appointed Chief Minister and he dealt with hundreds of matters. The crown prince learned a lot, he was talented in literature and art of war. While dealing with 10,000 matters, he always won respect and revered awe of officials. He was appointed crown prince at the age of 23. He invited and took in many learned men. The prince had a bright mind and honored teachings of the ancients since his young days. Whenever he picked up a brush, he created a literary work, and whenever he talked, an academic dispute

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<sup>22</sup> Tenji

<sup>23</sup> Kamatari.

<sup>24</sup> The Tenji reign is implied.

began. Contemporaries who took part in those disputes were stunned by his erudition. Days passed, but his poetic talent was only improving. The prince lost the heavenly mandate during the Jinshin War. He was 25 years old.” [Kaifuso... 1985, pp. 68-70].

The biography praises Otomo and accuses Temmu of usurping the throne, calling him a ‘deceiver’. Notably, a prediction of this event is ascribed to Kamatari, but he failed to prevent Prince Otomo from losing the heavenly mandate. The biography is followed by the prince’s poem, which lauds the virtue of Tenji:

The sovereign’s radiance shines as the Sun and the Moon!  
The emperor’s virtue-*toku* embraces Heaven and Earth!  
Three fundamentals of the great world are thriving!  
Ten thousand countries feel humbled as subjects.

皇明光日月  
帝德載天地  
三才並泰昌  
萬國表臣義

*Kaifuso* also gives a positive description of Prince Kawashima, the second son of Tenji, and Prince Kadono, a grandson of Tenji and a son of Otomo. A translation of his biography follows:

“Prince Kawashima was the second child of Emperor Omi<sup>25</sup>. He had a calm and generous temper and graceful manners. Soon enough, Prince Otsu and he agreed not to act against each other. Learning that Tsu<sup>26</sup> was plotting a revolt, Shima<sup>27</sup> reported treason. The sovereign appreciated his loyalty, but friends said he did a bad thing. Learned men are still undecided what to think of it. I think that a subject must serve the public cause and forget about personal affections, while opposition to the master

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<sup>25</sup> Tenji.

<sup>26</sup> Otsu.

<sup>27</sup> Kawashima.

and parents contravenes virtue. I still doubt that he blackened his friend without trying to reason first. [Kawashima] died in the rank of shodaisan<sup>28</sup>. He was 35 years old. [Kaifuso... 1985, pp. 72-73]

Kawashima had “a calm and generous temper and graceful manners” and was loyal to the sovereign. The text indicates that Kawashima was a friend of Prince Otsu, the third son of Temmu, but informed the sovereign about the intentions of his friend, who was allegedly plotting a coup. The authors of the collection speak in defense of the Tenji’s descendant: “We still doubt that he blackened his friend without trying to reason first.” Their stance is completely clear – a personal pronoun is used in this text, which is extremely rare for such monuments. There is no direct negative description of Prince Otsu. It is only mentioned that he “was confused” by slander of the “nasty monk” from Silla and “plotted to break the law.” The prince’s biography follows:

“The prince was the elder son of Emperor Kiyomihara<sup>29</sup>. He was handsome, had a robust constitution, a majestic temper, and vast knowledge. He loved learning since he was young, he knew a lot, and he composed poems well. He grew older, became keen on the art of war, gained strength, and mastered the use of his sword. His morals turned loose. He disregarded the law and bent his knees to express respect for warriors, so many of those people served the prince. There was a monk from Silla called Gyoshin, who interpreted heavenly signs and told fortune. This is what he told the prince, ‘A crown prince differs from a subject by his constitution, and I am afraid he won’t be able to preserve himself if he stays in the low rank for so long despite such qualities.’ This is why [Otsu] dared to plot a revolt. He was confused by slander and intended to break the law. Alas, how sad! He had remarkable talents but did not use loyalty and filial duty to preserve himself. He became close with a nasty monk, was sentenced to death, and took his life. This is why ancient wise men showed restraint in their communication with

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<sup>28</sup> Corresponds to the senior rank 5 of the upper level

<sup>29</sup> Emperor Kiyomihara is Temmu

friends. There is a profound meaning to this, if you think on it. He was 24 years old.” [Kaifuso... 1985, pp. 73-75].

Once again, the author says “Alas, how sad! He had remarkable talents but failed his loyalty and filial duty.” An attempt to take the throne was the gravest crime in the eyes of Japanese elites and a weighty argument in favor of eliminating the potential rebel. To our mind, it is also true that helping the correct transition of throne was the ultimate service to the state. A confirmation to this is found in the biography of Prince Kadono, a grandson of Tenji:

“The prince was a grandson of Emperor Omi, and the senior son of Crown Prince Otomo. His mother was the senior daughter of Emperor Kiyomihara, princess of the blood royal Tochi. His nobility was comprehensive, and his manners were delicate. He was stunningly beautiful, and his insight was remarkable. His “wood”<sup>30</sup> was worthy to be a pillar, and his “earth”<sup>31</sup> combined merits of the sovereign and his mother’s clan. He was learned from the young age and acquired a profound knowledge of the canon and historical works. He liked to write poetry, and his poems were outstanding. He also mastered the art of painting. Being a direct grandson of Emperor Kiyomihara, he was granted the fourth big grade of the *jo* rank<sup>32</sup> and was appointed the Minister of Governance. After Prince Takechi<sup>33</sup> died, the widowed empress invited all princes and officials from all ministries to the Forbidden Chambers to appoint a heir to the Sun. All subjects selfishly presented themselves and many reasons were given in a chaotic manner. The prince stepped forward and said, ‘Since the age of gods, it has been a law of our state that the heavenly throne is inherited by children and grandchildren. So, as soon as we give the power to brothers, there will be unrest. I am humbly asking you if anyone can foretell Heaven’s will?

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<sup>30</sup> Wood means personal characteristics.

<sup>31</sup> Earth means he comes from a noble family.

<sup>32</sup> Corresponds to the junior fifth rank of the lower level.

<sup>33</sup> Temmu’s son.

But speaking about human affairs, the sacred throne must be inherited in a natural way. Can anyone speak against this?’ Then Prince Yuge<sup>34</sup> wanted to speak from his seat, but Prince [Kadono] scolded him, and he decided not to. The widowed empress approved of his opinion on the state structure. By a special decree, she granted the prince the senior fourth rank and appointed him Minister of Personnel. He died at the age of 37.” [Kaifuso... 1985, pp. 81-83].

This biography directly accused Temmu and his descendants of violating the order of “succession to the Sun,” while a descendant of Tenji is presented as a guarantor of the “right” transition of throne. His speech about a certain “law established in the age of gods,” which says that the throne could be handed only to one’s children but not brothers to avoid unrest, is indicative. There is no such law in the legislative codes of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but it could be one of the “eternal laws” of Tenji, to which sovereigns refer in their *semmyo* orders. In the eyes of Temmu’s descendants, this statement meant the absence of legitimacy, because the Heavenly Warrior was a brother of Tenji and the person who initiated the murder of his son. Speaking of the hypothetical author of *Kaifuso* in this political context, we believe he was one of the people feeling discontent or even antipathy towards the Temmu dynastic line and closely related to the Tenji line. The most suitable candidate is Omi-no Mifune, a grandson of Prince Otomo. It is not accidental that the collection starts with the biography and poems of Otomo, which could be more than a mere poetical birthright.

In our opinion, it is allowable to speak of *Kaifuso* as a monument of political thought, which reflected the attitude of its authors to the enthronement of the Temmu dynastic line. The attitude to the reign of the Heavenly Warrior and his descendants was negative, which is proven by the contents of the biographies and poems of the collection. Naturally, not all poems in this monument are related to politics, but when they speak about the beauty of the world or nature, they not just express an

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<sup>34</sup> Younger brother of Prince Takechi, Temmu’s son.

esthetic or lyrical sentiment of the observer but also suggest a model of the ideal world, which is correctly governed and therefore beautiful. A “sage”, not a “warrior” was capable of the right reign, and rhymed lines were the most preferable instrument of keeping harmony and the right order of things, as well as an indicator of public stability.

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