



Project
MUSE[®]

Today's Research. Tomorrow's Inspiration.

Songs of the Righteous Spirit: “Men of High Purpose” and Their Chinese Poetry in Modern Japan

MATTHEW FRALEIGH
Brandeis University

THE TERM “MEN OF HIGH PURPOSE” (*shishi* 志士) is most commonly associated with a diverse group of men active in a wide range of pro-imperial and nationalist causes in mid-nineteenth-century Japan.¹ In a broader sense, the category of *shishi* embraces not only men of scholarly inclination, such as Fujita Tōko 藤田東湖, Sakuma Shōzan 佐久間象山, and Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰, but also the less erudite samurai militants who were involved in political assassinations, attacks on foreigners, and full-fledged warfare from the 1850s through the 1870s. Before the Meiji Restoration, the targets of *shishi* activism included rival domains and the Tokugawa shogunate; after 1868, some disaffected *shishi* identified a new enemy in the early Meiji oligarchy (a group that was itself composed of many former *shishi*). Although they

I have presented portions of my work on this topic at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Boston, March 27, 2007, as well as at colloquia at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Brandeis University. On each occasion, I have benefited from the comments and questions of audience members. I would also like to thank in particular the two anonymous reviewers of the manuscript, whose detailed comments have been immensely helpful.

¹ I use Thomas Huber’s translation of the term *shishi* as “men of high purpose”; his article provides an excellent introduction to several major *shishi* actions in the 1860s. See Thomas Huber, “Men of High Purpose: and the Politics of Direct Action, 1862–1864,” in *Conflict in Modern Japanese History: The Neglected Tradition*, ed. Tetsuo Najita and Victor Koschmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 107–27.

clearly disagreed on policies (indeed Sakuma Shōzan was cut down by another *shishi*'s sword), this motley group of men had in common an earnest sense of mission, an intense concern for the fate of the land, and a willingness to sacrifice themselves for their beliefs.

Many Japanese *shishi* were also bound together by their penchant for producing Chinese poetry (*kanshi* 漢詩). A naïve observer might be forgiven for finding the large body of *kanshi* composed by Japanese *shishi* at first somewhat perplexing. Why should a group of patriotic, sometimes jingoistic, and occasionally outright xenophobic young Japanese have chosen to couch their most heartfelt affirmations of personal integrity and their most keenly felt expressions of fidelity to the Japanese polity in a foreign language, literary Chinese? Of course, any assumption about the medium being “foreign” is misguided, for by the time the *shishi* emerged in the nineteenth century, literary Chinese had come to enjoy a privileged status in Japan as the preferred language of learning and public discourse for men of their social station. Japanese writers had been composing prose and poetry in literary Chinese (*kanshibun* 漢詩文) for over a millennium; in this sense it had long been domesticated.² Yet the prevalence of *kanshibun* as a form of discourse that penetrated a wide range of social strata was new to the late Tokugawa period. For most of Japanese history, the ability to compose in literary Chinese had been the province of a relatively narrow subset of its populace. As Saitō Mareshi has recently noted, the Kansei Reforms of the late eighteenth century ushered in institutional changes at both the national and domain levels that transformed the status of literary Chinese from a specialized or elite form of learning into a framework of knowledge held to be constitutive of learning itself. When Zhu Xi Confucianism was declared the state orthodoxy in 1790 and schools teaching it received official sanction, proficiency in the reading and writing of literary Chinese spread throughout the realm

² On Japan's rich *kanshibun* tradition, see Burton Watson's *Japanese Literature in Chinese*, 2 vols. (Columbia University Press, 1975–76); Judith Rabinovitch and Timothy Bradstock, *An Anthology of Kanshi (Chinese Verse) by Japanese Poets of the Edo Period (1603–1868)* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997); and *Dance of the Butterflies: Chinese Poetry from the Japanese Court Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell East Asia Series, 2005). See also Rabinovitch and Bradstock's detailed study of *kanshi* by amateur poets in the early nineteenth century and the spread of *kanshi* composition beyond elite circles, *The Kanshi Poems of the Ozasa Tanzaku Collection: Late Edo Life through the Eyes of Kyoto Townsmen* (Kyoto: Nichibunken, 2002).

and across the social spectrum to an unprecedented extent, especially among those who wished to be seen as educated members of society.³ Thus, although *kanshi* had long served as a vehicle for poetic discourse on overtly political topics of the sort that were rarely addressed in the courtly *waka* tradition, the early nineteenth century brought both the *kanshi* form and this sort of political expression within the reach of a much broader portion of the population. Specifically it saw the creation of a category of individuals for whom such engagement was of paramount importance.

For many of the *shishi* activists who emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, the production of poetry in Chinese was co-extensive with their identity as earnest and upright men who were committed to the service of the state. When composing *kanshi*, they could integrate themselves into a larger epistemic order: they used the language and rhetoric of great statesmen of the past to declare their intentions and often drew explicit analogies between themselves and the heroes of Chinese antiquity.⁴ *Kanshi* composition also played an important role in forging connections among the *shishi*. On one level, a shared interest in composing and exchanging poems created lateral bonds between individual *shishi*, strengthening their sense of camaraderie and common purpose. On another level, links between Japanese *shishi* became the focus of verse composition itself, and the contents of *shishi* poetry became more self-referential. Although the intertextuality of Japanese *kanshi* composition vis-à-vis Chinese precedents is readily apparent and frequently the subject of scholarly attention, the intertextuality among Japanese *kanshi*, especially those of the early modern period, also deserves note. In this paper, I argue that from the late Edo period onward the production of Chinese verse furnished the *shishi* with essential textual support for articulating their identity and intention. As the corpus of Japanese *shishi* poetry grew, it enabled them to situate themselves within an increasingly contemporaneous and localized discursive sphere. The naturalization of *shishi* poetry in Chinese thus happened not because

³ Saitō Mareshi 齋藤希史, *Kanbunmyaku to kindai Nihon: mō hitotsu no kotoba no sekai* 漢文脈と近代日本: もう一つのことばの世界 (Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2007), pp. 19–24.

⁴ On the formation of *shi* self-consciousness within East Asia, see Saitō Mareshi, “Kanjiken toshite no Higashi Ajia” 漢字圏としての東アジア, *Daikōkai* 大航海 66 (April 2008), pp. 77–85.

the poems ceased to be Chinese in linguistic form or orientation, but because the *shishi* were increasingly able to interpolate themselves into a referential landscape that was grounded domestically. By examining the poems of the Japanese *shishi*, I shall show how *kanshi* could simultaneously maintain its status as poetry in Chinese and serve aims that were entirely Japanese.

The Origins of the *shishi*

The *shishi* emerged in Japan as a significant force only after Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival in 1853, although scholars have retrospectively included some earlier figures in the category. In particular, they often cited three men who were active in the late eighteenth century as forerunners of the mid-nineteenth-century *shishi*: Hayashi Shihei 林子平 (1738–1793), Takayama Hikokurō 高山彦九郎 (1747–1793), and Gamō Kunpei 蒲生君平 (1768–1813). Collectively known as the “Three Great Gentlemen of the Kansei Era [1789–1801]” (Kansei no sankishi 寛政の三奇士), these three championed such issues as coastal defense and imperial predominance. They composed poetry that was often didactic in tone, as the following *kanshi* by Hayashi Shihei illustrates:

| | |
|---------|--|
| 海外萬國布如星 | The myriad countries across the seas spread out like stars; |
| 覬覦切奪他政刑 | Always seeking to wrest the reins of rule away from others. |
| 廟堂會無防邊策 | In our halls of state, none has offered plans to protect the borders; |
| 爲說海防濟生靈 | And thus I urge naval defense to safeguard our people. ⁵ |

The poetry of the “Three Great Gentlemen” shares key features with later *shishi* poetry, such as a perception of foreign threats to Japanese sovereignty and a strong sense of national, often imperial, pride. These forerunners' nationalistic concerns and their committed political activism (Hayashi, for example, was placed under house arrest for his fervent advocacy of coastal defense) resonated with those of the

⁵ Cited in Takano Tatsuyuki 高野辰之, *Shishi bungaku* 志士文學 (Tōkyōdō, 1942), pp. 6–7; and Sakata Shin 坂田新, ed., *Shishi: Fujita Tōko, Sakuma Shōzan, Yoshida Shōin, Hashimoto Sanai, Saigō Takamori* 志士: 藤田東湖・佐久間象山・吉田松陰・橋本左内・西郷隆盛, *Edo Kanshisen* 江戸漢詩選, vol. 4 (Iwanami Shoten, 1995), p. 324.

mid-nineteenth-century *shishi*, many of whom revered them and made reference to them in their poetry.

Yet the term *shishi* (Ch. *zhishi*) itself has ancient roots; the word originates in a line from the Confucian *Lunyu* (*Analects*):

子曰：志士仁人無求生以害仁、有殺身以成仁。

The Master said: “Gentlemen of high purpose and men of benevolence never cling to life at the risk of harming their benevolence; but they may lose their lives in the cause of achieving benevolence.”⁶

In his *Lunyu jizhu* 論語集註 (Collected notes on the *Analects*), Zhu Xi attempted to clarify the meaning of the term *shishi* as it was used in this passage from the *Analects*:

A *shishi* is a gentleman who has a purpose (志士、有志之士). A man of benevolence is a man whose virtue is complete. If principle demands that he die and yet he clings to life, he will not be at peace in his heart, for to do so would harm the virtue of his heart. If he dies when it is time for him to die, then his heart is at peace and his virtue is complete.⁷

Because Song Neo-Confucianism had received strong endorsement from the shogunate during the Kansei Reforms, Zhu Xi’s interpretation was most influential on nineteenth-century Japanese samurai. What is particularly important about Zhu Xi’s explication is, first, his postulation that there are times when it is appropriate for a man to lay down his life, and, second, his assertion that the two defining characteristics of the “gentleman of high purpose” are an ability to discern when this time has come and a resolve to act accordingly.

The connection between single-minded determination and laying one’s life on the line was underscored by the fact that the terms meaning “intention” or “purpose” (*shi* 志) and “death” (*shi* 死) have identical Japanese pronunciations. In light of this coincidence, a few nineteenth-century *shishi* and various subsequent commentators have dryly suggested that the first *shi* in *shishi* could just as well be written 死 instead of 志, to yield a “gentleman resigned to die” (*shishi* 死士).⁸ Although the

⁶ The quotation comes from the *Analects*, XV.9.

⁷ Zhu Xi, *Lunyu jizhu*, quoted in *Lunyu duben* 論語讀本, ed. Jiang Boqian 蔣伯潛 (Taipei: Qiming Shuju, n.d.), p. 236.

⁸ Kumoi Tatsuo, for example, used the phrase *shishi* 死士 in a *kanshi*; see Shimaoka Akira [also known as Shimaoka Shin] 嶋岡晨, *Shishitachi no uta* 志士たちの詩くうた (Kōdansha, 1979), pp. 94–95; Sakata Shin, *Shishi*, p. 322.

homophony may appear accidental, the connection between the two *shi* was implicit in the *Analects* passage and made unambiguous by Zhu Xi. Moreover, through a further connection that was fortuitously forged in the translation process, the *shishi* became intimately associated with yet another *shi*: 詩, indicating Chinese poetry—for the *shishi* were not only “gentleman resigned to die,” but also gentlemen who were obliged to compose poetry commemorating the occasion.⁹ Although in standard usage the term *shishi* typically refers exclusively to men, this sort of poetic expression was not entirely a masculine enterprise, as the works of *waka* poet Matsuo Taseko 松尾多勢子 (1811–1894) and *kanshi* poet Yanagawa Kōran 梁川紅蘭 (1804–1879) demonstrate.¹⁰ Notwithstanding such examples, *shishi* poetry—whether in Japanese or Chinese—is overwhelmingly masculine in tone and often strikingly homosocial.

The first anthologies of *shishi* poetry began to appear in Japanese bookstores several years before the Meiji Restoration.¹¹ *Seishin itchū* 精神一注 (Singularly focused spirits) was published in Kyoto in 1862, and over the next few years, a handful of small collections appeared. Then, in the final months of Keiō 4 (1868), a series titled *Junnan zenshū* 殉難全集 (Complete works of martyrdom) was inaugurated and continued to appear in installments during the first two years of the Meiji era (1868–1869). With *Junnan zenshū*, anthologies of *shishi* poetry reached a new level of breadth and comprehensiveness. The first volume, which contained compositions by seventy-seven poets martyred in the fight against the shogunate, made it explicit that a defining theme of the genre was self-sacrifice; several works soon followed in a similar vein.¹² A large number of poems in such collections were said to be their authors’ valedictory compositions, written as they steeled themselves to meet a certain death. As Tanikawa Keiichi has pointed out,

⁹ Of course, the link between *shi* (intention) and *shi* (poetry) was as old as the *Book of Documents*, in which the famous dictum “poetry articulates what is on the mind intently” (*shi yan zhi* 詩言志) appears; see Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge: Council of East Asian Studies Harvard University, 1992), pp. 26–29.

¹⁰ On Matsuo Taseko, see Anne Walthall, *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman: Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). A selection of *kanshi* by poet Yanagawa Kōran appears in Iritani Sensuke 入谷仙介, ed., *Rai San'yō, Yanagawa Seigan* 頼山陽・梁川星巖, *Edo shijin senshū* 江戸詩人選集, vol. 8 (Iwanami Shoten, 1990).

¹¹ Koizumi Tōzō 小泉荃三, *Ishin shishi kin'ō shiika hyōshaku* 維新志士勤王詩歌評釈 (Kyoto: Ritsumeikan Shuppanbu, 1938), pp. 325–32.

¹² The series includes *Junnan zensō* 殉難前草, *Junnan kōsō* 殉難後草, *Junnan isō* 殉難遺草, and *Junnan zokusō* 殉難續草. Some volumes include a separate section of poems written by women, often the wives of the martyred men.

even when the poems did not explicitly appear under a heading such as “*Jisei*” 辭世 (On leaving the world), their presence in anthologies like the *Junnan zenshū* series facilitated a particular mode of readerly engagement with the texts. In using the word “martyrdom” in their titles, in organizing compositions by poet’s year of death, or in focusing on the poet’s sacrifice in their prefaces, these anthologies implied a paradigm by which readers might encounter and evaluate the poems. As a result, readers might well have been encouraged to interpret each composition as the poet’s parting words and to seek out signs of the poet’s undiminished fervor within its lines.¹³

Valedictory poems were not all that the *shishi* wrote, but even their non-valedictory poems often reflect a preoccupation with death. Frequently, the *shishi*’s poem served as a means of affirming his “do-or-die” resolve. It was in this spirit that Takasugi Shinsaku 高杉晋作 (1839–1867) composed the following poem in 1865, when he accompanied the men of his Kiheitai militia to a newly completed memorial for their fallen comrades at Sakurayama:

八月六日招魂場祭事與奇兵隊
諸士謁之此日軍裝行軍如出軍式

ON THE SIXTH DAY OF THE EIGHTH MONTH,
THERE WAS A SERVICE CARRIED OUT AT THE
MEMORIAL FOR THE WAR DEAD. WITH SEVERAL
MEMBERS OF THE KIHEITAI MILITIA, I WENT TO OBSERVE IT.
TODAY, WE MARCHED IN OUR UNIFORMS AS THOUGH
PARTICIPATING IN A TROOP SEND-OFF.

猛烈奇兵何所志 Bold and fierce are the militia soldiers—and
what is their intention?
要將一死報邦家 Each one offers himself, repaying the nation
with his death.
可欣名遂功成後 Delightful! When their fame is achieved and
their merits are complete,
共作招魂場上花 They will be flowers adorning the memorial to
these fallen souls.¹⁴

¹³ See Tanikawa Keiichi 谷川恵一, “Shi no arika: shishitachi no shiika” 詩のありか: 志士たちの詩歌, *Bungaku zenshū* 9.4 (1998): 51–55.

¹⁴ Takasugi Shinsaku *zenshū* 高杉晋作全集, ed. Hori Tetsusaburō 堀哲三郎 (Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 1974), 2:498. Tominari Hiroshi 富成博 has raised questions about the

The first couplet of this poem makes it clear that the Kiheitai men had no “intention” other than “death” in the service of the country. A major means for articulating such aims and achieving the fame that Takasugi alludes to in the second couplet was the composition of poetry. One index of the tight connection between the *shishi* and poetry, especially Chinese poetry, is the fact that some of the poems selected for inclusion in the anthologies are the only known works by the poet to whom they are attributed. This suggests that even those *shishi* who were not particularly fond of composing poetry were motivated to prepare at least one verse that might serve as testament to their resolve. They thus participated in a longstanding tradition of valedictory poetry by soldiers, monks, and haiku poets.¹⁵ But such cases also raise the question whether the said *shishi* was in fact the composer of the poem attributed to him. Some commentators have speculated, for example, that the following poem, which has been conventionally attributed to Sakamoto Ryōma, who wrote no other *kanshi*, is a forgery:

| | |
|---------|--|
| 皇路傾危事々難 | The imperial way declines into crisis, and affairs grow difficult; |
| 奸臣黠虜覆乾坤 | Venal vassals and crafty foreign curs have turned the world upside down. |
| 憂邦烈士後先歿 | The noble men who lament their country perish one after another; |
| 自愧余生在柴門 | And I stand ashamed, living out my days behind a rustic gate. ¹⁶ |

The absence of evidence that the putative author regularly wrote Chinese poetry has, in other words, prompted some scholars to wonder if the dead may be the beneficiary of posthumous poetic ventriloquism carried out by anonymous others who felt a need to provide every *shishi* with a *shi*. Whether Sakamoto Ryōma was the author of this poem or not, in the prevailing climate of opinion, the *shi* form was intimately linked to the *shishi*.

chronological order assigned by the *Zenshū* editors; see his *Takasugi Shinsaku: shi to shōgai* 高杉晋作: 詩と生涯 (San'ichi Shobō, 1992), p. 167.

¹⁵ See Yoel Hoffmann, *Japanese Death Poems* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1986).

¹⁶ Quoted in Shimaoka, *Shishitachi no uta*, p. 101. Doi Haruo 土居晴夫, a historian who has published extensively on Sakamoto Ryōma, concludes that all *kanshi* attributed to Ryōma are forgeries; see *Sakamoto Ryōma zenshū* 坂本龍馬全集, ed. Miyaji Saichirō 宮地佐一郎 (1978; revised and enlarged edition, Kōfūsha Shuppan, 1980), p. 406.

The *shishi* and Their Chinese-Language Poetry

My focus here is on the Chinese poetry composed by the *shishi*, but it would be erroneous to characterize *kanshi* as their only mode of expression. Several wrote both *kanshi* and *tanka*, and a much smaller number experimented with *hokku* and *chōka*.¹⁷ The *kanshi* by Takasugi Shinsaku on visiting the memorial at Sakurayama is a good example of such linguistic multiplicity, for he paired it with a *tanka* in a piece of calligraphy he wrote on the same occasion:

帛らわる人に入るべき身なりしにとむらう人となるぞはづかし

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>tomurawaru</i> | It should be our fate |
| <i>hito ni iru beki</i> | to join the ranks |
| <i>mi narishi ni</i> | of the mourned; |
| <i>tomurau hito to</i> | how shameful then, |
| <i>naru zo hazukashi</i> | to be among the mourners. ¹⁸ |

As the appearance of this Japanese-language poem alongside Takasugi's Chinese-language poem on the same piece of paper suggests, the intertextuality between these two domains of poetic practice was important. Some poets used the strengths of each form toward different ends: they developed narrative more extensively in the longer *kanshi* and explored the subtleties of psychological description in the *waka*. Even those poets who composed predominantly in one language were often aware of works written in the other, as two poems, one a *kanshi* and the other a *tanka*, concerning the virtues of personal integrity illustrate. The first, a well-known *kanshi* by the *shishi* Saigō Takamori, is:

感懷

FEELINGS

幾歴辛酸志始堅 Having endured bitter toils, my intention is
now firm;

¹⁷ A good example of a valedictory *hokku* is the following by the Mito *shishi* Yamakuni Kihachirō 山國喜八郎 (also known as Hyōbu 兵部; 1793–1865): “So now it's time / One last battle / with the ghosts of the underworld” いざさらば冥土の鬼とひといくさ (quoted in Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, p. 218).

¹⁸ A photograph of this pair of poetic compositions appears in Tominari, *Takasugi Shinsaku: shi to shōgai*, p. 188.

丈夫玉碎恥甄全 A true man would be the shattered jewel,
 ashamed to be the intact tile.
 我家遺法人知否 We have a tradition in our house—I wonder if
 you've heard?
 不爲兒孫買美田 Do not buy fine rice paddies for your
 descendants.¹⁹

The phrase contrasting a fine but shattered jewel (*gyokusai*) with an intact but unspectacular roof tile can be traced to an episode recorded in one of the Chinese dynastic histories, the *Bei Qi shu* 北齊書 (Book of Northern Qi), which was completed in 636.²⁰ The term *gyokusai* is best known to us today for the military government's use of it during the Pacific War as a slogan advocating the most extreme forms of self-sacrifice by the Japanese populace.²¹ Yet it was probably first through the poetry of mid-nineteenth-century *shishi* that this term became widely known. Not only did Saigō use it in this *kanshi*, but in the world of *waka*, Hirano Kuniomi 平野國臣 (also known as Jirō 二郎; 1828–1864) is credited with an 1862 *tanka* alluding to the same adage:

碎けても玉となる身はいさぎよし瓦とともに世にあらんより

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>kudaketemo</i> | To be the jewel, |
| <i>tama to naru mi wa</i> | though it may shatter |
| <i>isagiyoshi</i> | is gallant; |
| <i>kawara to tomo ni</i> | far more than living on |
| <i>yo ni aran yori</i> | in the world as a roof tile. ²² |

¹⁹ Sakata, *Shishi*, pp. 315–16; Sakamoto, p. 49; see also Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, p. 177.

²⁰ The episode is recorded in the biography of Yuan Jing'an 元景安 in the *Bei Qi shu*, 41.544. In 550, Gao Yang seized the throne from the Eastern Wei and established himself as Emperor Wenxuan of the new Northern Qi dynasty. At the time, many of those with the Yuan surname (that of the deposed Eastern Wei imperial house) were executed. As a strategy for surviving this purge, Yuan Jing'an proposed assuming the Gao surname. Jing'an's brother Jinghao opposed such expedience: "A great man would rather be a jewel though it shatter than a tile that remains intact!" 大丈夫寧可玉碎、不能瓦全. Jinghao was later executed. Jing'an assumed the surname Gao. The "jewel" may refer specifically to a fine piece of jade.

²¹ On the wartime use of the image as a term to "encourage mass suicide when faced with a hopeless situation," see Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 114–15, 133, 150.

²² This poem of Hirano Kuniomi appears in Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, p. 177. A nearly identical *tanka* is attributed to Maki Izumi 真木和泉 (1813–1864): "To fall as the jewel /

Because few of Saigō's *kanshi* are dated, it is impossible to determine whether Hirano was thinking of Saigō, Saigō was thinking of Hirano, or both had in mind the original Chinese source; nonetheless the two poems show that the worlds of *kanshi* and *waka* were interpenetrating and mutually influential.

Composing Chinese *shi* poetry was widely practiced by *shishi* and intimately connected to their construction of identity and self-expression. That the enterprise was considered *de rigueur* is ample evidence of how naturalized *shi* composition had become by the mid-nineteenth century, even for lower-ranking Japanese samurai. Yet in stating that *kanshi* had become a naturalized form to the *shishi*, I do not mean to suggest that this domesticating process had completely de-sinified the texts or rendered them into anything other than literary Chinese. The *shishi* wrote *kanshi* as literary Chinese, often introducing into them episodes and allusions drawn from other literary Chinese texts, and incorporating technical features that show an impressive sensitivity, or at least an attentiveness, to linguistic features in the original Chinese. Even if the texts were recited in the form of Sino-Japanese known as *kundoku* 訓読, they were nevertheless written and circulated in literary Chinese and must be understood as such.²³

It is important to distinguish this sort of domestication in the compositions of the *shishi* from another domesticating process that has been pursued by some later twentieth-century commentators on this body of Chinese-language texts. Two wide-ranging monographic surveys of *shishi* poetry have appeared in Japan in recent decades, both written by scholars for a general audience. The titles of these two works indicate that the distance separating the modern Japanese reading public from the *kanshi* tradition has necessitated some editorial, or at least typographical, bridge-building. In his popular 1979 introduction to

though it shatters / is gallant; far more than living on / in the world as a roof tile" 碎けても玉とちる身はいさぎよし瓦とともに世にあらんより (see Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, p. 230).

²³ In emphasizing the Chineseness of their *kanshi*, I do not mean to imply that literary Chinese was for the *shishi* a local or national language specific to a particular region or ethnic group. Precisely because of its linguistic status as literary Chinese, the *shishi* saw their *kanshibun* works as universal. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, literary Chinese was becoming increasingly provincialized; on this transformation, see Saitō Mareshi, *Kanbunmyaku no kindai: Shinmatsu Meiji no bungakuken* 漢文脈の近代—清末＝明治の文学圏 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2005), esp. Chapters 1 and 9.

shishi literature, the poet and French literary scholar Shimaoka Akira (b. 1932) focused predominantly on their *kanshi*, yet he titled the book *Shishitachi no uta*, using the Chinese character *shi* but glossing it *uta*, the word typically used for Japanese-language poetry. As for the question of why *kanshi* composition was so prevalent, Shimaoka observed: “It might be said that it was rather the *kanshi* expressive form that was more suited to the *shishi*’s emphasis on and exaggeration of his fervent emotions.”²⁴ Although Shimaoka’s comments reveal his appreciation of the distinctive tonal features of the *kanshi* form, his decision to read the character *shi* as *uta* calls into question the poems’ status as Chinese verse. A decade later, the eminent historian of the Meiji period Naramoto Tatsuya 奈良本辰也 (1913–2001) gathered together a series of brief essays focused on the Chinese poetry of the *shishi* under the title *Ishin no uta* 維新の詩〈うた〉, similarly using the character *shi* but glossing it as *uta*.²⁵ Like Shimaoka, Naramoto attributed the prevalence of *kanshi* to what he claimed was the form’s greater capacity for accommodating intense feelings and inflamed passions:

In such times [of crisis and radical change] the *shishi* of the late Tokugawa period used *kanshi*, not *uta*, to express more fully the fiery blood of their hearts. . . . More than *uta*, more than *haiku*, it was *kanshi* that was most appropriate—for it was high-toned and had a dignified style (*kakuchō ga takai*). Ever since the *uta* of the *Man’yōshū* the Japanese people have been expressing their hearts with *uta*, doing so with true freedom and sophistication. But for the *shishi* of the late Tokugawa period, *kanshi* rather than *uta* was more fitting.²⁶

Beyond following Shimaoka’s lead in putting a Japanese gloss on the character for Chinese poetry, Naramoto took a further step toward naturalizing *kanshi* in his book by dispensing entirely with the original literary Chinese text and offering only a Sino-Japanese reading of the poems. We can understand both the unconventional orthography that reads the character *shi* as *uta* and the decision to provide only a Sino-Japanese gloss for the poems as attempts to domesticate *kanshi*: to ground them in Japanese poetic practice, to de-exoticize them by eliding traces of foreignness, and to render them familiar.

²⁴ Shimaoka Akira, *Shishitachi no uta*, p. 32.

²⁵ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Ishin no uta* (Kawai Shuppan, 1990).

²⁶ Naramoto, *Ishin no uta*, pp. 4–5.

An even more egregious example of attempts by modern critics to domesticate the *kanshi* of the *shishi* is the poet and literary scholar Kageyama Masaharu 影山正治 (1910–1979), who notes in his discussion of Saigō Takamori’s Chinese poetry:

The Great Saigō was, in his essence, a nativist (*kokugakuha*) to the core, but in his conceptual process, he was rather sinological. We can see this if we simply look at the fact that when he spoke of the “gods” (*kami*) he always used the word “Heaven” (*ten*). Therefore, when he wished to express his poetic soul, he did so with *kanshi*. But unless we are keenly aware of the fact that the Great Saigō’s *kanshi* are fundamentally composed with the heart of *uta*, we will be unable to accurately understand the Great Saigō and the basis of his poetic practice.²⁷

The idea is reminiscent of well-known critic Karaki Junzō’s rather problematic notion that, when classical Japanese poets composed *kanshi*, “they wrote using diacritic marks, adding Japanese inflections in their hearts. Although its form may have been Chinese poetry, it was actually Japanese poetry.”²⁸ Yet, any view of *kanshibun* composition that dismisses out of hand the primacy of the original literary Chinese text is profoundly ahistorical. As Suzuki Naoji has painstakingly demonstrated in his survey of the history of Japanese *kundoku* practice, the method of transforming literary Chinese texts into Sino-Japanese developed as it did in order to enable the reader to recall and reconstruct the original Chinese text from the *kundoku* gloss. Especially in the early modern period, the immediate intelligibility of the *kundoku* gloss as Japanese was often sacrificed so as to make it a more transparent means to apprehend the placement and function of particles in the Chinese and the various meanings that a given character had in Chinese.²⁹

²⁷ Kageyama’s argument is quoted with approval in Yamaguchi Tadashi 山口正, *Saigō Takamori no shikon: yamato nishiki o kokoro ni zo* 西郷隆盛の詩魂：大和にしきを心にぞ (Gin no Suzu sha, 1988), p. 24.

²⁸ Thomas LaMarre, *Uncovering Heian Japan: An Archaeology of Sensation and Inscription* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 39. The original quotation is from Karaki Junzō’s *Nihonjin no kokoro no rekishi* 日本人の心の歴史 (Chikuma Shobō, 1976), 1:63.

²⁹ Suzuki Naoji 鈴木直治, *Chūgokugo to kanbun: kundoku no gensoku to kango no tokuchō* 中国語と漢文：訓読の原則と漢語の特徴 (Kōseikan, 1975). My comment about the primacy of the original Chinese text is true for orthodox *shi* composition; one exception to this would be “crazy Chinese poems” (*kyōshi*), a humorous genre that flourished in the mid-Edo period, where wordplay in the Sino-Japanese reading (*kundoku*) often played an important role.

Many readers of these surveys by Shimaoka and Naramoto were born in the postwar era, when proficiency in literary Chinese played an ever-dwindling role in the primary and secondary school curriculum. To a substantial portion of them, the all-*kanji* exterior of the *kanshi* may have seemed forbidding, and the texts themselves impenetrable without the additional mediation of a *kundoku* gloss. But, beyond such valid concerns about improving the texts' accessibility, Shimaoka's and Naramoto's treatments reveal an ambivalence regarding the question of whether texts written in Chinese by Japanese authors fully qualify as Japanese literature. Such doubts are manifest even in works on the *shishi* by scholars active in the prewar period, whose readership would have been more readily equipped to understand literary Chinese, albeit with the aid of *kundoku*. In the introduction to his 1942 history of *shishi* literature, for example, Takano Tatsuyuki felt obliged to defend his view that Chinese compositions by *shishi* poets constituted a topic worthy of consideration, observing that, in spite of the popularity and emotional appeal of *shishi* poetry,

literary historians have thus far regarded it as outside of their scope; at best, treatment has been limited to a passing reference to those *shishi* who were also active as Japanese language poets. I regard the Chinese poetry and prose composed by our countrymen as national literature, and believe that it must be considered; from this standpoint, I cannot turn a blind eye to it.³⁰

As Takano's apologia suggests, the doubts about the legitimacy of Japanese *kanshibun* and its place in the canon are largely the product of a discourse of "national literature," which was consolidated in the late nineteenth century and produced a new awareness of *kanshibun* as foreign.

Although Naramoto Tatsuya does not specifically explain his decision to render the poems only in *kundoku*, his comments on Saigō Takamori's poetry shed some light on what is at stake here. In his discussion of the *kanshi* on the shattering jewel, Naramoto incidentally notes that "Ōkubo Toshimichi never left any such poems. And *that* is what distinguishes Saigō from Ōkubo."³¹ As Charles Yates has discussed, the definitive characterological contrast that is said to exist between boy-

³⁰ Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, p. 4.

³¹ Naramoto, *Ishin no uta*, p. 82.

the more familiar 瓦 (J. *ga*; Ch. *wa*). Though the latter is the character used in the *Bei Qi shu* passage to which Saigō alludes, he departs from precedent because a character having a level (*ping* 平) tone rather than an oblique (*ze* 仄) tone is required. Saigō's acquaintance with Chinese tonal regulations was impressive in its thoroughness, as is illustrated by the following quatrain, where level tones are indicated by a transparent circle ◦ and oblique tones by a solid circle • :

秋曉

AUTUMN DAWN

| | | |
|---------------|---------|---|
| • • ◦ ◦ • • ◦ | 蟋蟀聲喧草露繁 | The crickets chirp noisily, the grasses grow thick with dew; |
| ◦ ◦ • • ◦ ◦ | 殘星影淡照頽門 | Pale light from the lingering stars shines on my run-down gate. |
| • ◦ • • ◦ ◦ • | 小窻起座呼兒輩 | Rising from my seat beside the little window, I call the boys in; |
| ◦ ◦ • • ◦ ◦ • | 溫習督來繙魯論 | Watching over as they review their lessons, I browse the Confucian <i>Analects</i> . |

The final character, 論, usually meaning “discussion” or “argument,” would seem at first to be an oblique tone (equivalent to *lùn* in modern Mandarin); given the level tones in the rhyme characters ending the first two lines, it is thus incorrectly placed. However, in exceptional cases, most notably when this character refers to the *Analects* as it does here, the character has a level tone (equivalent to *lún* in modern Mandarin), and thus matches the rhyme of the poem, which fully conforms to the “oblique start” tone pattern for poems with level rhymes.³³

The foundation of education for these men was the Confucian canon and selections from the dynastic histories, and the pleasant domestic scene depicted in this last poem by Saigō indicates the ordinariness that characterized induction into and participation in the world of literary Chinese. Spurred by the industriousness of the crickets outside, one generation supervises the inculcation of the next; in the process the boys are integrated not only into the human world of

³³ These examples are gathered from the annotations compiled by Sakata Shin in *Shishi*, and are just two of the many instances where Saigō's knowledge of tonal requirements (or at the very least his belief in the importance of maintaining them) is evident.

learning, but also into the natural order, as their voices raised in *sodoku* recitation come to mirror the chirping of the crickets. In light of the fact that learning the rudiments of Chinese versification was often a staple of these young men's schooling, it is obvious that, for the *shishi*, such expression had already become domesticated, requiring no further editorial intervention.³⁴ Any apparent "foreignness" of the *kanshi* poetic form is mainly an artifact of a view of Japan's literary history that is based on "national literature"—a view that diminishes the importance of literary expression in Chinese or resists accepting its status as literary Chinese.

Mark Ravina has cogently observed in his recent biographical study of Saigō, "For Saigō, ancient Chinese history was not foreign: it was the shared cultural heritage of all civilized men."³⁵ This sense of a shared cultural heritage unquestionably informed the *shishi* composition of Chinese verse, but that shared sense of culture was twofold: the *shishi* asserted a shared cultural continuity with "ancient Chinese history," but they also incorporated domestic cultural heroes of both antiquity and recent times into their constantly evolving poetic tradition, sometimes even by overwriting the Chinese past. This happened not because *kanshi* were *waka* in disguise but because, as a literary form, *kanshi* provided the *shishi* with rhetorical modes, allusive techniques, and other poetic possibilities that *shishi* were able to exploit in a variety of innovative ways. Moreover, as the body of Japanese *shishi* literature in Chinese grew and as poems were copied, recited, and circulated, the referential world of their Chinese verse became as densely populated by Japanese loci classici as by Chinese. *Kanshi* composition had become a fully domesticated poetic enterprise for the late Tokugawa *shishi*, but not in the way that these popular treatments of the genre by Naramoto, Shimaoka, and Kageyama would suggest.

³⁴ For detail about the curriculum at one academy—the Zōshun'en 藏春園 of Tsunetō Seisō 恒遠醒窓, where Gesshō and other *shishi* studied—see Umihara Tōru 海原徹, *Gesshō: jinkan itaru tokoro seizan ari* 月性—人間到る処青山あり (Mineruva Shobō, 2005), pp. 22–24.

³⁵ Mark Ravina, *The Last Samurai: The Life and Battles of Saigō Takamori* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2004), p. 35. Ravina further notes that Saigō's "understanding of the world was deeply rooted in the shared East Asian canon of the Chinese classics," but that this did not necessarily translate to respect for contemporary Chinese; p. 105.

The Referential Fields of *shishi* Chinese Poetry

Shishi thus domesticated the *shi* form without losing sight of its Chinese provenance or sacrificing its linguistic status as literary Chinese. As such, *kanshi* served as a familiar and pliable form not just for elite scholars but even for a *shishi* poet such as Takasugi Shinsaku, whose ears were not so keenly attuned to the nuances of classical Chinese and whose scholarly aptitude was unextraordinary.³⁶ Once the teenage Takasugi enrolled in the Meirinkan, the school for the sons of Hagi-domain samurai, it took him four years to earn a place in its dormitory. Even the sympathetic biographer Tominari Hiroshi, author of three monographs on Takasugi, recognizes this leisurely pace as evidence that Takasugi was “by no stretch of the imagination an outstanding student.”³⁷ Nevertheless, Takasugi Shinsaku’s complete works include over three hundred Chinese poems written during the twenty-eight years of his brief life.³⁸ Although Tominari points out occasional grammatical or rhythmic defects of Takasugi’s poems, he also notes that their technical inadequacy reveals that they could not have been composed to fulfill academic expectations or assert social class distinctions.³⁹ Rather, the very roughness of Takasugi’s poems indicates that, for him, writing *kanshi* had other expressive purposes.

For Takasugi, as for so many of the *shishi* poets, one of the resources that *kanshi* composition provided was ready access to a gallery of famous figures from Chinese literature and history whom they could draw into their poetic worlds. Frequently Takasugi’s poetry refers to famous paragons of moral probity and selfless fidelity. Late in 1860, for

³⁶ Takasugi himself acknowledged that his technical skill for writing Chinese poems was limited. When his uncle Ōnishi Kohayata sent him a long “old style poem” (*J. koshii*; Ch. *gushi*) in 1861, for example, Takasugi recorded in his diary: “My poetic talents are meager and I was unable to respond by matching his rhymes, so I sent him a seven character quatrain instead” (quoted in Tominari, *Takasugi Shinsaku: shi to shōgai*, p. 50).

³⁷ Tominari, *Takasugi Shinsaku: shi to shōgai*, pp. 10–11. Tominari’s other monographs on Shinsaku include *Takasugi Shinsaku* (Shimonoseki: Chōshū Shinbunsha, 1979) and *Takasugi Shinsaku no shōgai* 高杉晋作の生涯 (Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 1996; rev. ed., Yūdachisha, 2005).

³⁸ The *Zenshū* actually contains 370 separately listed *kanshi*, but several of these are merely alternate versions of the same poem, differing by only one or two characters.

³⁹ Occasionally, Tominari also suggests the “rough-hewn” quality of Takasugi’s poems as an index of his sincerity; see his *Takasugi Shinsaku shi to shōgai*, pp. 13–14, 16.

example, after he had tried and promptly abandoned the idea of studying navigation, Takasugi Shinsaku found himself back in Hagi, working at the domain school and casting about for a future course in life. He imagined himself to be a man whose talents and sheer earnestness went underappreciated. In the following quatrain, he alludes to two contrasting responses to such a predicament:

偶成

EXTEMPORANEOUS COMPOSITION

| | |
|---------|--|
| 繁文爲累古猶今 | In dense thickets of text piled up from ancient times to the present, |
| 今古誰能識道深 | Who now, or then, has penetrated the depths of the Way? |
| 采菊采薇真的意 | Plucking chrysanthemums or fiddlehead ferns—herein lies the true meaning; |
| 人間萬事只斯心 | Many are the things in this world, but all that matters is this. ⁴⁰ |

The references in the third line are to famed eremites of Chinese antiquity. The phrase “plucking chrysanthemums” alludes to the reclusive poet Tao Yuanming (365–427), who resigned his post as the magistrate of Pengze in 405, during the final years of the Eastern Jin, and declined further official service.⁴¹ The second reference in this line is to the brothers Bo Yi and Shu Qi, quasi-mythic figures of the remote past, who chose to starve themselves rather than serve a regime they believed corrupt. When paired alongside Tao Yuanming’s positive embrace of reclusion, the brothers’ radical self-abnegation appears paradigmatic of an alternative solution to the problem of remaining true to one’s principles: that of extreme self-sacrifice.⁴² Takasugi’s poem thus shows

⁴⁰ *Takasugi Shinsaku zenshū*, ed. Hori Tetsusaburō 堀哲三郎, p. 388.

⁴¹ The reference is to a famous couplet in the fifth of Tao Yuanming’s series “Yin jiu ershi shou” 飲酒二十首: “Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern hedge / I catch sight of the distant southern hills” 采菊東籬下 悠然見南山; see James Robert Hightower, trans., *The Poetry of T’ao Ch’ien* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 130.

⁴² Alan Berkowitz calls Bo Yi and Shu Qi “extreme exemplars” of a type he terms the “paragon of extraordinary conduct”: those who shun service because of their fundamental nature. Such figures, argues Berkowitz, thus stand in contrast to Confucian heroes, who tend to make *ad hoc* evaluations of the propriety of service at a given juncture; see his *Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 39–44.

him struggling to define his own moral position, using the contrasting examples of these Chinese paragons as fixed points in relation to which he can orient himself.

Another classical figure to whom Takasugi frequently alluded was Qu Yuan (ca. 343–277 B.C.E.), a victim of slander who fell from favor yet remained loyal to the king who had banished him. Qu Yuan is known as the author of poetry that trenchantly insisted upon his own purity, the injustice of his exile, and his undiminished loyalty to the King of Chu. One of the best-known sequences in the *Chu ci* (Songs of the south) is the encounter between Qu Yuan's persona of "the sober old man" and a fisherman who, representing the recluse, asks Qu Yuan why he remains so adamantly invested in political affairs even after his unjust banishment.⁴³ Just as he had in the previous poem implicitly likened his own lack of political agency to the two contrastive reclusive strategies of Tao Yuanming on the one hand and Bo Yi and Shu Qi on the other, Takasugi in the following quatrain suggested a link between his own disaffection and that of Qu Yuan:

篠川氏來談 分韻得思字

MR. SHINOKAWA CAME OVER TO CHAT;

WE DIVIDED RHYMES, AND I GOT THE CHARACTER SI

| | |
|---------|---|
| 壯士由來有所思 | Stalwart men have always had things on their minds; |
| 所思遂不與時宜 | And what is on their minds may not accord with their times. |
| 誰知夜夜孤燈下 | Who knows that night upon night I sit alone beneath my lamp, |
| 空唱醒翁漁夫辭 | Vainly intoning the "Fisherman's Discourse" of the "Sober Old Man." ⁴⁴ |

In invoking Qu Yuan, Takasugi was indeed partaking of a long tradition. As Laurence Schneider observes in his study of the Qu Yuan myth, the convention of writing about Qu Yuan when one is in a "time of personal misfortune" had been established two millennia earlier in

⁴³ The term that I render "sober old man" (Ch. *xingweng*; J. *seiō* 醒翁) alludes to Qu Yuan's statement to the fisherman: "All the world is muddy and I alone am clear . . . all men are drunk and I alone am sober"; see "The Fisherman," trans. David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Others* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1985), pp. 206–7.

⁴⁴ *Takasugi Shinsaku zenshū*, ed. Hori Tetsusaburō 堀哲三郎, pp. 393–94.

the poetry of Jia Yi (201–169 B.C.E.).⁴⁵ As in these examples, the *shishi* might make reference to a particular historical episode or to reading a specific literary work, letting the allusion indirectly point to a parallel with the poet's persona or circumstance.

Sometimes the *shishi* might draw the analogy more directly, as in the following poem from 1864, written when Takasugi was imprisoned for absconding without permission from his domain:

囚中作

COMPOSED WHILE IMPRISONED

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 君不見死爲忠鬼 | Behold! Minister Sugawara, who |
| 菅相公 | became a righteous ghost when he died; |
| 靈魂尚在天拜峰 | Still today, his spirit haunts Mount Tenpai. |
| 又不見懷石投流 | Or behold! Qu Ping of Chu, stones in his |
| 楚屈平 | bosom, he jumped in the water; |
| 至今人悲汨羅江 | Even now, people mourn him at the Miluo |
| | River. |
| 5 自古讒閒害忠節 | From ancient times, slander has harmed loyal |
| | men of integrity; |
| 忠臣思君不懷躬 | A loyal vassal thinks of his lord without a care |
| | for himself. |
| 我亦貶謫幽囚士 | I too have been slandered and exiled: a man in |
| | prison now, |
| 憶起二公淚沾胸 | I recall these two men, and tears wet my breast. |
| 10 休恨空爲讒閒死 | Do not begrudge vainly dying from slander; |
| 自有後世議論公 | For the verdict of posterity shall be just. ⁴⁶ |

Takasugi had left his domain abruptly, hoping to reconnoiter with other *shishi* who were familiar with recent conditions in the capital and who, he hoped, would be able to advise the domain on its future course of action. Convinced that the time to act had arrived, he left behind only a vague statement of his plans before racing to the capital. The domain authorities, however, were unimpressed with the bold initiative, regarding it instead as a rash dereliction of duty.⁴⁷ Being detained

⁴⁵ Laurence Schneider, *A Madman of Ch'u: The Chinese Myth of Loyalty and Dissent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 23.

⁴⁶ *Takasugi Shinsaku zenshū*, ed. Hori Tetsusaburō 堀哲三郎, p. 449.

⁴⁷ Ichisaka Tarō 一坂太郎, *Takasugi Shinsaku* 高杉晋作 (Bungei Shunjū, 2002), pp. 147–50.

for his unauthorized departure from the domain proved conducive to Takasugi's self-conception as the victim of myopic officials who failed to appreciate his pure valor. In his opening couplet, Takasugi introduces the figure of Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), the Japanese paragon of the upright official who is unjustly exiled, specifically linking Sugawara to Mount Tenpai in Dazaifu, the region in Kyushu to which he was banished in 901 and which is conventionally invoked in Japanese dramatic and pictorial representations of Michizane as the site of his deification. The couplet that follows rhetorically parallels this one with its reference to the Chinese exemplar Qu Ping (that is, Qu Yuan) in very similar terms: focusing on the geographic site at which his mortal life ended and toward which his present-day propitiation is directed. In his *kanshi*, Takasugi adopted this technique of invocation to embrace allusions not only to Chinese paragons but also to Japanese ones, positioning them side by side on a single referential plane.

Moreover, Takasugi drew these Japanese models both from antiquity and from among his own contemporaries. In 1860, he embarked upon a tour of the Kantō area to broaden his knowledge and develop his abilities in scholarly and martial arts alike. In addition to engaging in duels with practitioners of various schools of swordplay, one of the specific purposes he mentioned in his diary was the exchange of poetry with scholars such as Katō Yūrin 加藤有隣, Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠, and Sakuma Shōzan, the teacher of his mentor Yoshida Shōin.⁴⁸ In Kasama (modern-day Ibaraki), he presented the following poem to Yūrin:

訪笠間加藤先生、席上匆卒□□ [PERHAPS 賦志]

I VISITED MR. KATŌ IN KASAMA AND AT
OUR GATHERING HURRIEDLY . . .

[WROTE THIS POEM TO EXPRESS MY INTENTION]

| | |
|---------|--|
| 書劍飄然遊天涯 | Drifting along with books and sword, I travel to horizon's end; |
| 半肩行李一草鞋 | Luggage hoisted low on my shoulders and grass sandals on my feet. |
| 壯士不期墳墓地 | A great man need make no plans for his gravesite; |

⁴⁸ Tominari, *Takasugi Shinsaku: shi to shōgai*, p. 30.

- 到處青山骨欲埋 Wherever he goes, there are blue mountains
where his bones can be lain.
- 5 匆卒訪君君休笑 I have visited you suddenly, but please do not
laugh
- 要以誠心叩蘊奧 For my sincere wish is to probe the depths of
your learning.
- 卻愧我性素頑愚 Shameful that I am by nature stubborn and
foolish,
- 讀書擊劍未得妙 In book learning and swordplay, I have yet to
become great.
- 駑馬千里雖難馳 Though it is hard to run a weak horse for a
thousand leagues,
- 10 鞭之々々何患遲 Whip and whip him again; who cares if he is
slow?
- 請君鼓舞我士氣 I entreat you to drum up my manly spirit,
使我得成報國基 And make me able to serve the foundation of
this country.
- 皇國武威猶未盡 The martial vigor of the Imperial land is not yet
spent,
- 幾時壯士發義憤 And some day, stalwart men will vent their
righteous indignation.
- 15 國恩萬世重如山 Throughout the ages, debt to one's country has
been as heavy as mountains,
- 死生從來輕似坩 While death and life have always been as light
as dust.
- 人間有別君加憐 In human affairs, there are partings, and you
have been kind;
- 半日談話亦因緣 That we could chat for half a day shows a
karmic bond.
- 去矣明朝任到處 Now I shall leave, and tomorrow go where the
road takes me;
- 20 茫茫霜野秋風寒 The frosted field spreads out vast, the autumn
wind chilly.⁴⁹

As his diary indicates, following the festivities that evening, Takasugi spent much of the night reading a volume of Yūrin's poetry that he had borrowed from his host. Thus the exchange of *kanshi* and the perusal

⁴⁹ Takasugi *Shinsaku zenshū*, ed. Horii Tetsusaburō 堀哲三郎, pp. 384–85.

of others' personal *kanshi* collections both were important in creating and perpetuating a sense of shared identity among the *shishi*. Just as he composed poems as an act of remembrance to his teacher Yoshida Shōin on the first anniversary of his death, so too did he use the *kanshi* form to solicit the instruction of other men.⁵⁰ *Kanshi* composition was intimately linked to the formation, clarification, and expression of personal intention. At the same time, it served as a shared practice that mediated the relations among contemporaneous *shishi*. Moreover, this poem demonstrates how *kanshi* could forge strong bonds beyond the strictures of direct contact, for even the poetry of other *shishi*, whom readers encountered as disembodied texts, played a role in determining the frame through which *shishi* would express their intentions. In the second couplet of this poem, Takasugi makes reference to perhaps one of the best-known *shishi* poems, a quatrain written in 1843 by the Chōshū nativist monk Gesshō 月性 (1817–1858):⁵¹

將東遊題壁

AS I AM ABOUT TO LEAVE FOR THE EAST,
I INSCRIBED THIS POEM ON THE WALL

| | |
|---------|---|
| 男兒立志出鄉關 | One born a man stakes out his ambitions and leaves his hometown behind; |
| 學若無成不復還 | Unless his studies are complete, he shall not return. |
| 埋骨何期墳墓地 | Why should he hope to have his bones buried in a graveyard? |
| 人間到處有青山 | In this world, wherever he goes, there will be blue mountains. ⁵² |

⁵⁰ *Takasugi Shinsaku zenshū*, ed. Hori Tetsusaburō, p. 387. The poem is titled “Senshi shōshōbi no saku” 先師小祥日作, dated 10.27.1860, and is signed as the “tearful lament of his disciple, Nanju Takasugi.”

⁵¹ There were actually two famous Buddhist monks named Gesshō in late Tokugawa Japan; both were active in nativist causes and both died in 1858. The Gesshō who wrote this line was from Chōshū. The other Gesshō (月照), from Kyoto, committed suicide with Saigō Takamori, though the latter was rescued.

⁵² Misaka Keiji 三坂圭治 and Gesshō Kenshōkai 月性顕彰会, eds., *Ishin no senkaku: Gesshō no kenkyū* 維新の先覚月性の研究 (Tokuyama: Matsuno Shoten, 1979), p. 396. In this volume, Yoshitomi Haruichi gives other versions of the second line, such as “Unless his studies are complete, he shall not return even if he dies” 學若不成死不還; as he argues, however, the tonal requirements make the version quoted above more likely. Some have also asserted that the poem is not Gesshō's own, but one that he corrected for Muramatsu Bunshō 村松文祥.

Gesshō's famous poem, especially its fourth line, became widely known and in later years even *kanshi* poets who did not identify with the *shishi* came to allude to it.⁵³ For Takasugi, poetry composition itself was a means to draw close to heroic figures such as Gesshō, who was one of the most highly skilled *shishi* poets, and his citation of Gesshō's line shows how the examples and poetry of Japanese figures, even contemporaries, had begun to be the objects of homage in Chinese verse. Alongside the process by which *shishi* mutually framed their ambitions in correlation with heroes of Chinese antiquity, the Chinese poetic discourse of the *shishi* had begun to develop its own self-referential status.

The *shishi* and Wen Tianxiang's "Song of the Righteous Spirit"

This increasingly domesticated intertextuality is especially evident in a series of interrelated *shishi* poems inspired by the Song loyalist Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236–1283). On the one hand, these poems, written by various Japanese individuals over the course of many decades, show the enduring importance of a noted Chinese historical precedent in Japan. On the other hand, they show how a single Chinese text was repeatedly reconfigured and redeployed and how its referential pantheon was repopulated with Japanese figures. The diverse ways in which the *shishi* domesticated Wen Tianxiang show how even *shishi* poems that advertised the Chinese provenance of their frame, structure, and rhyme could nevertheless be fully localized and self-referential within the context of *shishi* literature.

Wen Tianxiang remains a celebrated cultural hero in China even to this day for his refusal to submit to the Mongols when the Southern Song Dynasty collapsed. When Hangzhou fell in 1276, he was one of the few to resist, and it became his responsibility as prime minister to negotiate with the Mongols. After multiple failures to ally with other Song loyalists, he was taken prisoner in 1278. In spite of pressure from his captors to write appeals urging his fellow Song loyalists to surrender, he

⁵³ Narushima Ryūhoku 成島柳北 (1837–1884) nearly quotes the line verbatim in the first of a series of quatrains he composed during the tumultuous summer of 1868 titled "Boshin gogatsu uru tokoro no zasshi" 戊辰五月所得雜詩; see *Ryūhoku shishō* 柳北詩鈔 (Hakubunkan, 1894), 2:23.

stubbornly refused. Even after being transported to Northern China in the following year, he would not submit. To document his ordeal, Wen Tianxiang had been keeping two extensive poetic journals. The second of these contains what is perhaps his most famous work, a sixty-line poem he wrote in 1281 called “Zhengqi ge” 正氣歌 (Song of the righteous spirit). In the preface he reveals how he was able to overcome his bleak situation by faith in the “righteous spirit.”

Wen Tianxiang’s patriotic actions and his poetry of resistance had been popularized in Japan by the scholar Asami Keisai 淺見綱齋 (1652–1711), whose *Seiken igen* (Testaments of selfless sacrifices) included a detailed biography of Wen Tianxiang, as well as a thorough annotation and commentary on his “Song of the Righteous Spirit.” Written as an ethical guidebook, Keisai’s text comprised eight chapters, each of which extolled the valorous deeds and resolute loyalty of an individual Chinese figure from pre-Qin times down through the Ming, and was widely used as a textbook.⁵⁴ Wen Tianxiang was an important influence on many Japanese *shishi*, who referred in their own compositions to his inspiring example. Frequently such literary homage took the form of an implicit comparison between the Japanese poet’s confinement and Wen Tianxiang’s own tribulations, as in the following example from Takasugi Shinsaku, another poem that he wrote while incarcerated:

囚中作

COMPOSED IN PRISON

| | |
|---------|---|
| 囚室無苦爲 | In this prison cell, I do not want for things to do; |
| 披書養良知 | I can open a book and cultivate my “good knowledge.” |
| 虛心而平氣 | I empty my mind and relax my spirits; |
| 書中自有師 | The book itself becomes my teacher. |
| 5 讀至南宋滅 | When I read to where the Southern Song collapsed, |
| 獨悲天祥節 | In my solitude I was struck by Tianxiang’s integrity. |
| 臨死衣帶銘 | When he faced his death, his sash held a document |

⁵⁴ Asami Keisai later wrote a series of lectures on the text that are known as *Seiken igen kōgi* 靖獻遺言講義, which covered, in addition to Wen Tianxiang, Qu Yuan, Zhuge Liang, Tao Qian, Yan Zhenqing, Xie Fangde, Liu Yin, and Fang Xiaoru. The work was popular among and important to the *shishi*, inspiring, for example, Yoshida Shōin’s 1854 series of “Eight Historical Poems”; see Yamaguchi-ken Kyōiku Iinkai 山口縣教育會, ed., *Yoshida Shōin zenshū* 吉田松陰全集 (Iwanami Shoten, 1934–36), 7:43–52.

- 使人爲泣血 That made people shed tears of blood.
 爾來天下士 Recently, all the men of the realm
 10 貪利不成仁 Are greedy for profit and do not achieve
 benevolence.
 嗟我雖愚鈍 Alas! Though I be foolish and dull,
 要學天祥心 I seek to learn from Tianxiang's mind.⁵⁵

It is quite likely that the book in which Takasugi read of Wen Tianxiang was Asami Keisai's *Seiken igen*, for the title of its section on Wen Tianxiang also calls attention to the "Document in the Sash": the martyr's final writings that he hid in his sash and that were discovered posthumously. Although Takasugi speaks in line 4 of the book itself introducing figures who would serve as models for him during his incarceration, in another poem, written about the same time, he notes how he had been instructed in the example of Wen Tianxiang by his teacher Yoshida Shōin. When Takasugi found himself imprisoned, he was brought to remember the words of his mentor:

囚中作

COMPOSED IN PRISON

- 偷生決死任時宜 Whether I cheat death or prepare to die, I leave
 up to time;
 不患世人論是非 I do not concern myself with society's debates
 over right and wrong.
 嘗在先師寄我語 These are words my former teacher once
 bestowed upon me;
 回頭追思淚空垂 And as I reflect back on them, tears pour down
 in vain.⁵⁶

Takasugi explained the content of Shōin's lesson in a note, dated 04.11 of Genji 1 (1864), that he appended to the poem: "I recall that when my teacher was in prison in Edo, he sent me a letter stating: 'You should place the matter of death and life outside your immediate focus. Even though you may possess a high level of integrity like [Wen] Tianxiang, if you can cheat death [lit. "steal life"], then cheat death.'" In their references to Wen Tianxiang, *shishi* focused in particular on his equanimity in captivity, his willingness to die if that should be his fate, his

⁵⁵ *Takasugi Shinsaku zenshū*, ed. Hori Tetsusaburō 堀哲三郎, p. 461.

⁵⁶ *Takasugi Shinsaku zenshū*, p. 435.

maintenance of personal integrity in the face of fierce pressure to submit, and the resilient spirit that enabled him to write stirring works in spite of humiliating deprivation.⁵⁷

The example of Wen Tianxiang thus suggested itself naturally to those *shishi* who were imprisoned for their political loyalties in nineteenth-century Japan. In the following quatrain, Kojima Kyōsuke (児島強介, 1837–1862), another incarcerated *shishi*, directly addressed the question of how Wen Tianxiang's ordeal spoke to him, attributing especial importance to the Song loyalist's "Song of the Righteous Spirit":

獄中作

COMPOSITION IN PRISON

| | |
|---------|---|
| 愛讀文山正氣歌 | I have loved to read Wen Tianxiang's "Song of the Righteous Spirit"; |
| 平生所養顧如何 | Reflecting back now, I wonder what it has taught me. |
| 從容唯待就刑日 | To be composed and just wait for the day of execution; |
| 含笑九原知己多 | Smiling to myself that in the underworld many comrades await. ⁵⁸ |

Similarly, in one of the poems he composed while in prison, the well-known *shishi* martyr Hashimoto Sanai 橋本左内 (1834–1859) invoked Wen Tianxiang's "Song" not just as a source of solace but as a statement of defiance:

獄中作 三首其二

COMPOSED WHILE IN PRISON (THE SECOND OF THREE)

| | |
|---------|---|
| 二十六年如夢過 | These twenty-six years have passed like a dream; |
| 顧思平昔感滋多 | Reflecting on the past, my feelings grow all the more numerous. |

⁵⁷ William Hung attests to the lasting fame of Wen Tianxiang's example in Japan. When he was being imprisoned by the Japanese army in Peking in 1941–1942 and one of his fellow inmates was severely beaten by the guards for cursing the Japanese Emperor, Hung asked why the guards did not kill the inmate; they replied, "Oh, no . . . That would be killing another Wen Tianxiang"; see his foreword in William Brown, *Wen T'ien-hsiang: a Biographical Study of a Sung Patriot* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center Publications, 1986), p. xi.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Koizumi Tōzō, *Ishin shishi kin'ō shiika hyōshaku*, p. 106.

天祥大節嘗心折 Tianxiang's great integrity has always stirred my
heart;
土室猶吟正氣歌 In this earthen cell, I sing out "Song of the
Righteous Spirit."⁵⁹

Hashimoto had been incarcerated in 1859 as part of the Ansei Purge, a crackdown on *shishi* activities that had been launched the previous year by Great Councilor Ii Naosuke 井伊直弼 (1815–1860), the Hikone daimyo who had concluded a treaty with Townsend Harris without imperial sanction. Yet unlike many of the activists targeted by Ii's crackdown, Hashimoto strongly supported open relations with the West. However, because he advocated a position contrary to Ii's on the question of shogunal succession, he was arrested, accused of improper meddling, and promptly executed.⁶⁰ Familiarity with Keisai's *Seiken igen* may have been the inspiration that led Hashimoto to invoke Wen Tianxiang and "The Song of the Righteous Spirit" in his own poetry, but it is also possible that, like Takasugi, Hashimoto was particularly inspired to write about Wen Tianxiang through contact with other *shishi*.⁶¹

Beyond the simple invocations of, and references to, jailhouse recitations of Wen Tianxiang's "Song" in the poems by Kojima and Hashimoto, some Japanese *shishi* pursued an entirely different sort of homage by composing their own versions. In 1859, one of Hashimoto Sanai's fellow inmates in Edo's Denmachō prison, Yoshida Shōin, employed precisely this literary tactic, producing a version that would earn

⁵⁹ Sakata, *Shishi*, pp. 252–56.

⁶⁰ Born to a father who served as physician for the domain of Fukui, Hashimoto ran into trouble with the shogunal authorities over the question of who should succeed the thirteenth shogun, Tokugawa Iesada, who was infirm. Whereas Hashimoto lobbied the Kyoto nobility in support of Tokugawa Yoshinobu, Ii Naosuke and others in Edo backed the alternative candidate, who went on to become the fourteenth shogun, Iemochi. See George Wilson, "The Bakumatsu Intellectual in Action: Hashimoto Sanai in the Political Crisis of 1858," in Albert Craig and Donald Shively, eds., *Personality in Japanese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 234–63.

⁶¹ In his famous valedictory essay "Yūkonroku," Yoshida Shōin laments that Hashimoto Sanai was executed before Shōin had the chance to show him the poems of Gesshō and also of Kuchiba Norisuke 口羽徳祐. Nevertheless, *kanshi* did serve as a medium of exchange between the two while they were incarcerated at the Denmachō prison, for Hashimoto addressed Shōin in a quatrain, alluding to the latter's repeated failed attempts to become a stowaway on Russian and American ships so that he might investigate conditions abroad; see Shimaoka, *Shishitachi no uta*, p. 49.

considerable reknow.⁶² Shōin and other Japanese *shishi* thoroughly engaged Wen Tianxiang's "Song of the Righteous Spirit," echoing its diction and rhetorical features in various ways while at the same time making the poem their own. To understand their achievement, it is essential that one take a close look at the original poem, whose preface explains the context in which Wen composed the work:

I am held captive by the North, and sit now in an earthen room. The room is eight feet wide and twelve yards deep, its single door is low and small, its windows short and tight. It is dirty and dark. On a summer day like today, various vapors [or energies] (*qi* 氣) gather here. When the rains come in on all four sides, causing my bed and table to begin to float, this is the energy of water. When the muddy dirt dries halfway and steam bubbles ripple through it, this is the energy of earth. When the skies are clear and oppressively hot and the wind is blocked on all four sides, this is the energy of the sun. When cooking fires are lit under the shade of the eaves, making the long heat even more brutal, this is the energy of fire. When the grain in storage begins to decay, releasing an oppressive mustiness, this is the energy of rice. And when one is shoulder to shoulder with all sorts, rank, dirty, and oily, this is the energy of man. When the stench of privies, rotten corpses, and decaying rats emerge, this is the energy of fetor. These various malign energies overlap one on top of the other, and few are the men exposed to them who can remain unharmed. Moreover, my constitution is weak, yet I have lived amid them going on two years now, and thankfully have emerged unscathed. This is probably because I have something I have cultivated within me that makes it so. But how do I know what I am cultivating in myself? Mencius said, "I am good at cultivating my flood-like *qi*." There are seven energies, and I have just one. One has held off seven. So why should I worry?! Especially since what I mean by "flood-like" is the "Righteous Spirit" of Heaven and Earth. I hereby compose "The Song of the Righteous Spirit."⁶³

⁶² Yoshida Shōin wrote additional poems that made use of the rhymes in other poems by Wen Tianxiang. See *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, 7:282–83.

⁶³ *Wen Tianxiang quanji* 文天祥全集 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1985), 14:375–76. For discussion of the many allusions in the poem, see Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *Five Hundred Years of Chinese Poetry, 1150–1650*, trans. John Timothy Wixted (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 52–55. I have also learned a great deal from Yang Ye's translation and discussion of the poem in "The Culture of Canonization: Wen Tianxiang's 'Song of the Noble Spirit,'" unpublished paper presented at The Power of Words, a conference held in honor of Stephen Owen at Harvard University, October 28, 2006.

正氣歌

THE SONG OF THE RIGHTEOUS SPIRIT

- 天地有正氣 Pervading Heaven and Earth is a righteous spirit—
 雜然賦流形 Mixed and manifold, it assumes various forms.
 下則爲河嶽 Below, it makes rivers and mountains;
 上則爲日星 Above, it makes the sun and stars.
 5 於人曰浩然 In the world of man, it is what Mencius called
 “flood-like,”
 沛乎塞蒼冥 Surging forth to fill all that lies beneath the blue sky.
 皇路當清夷 When the Great Way is tranquil and peaceful,
 含和吐明庭 It inspires the bright court with harmony.
 時窮節乃見 When events reach an impasse, integrity is tested;
 10 一一垂丹青 Each instance is recorded down in the annals of
 history.
- 在齊太史簡 In Qi, it was the Grand Historian's bamboo slips
 [that told of Cui Zhu's assassination of Duke
 Zhuang];
 在晉董狐筆 In Jin, it was the brush of Dong Hu [that attributed
 blame to Zhao Dun for Duke Ling's murder].
 在秦張良椎 In Qin, it was the hammer of Zhang Liang [with
 which he attacked Qin Shihuang's carriage];
 在漢蘇武節 In Han, it was the staff of Su Wu [that he carried as
 envoy].
 15 爲嚴將軍頭 It was General Yan's head [that refused to bow in
 submission],
 爲嵇侍中血 It was Palace Attendant Ji Shao's blood [that he
 spilled defending the Emperor].
 爲張睢陽齒 It was the teeth of Zhang Xun at Suiyang [that he
 ground down while defending the city];
 爲顏常山舌 It was the tongue of Yan Gaoqing at Changshan
 [that was cut out when he insulted An Lushan].
 或爲遼東帽 Or, it appeared as the cap in Liaodong [that Guan
 Ning wore in his reclusion],
 20 清操厲冰雪 Whose purity was more intense than ice and snow.
 或爲出師表 Or, it appeared as the “Memorial to Dispatch the
 Troops” [by Zhuge Liang],
 鬼神泣壯烈 Which made even ghosts and spirits cry solemnly.

- 或爲渡江楫 Or, it appeared as the oar that crossed the river
[which Zu Ti beat, vowing to reclaim the north];
慷慨吞胡羯 With righteous determination to vanquish the
barbarians.
- 25 或爲擊賊笏 Or, it appeared as the tablet that struck the bandit
[Zhu Ci];
逆豎頭破裂 Whose traitorous head was split open.
- 是氣所旁薄 Each and every place that this spirit springs forth,
凜烈萬古存 Has stolid dignity that shall last for eternity.
當其貫日月 When it suffuses the sun and moon,
30 生死安足論 How can life and death merit discussion?
地維賴以立 The Terrestrial Perimeters depend upon it to stand;
天柱賴以尊 The Pillar of Heaven relies upon it to rise tall.
三綱實係命 The fate of the Three Bonds is tied to it;
道義爲之根 For Righteousness and the Way are its roots.
- 35 嗟予邁陽九 Alas! I have met with an ill-fated year;
隸也實不力 And am now one held captive, truly powerless.
楚囚纓其冠 Like the Chu prisoner who fastened his cap strings,
傳車送窮北 I was brought by carriage to the remote north.
鼎鑊甘如飴 To be boiled in a cauldron would be sweeter than
candy;
- 40 求之不可得 I begged for this, but could not obtain it.
陰房闐鬼火 My gloomy cell fills with ghostly will-o'-the-wisp;
春院闕天黑 The spring courtyard is plunged into darkness.
牛驥同一皂 The ox and steed share the same trough;
雞棲鳳凰食 A phoenix is made to eat among chickens.
- 45 一朝濛霧露 One day I shall be overcome by the damp, I thought,
分作溝中瘠 My fate to be an emaciated corpse in some gully.
如此再寒暑 Two winters and springs have passed like this,
百沴自辟易 And a hundred malignancies have kept their
distance.
- 嗟哉沮洳場 Oh this damp and soggy place,
50 爲我安樂園 Has now become my paradise!
豈有他繆巧 Surely it is not because of some clever trick
陰陽不能賊 That I am immune to the harm of the elements.
顧此耿耿在 I know it is the radiance that lies within,

- 仰視浮雲白 Pure as the white floating clouds that I gaze at
overhead.
- 55 悠悠我心悲 Vast is the sorrow in my heart;
蒼天曷有極 Blue Heaven! When will it end?
哲人日已遠 The great wise men grow more distant each day;
典刑在夙昔 Yet their example lives on in the past.
風簷展書讀 Under the breezy eaves, I open a book and read;
古道照顏色 The ancient path illuminating my face.

The original poem is not explicitly separated into stanzas, but it may be divided into four sections based upon shifts in rhyme: indicated here and in the Japanese versions that follow with the insertion of a blank line. Wen's poem begins with a general statement about the "Righteous Spirit" (lines 1–10), continues with a parade of vignettes from Chinese history that demonstrate the Spirit in action (lines 11–26), proceeds to another meditation on this Spirit (lines 27–34), and ends with a sequence on the poet's own situation and his reliance on the Righteous Spirit for inspiration and transcendence (lines 35–60).⁶⁴ The echoes of Wen Tianxiang's "Song" in the above poems by Japanese *shishi* are clear. The final section of Wen's "Song" in particular, with its grim description of the humiliation of unjust imprisonment, had particular resonance for the incarcerated Japanese *shishi*, and the equanimity toward life and death expressed by Wen in line 30 is specifically invoked in the poems by Takasugi Shinsaku and Kojima Kyōsuke. The shorter Japanese *shishi* poems that reference Wen Tianxiang repeat a key structure from the original, but they also effect an important contraction and displacement. In the same way that Wen Tianxiang speaks of how reading historical accounts of his valorous predecessors gives him the spiritual sustenance necessary to endure his ordeal, so do these short Japanese poems emphasize the encouragement readings and recollections of the past provide, yet they focus on a single historical exemplar: that of Wen Tianxiang himself. Similarly, line 9 of Wen Tianxiang's "Song" celebrates the "integrity" or "mettle" (Ch. *jie*; J. *setsu* 節) of a panoply of heroic individuals in Chinese history, while in these Japanese poems

⁶⁴ Yang Ye has suggested first a two-part division (lines 1–34 and lines 35–60), the first part of which can then be further subdivided into a "beginning, a middle, and an end in itself"; see his "The Culture of Canonization," p. 10.

inspired by Wen's example, the term serves as the definitive term associated with Wen himself, appearing in line 6 of the first poem entitled "Composed in prison" by Takasugi, the comment from Yoshida Shōin that Takasugi appended to his second poem of the same title, and the poem by Hashimoto Sanai. These shorter poems by the Japanese *shi-shi* thus recapitulate the frame in Wen Tianxiang's "Song" that invokes historical analogues as sources of inspiration, but at the same time displace the referential scope to Wen Tianxiang himself. The versions of Wen Tianxiang's "Song" by Yoshida Shōin and others represent a different form of displacement, one that relocated the frame to Japan.

Yoshida Shōin's "Song of the Righteous Spirit," also a "pentasyllabic old-style poem" (Ch. *wuyan gushi*; J. *gogon koshi* 五言古詩), makes use of the rhyme characters in Wen Tianxiang's original. Moreover, as in Wen's "Song," the shifts in Shōin's rhymes correspond to the contours of his poem's semantic content and rhetorical strategy, serving to distinguish one structural unit from another.

和文天祥正氣歌韻

MATCHING THE RHYMES OF WEN TIANXIANG'S
"SONG OF THE RIGHTEOUS SPIRIT"

| | |
|----------|--|
| 正氣塞天地 | The righteous spirit pervades Heaven and Earth; |
| 聖人唯踐形 | Only a sage can completely fulfill it. ⁶⁵ |
| 其次不朽者 | And after the sages come the ever-enduring, |
| 亦爭光日星 | Who rival the sun and stars in their light. |
| 5 嗟吾小丈夫 | But, alas! I am a mere man, |
| 一粟點蒼溟 | A grain of millet floating on the dark blue depths. |
| 才疎身側陋 | My talents are meager, and my station low; |
| 雲路遙天廷 | The cloud-path to Court stretches so far away. |
| 然當其送東 | Yet when I was sent up to the East, |
| 10 眼與山水青 | My eyes shone as pure blue as the mountains and rivers. |
| 周海泊舟處 | When our ship anchored on the shores of Suō, |
| 敬慕文臣筆 | I paid my respects to the literary vassal's brush. ⁶⁶ |

⁶⁵ The allusion is to Mencius VIIA.38: 孟子曰形色天性也。惟聖人然後可以踐形。"Mencius said 'Our body and complexion are given to us by heaven. Only a sage can give his body complete fulfillment.'" See *Mencius*, trans. D. C. Lau (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 191.

⁶⁶ I believe that the "literary vassal" here refers to eminent poet and scholar Sugawara

- 巖島麤賊地 At Itsukushima, where the bandits were obliterated,
 仰想武臣節 I reverently pondered the military vassal's resolve.⁶⁷
 15 赤水傳佳談 Along the red rivers of Akō is told a glorious tale;
 櫻留義士血 The cherry blossoms preserve the blood of
 righteous men.⁶⁸
 和氣存郡名 The "Japanese spirit" lives on in the name of "Wake"
 county;
 孰捫清丸舌 Who could suppress Kiyomaro's tongue?⁶⁹
 壯士一谷笛 A stalwart soldier played his flute at Ichinotani;
 20 義妾芳野雪 And Yoshitsune's righteous consort danced on
 Yoshino snows.⁷⁰
 墓悲楠子志 At his grave, I grieved over Kusunoki's resolve;
 城仰豐公烈 At the castle, I gazed up at Hideyoshi's greatness.
 倭武經蝦夷 Yamato Takeru subdued the Emishi barbarians;
 田村威靺鞨 And Tamuramaro's awesome might reached all the
 way to Mohe.⁷¹

no Michizane, who stopped in at Suō while en route to his place of exile in Dazaifu in 901. One of the first shrines dedicated to Michizane as the god Tenjin was founded in Suō. Alternatively, Maki Fujio 榎不二夫 interprets this couplet as "While sailing around on the seas, when our ship would dock, I would pay my respects to the vassal Wen Tianxiang's brush"; see his *Bun Tenshō, Fujita Tōko, Yoshida Shōin Seiki no uta shōkai* 文天祥・藤田東湖・吉田松陰正気歌詳解 (Bunrokudō, 1902).

⁶⁷ The reference is to the defeat of Sue Harukata (1521–1555) and his clan by Mōri Motonari at the Battle of Itsukushima in 1555; the term "military vassal" emphasizes Motonari's relationship with his former lord Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507–1551), whom Harukata had turned against and defeated in a 1551 coup.

⁶⁸ The reference is to the "Forty-Seven Loyal Rōnin" of Akō whose avenging of their lord in 1703 became the celebrated subject of many literary and dramatic works, including *Kanadehon Chūshingura*.

⁶⁹ When Dōkyō attempted to succeed to the imperial throne, Wake no Kiyomaro was ordered to inquire about the succession of the Emperor at Usa Shrine; when he reported the prophesy did not support Dōkyō's bid, Dōkyō banished him. Subsequently, once Dōkyō fell from favor, Wake was reinstated and given command of Bizen and Mimasaka, where Wake county is located today.

⁷⁰ The references are to Taira no Atsumori and Shizuka-gozen, both of whom figure prominently in the Genpei Wars of 1180–1185 and in the literature derived from it, such as *Tale of the Heike* and the Nō plays *Atsumori* and *Yoshino Shizuka*. Atsumori's "flute" was a gift from his father Tsunemori and the fact that Atsumori had it with him when confronted by Kumagai Naozane suggests his filial piety. The purity of Shizuka-gozen's loyalty to Yoshitsune is similarly reflected in the "snow."

⁷¹ Mohe was the name of a northern state populated by a Tungusic tribe that had contact with China beginning in the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Sakanoue no Tamuramaro 坂上田村麻呂 (758–811) was, like the more shadowy figure of Yamato Takeru, sent to subjugate the Emishi, and presumably "Mohe" refers here to the non-Yamato peoples who lived in the northern reaches of the Japanese archipelago.

- 25 嗟此數君子 Ah! These several gentlemen, each
大道補分裂 Used the Great Way to forestall division.
- 尾張連伊勢 In Owari and in Ise too,
神器萬古存 The sacred treasures have been kept since time
immemorial.
- 琵琶映芙蓉 With Lake Biwa, where lovely Fuji is reflected;
30 嵩華何足論 What need is there to discuss Mount Song or Hua?
最是平安城 But supreme above all is this, the capital of Heian;
仰見天子尊 Where I gaze up at the imperial majesty.
神州臨萬國 The Divine Land reigns over the myriad nations,
乃是大道根 For it is the root of the Great Way.
- 35 從墨夷事起 Ever since the matter of the American barbarians
arose,
諸公實不力 The various lords have truly been powerless.
已破妖教禁 Already the ban on the wicked religion has been
broken;
議港洲南北 And debates are held about the northern and
southern ports of our land.
名義早已誤 The “names” and “principles” having long been
mistaken,
- 40 寧遑問失得 How can we have leisure to ask about their pros and
cons?
天子荐軫念 The Emperor grew profoundly distressed,
四海妖氛黑 While malign airs spread black across the four seas.
奉勅三名侯 The three lords who received the imperial order
鷄棲鳳凰食 Were as phoenixes made to eat among chickens.⁷²
- 45 其他憂國者 And other men concerned for the nation,
亦皆溝中瘠 Were all left to rot: skeletons in the ditch.
歛忽五六歲 In a flash, five or six years have passed;

⁷² The identity of the “three lords” in the first line of this couplet is unclear. Maki suggests the reference is to the “Mito samurai, pro-expulsion activists in the capital, and the court nobles”; *Bun Tenshō, Fujita Tōko, Yoshida Shōin Seiki no uta shōkai*, p. 113. The editors of *Yoshida Shōin zenshū* speculate that the phrase “might” refer to “the daimyo of Mito, Owari, and Echizen”; 7:309 n. 6. H. Van Straelen holds that the three are the “daimyōs of Satsuma, Tosa, and Chōshū”; see his *Yoshida Shōin: Forerunner of the Meiji Restoration* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952), p. 109 n. 4. The second line of the couplet, with its image of the auspicious phoenix being forced to feed among the much more pedestrian chickens, comes directly from the Wen Tianxiang poem, where it refers to the latter’s being taken captive by the Mongols.

- 世事幾變易 And affairs in the world have shifted so many times.
 幸有聖皇在 Yet we are blessed by fortune with a sagely emperor,
 50 以足興神國 Who can reinvigorate the Divine Nation.
 如何將軍忠 And what of the loyalty of the generals,
 曾不拂洋賊 Who have never once attempted to expel the
 Western bandits?
 大義自炳明 The great principle shines bright in self-evidence,
 孰惑辨黑白 Who can be so lost as to debate its propriety?
 55 人世轉瞬耳 A human life lasts but for the blinking of the eye,
 天地何有極 Yet can Heaven and Earth ever come to an end?
 聖賢雖難企 Though the designs of sages and worthies may be
 hard to effect,
 吾志在平昔 My resolve remains as it has always been.
 願留正氣得 I wish to draw the righteous spirit up within me,
 60 聊添山水色 And somehow add to the beauty of this land.⁷³

Like Wen Tianxiang's original, Shōin's poem consists of four discrete sections: the first ten lines constitute a prologue that introduces the theme of the "Righteous Spirit"; lines 11–26 offer a series of illustrative instances from Japanese history; lines 27–34 reflect on the Spirit as manifest in the Imperial house and capital, and lines 35–60, shifting the focus to recent times, lament Japan's inability to repulse the foreign threat and express the poet's unflagging confidence in the nation and his resolve to contribute to its glory.

Even while drawing upon the rhymes and structure of Wen Tianxiang's "Song," Shōin made the poem his own: he transplanted its referential scope almost entirely to Japan, and he subtly shifted the course of its narrative to highlight how his own experiences had endowed him with a grand vision that transcended his own subjectivity. Wen Tianxiang's piece is striking for its extensive preface, which vividly portrays the grim details of the author's imprisonment and explains how the squalid surroundings inspired him to compose the poem. Yet, after this revelatory preface, Wen Tianxiang's poetic persona disappears during the first half of the poem, which discusses Heaven and Earth and surveys several Chinese historical precedents; only in line 35 does the poet reemerge with a direct reference to his individual situation. Shōin, by

⁷³ Yamaguchi-ken Kyōiku Iinkai, ed., *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, 7:306–10. The version of the poem in Maki curiously omits lines 39 and 40.

contrast, provided no prose preface to his poem; instead he used the first half of the poem to chart how his poetic persona had come into contact with traces of historical events.⁷⁴

The five couplets of Shōin's prologue steadily progress from the grand scale of "Heaven and Earth" (line 1) to the minuteness of "a grain of millet" (line 6), and from the realm of "sages" and other luminaries (lines 2–4) to the humble domain of the poet's own meager station (line 7). Wen Tianxiang's poem also progressively narrows its focus in its first few lines. Both poets turn their attention from cosmic to human affairs in line 5; but whereas Wen Tianxiang speaks in general terms about the world of men, Shōin speaks specifically about himself. In Wen Tianxiang's "Song," historical precedents are listed with detachment. In Shōin's poem, even the spectacular procession of illustrative historical personages (lines 11–26) is filtered through the poet's individual perceptions. In both poems, lines 9–10 serve as a transitional couplet that offsets the parade of famous figures to follow. Yet Shōin provides a personal context for this litany, describing the sequence in terms of the sites he remembered having visited during his cross-country travel in 1859—when he was being remanded from domiciliary confinement in Hagi to a shogunal prison in Edo. Shōin thus links the portraits in the gallery with a spatial vector that describes a more or less steady course from east to west. Grounded in Japan, the vector coincides with Shōin's own progression toward confrontation with the authorities and thence to his own death.

In Wen Tianxiang's "Song," twelve historical figures appear in sixteen lines (11–26), with only the first group of four following a strict chronological order. Scholar of Chinese literature Yang Ye has characterized the variety in both the syntactic structure of the lines and the time periods from which the allusions are drawn as lending Wen Tianxiang's gallery "color and musicality."⁷⁵ Shōin's poem also uses structural and syntactic variation, with the concentration of allusions per couplet varying considerably; the first four couplets (lines 11–18) each identify a single episode; the three couplets (lines 19–24) that follow each identify two episodes, and the concluding couplet offers a summary judgment about the whole group of ten figures (lines 25–26). Fur-

⁷⁴ Perhaps the work that he was writing concurrently, *Shōkonroku*, can be read as a prose counterpart.

⁷⁵ Yang Ye, "The Culture of Canonization," p. 11.

thermore, similarities among the couplets in their syntactic structure and semantic value create links within Shōin's gallery; the "literary vassal" of line 12 offsets the "military vassal" of line 14, for example, and the polysemy of a place name such as Akō (line 15) echoes the multiple associations called up by the characters for Wake (line 17).

Just as the ultimate couplet of the first section of Shōin's poem (lines 9–10) provides a transition to the following section, so too does the second section of Shōin's poem end with a transitional couplet (lines 25–26), a feature absent from the Wen Tianxiang original. This couplet implicitly invites readers to see the ten historical figures just recalled as linked not only by their shared status as sites of remembrance along the poet's journey from Hagi to Edo, but by their putative shared role in Japanese history. Just as these recollected figures span the entire archipelago, unifying its territory, so too have they promoted unity and prevented division over the course of history. If this particular reading of Shōin's works better for some of the enumerated incidents than for others, the third section declaims more directly that the focus and basis of this unity lies in the imperial house, its capital, and the national territory itself. In this section, after enumerating the domestic sites connected to the imperial house in the opening lines, the poet offers a fleeting glimpse of the world beyond Japan (line 30). Just as the sacred sites of Henan's Songshan and Shaanxi's Huashan, two of China's celebrated "five mountains," threaten to impinge upon the poem's field of vision, the poet preemptorily refocuses his gaze with insular confidence on Japan's status as a "divine land" that occupies a special place amid a myriad of other nations (line 33).

The tentative, disinterested glance beyond Japan's borders that is introduced in this sequence anticipates the transition to the fourth section, in which an unexpected foreign incursion disrupts the idyllic equilibrium. Having asserted that the defining feature of the historical heroes in the gallery is their ability to restore unity in troubled times, Shōin's detailing of the threat to Japan's unity and stability—initially introduced by the incursion of, and the concessions made to, foreign powers (lines 35–46)—suggests that the time is ripe for the emergence of another such heroic figure. Now, in 1859, five or six years after Perry, Shōin remains inspired by his faith in the emperor (line 49–50) and maintains his own personal resolve and determination (line 57–60). As in Wen Tianxiang's "Song," the fourth section of Shōin's poem

thus narrates a trying circumstance and explains how the poet remains hopeful through it. Yet, unlike Wen Tianxiang's focus on his individual crisis of imprisonment, Shōin's concern in these lines is the fate of Japan as a whole. The poem's focus, in other words, has moved from its initial attention to Shōin's own incarceration and his acts of remembrance to the larger issue of Japan's present crisis—precisely the opposite direction of movement from the Wen Tianxiang poem.

To appreciate these contrasting trajectories, it is worthwhile to compare a pivotal couplet in the original with Shōin's version. In writing about Wen Tianxiang's poem, Yoshikawa Kōjirō has identified a momentary wavering in lines 55–56, near the poem's climax:

悠悠我心悲 Vast is the sorrow in my heart;
蒼天曷有極 Blue Heaven! When will it end?⁷⁶

As Yoshikawa notes, Wen Tianxiang recovers from this brief crisis of faith when he recalls the historical precedents he has earlier rehearsed; these provide him with encouragement and solace and he literally basks in their glow as he peruses them again. In Shōin's version, by contrast, the couplet that occurs in this position instead intimates an indifference toward the poet's individual death:

人世轉瞬耳 A human life lasts but for the blinking of the eye,
天地何有極 Yet, can Heaven and Earth ever come to an end?

In its contrast between the endurance of Heaven and Earth and the transience of human life, Shōin's couplet thus emphasizes his progression out of personal experience to a larger truth that embraces and defines all of Japan.

Yoshida Shōin's "Song of the Righteous Spirit" influenced later *shishi*, many of whom may well have been more familiar with Shōin's version than the original.⁷⁷ Wen Tianxiang's piece had been domesticated

⁷⁶ Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎, *Gen Min shi gaisetsu* 元明詩概説 (Iwanami Shoten, 1963), pp. 61–70, esp. 69–70; and in *Five Hundred Years of Chinese Poetry*, trans. Wixted, pp. 52–56.

⁷⁷ Shōin's version of the piece remained popular into the twentieth century. H. Van Straelen notes how its "poetic and stirring lines" were recited by Japanese youth marching into battle during the Pacific War; see his *Yoshida Shōin*, p. 107. Although he does not specify a particular text by Shōin, *tokkōtai* (kamikaze) pilot Hayashi Tadao wrote about his own turmoil in metaphoric terms as a struggle between the eponymous protagonist

through Shōin's matched composition. Yet, a rigorously matched composition was not the only way in which Japanese *shishi* domesticated the "Song of the Righteous Spirit," and Shōin was not the first *shishi* to produce a Japanese version of the work. Fourteen years earlier, while under house arrest, the Mito scholar Fujita Tōko had written "Matching Wen Tianxiang's 'Song of the Righteous Spirit.'"⁷⁸ In a significant departure from the typical custom in such "matching" (J. *wa*; Ch. *he* 和) poems, he made no attempt whatsoever to echo Wen Tianxiang's original rhymes, but clearly the work was never far from his mind.⁷⁹ In the elaborate preface that accompanies his version, Tōko details how Wen Tianxiang's poem had long been an inspiration to him:

When I, Takeki, was eight or nine years old, I learned of Wen Tianxiang's "Song of the Righteous Spirit" from my late father.⁸⁰ Whenever my late father recited the song, he would beat out time with cup in hand, fervent and impassioned. He would explain how Heaven and Earth were filled with a righteous spirit, and would insist that one must follow it all the way to its basis in the great virtues of loyalty and filial piety. That was over thirty years ago now. For every ten works of poetry and prose that I could recite when I was young, I have probably forgotten seven or eight of them. But when it comes to Tianxiang's song, I recall each line perfectly and haven't forgotten a single word. Moreover, my late father's voice and visage appear with

of Thomas Mann's "Tonio Kröger," representing sensitive artistic withdrawal; and Yoshida Shōin, representing impassioned social engagement; see Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 89.

⁷⁸ In 1844, the shogunate ordered Tōko's lord, Tokugawa Nariaki, to report to Edo, whereupon he was stripped of his status as daimyo of the Mito domain. Tōko accompanied his lord and was placed under house arrest in the Mito domain residence in Edo. In addition to the "Song of the Righteous Spirit," Tōko wrote a poetic life history entitled *Kaiten shishi* 回天詩史 while he was in captivity.

⁷⁹ The poem is titled "Bun Tenshō no 'Seiki no uta' ni wasu; narabini jo" 和文天祥正氣歌并序, and I have used the version in Sakata, *Shishi*, pp. 38–62. It has also been reprinted in Maki, *Bun Tenshō, Fujita Tōko, Yoshida Shōin Seiki no uta shōkai*, pp. 43–83, and in Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, pp. 46–75. The explications in these two versions by Maki and Takano are strikingly similar, suggesting that Takano either relied on Maki or else both of them relied on a third source, perhaps *Seiki no uta zokkai* 正氣歌俗解, the 1867 commentary prepared by Oyama Shunzan 小山春山 (also known as Tomohiro 朝弘; 1827–1891), a former student of Ōhashi Totsuan who participated in the Sakashitamō incident. Shunzan apparently prepared the commentary for the use of his academy students.

⁸⁰ Here Tōko uses his given name, Takeki 彪; Tōko's father, the Confucian scholar Fujita Yūkoku 藤田幽谷 (1774–1826), was a founding figure of the Mito school.

life-like vividness in my mind's eye. By nature, I am prone to sickness. Last year, when it was time for me to follow my lord [Nariaki]'s carriage and come [to Edo], I happened to be suffering from a cold, but I toughed it out and departed. When my lord ran afoul of the authorities, I too was ordered into confinement. Drafty windows and a leaky room leave me assailed by dank and malevolent airs. Thin robes and sparse food make my hunger and cold extreme. The bitter toils and harsh difficulties I face are not those that the average man could endure. And yet, I have suddenly recovered from my long-standing illness, and my physical stamina is superb. That I am able to hold my head up and cast my gaze around the world, recklessly arraying myself alongside the ancients, I think is in large part due to Wen Tianxiang's song.

Fujita Tōko's decision to write a substantial preface itself emphasizes his indebtedness to Wen Tianxiang, and the textually mediated salvation he finds toward the end of this first section echoes the statement in Wen Tianxiang's preface about how the poet overcomes the fetid vapors of his confinement through reliance on cultivating the Righteous Spirit that he identifies with the Mencian "flood-like *qi*." Like Wen Tianxiang, Tōko writes that he has been able to achieve some degree of psychological release from his trying circumstances through his faith in a "righteous spirit." In writing the poem, Tōko had another agenda, however: to insist upon the particularity, and indeed the superiority, of the Japanese "righteous spirit." His preface continues:

When Tianxiang met with the toppling of the Song state, he was taken prisoner by the Mongols. Truly this was a great crisis in the life of a vassal. My confinement, on the other hand, is no more than a temporary and aberrant misfortune. And so both our circumstances and accomplishments are greatly dissimilar. But as someone of old once said, "Life and death are great affairs."⁸¹ Now, my travails have come to this point. But it seems that people are still unsatisfied with this and say "Why is he not given leave to commit suicide?" or "Why does he not hurry up and take his own life?" This is why I can say that I spend my days now on the border between life and death. Moreover, in my stubborn refusal to change, in my self-confidence that grows ever stronger, there is no dissimilarity between me and Tianxiang.

⁸¹ In *Zhuangzi* V, these words are attributed to Confucius; see *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*, trans. Burton Watson (Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 64.

Ah! The question of my own life and death is of course a matter beneath mention. When it comes to the advance or retreat of my lord, then this is a matter connected to the expansion or compression of the righteous spirit and the flourishing and decline of the Divine Land. How can *this* be said to be just a temporary and aberrant misfortune? Tianxiang said that “flood-like” is the righteous spirit that pervades Heaven and Earth. I will expand upon his statement, and say that the “righteous spirit” is what is accumulated through moral action, and is the basis upon which loyalty and filial piety are carried out. However, what he calls the “righteous spirit” has changed and remained inconstant from Qin to Han, from Tang to Song. And what I call the “righteous spirit” has endured unchanged across thousands of generations, remaining constant even to the ends of Heaven and Earth. Thus, I recite Tianxiang’s song, and to it match my own song. It goes like this:

Alongside his no-doubt-profound respect for Wen Tianxiang and his sincerely felt gratitude for the poem, a distinct sense of one-upmanship motivated Tōko to write his own version.⁸² Not surprisingly, Tōko’s “Song of the Righteous Spirit” exceeds the length of the original by some fourteen lines. The idea of Japanese imperial constancy and political unity that Tōko introduces in the preface’s final section receives amplification in the poem’s opening couplets. Here Tōko assigns Japan a special place as the purest site of the Righteous Spirit’s manifestation, a unique status underscored by the orthography 不二 (*J. fuji*; lit. “peerless” or “singular”) for Mount Fuji.

| | |
|---------|---|
| 天地正大氣 | The Righteous Spirit of Heaven and Earth |
| 粹然鍾神州 | Is gathered purely in the Divine Land. |
| 秀爲不二嶽 | In its splendid heights, it forms the peak of Fuji, |
| 巍巍聳千秋 | That has soared skyward for thousands of autumns. |
| 5 注爲大瀛水 | Pouring down, it forms the great ocean waters, |
| 洋洋環八洲 | Encircling the Country of Eight Islands in its vastness. |
| 發爲萬朶櫻 | Opening, it forms the cherry blossoms of countless branches, |
| 衆芳難與儔 | With which no other flowers can compare. |

⁸² On the ambivalence that China engendered in many prominent Edo-era scholars, see Kate Wildman Nakai, “The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan: The Problem of Sinocentrism,” *HJAS* 40.1 (1980): 157–99.

- 凝爲百鍊鐵 Hardening, it forms the iron sword, tempered a
 hundred times,
- 10 銳利可割鋏 Which is sharp enough to cleave a helmet.
 蓋臣皆熊羆 Each loyal retainer is fierce as a bear;
 武夫盡好仇 Every military man a trusted vassal.
- 神州孰君臨 In this Divine Land, what sovereign reigns?
 萬古仰天皇 Since time immemorial, we have revered the
 Emperor.
- 15 皇風洽六合 The Imperial way suffuses all space;
 明德侔大陽 His “shining virtue” equal to the Sun.
 不世無污隆 True, no age is without its rise and fall;
 正氣時放光 But the Righteous Spirit shines forth each time.
- 乃參大連議 It was manifest in the argument of the Ōmuraji,
20 侃侃排瞿曇 Who resolutely called for the expulsion of Gautama.
 乃助明主斷 It aided the bright sovereign in his determination
 焰焰焚伽藍 To torch the Buddhist temple in a roaring
 conflagration.⁸³
- 中郎嘗用之 Nakatomi once drew upon this Spirit
 宗社磐石安 To place the state on a rock-solid foundation.⁸⁴
- 25 清丸嘗用之 Wake no Kiyomaro once drew upon this Spirit
 妖僧肝膽寒 To subdue the fiendish monk, turning his innards
 cold.⁸⁵
- 忽揮龍口劍 Suddenly, it appeared in the hefted sword at
 Takinokuchi,

⁸³ The *Nihon shoki* records how Paekche’s presentation of a Buddhist statue and sutras to the court in 553 prompted debates about whether the new doctrine should be accepted. The first couplet refers to Mononobe no Okoshi’s argument that to propitiate Buddhism would incur the disfavor of Japan’s own gods, a position he staked out in opposition to that of Soga no Iname. Emperor Kinmei decided to award the Buddhist statue to Iname, who installed it at the temple he founded at his home in Mukuhara, but a subsequent pestilence caused Kinmei to reconsider, and he ordered the statue discarded and the Mukuhara temple burned.

⁸⁴ The reference is to the 645 coup in which Nakatomi no Kamako (Fujiwara no Kamatari) and Prince Ōe ousted Soga no Iruka and promulgated the Taika Reforms the following year.

⁸⁵ In 769, when the monk Dōkyō attempted to succeed to the imperial throne, Wake no Kiyomaro insisted on ascertaining the will of the gods at Usa Shrine; when Kiyomaro reported that the oracle was opposed to Dōkyō, he was banished, but ultimately Dōkyō fell out of favor and Kiyomaro’s brave fidelity was celebrated.

- 虜使頭足分 Separating the Hun emissary's head and limbs from
his body.
- 忽起西海颶 Suddenly, it rose up in the storm on the Western
Seas,
- 30 怒濤熾妖氛 Forming angry waves that devastated the
malevolent airs.⁸⁶
- 志賀月明夜 Then, on a bright moonlit night in Shiga,
陽爲鳳輦巡 It was the imperial carriage sent as a decoy.⁸⁷
芳野戰酣日 Then, in the heat of battle on Mount Yoshino,
又代帝子屯 It became a stand-in for the Crown Prince.⁸⁸
- 35 或投鎌倉窟 Or, for one thrown into an earthen prison in
Kamakura,
憂憤正愴愴 It became an indignation so truly lamentable.⁸⁹
或伴櫻井驛 Or, for him who was led to the post-station at
Sakurai,
遺訓何慙慙 It became a parting lesson so tender.⁹⁰
或殉天目山 Or, with the defeat at Tenmokuzan,
40 幽囚不忘君 The sequestered prisoner did not forget his lord.⁹¹

⁸⁶ These two couplets refer to the thirteenth-century Mongol invasions: in 1275 an emissary of Qubilai was executed at Takinokuchi, near Kamakura, and in 1281 the second Mongol invasion was repulsed supposedly through a "divine wind."

⁸⁷ As recounted in the military chronicle the *Taiheiki*, Fujiwara Morokata is sent to make a pilgrimage to Mount Hiei in the guise of the Emperor Go-Daigo as a strategy to rally the monks in opposition to Hōjō Takatoki; see *The Taiheiki: A Chronicle of Medieval Japan*, trans. Helen Craig McCullough (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 57.

⁸⁸ In 1333 Murakami Yoshiteru exchanged garments with Prince Morinaga, permitting the latter to escape, whereupon Yoshiteru killed himself in the Prince's guise; see *The Taiheiki*, pp. 178–79.

⁸⁹ Referring to Prince Morinaga, who was slandered by Ashikaga Takauji and thus ordered incarcerated in a cave prison, where he died in 1335; see *The Taiheiki*, pp. 384–87.

⁹⁰ The reference is to the parting of Kusunoki Masatsura (1326–1348) from his father Masashige at Sakurai (near modern Osaka) in 1336, just as Masashige was preparing to fight in the battle of Minatogawa. A famous scene in the *Taiheiki* (Chapter 16), the moment was well known through pictorial depictions, such as the painting called "The Parting of the Kusunoki Father and Son at Sakurai Station" by Kikuchi Yōsai (1788–1878). Saigō Takamori brought the poetic and graphic representations of the scene together when he wrote a *kanshi* in praise of Yōsai's painting that used Tōko's diction, entitled "Sakurai eki no zu no san" 桜井駅図贊; see Sakata, *Shishi*, p. 265.

⁹¹ Upon learning of Takeda Katsuyori's defeat at Tenmokuzan in 1582, his vassal Komiyama Naizen, who had once enjoyed his lord's favor but had been estranged from him in recent years, raced to the scene to die alongside Katsuyori.

或守伏見城 Or, in protecting Fushimi Castle,
 一身當萬軍 One man took on an army ten thousand strong.⁹²
 承平二百歲 Peace has endured for two hundred years,
 斯氣常獲伸 And this Spirit has continued to spread.
 45 然當其鬱屈 Just when it seemed that the Spirit might be
 obscured,
 生四十七人 It took the form of forty-seven men.
 乃知人雖亡 And thus it is known, that even though a man may die,
 英靈未嘗泯 His spirit shall never succumb.
 長在天地間 Rather it shall abide between Heaven and Earth,
 50 隱然敍彝倫 Subtly giving order to the Way.
 孰能扶持之 Who, then, can nurture and sustain this Spirit?
 卓立東海濱 He who towers above the rest, on the banks of the
 Eastern Sea.
 忠誠尊皇室 With loyalty and sincerity, he reveres the
 Imperial family;
 孝敬事天神 With filial piety and respect, he serves the
 heavenly gods.
 55 修文兼奮武 He cultivates learning while also rallying the troops;
 誓欲清胡塵 Vowing to purify the realm of the foreign filth.
 一朝天步艱 Yet one day, the workings of Heaven brought
 adversity,
 邦君身先淪 And the domain lord himself was the first casualty.
 頑鈍不知機 Stubborn and foolish, I could not discern the signs,
 60 罪戾及孤臣 And charges were brought even against this lone
 vassal.
 孤臣困葛藟 Now I, a vassal separated from his lord, am confined
 and bound,
 君冤向誰陳 Whom can I tell of this calumny against my lord?
 孤子遠墳墓 A fatherless child, far from the family graves,
 何以謝先親 How can I offer apology to my late ancestors?
 65 荏苒二周星 Now, two years have passed slowly by;
 唯有斯氣隨 And all that I have is this Spirit that follows me.

⁹² The reference is to Torii Mototada's heroic defense of Fushimi Castle in 1600 while his lord Tokugawa Ieyasu headed east to do battle with Uesugi Kagekatsu. Recognizing that the fall of the castle was inevitable, Mototada urged Ieyasu to take extra troops with him rather than to leave behind a large force to guard the castle.

- 嗟予雖萬死 Ah! Even were I to die ten thousand deaths,
 豈忍與汝離 How could I bear to be parted from you?
 屈伸付天地 Whether I am crushed or freed, I leave to Heaven
 and earth,
- 70 生死復何疑 Whether I live or die, how could I hesitate?
 生當雪君冤 So long as I live, I will clear my lord of this
 accusation,
 復見張綱維 So that we may again see the three bonds and four
 virtues at work.
- 死爲忠義鬼 Should I die, I shall become a righteous ghost
 極天護皇基 And protect the Imperial state forever.

Although Fujita Tōko ignored the rhymes of the original and the four-part structure that they underscored, he drew upon several features of Wen Tianxiang's original to compose his version of the "Song of the Righteous Spirit." In addition to the gallery of famous examples, various rhetorical devices used in the original find a place in Tōko's rendition.

Most of the shifts in rhyme in Tōko's poem do coincide with thematic shifts. The prologue (lines 1–12) elaborates the theme of the "Righteous Spirit" that Tōko introduced in the preface, articulating its purported unique connection to the land of Japan and its people. Like Wen Tianxiang in the original, Tōko moves from the grand scale of Heaven to the small scale of man, and from the impersonal natural world to the personal. In this opening section Tōko makes use of anaphora, especially in the repetition of the 爲 character, and of a syntactic structure that is sustained across several lines. (Lines 3, 5, 7, and 9 can be represented as V 爲 XXY, where V is a verb, XX is a geographic term or adjective, and Y is an element of the natural scene.) Tōko's implementation differs from Wen's when it comes to particular details, but such repetition of semantic and structural elements is a device that Wen Tianxiang makes use of in the original poem. The ultimate couplet of this section (lines 11–12) introduces the theme of loyalty and fidelity as the defining characteristics of men in the imperial realm: a segue to the second section (lines 13–18), which introduces the object of their loyalty: the imperial personage. The final couplet of this second section (lines 17–18) acts as a transition, anticipating the parade of paragons that follows in the third section (lines 19–42) as exemplars of instances when the "Righteous Spirit shines forth."

In contrast to Wen Tianxiang, Tōko introduces the twelve figures of his pantheon in strict chronological order, maintaining the verbal density constant throughout: one couplet alludes to each famous event. Yet, just as Wen Tianxiang added rhythmic interest by using a variety of repeated lexical elements and grammatical structures in his parade of heroes, so too does Tōko use a range of syntactic structures, each of which is sustained over the course of a single rhyme group, to recall heroes from Japan's history. Accordingly, the two couplets of lines 19–22 repeat the particle 乃; those in lines 23–26 repeat “once drew upon it” 嘗用之; those in lines 27–30 repeat the word “suddenly” 忽; those in lines 31–34 both use a place name at the head of the first couplet; and those in lines 35–42 repeat the word “or” 或. In addition, the adjacent couplets in each rhyme group show either complete intercouplet parallelism or “alternating” parallelism between the first lines of each. Such use of common verbal structures serves to bind together the couplets comprising each rhyme group and mirrors the use of anaphora in Wen Tianxiang's original poem.

Having surveyed over a millennium of Japanese history prior to the founding of the Tokugawa shogunate, Tōko then turns his attention to his own era (lines 43–64). Tōko finds that, after two centuries of peace and stability punctuated only by the exceptional valor of the Akō incident, his own lord Tokugawa Nariaki is a shining manifestation of the “Righteous Spirit” in practice. The adversity visited upon the Mito daimyo, and Tōko's feelings of responsibility for having failed to avert this crisis (lines 59–64), lead into the poem's final section (lines 65–74), where the focus shifts entirely to Tōko's present predicament. In its progression from eternal verities to a series of historical exemplars, and then from a trying circumstance to the poet's undiminished resolve to overcome it, the poem closely mirrors the trajectory of Wen Tianxiang's “Song.” Both poems celebrate the triumph of the unbent spirit, but Tōko parts company from his Chinese predecessor by articulating national particularism instead of universality and in vowing to rectify the present disorder.

In their versions of Wen Tianxiang's “Song of the Righteous Spirit,” both Fujita Tōko and Yoshida Shōin assign a preeminent place to Japan's national territory, thus domesticating the work further. Whereas the opening lines of Wen Tianxiang's “Song” identify the righteous *qi* as

the source of the “rivers and mountains,” both Japanese versions invoke not generalized topographical features, but elements of the landscape (whether named sites or native flora) that are particular to Japan. Just as Shōin’s version emphasizes the particularity of the realm through its steady progression through identifiable places, Tōko’s version foregrounds Mount Fuji and other hallmarks of the homeland in its opening couplets.⁹³ This formulation obliquely claims a homology between the physical magnificence of the homeland and the splendor of its denizens, a metonymy upon which later *shishi* poets drew. For example, in one of his best-known poems, Saigō Takamori situates Mount Fuji as a metaphor for the “gentleman” idealized in Confucian ethics:

題富嶽圖

ON AN IMAGE OF MOUNT FUJI

八朵芙蓉白露天 An eight-petal lotus in the white dew of
autumn;
遠眸千里拂雲煙 Visible from a thousand miles, it soars up
through the clouds.
百蠻呼國稱君子 Barbarians call Japan a land of gentleman;
爲有高標不二巔 Because of the lofty heights of peerless Fuji.⁹⁴

As in the Tōko poem, this quatrain progresses from natural scenery to the human world, a trajectory that recurs in the works of many later *shishi* poets.⁹⁵ Saigō’s poem, in turn, was said to inspire the famous Meiji General Nogi Maresuke 乃木希典 (1849–1912) to write the following quatrain:

⁹³ In his study of the Mito school, Victor Koschmann invokes Mircea Eliade to suggest the importance that sacred mountains like Mount Fuji and Nikkō often have to the “archaic mystique of origins.” Eliade’s theory may help to explain the recurrence of the image and the characteristic associations it has in Tōko’s poem as well as later *shishi* poetry. See Koschmann, *The Mito Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 166.

⁹⁴ Ōki Shunkurō, *Saigō Nanshū Sensei shishū*, pp. 204–5.

⁹⁵ Occasionally the vector is inverted, but even in such cases, the emphasis remains on asserting the profound bonds linking, and even equating, the people to their homeland. Consider, for example, the final couplet of “Shūchū zatsugin” 囚中雜吟, a quatrain by Tohara Ukitsu 戸原卯橘: “Like an autumn stream, my three-foot sword shines cold at the tip, / But the malevolent fog that pervades the realm is oh so hard to dispel. / Now I shall die and become the rivers and mountains, / A Righteous Spirit to protect the land for a thousand years” 秋水鉞寒三尺刀 滔天妖霧奈難消 從今一死爲河嶽 正氣千秋護本朝; see Koizumi, *Ishin shishi kin’ō shiika hyōshaku*, pp. 177–78.

詠富嶽

A POEM ON MOUNT FUJI

峻嶒富嶽聳千秋 Magnificent Fuji has soared skyward for
 thousands of years;
 赫灼朝暉照八洲 The brilliant morning sun shines down from it
 on the Land of Eight Islands.
 休說區區風物美 Let us have no more trifling talk about scenic
 beauty,
 地靈人傑是神州 For the terrestrial spirits and the people's
 greatness make ours a Divine Land.⁹⁶

Although the poem recognizes Japan's aesthetic splendor in its first couplet, it emphatically asserts in the second couplet that the land's true greatness lies in the inseparable fusion of the territory and its residents. Nogi's poem makes unambiguous the analogy between the nation (as territory) and the nation (as its people) that is latent in the works of Tōko, Shōin, Saigō, and other predecessors.

“Songs of the Righteous Spirit” after the Meiji Restoration

As Nogi's Saigō-inspired poem suggests, the legacy of the *shishi* and their literature lingered on well into the twentieth century. In part this happened as famous phrases from mid-nineteenth-century *shishi* poems were propagated and circulated in new forms. Yamada Bimyō incorporated Saigō's line about the shattering jewel, for example, into a poem appearing in *Shintaishi sen* (Selection of poems in the new style; 1886), and this version, in turn, soon became popularized as the war anthem “Teki wa ikuman” (How numerous the enemy) when set to music by Koyama Sakunosuke.⁹⁷ Yet at the same time, anthologies of

⁹⁶ An image of the quatrain in Nogi's own hand is included in *Nogi Maresuke zenshū* (Kokusho Kankōkai, 1994), 3:554. Incidentally, Ōki Shunkurō states that Nogi wrote this poem “while he looked at Saigō's poem, immediately before he committed *junshi*”; see *Saigō Nanshū Sensei shishū*, p. 204. I imagine, however, that this statement is an instance of the valedictory reading paradigm asserting itself, for most accounts of Nogi's spectacular suicide identify two *tanka* as the general's final poems. For a discussion of these two Japanese poems as well as Nogi's wife Shizuko's valedictory *tanka*, see Doris Bargaen, *Suicidal Honor: General Nogi and the Writings of Mori Ōgai and Natsume Sōseki* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), pp. 77–80.

⁹⁷ In Yamada Bimyō's poem, Saigō's line is transformed into: “Rather than remaining

shishi poetry continued to be published, and in 1909, the *Kokumin Shinbun* staged an unprecedented exhibition of poetry, paintings, and calligraphy composed by the *shishi* of the late Tokugawa and early Meiji period and their antecedents. Prominent Meiji newspaper publisher Tokutomi Sohō (1863–1957) explained his motivation for undertaking the exhibition in terms of his goal of furnishing an inspiring model for contemporary youth:

I believe our motivations in planning this exhibition were [severalfold]: first, to revive the spirit of reverence for the sovereign and love of country that reached its climax around the time of the Restoration. Second, the light of the Restoration era *shishi* had grown dim and obscure, and we sought to clarify and make it shine again, extolling their efforts. Third, we hoped to provide practical education to the youth of Meiji, encouraging them and invigorating their spirits. Fourth, we hoped vividly to depict the great feat of the Restoration reforms and the adversities it entailed, thereby awakening the hearts of society. Fifth, we hoped to gather historical materials on the Restoration, fashioning them into a resource for knowing the future by means of the past.⁹⁸

An extraordinarily handsome two-volume exhibition catalog was produced the following year, with full color reproductions of the paintings and calligraphy as well as transcriptions of the texts. Significantly, this catalog simply reprinted the text of the works themselves in movable type, without adding any *kundoku* reading marks or explanatory apparatus to the texts written in Chinese. That the journalist Tokutomi believed the unannotated items in the exhibition and the catalog his newspaper company had prepared could serve as “practical education” for the Japanese youth of 1910 indicates the continuing vitality of literary Chinese into the twentieth century.

Those born after the Meiji Restoration grew up with a national school curriculum that no longer equated the acquisition of literary Chinese with learning itself. Nonetheless, selections from the Confucian classics, the Chinese dynastic histories, and such Japanese *kanbun* works as Rai San'yō's *Nihon gaishi* continued to serve as basic texts

[intact] as a roof tile, become a jewel and shatter!” (*kawara to narite nokoru yori, tama to nari tsutsu kudakeyo ya*); see Yamada Bimyō 山田美妙, ed., *Shintaishi sen* 新體詞選 (Kōun Sho'oku, 1886), p. 21.

⁹⁸ *Ishin shishi ihōchō* 維新志士遺芳帖 (Kokumin Shinbunsha, 1910). I would like to thank Fred Notehelfer for generously making this text available to me.

of study well into the Meiji period. Moreover, Chinese poetic composition remained an important practice for many of this generation. The body of Meiji literature in Chinese is vast and extremely diverse; poems that are clear descendants of the *shishi* tradition form but one of its many strains. Given the importance that Wen Tianxiang's "Song" played in the literature of the *shishi*, it is not surprising that echoes of their engagement with this seminal text reverberate in the works of late Meiji poets. When the statesman Nagaoka Moriyoshi 長岡護美 (1842–1906) visited Fujita Tōko's gravesite, he composed an elaborate poem in honor of Tōko that includes the following three couplets:

| | |
|---------|--|
| 正氣作歌鼓四方 | With Righteous Spirit, he wrote a song that drummed up the four directions; |
| 誓雪公冤非刀匕 | Vowing to avenge the wrongful charge against his lord, he was no mere tool. |
| 壯志未遂淪黃泉 | His grand aspiration not yet achieved, he descended to the underworld; |
| 忠骨千古埋蒿里 | Everlasting are his loyal bones, buried in this graveyard. |
| 天鑿昭彰本分明 | But Heaven's oversight is manifest, its distinctions clear; |
| 安使正氣久靡徙 | How could the Righteous Spirit be suppressed for long? ⁹⁹ |

Significantly, Nagaoka's mention of "Song of the Righteous Spirit" occurs immediately before the couplet that recalls Tōko's death. Although Tōko in fact lived for over a decade after composing his famous poem, Nagaoka's eulogistic account gives the work a nearly valedictory air.

That Nagaoka repeats the phrase "Righteous Spirit" in his poem without overtly mentioning Wen Tianxiang, and that he allusively incorporates phrases derived from Tōko's poem, shows how closely identified the phrase had become with Tōko and other *shishi*. The *shishi* of mid-nineteenth-century Japan had so thoroughly naturalized Wen Tianxiang's "Song" within Japan's literary repertoire that a poet's reference to the "Righteous Spirit" might call to mind the Japanese *shishi*

⁹⁹ Nagaoka's undated forty-four-line poem is entitled "Fujita Tōko Sensei no haka ni essu; isasaka chōku o utatte motte saibun ni kau" 謁藤田東湖先生墓聊歌長句以代祭文; see his *Unkai shishō* 雲海詩鈔 (1900), 1:15a–16a.

rather than the Song loyalist. An example of this can be seen in the 1904 *kanshi* by Navy Commander Hirose Takeo 廣瀨武夫 (1868–1904), hero of the Russo-Japanese war.¹⁰⁰ The title of the poem, “Song of the Righteous Spirit,” alone is significant, for unlike the compositions of his literary predecessors Fujita Tōko and Yoshida Shōin, Hirose makes no reference here to Wen Tianxiang. Though their level of fastidiousness varied considerably, both Tōko and Shōin had framed their poems as “matches,” yet Hirose seemingly ignores the earlier poem:

- 死生有命不足論 Life and death are fated—of this there is
no doubt;
- 鞠躬唯應酬至尊 One can only bow and offer homage to the
most revered one.
- 奮躍赴難不辭死 To rouse the spirit and face a crisis, never afraid
to die;
- 慷慨就義日本魂 To sacrifice oneself heroically in the cause of
righteousness, that is the Japanese spirit!
- 5 一世義烈赤穗里 At a village in Akō, magnificent righteousness
that defined an era;
- 三代忠勇楠氏門 At the Kusunoki clan gate, three generations of
loyal bravery.
- 憂憤投身薩摩海 Frustrated and indignant, they threw
themselves into the sea off Satsuma
- 從容就刑小塚原 Calm and composed, they met their deaths at
Kozukappara.¹⁰¹
- 或爲芳野廟前壁 Taking the form of the front wall at a Yoshino
temple,
- 10 遺烈千年見鏃痕 Past glory is seen for a thousand years in an
arrowhead’s marks.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Hirose Takeo’s poem “Seiki no uta” 正氣歌 appears in Maki, *Bun Tenshō, Fujita Tōko, Yoshida Shōin Seiki no uta shōkai*, pp 127–37.

¹⁰¹ Maki Fujio gives an alternative version of this line: 慷慨就義小塚原 “They sacrificed themselves heroically in the cause of righteousness at Kozukappara.” Although this would also make sense contextually, it seems rather to be a confusion with the fourth line of the poem: 慷慨就義日本魂; see Maki, *Bun Tenshō, Fujita Tōko, Yoshida Shōin Seiki no uta shōkai*, pp. 127, 132.

¹⁰² This refers to the valedictory poem of Kusunoki Masatsura 楠正行 (1326–48), which he is said to have carved with an arrowhead on the wall of the Nyoirinji temple in Yoshino before departing for battle: “Having realized / that I shall not return, / I inscribe

- 或爲菅家筑紫月 Appearing as the moon that Michizane
gazed upon at Tsukushi,
詞存忠愛不知冤 His poems bespeak his loyalty, harboring
no grudge.¹⁰³
可見正氣滿乾坤 Behold how the righteous spirit fills
Heaven and Earth;
一氣磅礴萬古存 A constant spirit that has suffused all since
time immemorial.
- 15 嗚呼正氣畢竟在誠字 Ah! The Righteous Spirit boils down to the
word “sincerity”;
嗶嗶何必要多言 What need is there to prattle on about it?
誠哉誠哉斃不已 Sincerity! Sincerity! Not stopping even
in death!
七生人間報國恩 To be reborn seven times to repay your
debt to the nation!¹⁰⁴

A vast distance separates Hirose's poem from the original. Its very form, which is heptasyllabic rather than pentasyllabic and uses a single rhyme rather than multiple, advertises the poem's independence. Recall that in his elaborate preface Fujita Tōko first lavishly celebrated Wen Tianxiang's poem and extolled his integrity before going on to use this praise as a springboard for insisting upon the superiority of the Japanese imperial way. Yoshida Shōin likewise found a similarly unbroken vector, though in his case the trajectory was spatial, and fittingly, his pointed dismissal of China was configured in geographic terms. Moreover, it was the possibility of drawing an analogy between Wen Tianxiang's integrity and the poet's own that had stirred Takasugi Shinsaku, Hashimoto Sanai, and other *shishi* to refer to him in their works; it was the parallel in circumstances of imprisonment that had prompted Fujita

my name here, / among those who perished / by the catalpa bow” かわらじとかねて思へば梓弓なき数に入る名をぞとどむる。

¹⁰³ Maki Fujio quotes the poem with the character 祠 (shrine) at the head of this line, yielding “The shrines dedicated to him attest to his loyalty and harbor no grudge.” I have used the more common reading of 詞 (poetry) instead.

¹⁰⁴ The idea of “giving seven lives to repay the nation” 七生報國 was a slogan widely circulated during the Pacific War and later by Mishima Yukio, but its origins lie in a vow made by Kusunoki Masashige's younger brother Masasue 楠正季 during the Battle of Minatogawa: “I wish I could be born in the human world seven times to exterminate the enemies of the nation” 願七生人間以殺國賊。

Tōko and Yoshida Shōin to write their own versions of “Song of the Righteous Spirit.” Hirose Takeo’s poem, by contrast, hints at no privations personally suffered; indeed, it lacks any self-reference whatsoever. Hirose had no need to justify his composition because the theme of the “righteous spirit” had already been domesticated. The four couplets that comprise the poem’s truncated gallery expose the agents of this process of naturalization. Hirose’s gallery introduces six figures, and although there seems to be no particular progression guiding these references, it is significant that the *shishi* of the late Tokugawa period have already become a locus classicus in their own right. In line 7, Hirose alludes to the attempted suicide of Saigō Takamori and the priest Gesshō, and in line 8, he refers to the execution grounds of Kozukappara, where so many *shishi* lost their lives. Yoshida Shōin’s composure as he met his fate at the hands of the Kozukappara executioners was legendary, and thus a contemporary reader might well think of Shōin specifically upon reading this line.¹⁰⁵ In both its allusion to Shōin and in its lack of any reference to Wen Tianxiang or any other Chinese precedent, the poem attests to its origins in Japan, specifically in the *shishi* literature of the nineteenth century.

The elision of Wen Tianxiang from Hirose’s poem is thus symptomatic of a shift in his originary status as the immediate referent called to mind by the phrase “Righteous Spirit.” So long as the *shishi* versions of Wen Tianxiang’s “Song” proliferated and were anthologized, he would not disappear entirely from public consciousness; but over the next few decades, he became defined in Japan principally in terms of his relation to the *shishi*. Though Wen Tianxiang was one of a host of Chinese exemplars important to the *shishi*, he came to be the definitive Chinese paragon worth remembering precisely because of the poetry that he and his “Song” had inspired *shishi* to write. An anthology of Restoration-era *shishi* poetry that was published in a special “wartime budget edition” in 1938 and advertised as “Recommended by the Ministry of the Army” illustrates this trend. It carries a footnote to the poem that Hashimoto Sanai wrote on singing “Song of the Righteous Spirit” in prison, in which Wen Tianxiang is identified as follows: “he was a *shi* of fierce loyalty that is rarely seen in Chinese history, and he was

¹⁰⁵ Yoshida Shōin was said to greet his executioner by saying the equivalent of “otsukaresama” (something like “Thanks for your hard work”).

someone whom the *shishi* of the Restoration period deeply admired and to whom they were strongly attached.”¹⁰⁶ For the readers of this anthology, Wen Tianxiang was someone encountered only through the mediation of the Japanese *shishi*.

Whereas the *shishi* had been inspired directly by Wen Tianxiang and alluded to his works in their poems, a later poet like Hirose Takeo was instead responding to the poetry of these *shishi*. Nevertheless, even into the 1930s, there were some Japanese *kanshi* poets who maintained an affinity to both Wen Tianxiang’s original poem and the literature of the *shishi*. Kokubu Seigai (1857–1944), one of the best-known *kanshi* poets of the modern period, wrote his own version of “The Song of the Righteous Spirit” between late 1932 and early 1933—this was when Western condemnation of Japan’s invasion of Manchuria was intensifying and as Japan prepared to withdraw from the League of Nations. As a professional poet and a central figure in modern *kanshi* circles, Seigai not surprisingly rose to the challenge of using Wen Tianxiang’s original rhymes.¹⁰⁷

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 正氣所磅礴 | Everywhere the Righteous Spirit fills the world, |
| 羣類爰流形 | Leaving its traces in myriad forms of life. |
| 神聖立厥極 | The gods and sages established their ultimate order: |
| 斯道如日星 | Fixing this Way as the sun and stars. |
| 5 昔在草昧世 | At the dawn of time, when the world was in chaos, |
| 披霧見蒼冥 | The mists were parted and the blue sky appeared. |
| 自神武以來 | Ever since the reign of Emperor Jinmu, |
| 賢良翼王庭 | Worthies and talented men have helped the royal court. |
| 奕葉樹德厚 | In era upon era, they have established robust regimes of virtue; |
| 10 功烈炳汗青 | Their meritorious deeds shine brilliantly in the history books. |
| 乾綱久而弛 | When the bonds of imperial authority at last grew loose, |

¹⁰⁶ Koizumi, *Ishin shishi kin'ō shiika hyōshaku*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁷ Kokubu Seigai 國分青厓, *Seigai shizon* 青厓詩存, rpt. in *Shishū Nihon kanshi* 詩集日本漢詩, ed. Iritani Sensuke 入谷仙介, vol. 20 (Kyūko Shoin, 1990), p. 574. The poem is titled “Seiki no uta; Bunzan no gen'in o mochiu” 正氣歌用文山原韻.

- 正名義公筆 The Righteous Lord took up his brush to rectify the
names.¹⁰⁸
- 君辱臣乃死 When their lord was insulted, his vassals vowed
to die;
- 雪夜勵忠節 The snowy night stirred up their loyal integrity.¹⁰⁹
- 15 綱齋儒林英 Keisai—a flower blooming in the Confucian grove;
遺言瀝心血 He wrote his testament with drops of heartfelt
blood.¹¹⁰
- 仲繩志士魁 Chūjō—the pioneer of the *shishi*
慷慨談爛舌 In his fervor, he discoursed with a brilliant
tongue.¹¹¹
- 襲輿櫻田門 Attacking the palanquin at the Sakurada Gate,
20 落花散紅雪 The falling flowers scattered on crimson snow.
倡義十津川 Mustering the troops at Totsugawa River,
一蹶死何烈 A single slip, but their deaths so magnificent.¹¹²
妻兒病且飢 Though his wife and children were sick and hungry,
手欲攘胡羯 He rose up to rid the land of the barbarian hordes.
- 25 悲哉南嶼囚 Pitiful is the prisoner of a southern island,
望闕鐵腸裂 Who gazes at the palace gates, his iron innards
sundered.
- 稟生在日城 Of those who receive life in the Sun kingdom
是氣誰不存 Who is the man that lacks this spirit?
一遇龍飛運 Each time the dragon soars up to take the imperial
throne,

¹⁰⁸ The “Righteous Lord” 義公 was Mito daimyo Tokugawa Mitsukuni, the founder of the Mito school who commissioned the compilation of the *Dai Nihon shi* in 1657, a project that was not completed until the beginning of the twentieth century. For a discussion of the ideological foundations of the *Dai Nihon shi* project see Victor Koschmann, *The Mito Ideology*, pp. 29–55.

¹⁰⁹ The “loyal rōnin” of the Akō Incident carried out their attack on a wintry evening in the twelfth month of Genroku 15 (30 January 1703).

¹¹⁰ The reference is to Asami Keisai, author of *Seiken igen*.

¹¹¹ Chūjō refers to Takayama Hikokurō, one of the famed “Three Great Men of the Kansei Era.”

¹¹² Referring to the 1863 Tenchūgumi Incident, the first in which imperial loyalist troops rose against the shogunate. Led by Nakayama Tadimitsu 中山忠光 and Yoshimura Toratarō 吉村寅太郎 (1837–1863), the uprising was followed by a coup that resulted in the radical pro-imperial forces being ejected from the capital and making them the target of both the court and the shogunate.

- 30 侃諤立朝論 They unreservedly debate the affairs of court.
 國礎賴以固 The national foundation relies on them for solidity;
 國體賴以尊 The national polity relies on them for prestige.
 赫赫中興業 Shining bright is the great enterprise
 of Restoration;
 大義實爲根 The great righteousness, truly is the root.
- 35 萬國既會同 The myriad nations have already conferred,
 玉帛豈弗力 How can the jewels and silks of tribute be
 powerless?
 狼心或渝盟 With their wolfish hearts, they may violate the pact,
 鼙鼓震朔北 Then timbrels and drums will shake the North.
 微吾仁義師 Unless we use our army of benevolence and
 righteousness,
- 40 泰平安可得 How can peace be maintained?
 近時楊墨徒 In recent times, followers of Yang and Mo
 流毒乘闇黑 Have spread poison, taking advantage of
 darkness.¹¹³
- 文書換干戈 Learning is exchanged for weaponry, and
 四鄰企蠶食 On all four sides, they scheme to corrode.
- 45 民懈良風荒 The people grow lazy and the benevolent ways
 decay;
 莠長美田瘠 Ugly weeds grow, and corpses lie in rice paddies.
 執律凜冰霜 If the law is upheld with the cold severity of icy
 frost,
 邪心庶能易 Then evil thoughts may be possible to change.
 嗟我大八洲 Ah, our great Land of the Eight Islands!
- 50 夙稱君子國 Long we have styled ourselves a country of
 gentlemen!
 乾靈有明敕 The Heavenly Gods (Amatsukami) have a bright
 order,¹¹⁴
 斷不容此賊 And they certainly will not countenance these
 bandits!

¹¹³ According to Mencius (IIB.9), the followers of “Yang and Mo” are those who block the realization of Confucian morality; see *Mencius*, trans. D. C. Lau, p. 114. The category includes both extreme individualists, who embody the self-interest advocated by Yang Zhu, and those favoring indiscriminate, universal love, in the manner of Mozi.

¹¹⁴ The term “bright order” also refers to an imperial rescript.

- 蒼蒼者彼天 Blue is the color of the sky,
 仰見皞日白 As I look up at the bright white sun.
 55 天潢流逾遠 Like the Heavenly River, the Imperial line flows
 ever on;
 寶祚曷有極 The Jeweled Rank of Emperor—how could it
 ever end?
 君仁而臣忠 The sovereign benevolent and his retainers loyal:
 儼乎今猶昔 A solemn truth, now as in the past.
 維嶽神秀姿 These peaks—figures of the divine,
 60 萬年獻瑞色 Have offered their auspicious beauty for eternity.

Like Yoshida Shōin's version, Kokubu Seigai's "Song of the Righteous Spirit" preserves the rhymes and four-part structure of the original Wen Tianxiang poem. The prologue in the first section (lines 1–10) asserts the universal way. The second section (lines 11–26) comprises a gallery that alludes to eight historical episodes. Each of Seigai's eight allusions is made in a single couplet, without the shifts in allusive density and use of anaphora evident in Wen Tianxiang's original and in the versions by Yoshida Shōin and Fujita Tōko. Seigai does, however, make use of the same sort of cross-couplet syntactic links that animated Shōin and Tōko's versions, such as those that tie lines 15–16 with lines 17–18 (repeated proper name, figuration through bodily appendage, and the like).

Moreover, in composing the gallery, Kokubu departs from the strategies that his two Japanese predecessors used in their versions. Shōin chose to weave the gallery portraits together along a spatial axis, with the references to incidents from over a thousand years of history triggered by the poet's own procession across Japan from east to west. Tōko chose to invoke a chronologically sequenced array of historical exemplars from antiquity to the Tokugawa period. Seigai instead limits his allusions entirely to the brief time-span of a single era. In spite of the reference to the remote antiquity of Emperor Jinmu that occurs in the lines preceding the gallery (lines 7–8), the gallery is concerned solely with the Tokugawa period, and Seigai alludes exclusively to fresh inductees to the pantheon of cultural heroes.

Another important feature of the portraits in Seigai's gallery is that many of the referents are scholars and others who made specific contributions to Japan's *kanshibun* written tradition, such as Tokugawa

Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1700), in lines 11–12) and Confucian scholar and popularizer of Wen Tianxiang Asami Keisai (lines 15–16). Seigai further emphasizes this shared connection to *kanshibun* by alluding specifically to the poetry of the *shishi* and their Tokugawa ancestors. For example, line 23 (妻兒病且飢) refers to the following poem by Umeda Unpin:

訣別

PARTING

| | |
|---------|---|
| 妻臥病牀兒叫飢 | My wife lies in her sickbed; the children cry out in hunger; |
| 挺身直欲當戎夷 | I put myself forward, ready to do battle with the barbarians. |
| 今朝死別與生別 | Our parting this morning—will it be final or will we meet again? |
| 唯有皇天后土知 | Only the gods of Heaven and Earth know. ¹¹⁵ |

The second line of Seigai's couplet (手欲攘胡羯) likewise recalls a famous poem by a fallen late Tokugawa *shishi*—Rai Mikisaburō, the son of Rai San'yō:

獄中作

COMPOSED IN PRISON

| | |
|---------|---|
| 排雲欲手掃妖熒 | With a force to part the clouds, I sought to sweep away the evil stars; |
| 失腳墮來江戸城 | But I lost my footing, and find myself here in the city of Edo. |
| 井底癡蛙過憂慮 | Foolish frog deep in the well, my laments grew to excess; |
| 天邊大月缺高明 | But the great moon on the edge of Heaven seemed rather dim. ¹¹⁶ |
| 身臨鼎鑊家無信 | Now my body may be boiled alive; and there are no letters from home. |

¹¹⁵ The poem by Umeda Unpin 梅田雲濱 (1815–1859) is reprinted in Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, p. 94.

¹¹⁶ I have interpreted the first line of this couplet to refer to Rai Mikisaburō himself and the second to refer to the shogunal officials, but others have interpreted both lines of the couplet as criticisms of the shogunal officials.

夢斬鯨鯢劍有聲 In my dreams, I cut down the whales; my sword
makes a sound.
風雨多年苔石面 Wind and rain will batter for many years its
mossy stone surface;
誰題日本古狂生 Who will write in memory of this old crazy
student of Japan?¹¹⁷

Moreover, the couplet in Seigai's poem about the Sakuradamon Incident (lines 19–20) may also be a reference to a specific *shishi* poem, for the diction harks back to the fourth line of the following valedictory poem by Kurozawa Chūsaburō 黒澤忠三郎 (1830–1861), who participated in the attack:

走筆作詩

LETTING THE BRUSH RUN, I COMPOSE A POEM

呼狂呼賊任人評 Call me crazy, call me a thug—I'll let them
decide
多歲愁雲今日晴 The dismal clouds endured for years, are at last
today clear.
方是櫻花好時節 And now happens to be the best season for
cherry blossoms;
櫻天門外血如櫻 Outside the Sakuradamon Gate, blood like
cherries.¹¹⁸

The final couplet of the gallery, using terms derived from two of his poems, refers to Saigō Takamori. During Saigō's second exile, to the southern island of Okinoerabu-jima, he was kept prisoner in a caged enclosure for the first part of his period of banishment, leading him to refer to himself as a "prisoner of a southern island."¹¹⁹ The second poem referenced here is the following, written as Saigō watched domain troops:

¹¹⁷ This poem by Rai Mikisaburō 頼三樹三郎 (1825–59) is held to be his last; it is reprinted in Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, pp. 105–6; and in Shimaoka, *Shishitachi no uta*, pp. 125–26. Kusaka Genzui also composed a poem in which Rai Mikisaburō's line 手欲掃妖燹 appears.

¹¹⁸ The poem by Kurozawa Chūsaburō is reprinted in Takano, *Shishi bungaku*, p. 135.

¹¹⁹ Saigō used this phrase, for example, in the following couplet from his poem "Gokuchū kan ari" 獄中有感: "My confidantes in the capital have all become ghosts / While I, prisoner on a southern island, alone cheat death" 洛陽知己皆爲鬼 南嶼俘囚獨竊生; see Ōki, *Saigō Nanshū Sensei shishū*, pp. 1–3.

送藩兵爲天子親兵赴闕下

THE DOMAIN TROOPS, SERVING AS IMPERIAL SOLDIERS,
DEPART THE CITY GATES;

I WRITE THIS POEM TO SEND THEM OFF

王家衰弱使人驚 The decline of the imperial house leaves the
people shocked;
憂憤捐身千百兵 With righteous indignation, the soldiers
offer themselves up by the hundreds and
thousands.
忠義凝成腸鐵石 Loyalty and righteousness crystallized as iron
and stone in their viscera;
爲楹爲礎築堅城 As pillars, as foundations, they built a sturdy
fortress.¹²⁰

Through the incorporation of key phrases that allude to *shishi* poems, Kokubu Seigai elevates the *shishi* and their literary compositions into the gallery of his “Song of the Righteous Spirit”; they have become loci classici in their own right. The self-referential possibilities exploited by the *shishi* poets in the late Tokugawa period made them part of a constantly evolving domestic tradition of Chinese-language poetry—one that continued to have a vital relevance well into the Shōwa period.¹²¹ Moreover, as the publication of annotated *shishi* poetry anthologies and the proliferation of key terms such as *gyokusai* demonstrate, the *shishi* had an important role as mediators of Chinese discourse, and their *kanshi* left their mark on Japanese language discourse as well.

We should not ignore the Chinese elements of *kanshi*, reading them only in *kundoku* or as coded *waka*, for the *shishi* poet’s understanding of and appreciation for Chinese historical and literary precedents, as well as his ability to write with a sensitivity to the *kanshi* as Chinese-language discourse, were important premises for his composition of Chinese verse. However, the strategies that Japanese writers employed in the domestication of Wen Tianxiang and his “Song of the Righteous

¹²⁰ Ōki, *Saigō Nanshū Sensei shishū*, p. 61.

¹²¹ Composition of *kanshi* continued as a somewhat diminished though still significant form of poetry in Japan through the Pacific War, and even today it remains alive as a rarefied hobby. In addition to its survival intact as *kanshi*, the influence of the *kanshi* form on new “modern” forms of poetry in Japanese, such as the *shintaiishi*, has been noted by several scholars; see, for example, Tanikawa, “Shi no arika,” p. 54.

Spirit” also show how the *kanshi* form could be completely localized and its referential worlds could be adorned entirely with Japanese portraits. In looking at *shishi* literature in literary Chinese, and at *kanshibun* in general for that matter, we must maintain a dualistic perspective that remains cognizant of both of these features, resisting a schema based on “national literature,” which might force us into choosing a single orientation or an exclusivist reading paradigm.