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The Poet Who Challenged the Shogun: Asukai Masayo and *Shinshoku Kokin Wakashū*

Abstract: During Japan's late medieval era, the Ashikaga shoguns wished to merge the imperial and warrior governments and establish a feudal monarchy. Shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori made considerable efforts to acquire cultural capital and start a new imperial dynasty. He understood the symbolic importance of ancient traditions for the realization of his ambitions. One gesture aimed at acquiring cultural authority was his initiation and sponsorship of a literary project known today as the last imperial anthology of *waka*, *Shinshoku kokin wakashū*. The collection reveals that its compiler, Asukai Masayo, challenged the shogun with an agenda that undermined Yoshinori's authority.

In the eighth month of Eikyō 5 (1433) the teenage Emperor Go-Hanazono (1419–71) ordered the compilation of *Shinshoku kokin wakashū* (New continued collection of ancient and modern times; *Shinshoku kokinshū*). When its compiler Asukai Masayo (1390–1452) completed it in 1439, no one anticipated that it would be the last imperial anthology (*chokusen wakashū*) in the history of Japanese court poetry (*waka*).¹ The product of centuries of established, continued, and modified traditions of poetic composition,

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1. At Shogun Yoshimasa's (1435–90) request, in 1465 Go-Hanazono ordered Masayo's son Masachika (1417–90) to compile the next imperial *waka* anthology. However, Masachika's residence, serving then as the Bureau of Poetry (Wakadokoro), was destroyed in 1467 during the Ōnin War (1467–77). All manuscripts were lost, and the anthology was never completed. See Muraō Sei'ichi, "Chokusen wakashū to iu rekishi kara," in Kanechiku Nobuyuki and Tabuchi Kumiko, eds., *Waka o rekishi kara yomu* (Kasama Shoin, 2002), pp. 220–21.

the last imperial *waka* project naturally had many traditional features. The circumstances of its commission and realization were, however, less conventional. Similar to the three imperial anthologies that preceded it, *Shinshoku kokinshū* was initiated by an Ashikaga shogun, while the imperial household, no longer able to sponsor such large-scale literary projects, was its official commissioner in name only.²

Of aristocratic descent but not raised as noblemen, Ashikaga shoguns were fascinated with court traditions and financially stable enough to support grand cultural projects.³ As Robert Huey argues, they “wished to leave their mark on the cultural scene.”⁴ One of them was Yoshinori (1394–1441), the fourth son of Shogun Yoshimitsu (1358–1408). Not expected to succeed his father, he became a Buddhist monk at ten years old. However, the premature deaths of the fourth Ashikaga shogun Yoshimochi (1386–1428) and his son the fifth Ashikaga shogun Yoshikazu (1407–25) put Yoshinori’s life on a different track; he became shogun in 1429. Notorious for despotic behavior, he was nevertheless a generous patron of the arts and sponsored the development of *waka*, *renga* (linked verse), tea ceremony, monochrome ink painting, and *nō* drama. Yoshinori and earlier Ashikaga shoguns were not the first warrior leaders who emulated court culture and were active in the poetic world,⁵ but they had much more power in the process of the latter’s development than their predecessors. *Shinshoku kokinshū* was thus ordered by Go-Hanazono at the request of Yoshinori.

2. *Shinsen-zai wakashū* (New collection of a thousand years, 1359; *Shinsen-zai shū*), ordered by Emperor Go-Kōgon (1338–74), was initiated by the founder of the Ashikaga shogunate, Takauji (1305–58); *Shinshū wakashū* (New collection of gleanings, 1364; *Shinshū shū*)—also commissioned by Go-Kōgon—by the second Ashikaga shogun Yoshiakira (1330–67); and *Shingoshū wakashū* (New collection of later gleanings, 1384; *Shingoshū shū*)—requested by Emperor Go-En’yū (1359–93)—by the third Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimitsu (1358–1408). Unless noted otherwise, definitions of literary terms and biographical data on poets and historical figures are based on *Waka bungaku daijiten* and *Uta-kotoba utamakura daijiten*, in *Koten raiburarii* Web Library of Japanese Literature (Nihon Bungaku Web Toshokan).

3. There is historical evidence that Yoshinori’s father Yoshimitsu was of imperial descent through his maternal grandmother, who was a granddaughter of Emperor Juntoku’s (1197–1242) son, Imperial Prince Yoshimune (1233–1317). His imperial lineage was not always considered legitimate. See Imatani Akira and Kozo Yamamura, “Not for Lack of Will or Wile: Yoshimitsu’s Failure to Supplant the Imperial Lineage,” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1992), p. 45.

4. Robert N. Huey, “Warrior Control over the Imperial Anthology,” in Jeffrey P. Mass, ed., *The Origins of Japan’s Medieval World: Courtiers, Clerics, Warriors, and Peasants in the Fourteenth Century* (Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 189.

5. Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192–1219), the third Kamakura shogun, was a disciple of the renowned poet Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241) of the Mikohidari school. In the thirteenth century, the shogunate became a significant authority over various disputes in the *waka* world.

Shinshoku kokinshū is one of the least studied imperial anthologies compiled between 905 and 1439. There are a few reasons for this lack of scholarship in anglophone academia. Robert Brower and Earl Miner regarded the last four imperial collections as “undistinguished,” which has created a lasting image of them as less valuable in *waka* history.⁶ Robert Huey and Stefania Burk do not analyze *Shinshoku kokinshū* in detail in their studies of medieval and late medieval anthologies, which suggests that the collection did not follow the same agenda as other shogun-initiated imperial collections.⁷ Meanwhile, definitions of *Shinshoku kokinshū* in Japanese dictionaries emphasize its significant number of poems authored by warriors. Compositions by members of the warrior elite appear in earlier imperial anthologies, but the diary *Kennaiki* (Record of Kenshōin Naifu, 1414–55) by Madenokōji Tokifusa (1394–1457) reveals why *Shinshoku kokinshū*'s image is so closely connected with warrior poetry⁸:

According to Lord Muromachi [Yoshinori], the compiler's judgment is ill conceived; it is because Suketō and Gorō are amateur poets. When the members of the shogun's salon present their poems, it is unsuitable to only observe and not participate. Those people were invited to poetry events to watch and learn, but it is unthinkable that their poems should appear in an imperial anthology.⁹

Although these men were warriors and the shogun's close associates, Yoshinori thought them unworthy of inclusion in such an important project because they were low-ranking warriors at the time, uneducated in *waka*. It is evident that Yoshinori was disappointed with Masayo's collection and

6. Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry* (Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 414.

7. Huey, “Warrior Control over the Imperial Anthology”; Stefania Burk, “Reading Between the Lines: Poetry and Politics in the Imperial Anthologies of the Late Kamakura Period (1185–1333)” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2001). Though traditional Japanese historiography marks the medieval period as beginning in 1185 with the founding of the Kamakura shogunate, Robert Huey argues that the medieval era in *waka* began during Emperor Shirakawa's reign (1073–87), specifically in the mid-1080s. I apply his mark for the beginning of the medieval era in Japanese literature and use the term “late medieval” to describe the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See Robert N. Huey, “The Medievalization of Poetic Practice,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1990), pp. 651–68.

8. Madenokōji Tokifusa became Emperor Go-Komatsu's (1377–1433) chamberlain (*kurōdo*) at age 18. Later he became provincial major counselor (*gondainagon*) and served as a court envoy to the warrior elite (*buke tensō*) under Yoshimochi and Yoshinori. Go-Komatsu was Go-Hanazono's stepfather.

9. Karasumaru Suketō (1417–83?) was a cousin of Yoshinori's wife, Hino Shigeke (1411–63). Gorō refers to Isshiki Norichika (1419–51), a governor of Tango and Ise Provinces, who was a son of Yoshinori's retainer Isshiki Mochinobu (d. 1434). See Madenokōji Tokifusa, *Kennaiki*, in Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjō, ed., *Dai Nihon kokiroku*, Vol. 2 (Iwanami Shoten, 1966), pp. 368–69. Unless noted otherwise, all translations are mine.

that *Shinshoku kokinshū*, completed in the politically complex environment of mid-fifteenth-century Japan, reflects some of the emerging cultural features of its era. The anthology is thus relevant for medieval *waka* studies and the reconsideration of notions of power and status in late medieval Japan.

Due to Asukai Masayo's symbolic authority rooted in Japanese antiquity and based on his expertise in ancient traditions such as *waka* and *kemari* (a type of kickball game), Shogun Yoshinori was unable to challenge the choices Masayo made for his collection. Thanks to the importance of his family's heritage, Masayo possessed cultural knowledge and authority that transcended its own field and bled into the realm of politics. In addition, the mid-1400s was only the beginning of the Asukai rise in power; due to the house's expertise in two traditional arts, by the sixteenth century, it had unprecedented economic stability and had gained shogunal support for exclusivity in the transmissions of its teachings.¹⁰ Pierre Bourdieu's field theory lets us position intellectuals like Masayo, who had symbolic forms of capital (knowledge about *waka* and *kemari*), directly within the "field of power" instead of only within the literary field, designed for disempowered artists.¹¹ Masayo's expertise in traditional arts was capital that brought poets political and material benefits as well as support.¹²

With *Shinshoku kokinshū*, Masayo violated his relationship with Shogun Yoshinori, who wanted to become emperor, by exercising much more authority than Bourdieu's literary field would ever allow him to exercise. Bourdieu's theory applies imperfectly to mid-fifteenth-century Japan because it is organized around a scheme in which the political realm governs the cultural one. Masayo's collection proves that the dynamics of cultural and political authorities in late medieval Japan are too complex to fit into the frames of modern Western theories. It is evident that some modern concepts do not apply to premodernity, yet, in this case, Bourdieu's "symbolic good" and the mechanisms of the "production of belief" are clearly at work in Masayo's and Yoshinori's world.¹³

Given Yoshinori's imperial aspirations, the prestige of the Asukai poetic house, and Masayo's role as the sole compiler, I analyze *Shinshoku kokinshū*'s compilation process, its title, its Japanese preface (*kanajo*), its ten most-represented poets, and the authorship and content of the opening spring poems to prove that Masayo engineered the collection to celebrate

10. Lee Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467–1680: Resilience and Renewal* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), p. 37.

11. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 194–98.

12. Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in Colin Gordon, ed., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (Pantheon, 1980), pp. 78–108.

13. Michael Hockx and Ivo Smits, eds., *Reading East Asian Writing: The Limits of Literary Theory* (Routledge, 2003).

the Asukai house and its lineage as worthy to stand with the most renowned poets in *waka* history. I also show how the anthology acknowledges Yoshinori's presence behind the compilation agenda within the late medieval system while not elevating him above the emperor or his own late father, Yoshimitsu. Instead, my analysis demonstrates how the collection testifies to Yoshinori's fascination with aristocratic culture and his failed attempts to be recognized as emperor. It is Asukai Masayo, not Shogun Yoshinori, who emerges as cultural authority in late medieval Japan.

There are many instances of literature praising kings and queens at various historical moments all around the world, but there are also numerous cases of satirical poets criticizing and challenging the legitimacy of their sovereigns and politicians. Examples range from a medieval Arabic poem by Ibn al-Rūmī (836–96) containing a complaint about his patron,¹⁴ through the satirical poem *The Vision of Judgment* (1822) by English poet Lord Byron (1788–1824) about a trial in heaven over King George III's (1738–1820) soul,¹⁵ to the controversial track *Kem skjøt Siv Jensen* (Who shot Siv Jensen, 2010) by Norwegian hip-hop artist Lars Vaular about the leader of the populist Progress Party in Norway.¹⁶ These examples demonstrate that literature and poetry have been means of soft power since antiquity,¹⁷ serving as equivalents of social media. Asukai Masayo was aware of his cultural authority and therefore had the audacity to challenge a ruler notorious for coercive power, rage, and use of terror.¹⁸

By compiling *Shinshoku kokinshū*, Masayo did not give the shogun the symbolic acknowledgment that Yoshinori desired so eagerly; he did not present the shogun as emperor surrounded by courtiers who respected him. Yoshinori was disappointed because he did not achieve what he wished and paid for, and there was nothing he could do about it. Masayo won in the political arena with weapons of cultural authority and literary production—an imperial collection in which poems are meant to be read as political allegory against the sponsor. Since Masayo's *Shinshoku kokinshū* was one of the few instances in Japanese history in which poetry prevailed

14. Mohamad El-Merheb, "'There Is No Just Ruler at This Time!': Political Censure in Pre-Modern Islamic Juristic Discourses," in Karina Kellermann, Alheydis Plassmann, and Christian Schwermann, eds., *Criticising the Ruler in Pre-Modern Societies: Possibilities, Chances, and Methods* (Bonn University Press, 2019), pp. 350–52.

15. Andrew McKendry, "Will the Public Please Step Forward? Libel Law and Public Opinion in Byron's *The Vision of Judgment*," *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (2015), pp. 525–49.

16. Torgeir Uberg Nærland, "Rhythm, Rhyme and Reason: Hip Hop Expressivity as Political Discourse," *Popular Music*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2014), pp. 473–91.

17. Hendrik W. Ohnesorge, *Soft Power: The Forces of Attraction in International Relations* (Springer International Publishing, 2019), pp. 100–101.

18. Yanagihara Toshiaki, "Onmyōdō in the Muromachi Period," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2013), pp. 146–47.

over politics, it is perhaps time to redefine notions of power and status for medieval Japan.

Shogun Yoshinori's Imperial Aspirations and Shinshoku Kokinshū

Shinshoku kokinshū was commissioned not to celebrate a new imperial reign, as had been done in the past, but because of Shogun Yoshinori's eagerness to affirm his power and present himself as the emperor's equal. In 1432, when Yoshinori became the palace minister (*naidaijin*), he held the official celebration for this occasion in the newly rebuilt Muromachi Palace (Muromachi-dono) decorated, in the words of Matthew Stavros, "in strict accordance with 'noble precedent,'" imitating a similar ceremony held at the Konoe family's palace in 1288.¹⁹ In the same year, Yoshinori, who believed that "ritual was the source of his political power," made a land-viewing journey to Mt. Fuji to legitimize his power as a ruler.²⁰ It emulated the pilgrimages of earlier emperors to Kumano and was designed to affirm his authority over his cousin Ashikaga Mochiuji (1398–1439), who was suspected of planning to overthrow Yoshinori. In 1433, a few months before the official commissioning of *Shinshoku kokinshū*, diplomatic and trade relations with China (discontinued by Yoshimochi following his father Yoshimitsu's death in 1408) were restored. In his official letter, Emperor Xuande (1399–1435, Ming dynasty) referred to Yoshinori as "the king of Japan" (*Nihon kokuō*), confirming the shogun's political superiority over the emperor. If Yoshinori was considered Japan's ruler, he could behave like one.²¹ The "king of Japan" title had been a symbol of acceptance by China's suzerainty since the time of Yoshimitsu, but because the Ming dynasty traded exclusively with kings who had tributary relations and did not approve any private trade, the title also gave the Ashikaga exclusive right to trade with China and helped control powerful families in the provinces.²²

To further solidify his political power in the eyes of local governors (*shugo*) and feudal lords (*daimyō*) who had significant regional authority,

19. Matthew Stavros, *An Urban History of Japan's Premodern Capital* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), p. 123. The Konoe family was one of five houses with the right to imperial regency (*gosekke*); it descended from the main branch of the powerful Fujiwara clan which dominated court politics from the eleventh century.

20. Kendra Strand, "Aesthetics of Space: Representations of Travel in Medieval Japan" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2015), p. 239.

21. Under Yoshimitsu and Yoshinori, the imperial court lost much of its autonomy. See Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan*, p. 43. Yoshinori was a notorious autocrat. See David Eason, "Warriors, Warlords, and Domains," in Karl F. Friday, ed., *Japan Emerging: Premodern History to 1850* (Westview Press, 2012), p. 238.

22. Etsuko Hae-Jin Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations: From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), p. 37.

Yoshinori wished to become emperor.²³ Unlike his brother Yoshimochi, Yoshinori had no antipathy toward their father Yoshimitsu and wished to imitate him. Yoshimitsu—who had also been named “king of Japan” by one of the Ming emperors, Hongwu (1328–98), had become the chancellor (*daijōdaijin*) in 1394, and had wanted to become emperor himself—had initiated the compilation of the imperial collection *Shingoshū wakashū*.²⁴ At the end of his life, Yoshimitsu even acted like a retired emperor (*daijō tennō*), making considerable efforts to officially receive this prestigious title.²⁵ Yoshimitsu wished to start a new imperial dynasty, usurping the symbolic power to rule Japan by means of cultural authority, such as officiating festivals, conducting prayers, and gaining the ceremonial recognition reserved for emperors or retired emperors. However, Yoshimitsu’s immediate successor Yoshimochi did not share his vision, and the idea of the Ashikaga imperial lineage stalled after Yoshimitsu’s death.²⁶

Yoshinori was only 14 when Yoshimitsu died but as shogun he wished to follow in his father’s footsteps. He attempted to fit in with courtly culture, hoping to gain more authority through symbolic power.²⁷ Exposed to the court culture and *waka* as a Buddhist monk and abbot at the Enryaku temple at Mt. Hiei, Yoshinori regularly organized poetic events. He is presented in modern scholarship as a mediocre poet and a leader unconfident of his knowledge about ancient traditions who consulted about his every step with experts on court culture. This portrayal suggests Yoshinori had an obsession about not only aristocrats but also his father Yoshimitsu, whom he viewed

23. A. Hamish Ion and Keith Neilson, eds., *Elite Military Formations in War and Peace* (Praeger, 1996), p. 52. Andrew Goble writes about challenging the position of the imperial family and its right to rule Japan. See Andrew E. Goble, “Social Change, Knowledge, and History: Hanazono’s Admonitions to the Crown Prince,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (1995), p. 79.

24. Charlotte von Verschuer, “Ashikaga Yoshimitsu’s Foreign Policy 1398 to 1408 A.D.: A Translation from ‘Zenrin Kokuhōki,’ the Cambridge Manuscript,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (2007), p. 286.

25. Yoshimitsu died before he acquired the title of retired emperor. The imperial court was about to grant him the title of priestly retired monarch (*daijō hōo*) posthumously but Yoshimochi resented Yoshimitsu for favoring his brother Yoshitsugu (1394–1418) and stopped the process. See Marius B. Jansen, *Warrior Rule in Japan* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 108.

26. Yoshimochi composed poetry, participated in, and organized various *waka* and other cultural events, but he did not rely on cultural authority as much as Yoshimitsu; his son Yoshikazu died young and did not get a chance to rule independently from Yoshimochi’s influence. See Imatani and Yamamura, “Not for Lack of Will or Wile,” pp. 45–78. Jeremy Sather confirms that Yoshimitsu had imperial aspirations in “The Myth of Peace: ‘Taiheiki’ and the Rhetoric of War” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2012), p. 32.

27. Misumi Noriko, “Ashikaga Yoshinori to sono wakakai,” *Nihon rekishi*, Vol. 649, No. 6 (2002), pp. 18–33.

as “a great military leader but also as a great courtier.”²⁸ Initiating an imperial collection, which Shoguns Yoshimochi and Yoshikazu had failed to do, was an expression of Yoshinori’s desire to continue Yoshimitsu’s work in preserving ancient traditions—a symbolic gesture aimed at legitimizing his rule.²⁹

The rise of Ashikaga power was possible partially due to their respect for old aristocratic traditions.³⁰ Yoshinori’s eagerness to fit in with noble culture also confirms Andrew Goble’s view about the continued persistence of courtier values far into the late medieval era.³¹ For Yoshinori, an imperial collection was a way to affirm his political position in a society in which cultural capital could not be acquired in a short period; only the passage of time or direct family lineage could provide this kind of prestige. An imperial anthology would be concrete evidence of Yoshinori’s status, a physical object-manuscript which would be read, admired, studied, and copied by future generations of intellectuals. This collection was meant to solidify Yoshinori’s power and help him appear more legitimate once he became emperor. However, because *Shinshoku kokinshū* was the first imperial collection commissioned after the consolidation of the Northern Court (*hokuchō*) and the Southern Court (*nanchō*) in 1392, Yoshinori approached this project differently from previous Ashikaga shoguns. Because the Northern Court controlled by the shogunate prevailed in this unification of power, the process provided the warrior elite a claim to not only political but also symbolic power in medieval Japan. I view extensive usage of cultural production and symbolic authority as the next step toward a formal imperialization of the Ashikaga family and medieval Japan’s transformation into a feudal monarchy. As explained above, Yoshimitsu started this process but never completed it; having never achieved imperial status, Yoshinori failed too.

Yoshinori’s collection was not simply the continuation of his father’s legacy. Ordered after the unification of the courts and with the sole compiler from a family that had not been directly involved in the compilation of imperial collections for hundreds of years but had a long history of practicing *waka*³²—the Asukai—*Shinshoku kokinshū* was supposed to be a statement

28. Steven D. Carter, *Regent Redux: A Life of the Statesman-Scholar Ichijō Kaneyoshi* (Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1996), p. 42.

29. Brian Steininger claims that the shogunate in the mid-Kamakura period also sought to project power through various cultural channels. See Brian Steininger, “Manuscript Culture and Chinese Learning in Medieval Kamakura,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (2018), pp. 339–69.

30. Stavros, *An Urban History of Japan’s Premodern Capital*, p. 132.

31. Andrew E. Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo’s Revolution* (Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996), pp. xi–xxi.

32. The two courts favored different poetic houses and nominated their representatives to compile imperial anthologies. The Northern Court supported the Kyōgoku, while the Southern Court favored the Nijō house, both of which descended from the Mikohidari poetic

about how Yoshinori was to rule Japan's once divided but now unified and stabilized realm. The anthology was meant to characterize Yoshinori as the ultimate ruler who respected ancient traditions but looked beyond factions in both politics and poetry. It is evident that with this anthology, which qualifies as a symbolic good in Bourdieu's theory, Yoshinori wished to create what Bourdieu calls the "production of belief."³³ However, "belief" about any symbolic good, produced not in a vacuum but within systems of social relations, can only be created collectively by many practitioners because it is never controlled by a single agent.

Yoshinori wished to affiliate himself with renowned poetry masters; placing his name alongside theirs would symbolically raise his status in court circles. He chose his *waka* tutor and a leader of the Asukai poetic house, Masayo, who was a recognized practitioner of two ancient crafts—*waka* and *kemari*—to complete the next imperial collection. However, when the anthology was completed in 1439, Yoshinori was not pleased with it. We witness his dissatisfaction in another entry of Madenokōji's *Kennaiki*: "I heard that [Yoshinori] did not display the anthology for anyone to look at because it contains garbage by those misfits undeserving of its status."³⁴

Shogun Yoshinori's authority was not only undermined; it was challenged from an unexpected source. Scholarship by Jeffrey Mass, Steven Carter, and Robert Huey demonstrates that medieval Japanese courtiers offered their expertise to warrior elites with inferiority complexes about ancient noble families and the imperial court.³⁵ Asukai Masayo had more power than that; he emerged as a post-*nanbokuchō* symbol of cultural authority unexpectedly, from between the cracks created by the two imperial lines supporting the Nijō and Kyōgoku poetic houses, and also as an alternative to the Reizei poetic house that Yoshinori disliked. Masayo became a significant figure specifically because of the political instability in the imperial household and within the Ashikaga shogunate. Instead of Yoshinori, it was Masayo who had significant cultural authority in late medieval Japan. While Yoshinori was trying to build "belief" about his symbolic power, Masayo already held that kind of "belief."

school. Eagerness to legitimize the continuity and prestige of their own houses resulted in an unprecedented four imperial collections compiled between 1301 and 1323. With the establishment of the Ashikaga government in the early fourteenth century, imperial collections were sponsored by shoguns and compiled by Nijō poets.

33. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 74–111.

34. Madenokōji, *Kennaiki*, p. 369.

35. Jeffrey P. Mass, "Of Hierarchy and Authority at the End of Kamakura," in Mass, ed., *Origins of Japan's Medieval World*, pp. 17–38; Carter, "Claiming the Past for the Present"; Robert N. Huey, *The Making of Shinkokinshū* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2002).

Prestige of the Asukai Poetic House

Late medieval shoguns influenced imperial succession and cultural production, sometimes behaving as if they were emperors themselves and arbiters of unlimited power. The privileged class of aristocrats made considerable effort to preserve its ancient lifestyle, and practitioners of old traditions sought not only imperial but also shogunal patronage. However, the prestige and symbolic significance of traditional arts affected how the warrior elite regarded the aristocrats as gatekeepers of those practices. In the 1300s a system emerged in the traditional arts in which various aristocratic houses claimed certain specialties for themselves that only they could transmit.³⁶ As Carter observes, the apprenticeship system that allowed students from warrior families to gain expertise in old traditions guaranteed those warriors invitations to events and inclusion in the activities of the imperial court, simultaneously providing the aristocratic class with economic stability after the decline of its political power.³⁷ As a result of secret teachings (*hiden*) transmitted to their patrons in exchange for financial support, artistic families played a central role in cultural affairs and became essential for the legitimization of shogunal power in late medieval Japan.

The significance of the Asukai family in the poetic world had already been recognized in the early medieval era, when Masatsune (1170–1221) was acknowledged by Retired Emperor Go-Toba (1180–1239) and became one of *Shin kokin wakashū's* (New collection of Japanese poems from ancient and modern times, 1205; *Shinkokinshū*) compilers. Another of Masayo's ancestors, Masa'ari (1241–1301), was appointed as an imperial compiler in 1293.³⁸ Starting with Masatsune, the Asukai family was an independent poetic school and by the early 1300s was recognized as a legitimate poetic lineage.³⁹

36. Scholars have long discussed the exact nature of poetic groups of medieval Japan—whether they were “houses,” which implies a familial line of knowledge transmission and inheritance, or simply loosely knit groups of like-minded poets. See Inoue Muneo, *Kamakura jidai kajinden no kenkyū* (Kazama Shobō, 1997), p. 10. I take yet another position: for the purpose of this study, I refer to the Nijō, Kyōgoku, Reizei (descended from the Mikohidari), and the Asukai beyond the 1300s as poetic houses, a characterization that accounts for their adherence to the secret transmissions about *waka* within their families. However, I refer to the Mikohidari as a poetic school.

37. Steven Carter, “Claiming the Past for the Present: Ichijō Kaneyoshi and *Tales of Ise*,” in David R. Knechtges and Eugene Vance, eds., *Rhetoric and the Discourse of Power in Court Culture: China, Europe, and Japan* (University of Washington Press, 2005), pp. 96–97.

38. Asukai Masa'ari was to compile an imperial collection along with Nijō Tameyo (1250–1338), Kyōgoku Tamekane (1254–1332), and Kujō Takahiro (d. 1298). The project collapsed before the anthology was completed. See Christian Ratcliff, “The Cultural Arts in Service: The Careers of Asukai Masaari and His Lineage” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2007), pp. 93, 433–36.

39. After Fujiwara no Tameie's (1198–1275) death, the Mikohidari school split into three houses: (1) Nijō, led by Tameie's eldest son, Tameuji (1222–86); (2) Kyōgoku, headed by his second son, Tamenori (1227–79); and (3) Reizei, led by his third son, Tamesuke (1263–1328).

Asukai poets had an ancestry reaching back to the powerful Heian politician Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027) in a direct paternal line through Michinaga's eldest son, Yorimichi (992–1074). This line of the family was known for its expertise in *waka* and also in *kemari* since the forefather of the Asukai, Namba Yorisuke (1112–86). *Kemari* was not performed only for entertainment; it functioned as a religious rite (*shinji*) with origins in sacred ancient practices (*kojitsu*).⁴⁰ The *kemari* playground is a microcosm of the Heian court and recreates its hierarchy—the game usually involved eight players which correspond to seven members of the Council of State (Daijōkan) in addition to the emperor, and the eight ministries established by the Taihō Code and adopted in Japan in 701.⁴¹ Trees planted in the four corners of the *kemari* court represent the four directions of the world and the four seasons: cherry (spring) in the northeast, willow (summer) in the southeast, maple (autumn) in the southwest, and pine (winter) in the northwest. The player of the highest rank stood closest to the pine tree because in the feng-shui system northwest was the strongest direction⁴²; he was also the first one to kick the ball and was expected to pass it to the player with the next highest rank. Prominent members of the court, including emperors and retired emperors, organized *kemari* games and played it themselves from the Kamakura period (1185–1333).⁴³

Kemari's significance in premodern Japan reaches beyond the realm of ritual. Examples in literature show *kemari* as a platform for social interaction among courtiers, thus making them a part of the secular realm too. The “Wakana” (New herbs: part one) chapter of *Genji monogatari* (Tale of Genji, early eleventh century) contains a scene in which one of the male characters, Kashiwagi, catches a glimpse of Genji's wife, the Third Princess (Onna Sannomiya), during a *kemari* game at the Rokujō Palace (Rokujōin).⁴⁴ Their love results in the birth of another male character significant for the

40. Watanabe Tōru and Kuwayama Kōnen, *Kemari no kenkyū: kugemari no seiritsu* (Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1994), p. 19.

41. Council of State consisted of chancellor (*daijōdaijin*), minister of the left (*sadaijin*), minister of the right (*udaijin*), palace minister (*naidaijin*), major counselor (*dainagon*), middle counselor (*chūnagon*), and lesser counselor (*shōnagon*). The eight ministries were Central Affairs Ministry (Nakatsukasashō), Ministry of Ceremonial (Shikibushō), Civil Affairs Ministry (Jibushō), Popular Affairs Ministry (Minbushō), War Ministry (Hyōbushō), Punishments Ministry (Gyōbushō), Treasury Ministry (Ōkurashō), and Imperial Household Ministry (Kunaishō). For these titles, I follow William H. McCullough and Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period* (Stanford University Press, 1980).

42. Northeast was the weakest direction, from which misfortunes arrived, so it was in most need of protection. See Allen Guttmann and Lee Thompson, *Japanese Sports: A History* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), pp. 27–29.

43. Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū*, pp. 43–44.

44. Edward G. Seidensticker, trans., *The Tale of Genji*, Vol. 2 (Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 581–84.

tale, Kaoru; the scene is a famous literary moment appropriated in a variety of artistic and cultural modes.⁴⁵

In the fifteenth century the Asukai house was one of the few families with expertise in *kemari* and the only one possessing secret transmissions (*denju*) about it.⁴⁶ These families preserved knowledge about the intricacies of court politics and mysterious qualities originating in antiquity and incomprehensible to ordinary people. Therefore, all members of the Asukai family automatically had authority in *waka* and *kemari*, and they were aware of their unique position. This kind of venerable power was a commodity in medieval Japan, and it appealed to Yoshinori who knew that mastery in archaic practices was a manifestation of the symbolic right to rule Japan, and therefore he himself composed *waka* and played *kemari*.⁴⁷ However, Yoshinori's family did not have this kind of cultural capital, which could only be validated through the accumulation of prestige and symbolic authority over a significant amount of time. A compiler from the Asukai house was therefore intended to elevate Yoshinori's cultural status by associating him with a family with established courtly traditions and the right to transmit them to disciples of their choice.

The close relationship between the Asukai family and the Ashikaga shogunate goes back to Masayo's grandfather Masataka (1281–1353), who was one of the first Asukai family members to serve the Ashikaga shogunate as provisional middle counselor (*gonchūnagon*). Masayo's father, Masayori (1358–1428), gained Shogun Yoshimitsu's trust, also became *gonchūnagon*, and strengthened his family's position. Masayo became a trusted associate of Yoshinori, whom he also tutored in *waka*. In 1432, Masayo accompanied the shogun during his politically charged journey to Mt. Fuji.⁴⁸ At that time, Masayo composed a journal, *Fuji kikō* (Accounts of a journey to Fuji), consisting of poems praising the shogun's reign in a manner usually reserved for celebrating emperors. For example, the first poem in Masayo's diary praises Yoshinori similarly to how Abe no Ariyo (1327–1405), a specialist in the traditional Japanese esoteric cosmology (*onmyōdō*) and direct descendant of Abe no Seimei (921–1005), had complimented Yoshimitsu's rule. Ariyo wrote:

45. For example, see Keiko Nakamachi, "Genji Pictures from Momoyama Painting to Edo *Ukiyo-e*," in Haruo Shirane, ed., *Envisioning the Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production* (Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 180.

46. Yamamoto Keisuke, "Kemari denjusho kara mita Muromachi, sengoku-ki ni okeru Asukai-ke to sono shūhen," *Kokubungaku kenkyū shiryōkan kiyō*, Vol. 40 (2014), pp. 117–41.

47. G. Cameron Hurst III, "The Warrior as Ideal for a New Age," in Mass, ed., *Origins of Japan's Medieval World*, pp. 230–31.

48. Pilgrimages to sacred places, made by emperors and retired emperors in the past and by shoguns in the late medieval era, were to imitate the ritualistic nature of imperial tradition and validate a shogun's rule.

<i>inorikoshi</i>	Owing to the continued prayers
<i>kimi ga megumi ni</i>	For my blessed lord,
<i>Kuraiyama</i>	This position at Mount Kurai—
<i>yoyo ni mo koete</i>	And beyond my ancestors' reach—
<i>noborinuru kana</i>	I have climbed to. ⁴⁹

Masayo's poem was:

<i>omoitatsu</i>	Resolute, I start my journey,
<i>kokoro mo ureshi</i>	With a heart rejoicing,
<i>tabikoromo</i>	And in traveling robes,
<i>kimi ga megumi ni</i>	That I should meet with your blessings, my lord
<i>Ōsaka no seki</i>	At Osaka Barrier! ⁵⁰

Yoshimitsu established his “kingly presence” thanks to various rituals performed in his name and by behaving as if he were the emperor even around the actual emperor.⁵¹ Ariyo's poem refers to the expression *Kuraiyama* (mountain of rank)—a traditional pun on one's promotion in court society. He thus expresses his gratitude to Yoshimitsu, as none of Ariyo's ancestors reached the junior second rank (*juni'i*).⁵²

Yoshinori's rule was also accompanied by various *onmyōdō* rituals and pilgrimages to places usually reserved only for emperors. Such royal treatment reassured Yoshinori of his cultural authority which, he hoped, would translate to legitimizing his position as emperor. Kendra Strand writes, “whatever the opinions of Yoshinori held by the men during their journey to view Fuji, their poems are first and foremost a formal recognition of Yoshinori's political authority, composed in the language of ritual,” as they were deifying Yoshinori.⁵³ Masayo's poem is about traveling to Mt. Fuji with the shogun as well as about his own journey as he continues to gain significance in the *waka* world. The trip was symbolically important for Masayo because his ancestor Masatsune also passed Mt. Fuji on his way from Kamakura to the capital when Go-Toba appointed him as one of the *Shinkokinshū* compilers.⁵⁴ Only a year after the trip to Mt. Fuji, the new imperial anthology was commissioned. Yoshinori's most prestigious *waka*

49. Ariyo's poem is included in one of *Shinshoku kokinshū*'s miscellaneous volumes. See Murao Sei'ichi and Kubota Jun, *Shinshoku kokin wakashū* (Meiji Shoin, 2001), p. 349. Unless noted otherwise, the translations of the poems are based on *Shinpen kokka taikan* (Kadokawa Gakugei Shuppan, 2012), DVD-ROM.

50. Asukai Masayo, *Fuji kikō*, in Kishigami Shikken, ed., *Zoku kikō bunshū* (Hakubunkan, 1900), p. 77.

51. Thomas D. Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An Age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth-Century Japan* (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 178–79.

52. Yanagihara, “Onmyōdō in the Muromachi Period,” pp. 139–40.

53. Strand, “Aesthetics of Space,” p. 247.

54. Murao and Kubota, *Shinshoku kokin wakashū*, p. 408.

tutor, Masayo, was appointed as the sole compiler, which confirmed the Asukai's high position.⁵⁵

Challenges of the Compilation Process

Asukai Masayo had no experience in and no immediate access to knowledge about the process of compiling imperial collections. He also did not have the resources necessary for completing such a project. The Bureau of Poetry (Wakadokoro), established at the beginning of the tenth century, was in late medieval Japan a small room in the imperial palace, without an extensive library. The Reizei house possessed the primary Wakadokoro manuscripts,⁵⁶ but the Asukai had always been allied with the Nijō house. And Yoshinori's dislike for one of the major Reizei poets—Shōtetsu (1381–1459)—meant the Reizei were not officially invited to participate in the compilation process.⁵⁷ Fifty years without imperial anthologies meant many poems to review, and the work on the new imperial collection proceeded slowly.⁵⁸

Yoshinori made considerable efforts to assist Masayo; some of them were planned far ahead of the anthology's commissioning in 1433. For example, Go-Hanazono had a secret library in his imperial residence where he collected manuscripts for the purpose of creating a resource for future imperial collections. Sakai Shigeyuki points out that according to *Kanmon gyoki* (Record of things seen and heard, 1416–48), a diary by Go-Hanazono's biological father Fushimi no Miya Prince Sadafusa (1372–1456), in 1431 Go-Hanazono asked him (at Yoshinori's request) for poetry collections from different periods.⁵⁹ This request suggests that Yoshinori was aware of the insufficiency of Wakadokoro resources. In addition, a few months before the official compilation order in 1433, the young emperor (also at Yoshinori's request) commissioned a poetic event known as the *Eikyō hyakushu*

55. By the early 1400s, the Kyōgoku house had essentially disappeared after the death of its patron, Retired Emperor Hanazono (1297–1348). And while the Nijō poets maintained close relations with the Ashikaga shoguns starting with Takauji, their family had died out by the time of *Shinshoku kokinshū*'s compilation. Also, Yoshinori was not fond of the Reizei house. See Sakai Shigeyuki, “*Shinshoku kokinshū* no senshū o megutte,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (2009), p. 47.

56. Access to other collections was important because no poems appearing in earlier imperial anthologies could be included in the newly compiled one. See Burk, “Reading Between the Lines,” p. 64.

57. Shōtetsu's compositions are entirely omitted from *Shinshoku kokinshū*. Yoshinori attempted to pacify the Reizei family and asked for the manuscripts in 1433 but the Reizei distanced itself even more. See Carter, *Conversations with Shōtetsu*, pp. 26–29.

58. Inoue Muneo, *Chūsei kadanshi no kenkyū. Muromachi zenki* (Kazama Shobō, 1961), pp. 123–24.

59. Sakai, “*Shinshoku kokinshū* no senshū o megutte,” pp. 45–46.

(One hundred poems of the Eikyō era), following the tradition of ordering the composition of poems for a new imperial collection.⁶⁰

Both the process of collecting sources for *Shinshoku kokinshū* and the relationship between Go-Hanazono and his biological father were disrupted by a rivalry between Yoshinori and Prince Sadafusa.⁶¹ After 1435 there are no records of Go-Hanazono requesting new sources from Sadafusa's collection of manuscripts. Then, Gyōkō (1391–1455), who was the heir to the Nijō house and Shōtetsu's rival in addition to being Yoshinori's confidant and *waka* tutor, was appointed a chief recorder (*kaikō*) in the Wakadokoro and was to assist Masayo.⁶² Gyōkō, who also accompanied the shogun during his trip to Mt. Fuji in 1432 and composed a journal titled *Ran Fujiki* (The record of viewing Fuji), praising the peaceful features of Yoshinori's reign, was to act as the second compiler.⁶³ Despite the assistance from Gyōkō, Masayo's elder brother Masanaga (dates unknown), and Masayo's son Masachika (1417–90), Masayo was unlikely to complete the project by the original deadline of 1439.⁶⁴

According to *Kennaiki*, four close political allies of Yoshinori were asked to help Masayo with the compilation, while the Wakadokoro was moved to his residence.⁶⁵ Yoshinori also supported Masayo through a series of misfortunes in his personal life in 1437–38, including the deaths of his wife, son, and daughter. Masayo presented the seasonal books of the anthology to Go-Hanazono in the eighth month of 1438, signaling that he had completed a significant part of the project. The anthology was completed in the sixth month of 1439.

As we know from *Kennaiki*, Yoshinori was not pleased with Masayo's collection; he did not publicly release *Shinshoku kokinshū* immediately after its completion and thought that including poems by culturally insignificant warriors was insulting. Yoshinori wanted to strengthen his symbolic status among courtiers, but his plan failed. As Inoue Muneo argues, Masayo

60. Contributors include Go-Hanazono, Sadafusa, Nijō Mochimoto (1390–1445) who was a *sesshō* (regent to a minor emperor) to Go-Hanazono, Ichijō Kaneyoshi (1402–81) who had been Go-Hanazono's *sesshō* and was author of the Japanese and Chinese prefaces, Yoshinori, Sanjō Kin'fuyu (1391–1459), Sai'onji Kin'na (1410–68), and many others.

61. Karen L. Brock, "The Shogun's 'Painting Match,'" *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (1995), pp. 444–47.

62. Madenokōji, *Kennaiki*, p. 367.

63. On imperial treatment of Yoshinori in *Ran Fujiki*, see Vyjayanthi R. Selinger, *Autorizing the Shogunate: Ritual and Material Symbolism in the Literary Construction of Warrior Order* (Brill, 2013), pp. 121–23; Strand, "Aesthetics of Space," pp. 225–69.

64. Inoue, *Chūsei kadanshi no kenkyū*, p. 112.

65. Sanjōnishi Kin'yasu (1398–1460), Yoshinori's secretary; Sanjō Sanekazu (1415–84?); Matsunoki Munetsugu (1400–52); and Nakayama Sadachika (1401–59), mediator between the court and shogunate during Yoshinori's rule. See Madenokōji, *Kennaiki*, p. 367.

was strong-willed, did not follow all of Yoshinori's wishes, and was himself proud of the collection.⁶⁶ Despite the shogun's extensive support, Masayo undermined Yoshinori and exercised cultural authority over him.

Inscribing Authority in Shinshoku Kokinshū

The production of imperial *waka* collections had always been related to the prestige and continuity of Japan's monarchy, cultural inheritance, and the evolution of the poetic tradition. Imperial anthologies were frequently commissioned to designate the beginning of a new era and were usually compiled to celebrate emperors' enthronements and legitimize their authority, or to honor the birth of their legitimate sons who secured the continuity of the imperial line; anthologies often represented single imperial reigns. In medieval Japan, imperial anthologies became a reflection of the socio-political conditions that influenced their own creation, and we observe their culmination in late medieval anthologies. Those collections were produced in a very different culture from the first *waka* projects, making it impossible to separate their compilation from the politics of both the court and shogunate.⁶⁷ Medieval anthologies were complex formal literary ventures with specific agendas: like all imperial collections, they served the purposes and reflected the aesthetic values of the historical periods that produced them. They were objects that, along with their conventions of form, facilitated the power struggles in the cultural, political, and institutional games of legitimacy among various influential families.

As complex projects completed by professional and usually already renowned *waka* poets, imperial collections had certain agendas emphasizing the compiler's lineage, his affiliation to the ruling authority, and powerful patrons. Thus, besides the factors discussed in previous sections, there are other elements to consider when analyzing an imperial anthology: the title and its significance, its Japanese preface and the messages it transmits, the most-represented poets and their affiliations, and the opening poems of the first spring volume. This methodology, utilized by Stefania Burk, considers a variety of factors while analyzing the political and poetic aspects of imperial *waka* compilations and is thus useful in my approach.⁶⁸

1. *Title.* *Shinshoku kokinshū* refers with its title to three earlier imperial anthologies—*Kokin wakashū* (Collection of Japanese poems from ancient and modern times, 905; *Kokinshū*), *Shinkokinshū*, and *Shoku kokin wakashū* (Continued collection of Japanese poems from ancient and modern times, circa 1265; *Shokukokinshū*). Such a return to the past in a title is not unusual, since late medieval imperial collections tend to

66. Inoue, *Chūsei kadanshi no kenkyū*, pp. 126–28.

67. Burk, "Reading Between the Lines," pp. 8–10.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–23.

evoke nostalgia for the poetic past. Those earlier anthologies have many features imitated in Masayo's collection: all contain poems dated from the Nara period (710–94) onward, all have Japanese and Chinese prefaces and a similar organization of volumes by topic (*budate*), and in all cases one of the compilers is among the most-represented poets.⁶⁹ Moreover, even though *Kokinshū*, *Shinkokinshū*, and *Shokukokinshū* were compiled by committees, these were led by renowned poets—respectively, Ki no Tsurayuki (872?–945), Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), and Fujiwara no Tameie (1198–1275) who was Teika's son and direct heir of the Mikohidari school's poetic traditions.

By choosing to associate the title of his imperial collection with these three earlier anthologies, Masayo returned to the beginnings of the *waka* tradition and to collections and compilers that significantly affected its development. Furthermore, the founder of the Asukai house, Masatsune, was one of *Shinkokinshū*'s compilers, and *Shokukokinshū* contains the first appearance of Masa'ari's recorded poems. These facts locate Masayo in the direct line of a poetic house whose members were historically known as imperial compilers. *Shinshoku kokinshū* positions Masayo among the most renowned *waka* masters, legitimizing his authority by providing a lineage to the poetic past and thus a sense of continuity within his household.

2. *Japanese preface.* *Shinshoku kokinshū*'s significance and Masayo's establishment of his position within the continuum of the poetic past are notable in Ichijō Kaneyoshi's (1402–81) *kanajo*.⁷⁰ After emphasizing the unity of Emperor Go-Hanazono's and Shogun Yoshinori's reigns, Kaneyoshi directs his attention to supporting the legitimacy of Masayo's appointment as the compiler. He enumerates the titles and compilers of all major imperial collections and presents Masayo as Masatsune's direct descendant and one of the most renowned poets in *waka* history who is comparable to earlier imperial compilers.⁷¹ Following in the footsteps of his grandfather Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–88), who in his *kanajo* to *Shingoshūishū* emphasizes the

69. Several late medieval collections do not contain Japanese and Chinese prefaces. The last collection to contain prefaces in both languages was *Fūga wakashū* (Collection of elegance, 1349). Masayo's anthology is thus unusual with its return to a tradition of two prefaces. Volume 7 contains, like *Kokinshū* and *Shinkokinshū*, congratulatory poems; volume 8, like *Shokukokinshū*, is on Buddhism; volume 9 contains poems on parting, like *Shinkokinshū* and *Shokukokinshū*; volume 10 contains poems on traveling, like *Shokukokinshū*; volumes 11 through 15 are, like *Kokinshū*, *Shinkokinshū*, and *Shokukokinshū*, on love; volume 16 contains laments, like *Kokinshū* and *Shokukokinshū*; and, finally, volumes 17 through 19 contain, like *Kokinshū*, *Shinkokinshū*, and *Shokukokinshū*, miscellaneous poems.

70. Ichijō Kaneyoshi became a *sesshō* to Go-Hanazono with Yoshinori's support for a short period in 1432. For more on Kaneyoshi, see Carter, *Regent Redux*.

71. He lists Minamoto no Toshiyori (1055–1129); Fujiwara no Akisuke (1090–1155) of the Rokujō; and Shunzei, Teika, and Tameie of the Mikohidari. See Muraō and Kubota, *Shinshoku kokin wakashū*, pp. 10–12.

shogun's significance for *waka*, Kaneyoshi acknowledges Yoshinori as the initiator of this imperial anthology.

3. *Most-represented poets.* To have a poem included in an imperially commissioned anthology had always been considered equal to immortality; it meant to be remembered forever. Imperial compilers and authors remain the most celebrated poets in the history of Japanese literature. Burk emphasizes that, after Teika, rankings of the most-represented poets became increasingly important in imperial collections because the compilers used them to “inscribe a specific representation of the authorities—poetic, familial, and political—that legitimated the compiler.”⁷² Therefore, the identity of the poet is as significant as the poem itself, especially in late medieval collections. For the case of *Shinshoku kokinshū*, the ten poets who appear with the most frequency are shown in Table 1.

This ranking has a few features unseen in other late medieval imperial anthologies. First, the official commissioner Go-Hanazono does not appear among the most-represented poets. Most medieval imperial collections have their imperial commissioners included among the top ten poets.⁷³ Instead of Go-Hanazono, represented with 12 poems, who was still young at the time of this collection's completion which justifies the scarcity of his poems, the list contains his stepfather Go-Komatsu (1377–1433) of the Northern Court. Yoshinori is also included but represented with fewer poems than the compiler's father, famous poets from the past, and the late retired emperor. In fact, it is astonishing that poets associated with the shogunate and the Ashikaga shoguns themselves are not among the most-represented poets, except for Ton'a (1289–1372) who was close to the second Ashikaga ruler, Yoshiakira (1330–67). In the preceding imperial collection, *Shingoshūishū*, three of the Ashikaga rulers—Yoshiakira, Yoshimitsu, and Takauji (1305–58)—are among the top-ten poets.

Asukai Masayo's power was located in his expertise and the prestige of his family, while Yoshinori had power in financial means to support Masayo's activity. Once both sides entered a symbiotic relationship based on the exchange of their material and symbolic assets, they were fully able to perform their assigned roles. The prominence of medieval cultural experts and their patrons depended heavily on the existence of their relationship, mutual support, and loyalty, which corresponds to what Brian Steininger concludes about textual transmission and personal relationships in the context of Chinese learning in medieval Japan.⁷⁴ However, the list of the most-

72. Burk, “Reading Between the Lines,” pp. 97–98.

73. Burk argues that compilers of those collections reproduced the legitimacy of their imperial patrons and anthologized the political authority of their patrons. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

74. Steininger, “Manuscript Culture and Chinese Learning in Medieval Kamakura,” pp. 365–69.

Table 1
Poets Whose Works Appear Most Frequently in *Shinshoku kokin wakashū*

Name	No. of poems	Identity
1 Asukai Masayori	29	Masayo's father
2 Kujō Yoshitsune	28	famous poet and powerful patron of the Mikohidari school; one of the most-represented poets in other imperial collections
3 Retired Emperor Go-Komatsu	26	Go-Hanazono's stepfather
4 Fujiwara no Shunzei	22	founder of the Mikohidari school and compiler of the imperial collection <i>Senzai wakashū</i> (Collection of a thousand years, 1187)
5 Fujiwara no Teika	19	Shunzei's son and one of the most renowned poets in <i>waka</i> history
6 Ton'a	19	one of the compilers of the imperial collection <i>Shin shūi wakashū</i> (New collection of gleanings, 1364), and a disciple of Nijō Tameyo (1250–1338) who completed another imperial anthology <i>Shin gosen wakashū</i> (New later collection, 1303)
7 Asukai Masatsune	18	one of <i>Shinkokinshū</i> 's compilers and Masayo's ancestor
8 Asukai Masayo	18	<i>Shinshoku kokinshū</i> 's compiler
9 Retired Emperor Go-Toba	18	commissioner of <i>Shinkokinshū</i> and patron of the Asukai
10 Ashikaga Yoshinori	18	sixth Ashikaga shogun and unofficial initiator of <i>Shinshoku kokinshū</i>

represented poets in *Shinshoku kokinshū* suggests that the Ashikaga clan and Yoshinori himself were not as significant as the members of poetic and imperial families. It is no wonder that Yoshinori was angered by and disapproved of Masayo's anthology; it strays from the precedent of earlier collections and is a sign of disrespect for the shogunate.

In addition, while entries in *waka* dictionaries emphasize that the Nijō house is well represented in *Shinshoku kokinshū*, none of the Nijō poets made the top-ten poets' list.⁷⁵ Instead, the collection pays respect to the Asukai house—Masayori, Masatsune, and Masayo—and to the early 1200s when the Asukai were just beginning to gain significance. Go-Toba himself,

75. The father of one of *Shingoshūshū*'s compilers, Tamesada, is represented with 14 poems. The lack of Nijō poetry in the collection is also a result of Yoshimitsu executing Tamesuke and ending the Nijō as a *waka* house. See Inoue, *Chūsei kadanshi no kenkyū*, p. 31.

besides supporting the Mikohidari school, was Masatsune's first patron and it is largely thanks to him that the Asukai grew in power. Masa'ari, who became one of the compilers of a never-completed imperial collection and maintained close relations with the Kamakura shogunate, is represented with 14 poems. In addition, many of the esteemed *Shinkokinshū*-era poets and patrons, most of whom are associated with the Mikohidari school—Yoshitsune (1169–1206), Shunzei (1114–1204), Teika—are also on the list. It is, however, the compiler's father, Masayori, who emerges at the top; this emphasizes the lineage of the compiler who appears as the authoritative center of this imperial collection and his vast cultural superiority over Yoshinori. We observe similar dynamics in the first spring volume, where Masayori's poem opens the volume, while Yoshinori's composition ends it.⁷⁶ The shogun's dissatisfaction was thus caused by the lack of recognition for him as the center of cultural production.

This ranking suggests that *Shinshoku kokinshū* was not meant to promote the Ashikaga or Yoshinori, even though their existence is acknowledged, but above all to foreground the significance of the Asukai and to pay general tribute to the beginnings of *waka* which elevated, as tradition dictates, emperors and not shoguns. Masayo did not honor the agents to whom he owed his position as the imperial compiler—Yoshinori and Go-Hanazono—in a manner some compilers had done in the past.⁷⁷ He asserted his house's position, which confirms Jeffrey Mass's view of medieval Japan, according to which family takes precedence above everything else.⁷⁸ Yoshinori did not appreciate the collection because it did not recognize and highlight his prominence but rather favored the Asukai family and imperial court—traditional units against which Ashikaga shoguns could never win culturally or symbolically.

4. *The opening spring poems.* As Burk emphasizes, opening spring poems usually set the tone for the imperial *waka* anthology.⁷⁹ By the Muromachi period, those compositions became conventionalized, as they tended to employ similar imagery and vocabulary, and thus their authors and addressees stand out more than their content.⁸⁰ However, thanks to the well-known concept of *honkadori* (“allusive variation,” in the words of Robert

76. The pattern of father-and-son inclusion of poems is not unusual for imperial collections. Masayo borrows the idea from the Mikohidari poets, who—starting with Teika's *Shinchokusenshū*—paid tribute to their fathers in the top-ten poets. See Burk, “Reading Between the Lines,” pp. 166–67.

77. *Ibid.*, pp. 179–81.

78. Jeffrey P. Mass, *Lordship and Inheritance in Early Medieval Japan: A Study of the Kamakura Sōryō System* (Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 1–8.

79. Burk, “Reading Between the Lines,” pp. 193–98. In *Shinshoku kokinshū*, the first three poems are the most significant; the next ones are authored by poets from earlier eras.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

Brower and Earl Miner; the practice of borrowing lines from earlier poems and reconfiguring them in one's own work), frequently applied in *waka* since the 1200s, it is evident that late medieval poets rarely borrowed from only one poem.⁸¹ Instead, their compositions often contain layers of references from poems of various eras, complicating their messages more than ever before in *waka* history.

The first poem in *Shinshoku kokinshū* is by Asukai Masayori—Masayo's father. Opening an imperial collection with a composition by the compiler's father was a tradition started by the Mikohidari.⁸² Masayori was close to Shogun Yoshimitsu and strengthened the position of the Asukai family.⁸³ Perhaps Masayori wrote his poem for Yoshimitsu, praising his reign as if he were the emperor, or for Go-Komatsu whom Yoshimitsu treated as his own son and with whom Masayori was friendly too.⁸⁴

Composed in the spirit of “rising spring”
haru kinu to Because they say:
iu yori yuki no The spring has arrived,
furu toshi wo Mist ascends in four directions
yomo ni hedatete Leaving behind
tatsu kasumi kana The old year of falling snow.

Masayori's composition depicts a divine imperial realm, in which nature is controlled by court events. It is due to the announcement about a new emperor (spring) that a new era begins. The appearance of a new ruler affects nature, introducing an order into the world which speaks to the emperor's transcendent qualities. The poem contains early spring imagery and vocabulary found in other imperial collections, conventionally referring to a new imperial era, like *yuki no furutoshi* (old year of falling snow), *haru kinu* (spring has arrived), and *tatsu kasumi* (ascending mist) symbolizing the enthronement of a new emperor. There is also a traditional poetic device—a pivot word (*ka-kekotoba*) that puns on *furu*: *yuki no furu* (falling snow) and *furutoshi* (old year)—and a conventional grammatical structure . . . *yori* (as soon as . . .).

81. Brower and Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, p. 506.

82. For example, in *Shokukokinshū*, cocompiled by Tameie, the opening poem is by Teika—Tameie's father. In *Shokushūishū*, compiled by Tameuji, the opening poem is by Tameie—Tameuji's father. In *Shingosenshū*, compiled by Tameyo, the opening poem is by Tameuji—Tameyo's father. In *Shoku goshūi wakashū* (New collection of later gleanings, 1326) started by Nijō Tamefuji (1275–1324), the opening poem is by Tameyo—Tamefuji's father. In *Shinshūishū*, compiled by Nijō Tameakira (1295–1364), the opening poem is by Tamefuji—Tameakira's father. Finally, in *Shingoshūishū*, started by Nijō Tametō (1341–81), the opening poem is by Tamesada—Tametō's father.

83. Steven D. Carter, *Waiting for the Wind: Thirty-Six Poets of Japan's Late Medieval Age* (Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 279–80.

84. Masayori died in 1428 and Yoshinori was appointed shogun in 1429, so he could not have praised Yoshinori's reign.

Masayori's composition alludes to the first poem by Fujiwara no Tameie in *Shoku shū wakashū* (Continued collection of gleanings, 1276; *Shokushūishū*), compiled by one of Tameie's sons, Nijō Tameuji (1222–86)⁸⁵:

Composed in the spirit of the “rising spring”
aratama no The new year
toshi wa hitoyo no As yet an unpolished jewel
hedate nite Has emerged in a single night,
kyō yori haru to The ascending mist announces:
tatsu kasumi kana “From today, spring.”

Tameie's poem, likely composed for Retired Emperor Go-Saga (1220–72), who was his patron and commissioned Tameie to cocompile two imperial anthologies—*Shoku gosen wakashū* (Later continued collection, 1251; *Shokugosenshū*) and *Shokukokinshū*—also contains the traditional vocabulary of spring mist, signaling a new era in the imperial realm. The change is sudden, demonstrating how quickly shifts in politics happen thanks to an emperor's divine powers—*aratama no* (unpolished jewel) is a pillow word (*makurakotoba*) modifying the word *toshi* (year). The connection between the poems is undeniable; they both contain similar vocabulary: *hedate* (to part, to separate), *tatsu kasumi* (ascending mist), and the structure . . . *yori*. Masayori's composition alludes respectively to two other compositions: the opening poem in the imperial anthology *Shū wakashū* (Collection of gleanings, 1005–7; *Shūishū*) by Mibu no Tadamine (dates unknown), and the opening poem from *Shingoshūishū*, by Nijō Tamesada (1293–1360), father of one of its compilers:

Composed at the residence of Taira no Sadafun⁸⁶
haru tatsu to Is it because they say:
iu bakari ni ya “The spring ascends,”
miyoshino no It appears that
yama mo kasumite Even the mountains of fair Yoshino
kesa wa miyuran Are veiled in mist this morning?

Composed in the spirit of the “rising spring”
amatsu sora The vast heavens
kasumi hedatete Fade away behind the mist.
hisakata no Has the spring ascended yet
kumoi haruka ni In the distant
haru ya taturamu And ever-strong cloudland?

Both compositions' vocabulary and structure correspond with Masayori's poem. Tadamine's poem contains Yoshino, a common image in spring po-

85. Murao and Kubota, *Shinshoku kokin wakashū*, p. 15.

86. Reference to *Taira no Sadafun no ie no utaawase* (Poetry contest at the residence of Taira no Sadafun, circa 906). Taira no Sadafun (?–923) was a famous courtier and *waka* poet.

etry and known since antiquity for *sakura* (cherry blossoms).⁸⁷ In the late medieval era, Yoshino also symbolized the Southern Court which opposed the Ashikaga shogunate.

While there are no records proving that Tadamine's poem was composed for the emperor, Tamesada's composition was first recorded in 1319 in the *Bunpō sanen Go-Uda in hyakushū* (Retired Emperor Go-Uda's hundred poem sequence of the third year of the Bunpō era) and was thus dedicated to Go-Uda (1267–1324).⁸⁸ Even though Emperor Go-En'yū (1358–93) of the Northern Court commissioned *Shingoshūshū* at Yoshimitsu's request and Tamesada compiled *Shinsen'ai wakashū* at Go-Kōgon's (1338–74) order per Takauji's request, Go-Uda was a ruler in the Daikakuji line who resided in Yoshino (before 1336 Daikakuji rulers favored Nijō poets).

In 1318, a year before Tamesada composed his poem, Go-Uda regained his position as retired emperor thanks to his son Go-Daigo's (1288–1339) enthronement.⁸⁹ Tamesada's poem borrows from Prince Genji's composition in the "Suma" chapter of *Genji monogatari*, in which the protagonist looks back toward the veiled-in-mist capital as he travels to Suma Province.⁹⁰ In Tamesada's poem, the mist obscures one's view, but the assumption is that spring is arriving in the capital. *Kumoi* (cloudland) symbolizes the imperial court and *hedate* the division between the two succession lines. The speaker gazes toward the direction where the imperial court should be in a reversed perspective from a famous spring poem in *Kokinshū* 1:3, suggesting Go-Uda's residence in Yoshino.⁹¹ Tamesada's composition thus

87. Yoshino was the site of summer palace visited by emperors in ancient Japan. See Torquill Duthie, *Man'yōshū and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan* (Brill, 2014), p. 243. Haruo Shirane argues, "spring was envisioned as coming by way of the famous mountains (such as Mount Kagu and Mount Kasuga) in the Yamato basin, the former capital at Shiga (Ōtsu), and Yoshino," which explains why the first sign of the spring would be notable in Yoshino. See Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 34.

88. The event was ordered by Go-Uda to collect poems for *Shoku senzai wakashū* (Continued collection of a thousand years, 1320) compiled by Tameyo.

89. Go-Uda was first the retired emperor in 1301–8 when his son Go-Nijō (1285–1308) was the emperor. Since the emperors of the Jimyōin and Daikakuji lines alternated, Hanazono became the emperor after Go-Nijō and thus Go-Uda lost his title to Fushimi (1265–1317).

90. *furusato o* Even though my home
mine no kasumi wa Fades away behind the mist
hedatsuredo Above the mountains,
nagamuru sora wa Is the sky that I gaze at
onaji kumoi ka In the same cloudland?
 91. *harugasumi* The spring mist,
tateru ya izuko Where to look for its rising?
miyoshino no While in the Yoshino mountains
yoshino no yama ni Of fair Yoshino
yuki wa furitsutsu It is still snowing.

celebrates spring—Go-Daigo’s new rule—spreading far and wide from the ever-strong (*haruka*) and legitimate Daikakuji imperial line.

Traditionally, the opening spring poems in imperial collections praise the new emperor ascending the throne. Masayori’s poem, unrecorded in any other resource, is more complex; the context of its creation suggests that it celebrates Yoshimitsu and Go-Komatsu and their union symbolizing the harmony between the two governments. However, it contains an intricate web of intertextuality acknowledging emperors of the Southern Court located in Yoshino as legitimate rulers. By opening this anthology with his father’s poem, Masayo elevates his family and recognizes a government that once opposed the shogunate. There is no direct recognition of Yoshinori, who wished to create an image of himself as a legitimate ruler and who had been once deified in Masayo’s *Fuji kikō* with “cloudland” vocabulary.⁹²

The second poem in *Shinshoku kokinshū* is by Go-Komatsu—Go-Hanazono’s stepfather. While the first composition is by the compiler’s father, the second poem is by the official patron’s father. Emperors of the Northern Court were recipients of shogunal support and Yoshimitsu treated Go-Komatsu like a son. During Go-Komatsu’s rule, the Northern and Southern Courts reunited, so he is a symbol of imperial power sanctioned by the Ashikaga.

Composed on the subject “ice of rising spring”	
<i>Shiga no ura ya</i>	The Bay of Shiga!
<i>yosete kaeranu</i>	Between the waves approaching
<i>nami no ma ni</i>	Yet not returning,
<i>kōri uchitoke</i>	Ice has unexpectedly
<i>haru wa kinikeri</i>	Melted and spring has arrived.

The poem contains conventional early spring imagery used to praise the beginning of a new imperial era—*kōri uchitoke* (ice melts) and *yosete . . . nami no ma ni* (between the waves approaching), which indicate the emperor’s divinity and limitless control. Go-Komatsu’s composition alludes to a miscellaneous poem in *Kokinshū* 17:919 by Ki no Tsurayuki and dedicated to Retired Emperor Uda (867–931).⁹³ In addition, Go-Komatsu plays upon the opening poem by the renowned poet Ōe no Masafusa (1041–1111) from

92. Strand, “Aesthetics of Space,” p. 242.

93. Composed on the subject of “cranes standing in the shallows” on the day the Retired Emperor-Monk went to the Western River

<i>ashitazu no</i>	The cranes in the reeds
<i>tateru kawabe wo</i>	Standing on the riverside,
<i>fuku kaze ni</i>	Do they appear as waves
<i>yosete kaeranu</i>	Approaching, yet not returning,
<i>nami ka to zo miru</i>	In the breezing wind?

See Murao and Kubota, *Shinshoku kokin wakashū*, p. 15. The preface refers to Uda’s famous excursion to the Ōi River (near Kyoto) in 907, which played a similar role to imperial trips to Kumano.

another imperial collection, *Shika wakashū* (Collection of verbal flowers of Japanese poetry, 1151):

Composed in the spirit of “rising spring” among poems for the one hundred poems sequence for Emperor Horikawa

<i>kōri'ishi</i>	The ice-filled waters of
<i>shiga no karasaki</i>	The Cape of Kara in Shiga
<i>uchitokete</i>	Have melted,
<i>sazanami yosuru</i>	A spring wind blows
<i>harukaze zo fuku</i>	Pushing the wavelets closer.

In Masafusa’s poem, dedicated to Emperor Horikawa (1079–1107), we find the parallel themes and vocabulary of melting ice in Shiga and waves approaching, and respect paid to the sovereign. Masafusa’s composition suggests that the emperor, represented by *harukaze* (spring wind), causes a radical change in a “frozen” world of humans, because imperial powers affect everything. Composed for the *Horikawa hyakushu* (One hundred poems for Emperor Horikawa, 1105–6), the poem alludes to Horikawa’s enthronement in 1087 as the beginning of a new era.⁹⁴

While Masafusa’s composition pays tribute to Horikawa, Go-Komatsu’s poem honors the Northern Court. Shiga, borrowed from Masafusa’s poem, alludes to Lake Biwa and symbolizes the Northern Court located in Kyoto and remaining under Ashikaga influence. The conventional spring site of Yoshino—a symbol of the Southern Court in late medieval Japan—is replaced with Shiga.⁹⁵ In Go-Komatsu’s poem, Shiga is a politicized image and reference to the poet’s own imperial lineage. Moreover, if the poem was composed after the unification of the two courts in 1392, the melting of ice may be interpreted as the peaceful reconciliation between them. Go-Komatsu’s composition thus symbolizes a new era of unified imperial reign controlled by the Northern Court. It strays away from Masayori’s composition and is a symbol of political submission to the Ashikaga shogunate. However, through Go-Komatsu’s close connection to Yoshimitsu, it is a tribute to Yoshinori’s father and not to Yoshinori. Yet again, Masayo’s agenda diminishes the ruling shogun.

The third poem in *Shinshoku kokinshū* is by Yoshinori. By including the shogun’s composition among the opening spring poems, Masayo acknowledges his patronage.

On the subject of “mist recognizing the spring”

<i>itsushika to</i>	The shifting in
<i>kinō no sora ni</i>	Yesterday’s sky—

94. *Horikawa hyakushu* was a poetic event organized by Horikawa in an attempt to return to older poetics and renew the *waka* tradition. It was frequently referred to in poetry of the following centuries.

95. Michele Marra, *Representations of Power: The Literary Politics of Medieval Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 6–7.

<i>kawareru wa</i>	I wonder when
<i>kasumi ya yagate</i>	The mist has at last
<i>haru wo shiruran</i>	Recognized the spring.

Yoshinori's poem maintains the theme of early spring and at first sight expresses tribute to the imperial reign with traditional vocabulary and structure: *kasumi*, *haru*, and “when . . .?” with a tentative grammatical form (*itsushika . . . -ramu*) which turns the poem into a rhetorical question. The poem asks whether the world is aware of a new ruler in the imperial realm. Yoshinori's composition emulates the third poem in *Kin'yō wakashū* (Collection of golden leaves, 1127) by the renowned poet Fujiwara no Akinaka (1059–1129)⁹⁶:

Composed in the spirit of the “rising spring” as ordered for the one-hundred-poem sequence for Emperor Horikawa	
<i>itsushika to</i>	The misting over
<i>akeyuku sora no</i>	The dawning sky—
<i>kasumeru wa</i>	I wonder when
<i>ama no to yori ya</i>	Through the gates of heaven
<i>haru wa tatsuramu</i>	The spring has made its entrance.

Yoshinori imitates the theme, vocabulary, and structure of Akinaka's poem: *sora* (sky), *itsushika to* (when . . .), a verb followed by the existing condition marker *-ri* (*kawareru* versus *kasumeru*), emotive particle *wa*, question particle *ya*, and tentative form *-ramu*.

Both poems allude to shifts in court politics—possibly a change of the imperial reign—by emphasizing that spring, symbolizing a new emperor, emerges in the sky. While Akinaka composed his poem for Horikawa, Yoshinori likely dedicated his composition either to Go-Hanazono or more generally to the rulers of the Northern Court supported by the Ashikaga. And yet, the conventional *waka* imagery he uses signals a more direct adulation of shogunal instead of imperial rule. Akinaka makes reference to *ama no to* (gates of heaven), accentuating the divinity of imperial power. Though the image is omitted in Yoshinori's poem, allusion to Akinaka's composition suggests that the prestige normally accorded to the emperor refers to the powers to which the emperor was beholden, that is, to Yoshinori himself. By implying that the emperor, who owed the continuity of his imperial rule to the Ashikaga, was a ruler anointed by the gods, Yoshinori emphasizes his own ability to control the imperial succession in the manner of divine powers. He places himself above the reigning emperor, revealing his imperial ambitions. Such an interpretation allows us to understand Yoshinori's dissatisfaction with Masayo's compilation agenda; the shogun wished to be acknowledged as a symbolic ruler of Japan in other poets'

96. Murao and Kubota, *Shinshoku kokin wakashū*, p. 15.

compositions as well. Meanwhile, Masayo's compilation agenda elevates the Asukai, the imperial court, and to some extent Yoshinori's father, while it marginalizes instead of centralizes Yoshinori's symbolic status.

We notice a statement of Yoshinori's imperial aspirations in another of his poems in *Shinshoku kokinshū*, the last composition of the first spring volume⁹⁷:

Composed at the residence when the participants offered poems on
cherry blossoms
kotoshi yori Starting this year
sara ni chigirite I hereby vow anew—
wa ga yado no Beneath the cherry blossoms in my garden
hana ni matsu beki I shall await
yorozuyo no haru The everlasting spring.

This poem, not included in any other extant poetry collection, was likely composed during a New Year's event held at Shogun Yoshinori's residence. The format of the sovereign's prayer for the longevity of his own reign, symbolized by *yorozuyo no haru* (everlasting spring), resembles compositions by past medieval Japanese emperors and imperial princes, as well as their supporters.⁹⁸ With vocabulary like *matsu* (to wait)—a pun on *matsu* (pine), a symbol of longevity in *waka*—and *wa ga yado* (my garden), the poem reveals Yoshinori's self-reference to his eternal imperial reign in Japan.

The first three poems in *Shinshoku kokinshū* contain layers of various factors to consider, demonstrating the complexity of the messages carried by those poems and their authors' identities. They produce an intricate web of familial, poetic, and political connections among their authors, creating a new system of power relations absent in other late medieval imperial *waka* anthologies. Masayo pays tribute to many alliances in his selection of opening poems. He allows for poems with shogunate-oriented political implications to appear early in his anthology, which is a sign of respect for the Ashikaga, especially considering that in other collections sponsored by Ashikaga rulers their poems are not to be found in the opening spring poems at all. But Masayo also reveals his controversial view on the political order in late medieval Japan: with his father's composition he first acknowledges the power of the Southern Court; in the next one, the legitimacy of the Northern Court supported by the Ashikaga; and only after that he recognizes Yoshinori.

The two opening poems do not refer to Yoshinori; the unofficial commissioner and sponsor of the last imperial *waka* project is thus diminished

97. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

98. For example, see George W. Perkins, trans., *The Clear Mirror: A Chronicle of the Japanese Court During the Kamakura Period (1185–1333)* (Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 185.

and presented not as a respected leader but as someone who pays respect to himself with a poem that too well exposes his own imperial aspirations. Yoshinori wished to either have his poem included as the first or be elevated to imperial status in compositions by Asukai poets and emperors. Instead, his poem comes after Masayori's and Go-Komatsu's, while the late Yoshimitsu receives, even if indirectly, more recognition than Yoshinori. At the very beginning of a collection the creation of which he sponsored, Yoshinori is thus marginalized as a poet and sovereign, though his presence is not ignored. In the last poem in the first spring volume, we confirm that the shogun wished to be seen as Japan's symbolic ruler, but this *waka* anthology, intended to provide him with cultural authority and symbolic power, presents him as secondary to the Asukai house, imperial court, and even his own father. Masayo exercised his cultural authority over the ruling shogun in a manner previously unheard of for imperial compilers, proving that in late medieval Japan his cultural capital was superior to Yoshinori's political power.

Conclusion

The last imperial *waka* collection is a complex object of study. Though not created in isolation from its predecessors, its compilation process was affected by shifting sociopolitical dynamics of the mid-fifteenth century. The anthology's initiator Ashikaga Yoshinori was obsessed with the imperial court; an imperial collection was meant to provide him with cultural authority to become emperor or at least be recognized as the emperor's equal. However, the cultural capital of the Asukai house clashed with Yoshinori's lack of lineage of comparable caliber, which is why Asukai Masayo challenged the shogun.

In Masayo's collection, Yoshinori appears secondary to the emperor, the Asukai house, and even his own father. *Shinshoku kokinshū*, initiated to help the shogun solidify his symbolic power, demonstrates instead his place in late medieval Japan—in close vicinity to the imperial household but not at the center of it. Yoshinori had grander expectations and was betrayed by Masayo, who, as the Asukai were rising in power, emphasized the imperial court and Yoshimitsu instead of Yoshinori; it was more appropriate to show respect to a deceased shogun than an insecure ruler with imperial aspirations who was never meant to become the country's leader. Masayo found a balance between what was culturally acceptable and politically correct within the *waka* tradition and imperial realm, but in the very hierarchical society of feudal Japan his collection ultimately threatened Yoshinori, who could never be considered equal to the emperor or gatekeepers of ancient traditions—the Asukai.

Shinshoku kokinshū did not meet Yoshinori's expectations. Having been previously treated like an emperor by Masayo during his trip to

Mt. Fuji, Yoshinori was disappointed, but he did not ask the compiler to revise the collection, as he did in the case of Ichijō Kaneyoshi's Chinese preface (*manajo*). Yoshinori was unable to question Masayo because he was culturally inferior to him and, as a warrior keenly aware of distinctions in rank and status in the hierarchical feudal society, had too much respect for the symbolic status of an imperial anthology to question it.

Yoshinori took Masayo's compilation agenda as an offense, but the reality was that imperial *waka* collections were traditionally not compiled for shoguns before the late medieval era, and Masayo was already setting precedent by including Yoshinori's composition as third in the spring volume. Poetic conventions allowed for coded recognition of a shogun's presence within the imperial realm—*Shinshoku kokinshū* shared this feature with previous imperial collections initiated by Ashikaga rulers. However, Yoshinori was not considered equal in status to the ruling emperor, to his own father, or to the Asukai poets whose lineage and level of expertise in traditional arts could not be surpassed by many. Thus, despite Yoshinori's efforts—patronage of the Asukai, sponsorship of the collection, and personal engagement in the process—he was betrayed in his alliance with Masayo, proving that notions of power and status in medieval Japan need reconsideration and perhaps even the creation of new theories.

Considering the examples of satire in other literary traditions, Masayo did much more than compose a satirical poem about Ashikaga Yoshinori; he compiled a book that undermined the shogun's authority. Masayo used a traditional medium for praising the sovereign with poetry to ridicule and subvert what had already been once subverted in late medieval era—that is, shoguns seeking recognition as emperors. The last imperial *waka* collection thus becomes a tool of criticism of a self-proclaimed yet never acknowledged emperor. Therefore, as a compilation sponsored by a ruler it insults, its very existence proves that cultural authority did at times prevail in premodern Japan.