Common Songs: A Study of the Saibara Collection and Inquiry into "Fuzoku" Arts in the Heian Court

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Even a cursory glance at the obscure *saibara* song collection reveals a deep and prevalent intertextual relationship with the canonical Nara period poetic anthologies, the *Man'yōshū* (万葉集) and *Nihon shoki kayō* (日本書紀歌謡). This intertextuality is, in some cases, near identical duplicates of poems. They offer an intriguing perspective into the semiotic construction of the songs, as well as offer insight into what aesthetic elements separate *saibara* from the collections that help construct its subtext.

Saibara is usually treated as a Heian period text (Konishi 1957, Usuda 2000, Kimura 2006, Ikeda 2006) with archaic but untenable roots in traditional oral songs of commoners and regional ballads from outside the capitol (Fujiwara 2011, 43 - 50; Usuda 2000, 116 - 17). This widely held assertion about *saibara*'s provenance is the most persistent element in studies and commentaries on the songs. This paper will look at *saibara* in the historical records, as well as at its intertexts, in order to illuminate elements of its historical construction as a *fuzoku* (風俗) "folk" text.

Background

Saibara (催馬楽) "horse urging music" refers to a genre of accompanied vocal court songs from the Heian period. It consists of 61 songs that were ultimately preserved in the late Heian and early Kamakura periods. These songs were likely part of a much larger repertoire that was performed in accompaniment with music and dance in the Heian court (Konishi 1957, 267). *Saibara* was formalized as a genre of *gagaku* (雅楽) "elegant music" during the *Engi* period (901 – 923), but there are several early attestations, beginning with the *Sandai Jitsuroku* (三代実録) "True History of Three Reigns of Japan' (901 CE), *Wamyō ruijushō* (倭名類聚鈔) "Annotated Classification of Japanese Taxonomies" (ca. 935), *Makura no sōshi* (枕草子) "Pillow Book" (1002), *Genji monogatari* (源氏物語) "Tale of Genji" (1021), and *Taiheiki* (太平記) "Record of Tranquility" (ca. 1368).
Almost nothing is known of the provenance of the songs, however they are frequently attributed to traditional regional songs of the peasantry that were brought to the court through tribute and traveling performers (Fujiwara 2011; Konishi 1957; Usuda 2000).

The history of the songs is illustrated first by Go-Shirakawa in *Ryōjin hishō* (梁塵秘抄) "Secret Collection of Rafter Dust" (ca. 1180) and later by Ichijō Kanera in *Rōjin guanshō* (梁塵愚案抄) "Secret Collection of Rafter Dust Folly" (ca. 15 c.). In *Ryōjin hishō: Kudenshū* (梁塵秘抄口伝集) "Secret Selections of Rafter Dust: Collection of Oral Transmissions," Go-Shirakawa writes,

> From ancient times to the present, these songs have been learned and passed down. These [songs] are known as *kagura*, *saibara*, and *fuzoku*… *Saibara* was born from the oral traditions of commoners from various provinces who came offering tribute in the Ministry of Finance
>
> 古より今にいたるまで、習ひ伝へたるうたあり。これを神楽催馬楽風俗といふ。かぐらは天照おほん神の、天の岩戸をおし開かせたまひける代に始まり、催馬楽は、大蔵の省の国々の貢物おさめける民の口遊におこれり。(*Ryōjin hishō: Kudenshū* 1)

Among the theories of *saibara*'s origins, this early description by retired emperor Go-Shirakawa has held the attention of most modern scholars on the subject. In a recent study, Fujiwara notes the difficulty in substantiating this version of *saibara*'s history, but yields to the possibility of a refining process that may have taken place after the early adoption of the songs in the court (Fujiwara 2001, 47, 45).

Saibara was ultimately preserved in two family manuscripts*, Tenji-bon* (天治本) (1125) of the Fujiwara (藤原) family (referred to in the literature as the *Tōke* 藤家 manuscript) and *Nabeshimake-bon* (鍋島家本) (ca. late 12 c.) of the Minamoto family (referred to in the literature as *Genke* 源家. Despite the late dates of these manuscripts, both are written in *man'yōgana,* which would have almost certainly been an obsolete script by the eleventh or even mid-late tenth century. This, in corroboration with other evidence suggests that the collection itself may be much

older than their extant copies reveal.[1] The first appearance of "*saibara*" in text is the *Sandai Jitsuroku* (三代実録) "True History of Three Reigns of Japan," part of the *Rikkokushi* (六国史) Six National Histories. It is recorded that a lady-in-waiting who had risen to the rank of *Naishi no kami* (尚侍) or Fourth Rank court official, *Hiroi no joō* (広井女王), was proficient at and instructed in s*aibara* song and dance:

> Fourth Rank court official Third Subordinate Lady Hiroi passed. At the time of her death she had surpassed eighty years. Hiroi cultivated a virtuous character. She had etiquette. She thusly was known to be a talented singer. She was especially perfected in *saibara* song. (Tenth month, twenty-third day of *Jōgan* 1 [859 CE])

> 尚侍従三位広井女王薨。薨時年八十有余。広井少修徳操。挙動有礼。以能歌見称。特善催馬楽歌。

Thus, it is clear that as part of a performance tradition, *saibara* songs were already being enjoyed by the court aristocracy since at least the ninth century. This allows for some firm grounding when considering the historical context of *saibara* being preserved some time in the Nara period. However, tenuous speculation turns to serious consideration in light of other textual and historical connections, beginning with Hiroi no joō and the *Nihon shoki*.

While very little is known about Hiroi no Joō, it is likely that she came from a family with a tradition of some performative and / or poetic achievement in the Nara period. In the *Sandai jitsuroku* it states that Hiroi is the descendant of Nihin no nagashinnō (二品長親皇) "Prince Nagashin of the Second Princely rank." This is likely Naga no miko (長皇子) "Prince Naga" (ca. 715) who was the fourth son of Emperor Tenmu (天武天皇) (631-686). Poems authored by Naga no Miko can be found in *Man'yōshū* volume I and III (*Ise to Tsukushi no tabi*) (MYS 1.60, 1.65, 1.73, 2.130). Additionally, Nagata no Miko's[2] father, Kurusu Ō (来栖王) "Lord Kurusu"[3] (681-758) was charged with the duty of heading the bureau of court *gagaku* in 733. Concurrently he organized an *utagaki* at the *Suzakumon* 朱雀門 "Vermillion Bird Gate" at the capitol *Heijō kyō* (平城京) (Nara). In the *Shoku nihongi* (続日本紀), in the second month, first day of the thirtieth year of the sexagenary cycle, *Tenpyō* (天平) six (734), it is written:

> At the *Suzakumon* gate, before the imperial palace of the emperor, an *utagaki* with more than 200 men and women in attendance was viewed. Among them were talented individuals of special distinction. Lord Nagata of the Lower Fourth rank,[4] Lord Kurusu[5] of the Fourth Rank,

[1] Comparative evidence of these manuscripts with early Chinese music

[2] Nagata no Miko is Prince Naga's grandson

[3] For details on the controversial dates and records regarding Prince Naga and the imperial line, see http://www7a.biglobe.ne.jp/~kamiya1/mypage441.htm

[4] Nagata Ō Seishi (正四位下長田王) (*Nagata-no-Miko* 長田皇)

[5] *Kurusu Ō Jushi* (来栖王従四)

> Prince Kadobe,[6] Lord Nonaka of the Fifth Rank[7] and others were the event leaders. Everyone sang verses in chorus. And in this way, they performed in the scales (*ne* 音) of the song Naniwa (難波), the song Yamatobe (倭部), the song Asaji no hara (浅茅原), the song Hirose (広瀬), and the song *Ya mo sashi* (八裳刺)[2]. As decreed, men and women in the capitol were seen indulging there. They enjoyed thoroughly until they became fatigued. The men and women who (honorably) [performed] *utagaki* received a small reward (for their performances).
>
> 二月癸巳朔。天皇御朱雀門、覧歌垣。男女二百余人。五品已上有風流者、皆交雑其中。正四位下長田王。従四位下栗栖王。門部王。従五位下野中王等為頭。以本末唱和。為難波曲。倭部曲。浅茅原曲。広瀬曲。八裳刺曲之音。令都中士女縦観。極歓而罷。賜奉歌垣男女等禄有差。

Kurusu's son, Ōhara Ō (大原王) (ca. 742), who is also found in the *Man'yōsū* (17.3952), would have been Hiroi's paternal uncle and elder. Furthermore, the similarities between the songs performed at the above mentioned *utagaki* and the *saibara* songs *Asamuzu* 浅水 "shallow water," *Asamidori* 浅緑 "shallow (pale) green," and *Namuba no umi* 難波海 "sea of Nanba" cannot be ignored. What is clear is that Hiroi and her family had deep ties with practitioners and offices dealing with Nara period *gagaku,* and *saibara* in particular. Fujiwara suggests that Hiroi was the first to learn and pass on the *Genke saibara* tradition from Emperor Saga (嵯峨天皇) (r. 809-823) (Fujiwara 2011, 131). If this is accurate, it puts into question the assertion that allusions to poems in the *Man'yōshū* and other Nara period texts are in fact 'allusions.' These instances would have almost certainly been viewed as borrowed elements by later literati, but in reality it may be something much more indirect and unintentional. Haruo Shirane reminds us that intertextuality is a "collective unconscious" that "dispenses with the classical criteria of authorial consciousness or contact" (Shirane 1990, 76). In line with this definition, *saibara* is a prime candidate for this kind of unconscious and authorless ubiquity. What's more, the composite of textual elements present in these *songs* speaks to a possible parallelism between folk traditions and early court poetry.

On the character and venues where the *saibara* songs enjoyed their greatest popularity in the court, the *Gyōyūshō* (御遊抄) (1485) documents it in excerpts dated from 906 to 1200 CE. The context of the songs is further documented in the *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (1021) and *Saibara ryakufu* (催馬楽略譜) (1738). These entries describe songs from the *saibara* repertoire as sung typically with musical accompaniment at various events through all four seasons. They were especially prevalent at *kōen* (公宴) "court banquets." The lyrics were not fixed and are described as being flexible, with ample room for spontaneous alterations, without strict rules or guidelines for performance (Fujiwara 2011, 20 - 21). Lyrics and phrases would often be altered spontaneously and many times deliberately in order to adjust the content to a

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[6] *Kadobe-no-Ōkami*(門部王)

[7] *Nonaka* Ō *jugo* (従五位下野中王)

particular event taking place, i.e. adjusting to appropriate seasonal metaphors or physical locales, etc. (Harich-Schneider 1952, 403; Fujiwara 2011, 43). An excerpt from the *Gyōyūshō* confirms the casual singing of *saibara* songs at a banquet:

> On the occasion of the imperial visitation to *Tōhokuin*. Record of Minister Sukefusa. At the residence of the Imperial Consort.
> There was no musical performance, however the adjutant minister who was in attendance at the banquet initiated the singing of miscellaneous songs. A certain Saibara [song], a certain miscellaneous song, and, again, a certain Kusha[8] hymn, which were said to be quite unorthodox.
>
> 幸東北院資房記。女院御在所。無奏音楽。但於饗座丞相及戸部発雑芸事。或催馬楽。或雑哥。或又倶舎頌。奇怪云々。
> (*Gyōyūshō*, *Chōkin gyōkō, Eisho* 6) (cited in Fujiwara 2011, 44)

This excerpt dated 1086 and describes the unfixed nature of the songs. Konishi draws a parallel between *saibara* and *min'yō* (民謡) via its relationship to *gagaku* (Konishi 1957, 167). The term *minyō* is a calque derived from German *volkslied* "folk song." This is an interesting parallel considering the character of the songs as described in the literature. The definition of folk music is an elusive one. Ronald Cohen defines folk music as a musical tradition with unknown origins (Cohen 2006). Another definition given by the International Folk Music Council is based on an evolutionary process of oral transmission (Latham 2002). Other definitions have folk music as constituting any musical tradition associated with the underclass, or that is culturally and linguistically regional in nature (as opposed to central or standard speech), and being passed through oral tradition. Within the study of folklore, the folk process is the operation by which songs are adapted, re-interpreted, and altered over time in order to better suit changing environments (ibid). In consideration of this process, *saibara* can be viewed in this way. While it is likely the original melodies were lost early into its induction into the *gagaku* repertoire, the songs likely had considerable dialectal and melodic variation (Tachibana 1967; Fujiwara 2011). Each song chosen was inevitably representative of whatever region they hailed from. As is the case in the folk process, lyrics were altered and adapted to fit the court environment and the events where they were sung. Moribe asserts that the songs were not altered from their original state as regional folk ballads (Tachibana 1967, 102). This disputable assertion notwithstanding, *saibara* offers ample connection with late Nara period courtiers, as seen above, as well as an intriguing correlation with excerpts from the *Nihon shoki*.

Geography of the songs and *Nihon shoki* records

Thirty-five of the *saibara* songs contain references to specific geographic locations in Japan. The majority of songs indicate provinces in or around the capital *Heijōkyō* (平城京) modern Kyoto, most in the areas along the *Tōkaidō* (東海道) "Eastern Sea

[8] Kusha (倶舎) (Sanscrit *Kośa*) is probably referring to *Kushashū* (倶舎宗), a sect of Hinayana Buddhism brought to Japan some time in the Nara period from India via a continental intermediary. The sign 頌 *jō* can refer to a gatha or hymn (also those found in the *shijing* (Jp. *shikyō* 詩経 "Classic of Poetry")

Road." *Tōkaidō* encompasses the *Goki shichidō* (五畿七道) "Five Capital Provinces and Seven Districts (lit: roads)." *Tōsandō* (東山道) "Eastern Mountain Road" stretches through the center of *Honshū* from as far west as modern day *Shiga* prefecture and northeast to modern *Ibaraki* prefecture. However, *saibara* does not indicate anything farther than modern day *Aichi*. *Saibara*'s geographical distribution can only be put into perspective when compared with textual evidence from the *Nihon shoki.*

> "With no limitation as to the distance or proximity of their provinces, [they] invited able
> singers."[9]

The above excerpt is from the *Ryō no shūge* (令集解), a ninth century commentary on the *yōrō* code (養老律令) originally written in 718 CE. The full excerpt describes the *utamai no tsukasa* (楽官) the governmental management system of song and dance under the *ritsu ryō* (律令) system. This early description of the office's origins corroborate those of court *saibara*'s genesis as *fuzoku uta* (風俗歌) "folk / commoner song" in *Ryōjin hishō* and *Ryōjin guanshō*. In an entry dated 675, an excerpt from *Nihon shoki* lists the provinces where song, dance, and other talent were collected under the auspices of the imperial academy of music, to perform and instruct within the confines of the court.

Table 1: Location correspondences between *Saibara* and *Tenmuki*

Corresponding locations		
Nihon shoki (Tenmuki)	***Saibara***	Song
Yamato no kuni (大倭国)	Katsuragi (葛城)[10]	2.20
	Asukawi (飛鳥井)[11]	1.8
Kawachi no kuni (河内国)	Ishikawa (石川)	2.19
Settsu no kuni (攝津国)	Naniwa no umi (難波海)	2.36
Yamashiro no kuni (山背国)	Sawadagawa (沢田河)	1.2
	Fujūno (藤生野)	2.11
	Yamashiro(山城)	1.7
Tazima no kuni (但馬国)	Irusa no yama (伊留左の山)	2.12
Ōmi no kuni (近江国)	Mi Kurusu, Mikurusu no hara (御来栖, 粟津の原)	1.23
	Hashiriwi	1.7
	Ōmi (近江)路	1.19
	Shinohara (篠原)	1.20
Ise no kuni (伊勢国)	Ise no umi (伊勢)	1.10

[9]Original excerpt: 不限国遠近取能歌人耳。

[10] There is also a placename, *Katsuragi*, in *Kawachi* province, which it is possible this poem is referring to as well. However, as the birthplace of the *Soga* clan (蘇我氏), it seems more likely this location is speaking of *Yamato* province.

[11] Poem 1.8 only has a passive and ambiguous reference, 安須加井爾 *asukawi-ni* "at the well at Asuka / at Asukawi." This can be referring to *Asuka* 飛鳥 in *Yamato*, *Yamashiro*, or *Kii* provinces where *Asuka* is a known placename (Usuda 2000: 129)

	Takekawa (竹河)	2.8
	Kawaguchi (河口)	2.9
	Suzukagawa (鈴之川)	2.27
Mino no kuni (美濃国)	Itsunuki kawa (伊豆貫河), Mushiroda (蓆田)	2.26
	Minoyama (美濃山)	2.30
Owari no kuni (尾張国)	Simatuda (島つ田)	2.4

There are a total of 9 corresponding locations out of a total 12 cited in *Tenmuki* and 16 in *saibara*. Furthermore, all 13 locations are referenced in the *Engishiki* (延喜式) (927) with the exception of *Awaji*. This evidence is cause for speculation and is considered by Konishi (1957) and Fujiwara (2011) in their assessment of *saibara* as having genuine *fuzoku* origins. With other sources agreeing with this analysis, it is likely that, at the very least, these were the areas where many of the *saibara* songs originated, some time in the Nara period. Fujiwara views these statistics as supporting the idea that the songs collected as *saibara* were not limited to outlying provincial areas but also represent *fuzoku uta* from the capitol (Fujiwara 2011, 53 - 55). Furthermore, he cites the intertextuality and phrasing that is reflected in poems from the *Man'yōshū* and the *Nihon shoki kayō* (日本書紀歌謡) "Archaic songs of the *Nihon shoki*."

Despite this correlation, there is only one identifiable textual allusion to the *Nihon shoki kayō* in *saibara*. It is dated *Tenchi* 9 (ca. 635) and occurs in a song that contains comparable elements from other intertexts as well:

Saibara: Takekawa (竹河)

> 太介加波乃　波之乃川女名留也　波之乃川女名留也　波名曾乃尓　波礼　波名曾乃尓　和礼乎波波名天也　和礼乎波波奈天也　女左之太久戸天
>
> *take kafa no / fasi no tume naru ya / fasi no tume naru ya / fanazono ni fare / fanazono ni / ware woba fanate ya ware woba fanate ya / mezasi tagufete*
>
> By the bridge of Takekawa, [it is] by the bridge of Takekawa
> At that flower garden *fare*!
> Let [me] go at the flower garden, put me with those girls and let me go! (*Saibara*: *Takekawa*)

Nihon shoki 124

> 于知波志能　都梅能阿素弭爾　伊提摩栖古
>
> *utipasi no*$_2$ / *tume*$_2$ *no*$_2$ / *aso*$_1$*bi*$_1$ *ni* / *ide-mase ko*$_2$
>
> Come out girls, to the amusement by the bridge (NSK 124)

There are no precisely corresponding full lines, just the phrases *fasi* ~ *pasi* "bridge," and *tume* "edge; vicinity" However, the description and context is similar, both are anticipating the company of young girls at the foot of a bridge. In part following Moribe, Usuda suggests that the *saibara* song is a fragment of an old tale involving

sexual temptation of the imperial princess serving at *Ise* Shrine (*Saigū* 斎宮), for which the punishment was death (Usuda 2000, 147). Tsuchihashi views the *Nihon shoki* poem as a description of *utagaki,* which commonly took place at the foot of a bridge (Tsuchihashi 1957, 206). This *saibara* song is also compared with the following *Man'yōshū* poem:

> 墨江之 小集樂尓出而 寤尓毛 己妻尚乎 鏡登見津藻
> *SUMI$_1$NO$_2$YE NO$_2$ / WODUME$_2$ ni IDETE / UTUTU ni mo / ONO$_2$-DUMA SURA wo / KAGAMI$_1$ to$_2$ MI$_1$tu mo*
>
> Going out to the small gathering at Sumiyoshi
> It is not a dream
> That my spouse appears as a transient beauty, as if [looking] in a mirror (MYS 16.3808)

This *Man'yōshū* poem has a commentary following:

> [Regarding this poem], it is said there was a man from outside the capitol. His name is not known. On an occasion, the townspeople gathered in great numbers and for field amusement (*utagaki*). Among the people who attended there was a couple of provincial peasant stock. The woman's countenance was handsome and supreme to everyone who gathered there. And that provincial peasant felt increasingly endeared towards his wife. This was when he made the song and praised her with it.
>
> 右傳云 昔者鄙人 姓名未詳也 于時鄉里男女衆集野遊 是會集之中有鄙人夫婦 其婦容姿端正秀於衆諸 乃彼鄙人之意弥增愛妻之情 而作斯歌賛嘆美皃也

The commentary identifies this poem as composed by a man of regional peasantry stock (*tohito* 鄙人) during an *utagaki.* The above *Nihon shoki* poem also has a clear reference to *utagaki.* These intertexts necessitate a revaluation of Usuda's interpretation of the *saibara* song and immediately tie the song into a subtextual theme of *utagaki*, romantic encounters and feminine beauty. They are further tied together by their *fuzoku* provenance (explicitly in MYS 16.3808) and topic. It is difficult to say whether these songs were included consciously or as an unconscious bricolage of poetic elements accessible to anyone within the sphere of oral ballads in this period. Suffice it to say that the intertextuality between *saibara* and *Man'yōshū* is considerable, and begs many more questions about the literary or pre-literary relationship they reveal.

Saibara* and *Man'yōshū

Man'yōshū is *the* major (known) intertext of *saibara*. There are 26 references to the *Man'yōshū* occurring across eight books. This is probably one of the most intriguing and evocative aspects of the *saibara* songs, an aspect that has them stand out considerably from the other Heian period *fuzoku* song collections. Interestingly, with the exception of one poem *Manyōshū* 11.2362, and *saibara*: *Yama shiro* (山城), all

the songs with *Man'yōshū-saibara* parallels are from unknown authors (Fujiwara 2011, 41). While these parallels are not numerous, it is important to keep in mind the size of the *saibara* corpus. Furthermore, the putative origins, venue, content, and composition of the majority of songs in the *Saibara* collection are, for the most part, vastly divergent from those selected for inclusion in the *Man'yōshū*. This makes for a perplexing qualitative contradiction in the inclusion of *Man'yōshū* poems in the collection. In order to better understand what these resemblances reveal, it is necessary to briefly outline the *Man'yōshū* books wherein they appear.

It is clear that of all 26 instances, there is particular density in Book VII, XII, and XIV. The concentration of intertextual references to poems in Book XIV is interesting, considering the association of *Azuma uta* with *fuzoku* artistry in general. The relatively high number of occurrences in Book VII and XI is also interesting for different reasons, which I will elucidate below. However, a compositional breakdown of the books that have the highest number of poems with intertextual references in *saibara* is necessary to understand what, if any, connections they may have to better understand its historical context.

Man'yōshū Book VII contains the highest number of intertextual references in *saibara*, occurring in six songs (five poems from Book VII). Book VII's compiler is not known. It contains 350 poems in the *zōka* (雑歌)*, hiyuka* (比喩歌)*,* and *banka* (挽歌) genres. Though the majority of poems are not dated, they are likely from the late seventh or early eighth century. Along with the *zōka* and *hiyuka* genres are a series of themed poems such as *mondō* (問答) "question and answer" poems involving a hypothetical addressee (i.e. MYS 7.1251), and *yamatokoto* (大和琴) "songs on the Japanese zither," which include songs applied to the *kagura* and other *gagaku* repertoires.

The majority of poems have anonymous authors. However, among those attributed to an individual, Book VII contains a small pool of various authors. The vast majority of poems, however, are attributed to *Kakinomoto no Hitomaro*, 56 in total. These poems are from the collection *Kakinomoto no ason Hitomaro kashū* (柿本朝臣人麻呂歌集) "*Kakinomoto no ason Hitomaro* Poetry Collection" (abbr. *Hitomaro Collection*). This is one of several collections included throughout the *Man'yōshū* as *kokashū* 古歌集 "old song collection" (Commons 2003: 34).

Man'yōshū Book XI contains four poems referenced in four *saibara* songs. Of these, MYS 11:2362 is identified as a *Hitomaro Collection* poem. This book in its entirety is identified as having a distinctly folk flavor (Takagi 1972: 9-11). It is also dominated by logographic writing, especially in the case of the *Hitomaro Collection* poems.

These *Man'yōshū* books share a few commonalities: (1) the spelling system; all the books apply semantographic spelling with very few exceptions. (2) The general composition of the poems: Books XI and XII have distinctly folk-style poems

reminiscent of some *gagaku* and *kagura* song varieties. (3) Anonymous authorship; the majority of poems in Book VII, XI, and XII have anonymous authors. (4) Kakinomoto no Hitomaro; *Kakinomoto no Ason Hitomaro Kashū* (柿本朝人麻呂歌集) poems appear frequently in Book VII, XI, and XII. These three books specifically contain poems from the *Hitomaro Collection*. The largest cluster of references in *Man'yōshū* Books VII, XI, and XII statistically reflect the distribution of poems from the *Hitomaro Collection* in *Man'yōshū.* The highest density of *Hitomaro Collection* poems is found in Book XI with 161 poems. The full distribution is as follows:[12]

Table 2: Distribution of Hitomaro Collection poems in the *Man'yōshū*

MYS Book	XI	X	VII	IX	XII	XIII	II	III
Number of *Kashū* poems	161	68	56	49	27	3	1	1

Compare this with the distribution of *Man'yōshū* songs in *saibara* summarized below.

Table 3: Summary of distribution of textual references to the *Man'yōshū*

MYS Book	II	III	V	VII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XVI
Totals	1	1	1	6	1	1	3	3	2	4	2
Grand total	26										

With the exception of one reference appearing in Book XIV, the *saibara-Man'yōshū* intertextual references correlate exclusively with poems from *Hitomaro Collection*. It is clear from the conspicuous appearance of these poems that they were held in high esteem by the compilers of *Man'yōshū.* Commons notes that this is especially true in Book VII, where the poems are indeed heading most of the *zōka* 雑歌 sections, thus reflecting veneration paid to Hitomaro as one of the great and respected poets of the age (Commons 2009, 34). There are 84 poems attributed directly to Hitomaro himself, but these are distinct from those quoted from the *Hitomaro Collection.* It is not known whether these songs were actually composed by him or not. There is a theory that Hitomaro did, in fact, not author the bulk of these poems, but that he collected them in his travels. The recitation of Hitomaro's songs before travel poems in some *Man'yōshū* books further suggests that Hitomaro's name was at least superstitiously associated with safety in travel (Commons 2009, 1). While this does point to some connection between Hitomaro and the *saibara*, or perhaps more aptly, early oral songs and poetic traditions of travelling entertainers and regional commoners, more investigation is necessary to substantiate this.

These lines of inquiry may bring about more questions than answers. The connections between *saibara* and Nara period poetic collections and its historical provenance, may turn out to be a phantasm--a construction, of a vision of *saibara* as nostalgic ballads, imbuing them with a certain curiosity and raw flavor that would have appealed to the bored and isolated court aristocracy. Or there may be a genuine underlying history threading them together. However, the implications for both of these scenarios is significant for our understanding of the development of oracular traditions and

[12] chart adapted from Commons (2003: 34)

literacy in Japan, as well as the way in which song and poetry and native traditions of the populace was conceptualized in the minds of early Japanese courtiers.

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