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Visions of the Eastland: Reading the *Azuma uta* of *Man'yōshū*

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During the early eighth century, a new capital at Nara became home to Japan's first urban aristocracy. Nara was built as a Chinese-style capital city, serving as the headquarters of a newly expanded Chinese-style bureaucratic state, where the land's elite families gathered to live in magnificent mansions clustered around the imperial palace. This sort of urban life was a new phenomenon; while capitals of different scales had been constructed several times throughout the latter half of the seventh century, including at Ōmi, Asuka, and Fujiwara, the new capital city of Nara, to which the court moved in 710, was the first to endure beyond two reigns. Moreover, Nara remained the *only* city in Japan for the duration of its time as capital. In this new city, for the first time, males from powerful lineages vied to serve in the palace bureaucracy, a career which required urban residence. While they usually retained their provincial lands despite relocating to the city, in terms of both lifestyle and landscape, they were living very differently than their parents and grandparents.

As in any swift "modernization," such a rapid transition over the course of just a single generation had a significant impact on how this new urban aristocracy understood themselves and their place in the world. The alienation engendered by this rapid transformation can be glimpsed in much of the poetry of the *Man'yōshū* (ca. 780s), the oldest anthology of Japanese vernacular poetry. Consisting of approximately 4,500 verses in twenty volumes, a significant portion of the poetry found therein is colored with a nostalgia for the "simple life" of ages past, lived close to nature in a traditional agricultural village context. The preference for such themes must be seen as that of the newly urban society that produced and consumed the anthology. Their longing for the past was often transferred onto rural settings that embodied what the aristocracy felt they had lost. One particular epicenter for nostalgia was *Azuma*, "the Eastland."[1] Not only was the Eastland a site of nostalgic longing for the urban population

of Nara, but more than any other non-capital setting it emerged as the *opposite* of the capital in *Man'yōshū*. The representations of this exotic locale through its poetry also allowed Nara courtiers to begin to explore their own sense of urban superiority. While the nostalgic aspect of aristocratic fascination with the Eastland would fade with the Nara period (once aristocrats had fully adjusted to urban life), into the Heian period (794–1185) courtiers would continue to define themselves as Capital People in large part through *what they were not*, and the epitome of *what they were not* was Azuma.

The "songs of Azuma" (*azuma uta*) included in Book XIV of *Man'yōshū* have long been understood as "folk songs" of the Eastland. Recent scholarship has pushed back against the interpretation of *azuma uta* as folk songs, and has argued instead for the importance of understanding the "filter" through which these songs are presented by an urban courtier editor for an urban courtier audience.[2] However, the *Man'yōshū* itself encourages its readers to comply with the fiction that these songs are authentic expressions of Eastland people, by both erasing any identifiers of individual authorship and directly engaging urban courtiers' preconceptions about Azuma. In other words, Book XIV is a carefully curated collection of poems about Eastland people who live close to nature, who indulge in sexual pleasure, and whose lives follow the rhythms of the agricultural calendar, because this is what Nara courtiers believed them to be. While a close reading of some individual poems may reveal more complexity—and even traces of an "authentic" Eastland voice—the book as a whole works to counteract this by presenting urban aristocrats with a singular vision of their "primitive selves" inhabiting a pastoral landscape that was both recognizable and aspirational. Moreover, if Book XIV reveals that the Eastland represented a site of pastoral fantasy, this is even more apparent in poems composed by courtiers traveling in the Eastland, who sought to indulge in that very fantasy. Two parallel, but equally fantastical, visions of *Azuma* thus emerge within the *Man'yōshū*: one filtered through the ethnographic gaze of a poetic interlocutor from the capital, and the other ventriloquized in "learned and fashionable language" by an editor consciously crafting a pastoral tour of the Eastland through allegedly authentic poetry.

In what follows, I will consider the interlocking modes of ethnography and the pastoral which structure literary encounters between Nara-period urban aristocrats and the people of the Eastland in *Man'yōshū*. In exploring how the "Eastland" was depicted in Nara-period texts, I argue

that the same preconceptions about Azuma people can be observed in poems written by both "Western" and "Eastern" poets. However, poems by Western poets approach the Eastland from an ethnographic vantage point that highlights the distance between observing the subject and observed others, while poems allegedly composed by Eastlanders themselves, such as those found in Book XIV of *Man'yōshū*, exemplify the pastoral mode in that they collapse the distance between courtiers and Eastland folk by revealing the capacity of these "primitive" others to express "strong feelings" in surprisingly sophisticated voices.

Azuma uta and the Pastoral

The appeal of the Eastland to the urban aristocracy of Nara was such that the entirety of Book XIV of the *Man'yōshū* is devoted to poetry from the provinces of Azuma (*azuma uta* 東歌).[3] Poems about travels in the Eastland by Nara courtiers are included in several other books, and poems by so-called "border guards" (*sakimori* 防人) who were appointed from the Eastern provinces to serve in distant Kyūshū are collected in Book XX. No other specific region of Japan is given nearly as much coverage within the anthology.[4] The *azuma uta* of Book XIV are 230 verses (249 with variants included) that are ostensibly composed in the voices of the Eastlanders themselves. These poems are arranged geographically in a "tour" of the territories of the East, that leads the reader away from the capital. The tour route follows the Eastern Sea Road [Tōkaidō] through Musashi, continuing east and then north through the provinces of Kazusa, Shimōsa, and Hitachi, before heading inland and northward along the Eastern Mountain Road [Tōsandō] through Shinano, Kōzuke, Shimotsuke, and finally the far northern frontier province of Mutsu. In its current form, the book probably was not completed until the 770s, although many of the poems can be dated to the early part of the eighth century or earlier.[5] Through the inclusion of Book XIV, the *Man'yōshū* subsumes the Eastland into its poetic history of the realm, giving that same history geographic range to match its temporal depth.[6] No less, while the *azuma uta is* presented as "folk songs," they are all in the *tanka* form, the sophisticated verse form of the capital (five lines of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables).[7] This is certainly a symptom of the fact that in *Man'yōshū,* poetry is a "civilizing influence" that "radiates outward from the sovereign and the imperial court and spreads over the entire realm of 'all under heaven.'"[8] However, there is evidence that while the verses in Book XIV may have been originally transcribed in the provinces from which they are purported to

come, they must have been collated into Book XIV by a courtier in the capital, whose editorial hand is likely responsible for many of them appearing in the anthology as perfect *tanka*.[9] It is to this editor that we can attribute the creation of the "pastoral mode" that characterizes Book XIV, in that he worked to bridge the gap between urban aristocrats and humble Eastlanders by making the latter speak in a recognizable "learned and fashionable" language.

While the poetry of courtiers traveling in the Eastland is composed in an ethnographic mode that maintains both social and aesthetic distance between Capital and Azuma, the *azuma uta* themselves are best described as pastoral poetry, because they are arranged geographically in a tour of rural space that takes the form of alleged compositions of "commoners" who express themselves directly and affectingly.[10] All the poems in Book XIV are anthologized as anonymous compositions, and many are in the "authentic" language of the Eastland, which was surely an exotic curiosity for the residents of the Nara capital. In this way, Book XIV purports to offer the reader direct access to the Eastland through "authentic" voices of its people. By deliberately constructing this pretense of authenticity, Book XIV presents its urban courtier reader with a pastoral vision of Azuma.

Definitions of "pastoral" literature vary widely, but in its most broad sense it refers to "any literature that describes the country as providing an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban," but usually entails a "looking backwards" to an "only-just-vanished-period" through focusing on rural people who are seen as embodying the values of the past. In this literature, rural landscapes and lifestyles are given idyllic representation as a way of both capturing the urban population's longing for a "return" to the country and the past, but also as a way of obscuring the real exploitation of rural populations.[11] One of the most consistent features of the pastoral mode, however, is a pretense of authenticity, in which "country people" are purported to speak "for themselves." As William Empson writes:

> The essential trick of the old pastoral, which was felt to imply a beautiful relation between rich and poor, was to make simple people express strong feelings (felt as the most universal subject, something fundamentally true about everybody), in learned and fashionable language (so that you wrote about the best subject in the best way). From seeing the two sorts of people combined like this you thought better of both; the best parts of both were used. The effect was in some degree to combine in the reader or author the merits of the two sorts; he was made to mirror in himself more completely the effective elements of the society he lived in.[12]

To follow Empson, in Book XIV, the people of Azuma are a veritable repository of "strong feelings" expressed in "learned and fashionable language." In putting these strong feelings on display, Book XIV collapses the distance between reader (urban courtier/sophisticate) and "poets" (simple people of the Eastland), thereby highlighting both similarities and differences. In other words, the pastoral mode of the *azuma uta* allows the urban sophisticate to escape from his everyday existence to experience a simple, "uncorrupted" way of life that is close to nature, followed the rhythms of the seasons, and is fundamentally corporeal.[13] From the perspective of the *ritsuryō* state, the reader of Book XIV belonged to the "rich," and would have been ideologically invested in better connecting the central provinces (Yamato and the surrounding provinces) to those at further remove from the capital, and especially the so-called Eastland (Azuma), a land of many resources.[14] The poems of Book XIV allowed these readers to gain insight (however fictitious) into the deepest thoughts and feelings of the Azuma people, and for them to recognize themselves within them. In other words, *azuma uta* made Azuma *feel* less distant from Nara. However, while the Nara-based reader of Book XIV may have felt this sense of closeness between himself and a prototypical "Eastlander," he also was keenly aware of just how much more "sophisticated" he was—in other words, he saw in the "mirror" before him a reflection of his "primitive self."

The degree to which the poems *do* conform to the *tanka* form and follow established poetic tropes and conventions has been pointed to as possible evidence that if not complete forgeries, the poems were probably heavily re-shaped by someone who had knowledge of the ways of the capital.[15] To a certain extent, an eighth-century reader may have been aware of the artificiality of these perfect *tanka*, but to quote Empson again, "to make the clash [between "rich" and "poor" or "Nara courtier" and "Azuma folk"] work in the right way (not become funny), the writer must keep up a firm pretense that he was unconscious of it…. Such a pretense no doubt makes the characters unreal, but not the feelings expressed or even the situation described...."[16] In other words, even if the form was perceived as "artificial," the substance of the poems was *real*: the verses may have been polished, but the feelings expressed within them were "authentic" to Azuma people. In consuming the "poetry of the Eastland," however, the Nara courtier did more than just recognize an affinity between himself and Azuma people, he came to more fully understand himself as a "modern" urban aristocrat, and was thereby reassured of the

importance of his function in helping oil the system that benevolently ruled over those Eastland people.

The Center and the Eastland

In the Nara period, direct administration of the Eastland by the central Yamato government was a new phenomenon. The western part of Eastern Japan, including the Kantō plain, was part of an elite interaction sphere from the beginning of the Kofun period (ca. 250 CE–645 CE), wherein the cultural products of the Kinki core region were actively adopted by local chieftains as a signifier of political alignment, but not necessarily as the result of direct political control.[17] The extent of this elite interaction sphere had reached the Sendai plain by the middle Kofun period.[18] This meant that while large keyhole-shaped tumuli were built in clusters throughout Kantō, provincial chieftains (*kuni no miyatsuko*) remained largely autonomous within their own domains.[19] Indeed, no part of Eastern Japan was probably fully under the control of the central Yamato state until the *ritsuryō* age, the era in which Yamato rulers worked to build a Chinese-style imperial state.

Centralization through Chinese-style bureaucratic administration began in the late seventh century, but the dispatch of centrally appointed administrators to the provinces did not begin until early in the eighth century. Even under the *ritsuryō* system, officials dispatched from the center relied heavily on locally based staffers, many of whom were descendants of traditional powerholders in the region. While the new system meant a significant diminishment of authority for former provincial chieftains, they and their kin managed to maintain some hold on local affairs by vying for positions in the newly created provincial bureaucracy. The demand for official posts among descendants of local powerholders was such that it appears smaller and smaller administrative units were created in order to accommodate them.[20] Therefore, because village, district, and provincial governments were primarily staffed by these local stakeholders, total centralized control was never feasible; rather, centrally dispatched officials sought to strike a balance between their own responsibilities and the needs of local stakeholders, and the latter were always important allies in administration at any level. The sense of the Eastland provinces being a separate cultural realm thus strongly persisted.

The most important tasks that *ritsuryō* era administrators performed in the provinces were the collection of taxes (in the form of both rice and local specialty goods), and the conducting of censuses that facilitated the

collection of not only taxes in kind but also corvee labor tax and military conscription. A directive issued in 713 to compile "reports" at the provincial level was in many ways a related task. According to *Shoku Nihongi*, in the fifth month of the sixth year of Wadō (713), Empress Genmei (r. 707–715) ordered that each province submit a report about the natural resources and products of each district. Further, her order specified that these reports should also include information about the fertility of the soil, the origin of the names of rivers, mountains, plains, and moors, and old legends or tales of strange events transmitted by elders of the region.[21] It is believed that these "reports" constitute what are now known as the *ko fudoki* 古風土記 (old *fudoki*). These *fudoki* are gazetteers whose compilation dates to the 710s–730s, five of which are at least partially extant today.[22] The old *fudoki* are an invaluable resource for understanding the relationship between the center and provinces in the *ritsuryō* age. Crucially, one of the extant eighth-century *fudoki* is that of Hitachi province (modern Ibaraki prefecture), one of the largest and most important provinces of Azuma, and as such offers context for understanding the *azuma uta* of *Man'yōshū*.

As much as it may have been an administrative necessity, the project to compile "reports" on each province was also an ethnographic one. Ethnography in East Asia dates at least as far back as the *Shiji* (Records of the grand historian, ca. 90 BCE), where the ethnographic gaze undergirds the assertion of Han imperial sovereignty over foreign peoples.[23] Meanwhile, the collection of folk songs from different corners of the empire (especially those which were previously politically independent) was also seen as a method for integrating different peoples into the realm, as is seen in the *guofeng* 'airs of the domains' that begin the *Shijing* (Book of songs).[24] This ethnographic gaze is the exclusive privilege of empire, and while observing barbarian others both bolsters the imperial self's sense of superiority and allows for self-definition in terms of that barbarian other, it can also provoke a romantic nostalgia for simpler lifeways that have been "lost." It is here that ethnography and pastoral literature intersect. E. Taylor Atkins, in his engaging study of the Japanese ethnographic gaze on colonial Korea, notes that ethnographic accounts and images have a dual goal of both maximizing and minimizing differences between "primitive" people and their would-be rulers: on the one hand, an emphasis on greater difference meant highlighting the righteousness of the empire's civilizing influence, while on the other, an emphasis on lesser difference allowed for a glimpse of the imperial self in an earlier,

uncorrupted, primitive state.[25] In other words, the ethnographic gaze allows for the imperial subject to peer backward in time at *himself*. In looking upon the colonized other, the imperial subject rediscovers something of his "primitive self," while simultaneously solidifying his belief in his own cultural superiority. Eighth century courtiers in Nara share much with their modern counterparts in terms of experiencing a sort of "modern" alienation that prompted a desire to "return" to the simple life of ages past. While their modern counterparts looked to Korea, Nara courtiers sought to rediscover something of their "primitive selves" by looking upon the people of Azuma. In *Man'yōshū,* this practice manifests in two ways: through ethnographic poetry centering the courtier's gaze on Azuma people, and through an editor's crafting of a pastoral tour of the Eastland using the "authentic" voices of Azuma people in Book XIV.

The Courtier in Azuma

The Eastland first appears in *Man'yōshū* in Book II, in the very first sequenced *sōmon* (exchange) verses in the anthology which are dated to the time of the Ōmi capital (667–672). Here, references to Eastland people and products are used to humorous effect in the context of witty poems composed as a mock courtship exchange that was likely performed at a banquet for a courtly audience, perhaps in the context of Eastland tribute having been recently presented:

水薦苅 信濃乃真弓 吾引者 宇真人佐備而 不欲常将言可聞[26]
mikomo karu (where they reap wild rice)
Sinano no mayumi A Shinano true bow:
waga pikaba if I were to draw it to me,
umapito sabite will it put on dignified airs
ina to ipamu kamo[27] and refuse me? [Master Kume][28]

三薦苅 信濃乃真弓 不引為而 強佐留行事乎 知跡言莫君二[29]
mikomo karu (where they reap wild rice)
Sinano no mayumi A Shinano true bow:
pikazu site without drawing it to you,
[xxx][30] *waza wo* all the while you say that
siru to ipanaku ni you couldn't possibly know of such things.
[Lady Ishikawa]

梓弓 引者随意 依目友 後心乎 知勝奴鴨[31]
adusa yumi A cherry birch bow
pikaba mani mani If drawn, then naturally

yoramedomo	I will bend to you—
noti no kokoro wo	but as for your heart thereafter,
sirikatenu kamo	I fear I do not know. [Lady Ishikawa]

梓弓 都良絃取波氣 引人者 後心乎 知人曽引[32]

adusa yumi	A cherry birch bow
turawo tori pake	stretching the string around the ends
piku pito pa	the person who then draws it back
noti no kokoro wo	is he who knows
siru pito so piku	his heart thereafter. [Master Kume]

東人之 荷向篋乃 荷之緒尓毛 妹情尓 乗尓家留香問 [33]

adumato no	Like a man of the Eastland's
nosaki no pako no	tribute box tied to a horse's back
ni no wo ni mo	with a cord
imo pa kokoro ni	you, my beloved, ride along
norinikeru kamo	tied to my very heart. [Master Kume]

Here, at least in the first four verses, the two poets, Master Kume and Lady Ishikawa, are playing at *utagaki* (song match), a courtship ritual that had once been widely prevalent throughout both Eastern and Western Japan, but by the time of this exchange had come to be primarily associated with the agrarian communities of the Eastland. Their verses clearly echo many of the "authentic" examples of eastern songs seen in Book XIV in their use of specific local customs and products as *jo* 'poetic prefaces.' Here, the bow which is drawn close and then released is an apt visual metaphor for a fickle lover and is used appropriately to express feelings of anxiety about the future direction of a relationship that is forged in the context of a brief first encounter. Meanwhile, the apposition of the "box" that brings Eastland tribute riding upon the horse's back with the beloved who rides upon the poet's heart is rather more clumsy and may have been composed to fit a specific moment at a banquet and purposefully crafted for humorous effect.

As Doi Kiyotami argues, during this age of reform and nascent imperial state-building, the Eastland had just been brought under direct control of the sovereign, and people and products from this region were both excitingly exotic and particularly symbolic of the empire's expansion. It is in this context that songs from the Eastland may have first become known, perhaps as performances that accompanied the submission of tribute to the court.[34] These early songs may indeed be the source for some of the poetic associations with Eastland provinces and their specialty

products seen throughout *Man'yōshū*.[35] For the courtiers of this era, however, who were not yet the urban aristocracy of the Nara period, the appeal of the Eastland was very much tied to its identity as the extremity of a new Yamato "empire." It would not be until the Nara period that *Azuma* would become a site for the courtly self to encounter a pre-modern other that embodied what was lost in the transition to urban modernity.

This sort of encounter is first seen in the poetry of urban aristocrats who traveled to the Eastland themselves in the 720s. Foremost among them was Takahashi no Mushimaro 高橋虫麻呂 (fl. 720s–730s), who is known as one of the greatest admirers of the Eastland among named *Man'yōshū* poets, with approximately 47% of his repertoire being composed on related subjects (although he also composed about his travels to other regions).[36] He apparently spent several years in the Eastland around the early 720s while in service of his patron, Fujiwara no Umakai 藤原宇合 (694–737), who was *azechi* 'inspector' of Hitachi province in the early 720s.[37] While resident in Hitachi, it is likely he had some role in the compilation of the *Hitachi no kuni fudoki.*[38] Relatively little else is known about Mushimaro, other than what can be inferred from his poetry; however, because he did number among the aristocracy of Nara, his poetry inevitably reflects an Azuma that is an exotic land seen through the eyes of an urban sophisticate. His famous *chōka* 'long verse' composed on the custom of the *utagaki* is a perfect example of the ethnographic gaze at work:

鷲住 筑波乃山之 裳羽服津乃 其津乃上尓 率而 未通女壮士之 徃集 加賀布嬬歌尓 他妻尓 吾毛交牟 吾妻尓 他毛言問 此山乎 牛掃神之 従来 不禁行事叙 今日耳者 目串毛勿見 事毛咎莫[39]

washi no sumu	Where eagles dwell
tukuba no yama no	on Mt. Tsukuba;
mopakitu no	Mowaki landing,
sono tu no upe ni	up above that landing:
adomopite	Gathering together,
wotome wotoko no	young women, young men,
yuki tudopi	go and assemble,
kagapu kagapi ni	to make merry at the *kagai* celebration.
pitoduma ni	With others' wives,
wa mo maziparamu	I will surely mingle,
wa ga tuma ni	and to my own wife,
pito mo koto tope	others will surely press suit.
kono yama wo	As for this mountain,
usipaku kami no	the gods who preside here

mukasi yori	from ancient times
isamenu waza zo	have not forbidden such things.
kepu no mi pa	So for today only,
megusi mo na mi so	please don't look upon me with love,
koto mo togamu na	nor condemn me too harshly.

Mushimaro describes here the famous *kagai* 嬥歌 gathering, also known as *utagaki*, one of the largest of which took place in spring and autumn on the dual peaks of Mt. Tsukuba in Hitachi. At first, he is a detached observer, looking down on the mountain from above "where the eagles dwell," but he gradually zooms in on Mowaki landing, and from there the twin peaks of Tsukuba where young men and women gather. After sketching the scene, he inserts himself into it rather abruptly, including the first-person pronoun *wa* at the beginning of the tenth line. Mushimaro then portrays himself as an overly eager participant in the gathering: "just for today," he and everyone else present can indulge their most primitive selves, as the "gods have not forbidden it." While he begins the *chōka* as an ethnographer, the first-person pronoun diverts the reader's attention from the scene sketched in the first eight lines to the observing subject himself and his own active indulgence in the *kagai* celebration. His opting to join the *utagaki* is a moment of the fulfillment of a capital person's fantasies about the "primitive" Eastland. Eastland *kagai* seem to have been especially famous in the capital already by the time Mushimaro composed this verse, perhaps because the custom was already somewhat archaic in the capital region.[40] The *Hitachi no kuni no fudoki* offers a description of the ritual that echoes Mushimaro's more poetic version:

> The height of Mt. Tsukuba exceeds even the clouds. Its peak in the west is precipitous and rocky, and it is called the Male God; climbing it is not permitted. However, its eastern peak, while there are boulders and stones in every direction, there are many who climb it. The spring that flows down from this peak does not stop in summer or winter. All the men and women who live in the provinces to the east of Ashigara Slope come throng together here when the blossoms open in the spring and when the leaves turn yellow in the fall, bringing food and drink with them and ascending on foot and on horseback, there to enjoy themselves to the fullest. A song sung on that occasion goes:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *tsukupane ni* | "Let us meet tonight |
> | *apamu to* | on the peak of Mt. Tsukuba." |
> | *ipishi ko pa* | The one who so promised me |
> | *taga koto kikeba ka* | whose sweet nothings must she have heard |
> | *mine apazu kemu ya* | that I should have failed to meet her on the peak?[41] |

The content of this passage echoes Mushimaro's *chōka* but provides the more concrete details that one would expect in a "report" about the land prepared for submission to superiors. The poem included here might be called an *azuma uta*, as it is identified as a "song from that occasion" and clearly is composed from the perspective of an Eastland native participant in the *utagaki*. However, in contrast to the verses of Book XIV of *Man'yōshū*, this song is not in standard *tanka* form (its syllabic pattern is instead 5-4-5-8-8), a fact that might be said to lend the verse a stronger authentic flavor. Moreover, its content does echo Mushimaro quite clearly in suggesting that sexual freedom extended over the nights of the *utagaki*. This freedom to indulge in one's desires in a natural setting was the romanticized version of Azuma that appealed to urban aristocrats in Nara.

The version of Azuma that appears in this *fudoki* passage and in Mushimaro's *chōka,* focused on the semiannual *kagai* celebrations, was probably already familiar to residents of the capital, as is suggested by the verses of Master Kume and Lady Ishikawa. Mushimaro does appear to approach the experience of *kagai* with some idea of what to expect. Such customs had once been more widespread throughout Japan, and recent scholarship has identified a number of similar "song-match" customs on the Asian continent; comparative studies of these rituals have become a vibrant research field in recent years.[42] However, *kagai* became strongly associated with the Eastland perhaps because they were a vestige of the past that fit with an overall image of *azuma* people as preservers of the "old ways." Indeed, internal evidence from *Man'yōshū* as well as texts like *fudoki* show that the Eastland was "known" by those in the capital, and Book XIV then actively caters to their preconceptions. Neither Mushimaro nor Book XIV is looking to change any minds about Azuma; on the contrary, both consciously play with pre-existing ideas about Azuma as part of their efforts to fold the Eastland into the poetic landscape of the imperial realm. In effect, by avoiding any "fresh insights" about Azuma, both seek to "mediate and harmonize center and periphery."[43]

Mushimaro's *chōka* is flush with the capital-based aristocracy's pre-conceived notions about the people of the Eastland. Those that resonate with the poems of Book XIV include: (1) Azuma people live close to nature; (2) Azuma people still follow the "old ways" unchanged from the past (these "old ways" are distinct from those of the capital, but in a way that makes them exotic and appealing); (3) Azuma people enjoy sex. Preceding the above *chōka* in Book IX is a separate *chōka* by Mushimaro with an attached *hanka* 'envoy', also on the topic of Mt. Tsukuba. This

chōka, however, focuses on the natural scenery of the mountain in autumn, which the poet first describes and then credits for curing his traveler's malaise. While on the surface this poem is purely about the landscape and does not indulge in any of the "stereotypes" of Eastland people noted above, the ***hanka*** takes a turn sharply in that direction:

草枕 客之憂乎 名草漏 事毛有〈哉〉跡 筑波嶺尓 登而見者 尾花落 師付之田井尓 鴈泣毛 寒来喧奴 新治乃 鳥羽能淡海毛 秋風尓 白浪立奴 筑波嶺乃 吉久乎見者 長氣尓 念積来之 憂者息沼[44]

kusamakura	Grass for a pillow
tabi no urepe wo	this traveler's malaise—
nagusamoru	might it be lifted
koto mo ari ya to	a little? I thought—
Tsukubane ni	and so up the peak of Tsukuba
noborite mireba	I climbed and looked:
wobana tiru	flowers of eulalia
situku no tawi ni	scatter above the paddy fields of Shizuku,
karigane mo	where the geese come
samuku kinakinu	to cry coldly,
Nipibari no	and at Niibari,
Toba no apumi mo	on Toba lake
akikaze ni	responding to the autumn wind
siranami tatinu	white waves rise;
Tsukubane no	up on Tsukuba peak,
yokeku wo mireba	when I witness this beauty,
nagaki ke ni	what for several days
omopi tumi kosi	had been accumulating—my thoughts
urepe pa yaminu	of malaise—have now ceased.

筑波嶺乃 須蘇廻乃田井尓 秋田苅 妹許将遣 黄葉手折奈[45]

Tukubane no	On Tsukuba peak
Susomi no tawi ni	for she who in the paddy fields of Susomi
akita karu	reaps the autumn harvest,
imogari yaramu	to send it to her:
momiti taworana	let me break off a branch of colored leaves.

While the *chōka* occupies a space between travel poetry and ritualistic land-viewing poems (*kunimi*), the accompanying envoy does not reiterate or elaborate on the praise of the natural scenery, but rather zooms in on a young woman who is helping reap the autumn paddy fields below. The traveler's malaise described in this *chōka* might be set on any number of mountains in any number of provinces, but in focusing on the figure of the

"eastern woman" glimpsed from atop Mt. Tsukuba, the envoy echoes the ethnographic mode of Mushimaro's *utagaki*-centered *chōka* above. The scenery the poet praises in the *chōka* becomes in the envoy something that is only valuable in so far as it can be shared with the woman, who is in turn also a part of the observed landscape. This envoy very much fits with the first preconception about Eastland people: that they are so "close to nature" that they themselves become features of the scenery. However, this girl is also engaged in agricultural production, a key component of Azuma's importance to the *ritsuryō* administration. Here, as in Book XIV, the image of the "Azuma person" that is conjured by a capital resident is one that cannot help being intricately connected to agricultural productivity. Therefore, we must include a fourth preconception about the people of Azuma: (4) Azuma people live close to their fields and their life rhythms follow that of the agricultural calendar. Life in an agricultural village is not purely about planting and harvesting, but includes other types of vital work, including cloth production and laundering, hunting, fishing, and foraging; references to these types of activities are considered subcategories of this fourth preconception.

Thus far, I have identified four preconceptions central to a Nara aristocrat's understanding of the Eastland and its people. These preconceptions can be observed throughout *Man'yōshū* where references to the Eastland appear. As is shown in Table 1, these preconceptions are pervasive in Book XIV, despite the poems collected therein having been allegedly composed by the people of the Eastland themselves.

Urban aristocrats' preconceptions about Azuma people	Number of poems in Book XIV	Percentage
Close to/part of nature	105	42%
Traditions unchanged	37	15%
Enjoy sex	81	33%
Agricultural way of life	30	12%
Cloth production/care	28	11%
Hunting/fishing/foraging	28	11%

Table 1. Breakdown of *azuma uta* in Book XIV according to urban aristocrats' preconceptions about the Eastland.

This distribution should shape our understanding of Book XIV in two important ways. First, these figures support the idea that while *azuma uta* probably has roots in the Eastland, most were probably deliberately altered and/or polished to meet courtly expectations. Second, whatever the degree

of alteration of individual verses, as a collection Book XIV is clearly curated for a courtly reader in a way that specifically caters to his expectations. The veneer of authenticity cast over the collection is an obvious artifice meant to maximize his enjoyment of the verses.

As might be expected, it appears people of the Eastland—at least those who were in contact with their "Western" Japan counterparts—were aware of these preconceptions, and they might play with these when composing poems intended to evoke the sympathies of a capital-based audience. The following poem was allegedly sent by a woman identified simply as a "Maiden of Hitachi," who had a romantic relationship with Mushimaro's superior Umakai when he served as governor of her province:

庭立 麻手苅干 布暴 東女乎 忘賜名[46]

nipa ni tatu	Standing in the garden
asa tekari posi	cutting and drying hemp,
nuno sarasu	bleaching cloth in the sun:
Azuma womina wo	that Eastland woman,
wasure tamapu na	don't forget her!

Here, the poet evokes what she knows is her lover's idea of an "Eastland woman": outside, engaged in traditional domestic activities, including agricultural work, cloth production and laundering. This Maiden of Hitachi knows this is how her lover sees her and appeals to this precise image in imploring he remember her, even if he remembers her as a stereotype.

Voices of the Eastland: The Pastoral Mode of Book XIV

Book XIV retains the generic divisions of the rest of *Man'yōshū,* and so is divided into *zō* 雑 ("miscellaneous" or "public") poems, *sōmon* 相聞 ("exchange" or "love") poems, *hiyuka* 比喩歌 ("allegorical") poems, and *banka* 挽歌 ("elegies"). However, these categories are subdivisions within two larger subsections of the book, "Poems from Identified Provinces" and "Poems from Unidentified Provinces." Within each generic heading under "Poems from Identified Provinces," the Book traces a journey away from the capital through the provinces of Azuma.[47] All along the way, the reader is introduced to a variety of Azuma "characters" who live close to nature, practice unchanging traditions, indulge in primitive corporeal pleasures, and structure their lives around the traditional agricultural village. While the main principle of organization is geographical, within each subset of verses from a particular location, verses are ordered in ways that work to create a pastoral vision of Azuma. Poems that center love in rural spaces

highlight for the courtier both the similarities and differences between his own experience and that of Azuma folk. For instance, within the group of poems from Musashi province included in the *sōmon* section (poems #3373–3380), a familiar pattern of courtly love can be traced. We begin with a glimpse of an idealized vision of an eastern maiden bleaching cloth in the Tama River, and from there traverse poems about infatuation (#3374), longing for a meeting/consummation (#3375), the need to keep the relationship hidden (#3376), uncertainty about the future (#3377, 3379), and then finally, break-up poems (#3378, 3380). Although the individual poems were not composed as a sequence, with this sort of progression the courtly reader is able to imagine the maiden of poem #3373 as the "woman" protagonist of a provincial romance that unfolds within an agricultural village space that is close to nature, where local animals and plants are used as metaphors for lovers' feelings. Similar patterns, with suitable variations, occur within each subset of verses from a particular locale. Then, within the group of verses of unknown provenance included at the end of the volume, association of images links individual verses together into subsets that internally cohere strongly but are not usually connected to other subsets. These subsets focus on features of the rural landscape—mountains, paddy fields, streams, birds, clouds—or particular kinds of human experience—forbidden love, separation from a loved one. Particularly "Azuma"-themed subsets highlight exotic difference, with subsets included on bows, horses, hunting, and cliffs. Within each of these subsets we find the same preconceptions about Azuma people, despite the location being a general, rather than a specific, Eastland. Moreover, no matter how different the metaphors, the feelings of Eastland people remain accessible, and their expression surprisingly sophisticated.

While the organization of the volume works on courtly sensibilities in particular ways, behind individual verses the contradictions inherent in the pastoral mode are visible. In other words, while the courtier may be able to see what they want to see in the people of Azuma as part of an idyllic landscape that serves as a mirror for the capital, traces of "authenticity" are present in the very real trials and tribulations of life that lurk beneath the surface. This is perhaps most easily observed in the Mt. Tsukuba-related poetry included in the volume, which in some ways coincides with the Tsukuba of Mushimaro, but also undermines the picture of hedonistic indulgence he paints:

筑波祢乃 祢呂尓可須美為 須宜可提尓 伊伎豆久伎美乎 為祢弖夜良佐祢[48]

tukubane no	Mt. Tsukuba:
nero ni kasumi wi	on its peak haze lingers,
sugikate ni	unable to move along—
ikituku kimi wo	the lord who breathes so arduously
winete yorasane	take him to bed and nestle up close.

筑波祢尓 可加奈久和之能 祢乃未乎可 奈伎和多里南牟 安布登波奈思尓[49]

tukubane ni	On Mt. Tsukuba
kaka naku wasi no	eagles screech:
ne nomi wo ka	like them, only while crying aloud
naki watarinamu	will I wander about,
apu to pa nasi ni	unable to meet you?

乎都久波乃 之氣吉許能麻欲 多都登利能 目由可汝乎見牟 左祢射良奈久尓[50]

wotukupa no	On dear Tsukuba,
sigeki kono mayo	between the overgrown tree branches
tatu tori no	birds fly up;
me yu ka na wo mimu	will I only be able to see you from a distance?
sanezaranaku ni	Since it's not as if we haven't lain together.

All of the poems on Mt. Tsukuba in Book XIV are love poems, and nearly all of them appear to have some connection to *utagaki*. *Utagaki* was a subject of enduring fascination for capital folk, whose imaginations were captured by the idea of men and women freely seeking sexual fulfillment in a natural setting under a bright moon. As is seen above, *utagaki* for Mushimaro is an opportunity to embody his "primitive self," because the gods of Tsukuba permit it. Here, 3388 perhaps comes closest to Mushimaro in spirit, in that a third-person encourages a sexual encounter as a method of placating the desires of a "lord who breathes so arduously" [*ikitsuku kimi*]. However, the anxiety that stops this man in his tracks and makes him unable to "move along" contrasts sharply with the ease of Mushimaro's speaker who freely "mingles," and suggests that for the people of Azuma, the practice of the *utagaki* was probably no mere pleasure romp. Poems 3390 and 3396 echo this sentiment in articulating a different sort of anxiety about whether a bond forged within the context of *utagaki* had any hope to endure. If these poems by Eastland folk add anything to Mushimaro's Tsukuba, they tell us that participants in *utagaki* probably *did* worry about the precarity of relationships forged under such

circumstances; that is, contrary to what Mushimaro hopes to get out of the experience, men and women of Azuma did not hope such things were "just for today." *Utagaki* indeed was probably more about "finding a mate" than about pure indulgence in sex, but for the courtly interloper, the exotic quality of the event was foregrounded, while the real social implications of the gathering were obscured or deliberately ignored.

As in the above Mt. Tsukuba verses, the "sexual freedom" that was such a large component of how Nara-based courtiers viewed the *utagaki* was not usually taken so wistfully by Eastland people. That is, for Eastland people, sex is something that not only creates anxieties about both the present and future, but has the potential to disrupt the social matrix as it does so:

駿河能宇美 於思敝尓於布流 波麻都豆良 伊麻思乎多能美 波播尓多我比奴[51]

suruga no umi	The bay of Suruga
osibe ni opuru	growing rank along the shore
pama tudura	beach vines:
imasi wo tanomi	Like them, I have leaned on you
papa ni tagapinu	and gone against my mother.

筑波祢乃 乎弖毛許能母尓 毛利敝須恵 波播已毛礼杼母 多麻曽阿比尓家留[52]

tukubane no	On Tsukuba's peak
wotemo konomo ni	Over here, over there
moribe suwe	she has placed guards;
papa i moredomo	although my mother guards me like this,
tama zo apinikeru	our souls have still met.

The speaker of the first verse frets about the consequences of her liaison with a lover of whom her mother does not approve. Like the vines on the shore, she has intertwined her fate with that of her lover, and in doing so has gone against her mother. The image of the vine along with *tanomi* 'lean on' suggests the speaker has completely given herself over and is now totally reliant on her lover, and her anxieties revolve around the consequences of such trust. The second verse, which also appears within the small subset of Mt. Tsukuba-related verses in Book XIV, features yet another mother who seeks to prevent the sexual union of her daughter and a lover, going so far as to "post guards" on Mt. Tsukuba. This is almost certainly hyperbole, meant to emphasize the scale of obstacles to seeing

her lover, and highlight the perseverance of the two lovers' "souls" in meeting anyhow. However, there is an implication of the mother's success in the fact that the meeting is one of the "souls" and not of bodies. This Mt. Tsukuba, where a mother works tirelessly to keep her daughter away from her lover, is a far cry from the permissively indulgent world of the *utagaki* atop Mt. Tsukuba described in Mushimaro's *chōka*. Here, sex is again not something taken lightly. It has serious consequences that devoted parents are eager to prevent, and which the eager lovers are generally content to dismiss.

What sort of consequences? The tightly woven fabric of provincial society in early Japan was indeed at stake, as other poems in *Man'yōshū* attest. Mushimaro writes narrative *chōka* about several maidens who found themselves pursued by multiple men, and unable to choose between them, were forced to make the tragic choice to end their own lives. Several of these maidens called Azuma home, but their stories are given in rather vague terms. The story of one maiden whose grave is found in what is now Kobe, the Maiden of Unai, makes it quite clear what the nature of the offense was, and what the consequences might have been: Unai is pursued by two men, one from another village and one from her own. She has a social obligation to choose the latter despite her strong feelings for the former. When she is unable to make the "right" choice, she makes the only other acceptable one from a social and moral perspective: she chooses to die.[53] While the details are lacking, a similar story of a tragic maiden pursued by multiple suitors is known from Kazushika no Mama in Shimōsa province, which is alluded to in several verses in Book XIV and is the subject of another Mushimaro *chōka*.[54] These tales of women who must make a moral choice to die suggest the dire importance of maintaining the social fabric of provincial society, and cannot but cast doubt on Mushimaro's depiction of the *utagaki*. Poems in Book XIV suggest instead that while Eastland people did indeed enjoy sex, and composed songs to that effect, it was important that the sex in which they indulged not be socially transgressive. Therefore, the "sexual freedom" of the *utagaki* nights on Mt. Tsukuba probably carried with it many more restrictions than Mushimaro, or any capital person, would have cared to imagine. There are hints at these restrictions in the poems cited above, but nothing so assertive as to detract from readerly fantasies about the event.

Versions of the Eastland

Thus, while careful reading might reveal something about Eastland people's own experiences imbedded within the poems of Book XIV, the

overall organization of the collection does cater to the preconceptions of the courtly reader, encouraging him to indulge in his fantasies of the Eastland. There are only five poems included in the *zō* category at the top of Book XIV, and their nature has long been debated; another seventeen *zō* poems are found in "Poems of Unidentified Provinces," for a total of twenty-two.[55] Meanwhile, the vast majority *of azuma uta* are indeed categorized as *sōmon* ("exchange") verses, and focus on love: 188 out of 230, or 82%.[56] In accordance with a Nara courtier's expectations, Azuma people's love is usually expressed in terms of their identities as agricultural people living close to nature. Notably, they also generally sing of love in more explicit terms than their "Western" counterparts. To cite a few examples:

可美都氣努 安蘇能麻素武良 可伎武太伎 奴礼杼安加奴乎 安杼加安我世牟[57]

kamitukeno	From Kamitsukeno
aso no maso mura	a bundle of pure hemp
kaki mudaki	my arms around, in a close embrace
nuredo akanu wo	although I lie with you like this, I never tire
ado ka a ga semu	What am I to do?

可波加美能 祢自路多可我夜 安也尓阿夜尓 左宿佐寐弖許曽 己登尓弖尓思可[58]

kapakami no	The upper reaches of the river
nesiro takagaya	there the roots of the *kaya* grasses
aya ni aya ni	grow in rank profusion:
sane sanete koso	since we have slept together so profusely,
koto ni denisika	we have now sprouted rumors.

乎可尓与西 和我可流加夜能 佐祢加夜能 麻許等奈其夜波 祢呂等敝奈香母[59]

woka ni yose	Approaching the hillside
wa ga karu kaya no	I cut down some grasses,
sane kaya no	grasses for sleeping on—
makoto nagoya pa	she finds them so soft,
nero topena kamo	she asks we sleep upon them!

In the first verse, the poet's lover is likened to a bundle of precious hemp from Kamitsukeno. The first three lines here are a *jo*, or poetic preface, which is an especially common technique in the *azuma uta* corpus. A *jo*

usually works to bring two seemingly disparate images into close contact: some observed phenomenon and the poet's emotional state. Because the relationship between them is only ever apposite, and usually accomplished through word play, the *jo* can sometimes act like a metaphor but usually requires some readerly effort to bridge the gap between two halves of the poem. This creates a rather humorous effect in this case: the poet depicts himself as embracing and laying with a bundle of hemp from Kamitsukeno, that he finds just as precious as he finds his lover (or perhaps he finds his lover as precious as the hemp?). The final rhetorical question, which has the poet at a loss for how to cope with his "strong feelings," saves this particular verse from absurdity and allows for the preservation of the pastoral mode: the poet's feelings of disorientation at being in love are as intense as they are recognizable, even if a capital-person might choose to express them differently.

The first part of the second verse is likewise a *jo* that functions to prompt the word "[extreme] profusion" (*aya ni aya ni*) which the poet then pivots upon to speak of what is really on his/her mind: the rumors that have arisen due to the two lovers' frequent meetings. The third verse works in a similar way: the *kaya* ('grasses') for sleeping prompt a proposition from the speaker's companion to sleep (together). In all three of these verses, the images chosen for the *jo*, which both sets up and softens the main emotional content of the poem that comes in lines 4–5, are closely tied to the provincial agricultural identity of Azuma people. For the primitive, simple people of the Eastland, something precious was some pure hemp, and something profuse was the *kaya* grasses growing at the riverside. A convenient occasion for a liaison included the hillside, where soft cut grasses might dually serve as bedclothes. While capital people might find themselves in similar situations wanting to express similar emotions, the ways in which they do so are instead tied to their everyday lived experiences, and so differ in kind, if not in spirit, from the verses of the Eastland. However, because the "strong feelings" are the same between the two, the courtly reader is not repelled by, but rather delights in, the quaint backwardness of the Eastland.

In addition to expressing feelings in relation to their more traditional modes of life, *azuma uta* portray Azuma people as understanding the world through unchanged traditions which they follow faithfully. While capital people may have practiced forms of divination, they certainly did not do so using rice seeds, as in this verse:

可美都氣努 佐野田能奈倍能 武良奈倍尓 許登波佐太米都 伊麻波伊可尓世母[60]

kamitukeno	In Kamitsukeno
sanota no nape no	In the young rice seedlings of Sanota
muranape ni	divined in those many seedlings
koto pa sadametu	things have been decided.
ima pa ika ni semo	So what shall I do now?[61]

This sort of custom is not explained nor attested elsewhere, but the poet's distraught attitude in the final line appears to suggest a world in which superstitions related to the planting of young rice seedlings might be determinative of one's future. In a similar vein, references to the sleeve-waving custom, connected to ensuring safety for travelers, abound in Book XIV, as are references to poorly understood rituals surrounding the blessing of a new home, and the tasting of new rice:

多礼曽許能 屋能戸於曽夫流 尓布奈未尓 和我世乎夜里弖 伊波布許能戸乎[62]

tare so kono	Who is it that
ya no to ni so puru	shakes the door of my hut?
nipunami ni	For the tasting of the new rice
wa ga se wo yarite	I sent away my beloved
ipapu kono to wo	so that I might consecrate this very door.

尓比牟路能 許騰伎尓伊多礼婆 波太須酒伎 穂尓弖之伎美我 見延奴己能許呂[63]

nipimuro no	A new home
kodoki ni itareba	at this moment of blessing it with words,
pada susuki	Like ears of pampas grass
po ni desi kimi ga	your feelings had emerged,
mienu kono koro	but now my lord, I no longer see you.

The inclusion of such poems reveals a continued ethnographic intent behind the collection of the *azuma uta*. The observation of such quaint rituals would have fit perfectly with the preconceptions of the capital people about the simple, traditional lives of the Eastland people, especially interspersed, as they are, with expressions of romantic anxiety. Indeed, such rituals would probably not make it into much poetry were they not used, as in these two verses, as an occasion on which to highlight one's uncertainty about their lover.

Beyond the four preconceptions about Eastland people that I have focused on herein, perhaps one other trait of Eastland people might be

detected within Book XIV: directness of expression. This is evident in many of the examples cited thus far; however, such directness, at least within Book XIV, is indeed usually found in the context of sexual encounters, which capital people believed to be a frequent pleasure indulged by Eastland folk. Perhaps, in some ways, it is less about the indulgence in sex, than the directness about one's desire for sex, that was expected of Eastland people. To cite a few examples that would be out of place in an equivalent capital person's poem:

於久夜麻能 真木乃伊多度乎 等杼登之弖 和〈我〉比良可武尓 伊利伎弖奈左祢[64]

okuyama no	Deep in the mountains
maki no itado wo	my pine board door
todo to site	knock upon it,
wa ga hirakamu ni	and I will open it,
iri kite nasane	come in and sleep with me.

比登豆麻等 安是可曽乎伊波牟 志可良婆加 刀奈里乃伎奴乎 可里弖伎奈波毛[65]

pitoduma to	"Someone's wife,"
aze ka so wo ipamu	why should I have to say that?
sikaraba ka	If that's the case,
tonari no kinu wo	then the robe of my neighbor,
karite kinapa mo	should I never borrow and wear it?

兒毛知夜麻 和可加敝流弖能 毛美都麻弖 宿毛等和波毛布 汝波安杼可毛布[66]

komoti yama	Mt. Conception:[67]
waka kaperude no	until the leaves of the young maples there
momitu made	start to turn yellow,
nemo to wa pa mopu	let us sleep together, I think.
na pa ado ka mopu	What do you think, my dear?

In the background of each of the *azuma uta* that fit the courtly reader's preconceptions is the image of the Azuma woman, which, as we saw above in the poem composed by the Maiden of Hitachi for Umakai, was a particular kind of "primitive" beauty. Eastland women of course fit with courtly preconceptions in that they occupy the traditional agricultural village space and eagerly enjoy sex. The variety of labor they perform, specifically the production and laundering of cloth, become central to their sex appeal in the courtly imagination. Indeed, it is in this activity we most

frequently find Eastland women engaged in Book XIV:

多麻河泊尓 左良須弖豆久利 佐良左良尓 奈仁曽許能兒乃 己許太可奈之伎[68]

tamagapa ni	In the waters of the Tama river
sarasu tedukuri	bleaching handmade cloth,
sara sara ni	over and over, again and again,
nani so kono ko no	why is it that this girl
kokoda kanasiki	is so very dear to me?

安左乎良乎 遠家尓布須左尓 宇麻受登毛 安須伎西佐米也 伊射西乎騰許尓[69]

asa wora wo	Spinning hemp thread
woke ni pususa ni	into a hemp basket
umasu tomo	even if you spin it all now,
asu kisesame ya	could you wear them tomorrow?
iza se wotoko ni	Hurry and come to bed.

The Eastland woman is engaged in cloth production perhaps partly because of the importance of Azuma-made cloth at the imperial court, but cloth-making is also an essential part of traditional women's labor, one that elite women of the capital continued to perform but in perhaps less visible ways (and in less "natural" settings). The figure of an Azuma woman working with cloth in the river, or weaving threads late into the night, is thus a particular kind of exoticized, "primitive" beauty. Perhaps the poem that best encapsulates this appeal of the Eastland woman is found among the five *zō* poems that appear at the top of Book XIV. The picture painted here subtly bridges the gap between Eastland maidens bleaching cloth in nature and the exotic sex appeal that permeates the air on Mt. Tsukuba:

筑波祢尓由伎可母布良留 伊奈乎可母 加奈思吉兒呂我 尓努保佐流可母[70]

Tukubane ni	On Mt. Tsukuba
yuki kamo puramu	is it snowing?
ina wo kamo	or is it not?
kanasiki koro ga	Or is my dearest love
ninu posaru kamo	drying cloth up there?

Our poet here feigns confusion as to whether his dearest love's cloth-drying is in fact snow falling atop Mt. Tsukuba. Mt. Tsukuba is again the site of romantic entanglement, but atop its peak is also the idyllic Eastland

maiden bleaching cloth. This poem appears fourth in Book XIV, the last in a series of poems that open the volume that focus on cloth production, maidens, and seafaring, all essential components of the Eastland as imagined from the perspective of Nara. The latter two of the four also mention Mt. Tsukuba, perhaps the most idyllic spot in all the Eastland. The courtier's touch in curating these poems is thus apparent from the outset, and we as readers are primed to expect more of this romanticized, idyllic Azuma as we go. Book XIV does nothing if not deliver on this very promise.

Conclusion

As Japan sought to remake itself into a Chinese-style imperial state, the newly formed aristocracy, constituted from royal affinal clans and local powerholders in the home and western provinces, experienced a similar kind of alienation to the elites of modern Japan. Many poems in *Man'yōshū* demonstrate a nostalgia for "simpler, communal modes of existence," and articulate an "anti-modern ambivalence" that looks for "premodern 'others' with whom the modern 'self' could be readily contrasted."[71] In *Man'yōshū*, these "premodern 'others'" are primarily of two types: people living in traditional agricultural villages, especially in the Eastland, and sea-faring folk (*ama*). Women of these two groups were particularly fetishized as beautiful in their untarnished "primordial" beauty. Meanwhile, agricultural metaphors for simple corporeal attraction abound in courtly verse as well.

Nara courtiers clearly longed for a simpler past they felt they had lost in moving from their traditional lands and villages into the capital city. That longing was partially channeled through a fascination with the "primitive selves" who occupied the Eastland, at the end of the new Eastern Sea Road, on the edges of a newly constituted imperial realm. It is this possibility of looking back on what had been lost in the transition to a "modern" Sinified imperial state that we can imagine made *azuma uta* deeply appealing for the courtly residents of the Nara capital, to the extent that an entire book of them was incorporated into the anthology that would become *Man'yōshū*. In contrast to poems about the *ama* sea-folk maidens, or poems that used agricultural metaphors for longing, these poems were in the voices of the Eastland folk themselves, and even transcribed their own peculiar local speech. In other words, *azuma uta* alleged to offer direct access to this primitive world and its inhabitants. While the order to compile the various *fudoki* was probably motivated by practical concerns

of governance and the desire to better understand the scope of the new imperial realm, the appeal of the material in them, as well as the songs of Book XIV of *Man'yōshū*, can be connected to this desire to understand one's "primitive self." It is impossible to know what kind of reflections on the courtier's "modern" condition the images of the Eastland may have provoked, but we can be sure the encounter was one that allowed him to experience his basest impulses vicariously through the people of the Eastland.

NOTES

[1] Going forward, the terms "Azuma" and "Eastland" are used interchangeably.

[2] The notion of *azuma uta* as *min'yō* dates to the early twentieth century and is related to efforts to define *Man'yōshū* as a "folk collection." See Shinada Yoshikazu, "The Invention of a National Poetry Collection," in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, edited by Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 46–48. However, critiques of this theory were quick to emerge in the 1910s and 1920s: despite prevailing discourses about *Man'yōshū* as a "folk collection," scholars such as Tsuda Sōkichi and Takeda Yūkichi recognized the strong hand of a capital-based aristocrat in the editing of the Book XIV. The debate over whether to understand *azuma uta* as "folk songs" or "not folk songs" has continued since the work of Tsuchihashi Hiroshi in the 1950s, who argued that *azuma uta* were far more literary than "folk song" in character. In more recent scholarship, a consensus has emerged that any original Eastland compositions were heavily edited and reshaped to fit the standards of the center (see, for instance, Mizushima Yoshiharu, II: 596–598). Shinada Yoshikazu, however, has argued that *azuma uta* are products of the transit system developed under the *ritsuryō* state in the eighth century, and must therefore be understood as an attempt at literary colonization of the east by the center; in Shinada's view, the lack of continuity of an "Eastland song" tradition after the eighth century points to *azuma uta* as being a phenomenon that was coterminous with the *ritsuryō* state. See Shinada Yoshikazu, "Azuma uta no bungakushiteki ichizuke wa dono yō na shiya o hiraku ka," *Kokubungaku* 35.5 (May 1990): 79–82. On the history of the *azuma uta min'yōsetsu*, see Shinada Yoshikazu, "Azuma uta, sakimori uta ron," in *Seminā Man'yō no kaji to sakuhin—dai jūichi kan, Azuma uta sakimori uta kōki Man'yō no dansei kajin tachi*, (Osaka: Izumi shoten, 2005), 12–15.

[3] The provinces of Azuma represented in Book XIV are Tōtōmi 遠江, Suruga 駿河, Izu 伊豆, Sagami 相模, Musashi 武蔵, Kazusa 上総, Shimōsa 下総, Hitachi 常陸, Shinano 信濃, Kōzuke 上野, Shimotuke 下野, and Mutsu 陸奥.

[4] Book XIV is usually seen as the companion volume to Book XIII, which consists of anonymous "folk songs" of the home provinces (i.e., those provinces surrounding the capital). Both are often characterized as appendices to the first twelve volumes which are focused on "courtly poetry," in that they contain verses allegedly composed by "common folk" who inhabit rural spaces. However, Book XIV is unique in that it appears to abandon the "ancient/modern" sequencing of much of the *Man'yōshū* in favor of a "known provenance/unknown provenance" division. Itō Haku argues the emphasis on geography in this volume should be seen as a deliberate effort to incorporate this region into the Yamato court's "poetic realm." Itō Haku, *Man'yōshū shakuchū* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1997), 7: 266–267.

[5] There are many detailed theories on the compilation process for Book XIV. These theories address first of all who would have transcribed the songs, and then who would have compiled Book XIV. While a number of candidates, including Ōtomo no Yakamochi, have been floated as possible transcribers, the most convincing theory to emerge is that which acknowledges the probability of multiple recorders at different times and places, and then the possibility of someone editing transcription later to fit the book as a whole (Book XIV is unique among the "anonymous" books of *Man'yōshū* in that it is transcribed entirely in one-character one-sound *on'gana*). The various theories about transcribers are summarized and evaluated in Mizushima Yoshiharu 水島義治, *Man'yōshū Azuma uta no kenkyū*, (Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 1984), I: 463–520. The most popular theory is that the final compiler of Book XIV was Ōtomo no Yakamochi, although this is largely based on his role in compiling *Man'yōshū* as a whole and his inclusion of *sakimori uta* in Book XX. Mizushima (I: 528–540) also notes some overlapping lexical features between Yakamochi's poems and *azuma uta*, as well as some similarities in *on'gana* usage with Books XVII–XX. None of this is conclusive, of course, but it is as convincing as any other theory of the identity of the final compiler.

[6] Torquil Duthie, *Man'yōshū and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan,* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 162–165.

[7] This contradiction has led to the questioning of the "folk song" designation in recent scholarship. Mizushima Yoshiharu argues for a balanced approach, acknowledging the likely presence of some *azuma uta* with "folk song"-adjacent origins. See Mizushima Yoshiharu, *Man'yōshū Azuma uta no kenkyū*, II: 597–598; 603–605. As noted above, Shinada Yoshikazu is more doubtful, arguing that *azuma uta* were an extension of the literary culture of the central aristocracy that did not fully take root in the region and so did not continue. See Shinada Yoshikazu, "Azuma uta, sakimori uta ron," 15–18.

[8] Duthie, 165.

[9] The evidence in support of this is largely linguistic in nature, as the representation of specific regional dialects is found in Book XIV (but so are poems in Western Old Japanese). Vovin argues that this suggests the transcriber/compiler (who he believes to be the same person) must be an Eastlander. See Alexander Vovin, *Man'yōshū Book 14: A New English Translation Containing the Original Text, Kana Transliteration, Romanization, Glossing and Commentary* (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2012), 12-16. There is certainly a possibility that a Western interloper could have learned the dialects of the Eastland, so this is not entirely conclusive, but a "native speaker" transcribing the original songs for a capital-based compiler is a compelling possibility.

[10] While Book XIII also shows some geographical sequencing, geography is not the main principle of organization as it is in Book XIV; rather, songs are categorized as *zō*, *sōmon*, *mondō* (question and answer), *hiyuka*, and *banka*. In Book XIV, these categories are subordinate to the geographic categorization of identified vs. unidentified province.

[11] Terry Gifford, *Pastoral*, 2nd ed., *The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 2–10.

[12] William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (New York: New Directions, 1974), 11–12.

[13] The idealization of agrarian life as pure and uncorrupted, in a mode that can be aptly described as pastoral, has precedent also in the Chinese literary past, most famously in the poetry of Tao Yuanming (365–427). However, Tao's "pastoral poetry" is framed from the perspective of a courtly interloper who has retreated from public officialdom to rural space and thereby gains moral superiority, which contrasts sharply with both the ethnographic gaze of Mushimaro and the individual *azuma uta*. On Tao Yuanming's "pastoral" poetry, see especially Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 95–131.

[14] *Ritsuryō* literally means "civil and penal codes." Japan's *ritsuryō* age roughly corresponds to the mid-seventh through the early ninth centuries and refers to the era during which a Chinese style law code-based bureaucratic state operated within the archipelago. This style of governance was already deteriorating by the late eighth century and was largely extinct by the early- to mid-ninth, but the vestiges of it persisted for many centuries thereafter. For more on the *ritsuryō* codes and the age named for them, see Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 167–235.

[15] Katō Shizuo 加藤静雄, *Man'yō Azuma uta no sekai* 万葉東歌の世界 (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 2000), 197–198.

[16] Empson, 12.

[17] In contrast, prior to the Kofun period, Eastern Japan had a distinctive Yayoi culture from that of Western Japan/Kyūshū. For more on the phenomenon of an "elite interaction sphere" in the Kofun period, see Koji Mizoguchi, *The Archaeology of Japan* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 231–233, 290–291; Koji Mizoguchi, "The Yayoi and Kofun Periods of Japan," in *Handbook of East and Southeast Asian Archaeology*, edited by Junko Habu et al. (New York: Springer, 2017), 588–590.

[18] That is, by the fifth century. Mizoguchi, "The Yayoi and Kofun Periods of Japan," 590. Beyond the Sendai plain, much of the present day Tōhoku region remained outside of central control until the ninth century.

[19] According to documentary sources, it appears some local leaders may have migrated from the center and had (real or fictitious) kinship ties with the Yamato rulers, and all were technically "appointed" as *kuni no miyatsuko* (provincial chieftain) by the paramount chieftain (the Great King of Yamato). However, no centralized bureaucracy existed, and local matters were largely left to the discretion of local leaders. Meanwhile, relations with the polities of Korea and Chinese dynasties were conducted by the Yamato rulers. In times of war, local leaders were asked to provide soldiers for use by the central authority.

[20] Inoue Tatsuo and Michiko Aoki, "The *Hitachi Fudoki* and the Fujiwara," in *Capital and Countryside in Japan, 300–1180*, edited by Joan R. Piggott (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell East Asia Series, 2006), 113.

[21] Dated Wadō 6.5.2. Aoki Kazuo et.al, eds., *Shoku Nihongi*, Vol. 12 in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1989), I: 197–199.

[22] The extant "old *fudoki*" are the *Harima no kuni fudoki* (ca. 715), *Izumo no kuni fudoki* (733), *Bungo no kuni fudoki* (ca. 730s), *Hizen no kuni fudoki* (ca. 730s), and *Hitachi no kuni fudoki* (ca. 723). For more on the old *fudoki*, see Michiko Y. Aoki, *Records of Wind and Earth: A Translation of* Fudoki *with Introduction and Commentaries* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Association for Asian Studies, 1997).

[23] For instance, "The Account of the Xiongnu" begins with an extensive ethnographic account of the Xiongnu people focused on their lifeways, customs, and social order, before the history of Xiongnu-Chinese conflict is recounted. This pattern is repeated in later "accounts of foreign peoples" seen in Chinese histories. See *Shiji* 110; Burton Watson, trans. *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty*, Revised edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), II: 129–130. On ethnography in the Chinese historiographic tradition, see Nicola di Cosmo, "Ethnography of the Nomads and 'Barbarian' History in Han China," *Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*, edited by Lin Foxhall et al. (Stuttgart, Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 299–325.

[24] These 'domains' were concentrated in the central regions of the Zhou dynasty. Like the *azuma uta*, no matter the relative distance from the capital, all of these verses are in a standardized four-character/four-line form. Martin Kern, "Early

Chinese literature, beginnings through Western Han," *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature, Volume I: To 1375* (Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19–20.

[25] E. Taylor Atkins, *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910–1945* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2010), 52–53.

[26] *Man'yōshū* II: 96. Kojima Noriyuki et al., eds., *Man'yōshū*, Vols. 6–9 in *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1994), I: 86. [Hereafter *SNKBZ MYS*].

[27] Romanization of Old Japanese text is according to a modified *kunrei* system in which the *ha-gyō* consonant is represented with /p/. I have not included the *kō/otsu* vowel distinctions.

[28] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

[29] *Man'yōshū* II: 97. *SNKBZ MYS* I: 86.

[30] This portion of text, consisting of the three characters 強作留, cannot be adequately deciphered.

[31] *Man'yōshū* II: 98. *SNKBZ MYS* I: 86.

[32] *Man'yōshū* II:99. *SNKBZ MYS* I: 86.

[33] *Man'yōshū* II:100. *SNKBZ MYS* I: 86.

[34] This interpretation relies heavily on the content of the final poem in the sequence (II: 100). See Doi Kiyotami 土井清民, *Man'yō Azuma uta: Kodai tōhō no kayō* 万葉東歌 古代東方の歌謡 [*Azuma uta* of the *Man'yōshū* : Songs from the eastern provinces in the ancient period] (Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 1997), 8–11.

[35] Doi believes several of the *azuma uta* in Book XIV may be versions of such songs. Doi Kiyotami,12.

[36] Of thirty-two verses that can be confidently attributed to Mushimaro, fifteen are connected to Azuma.

[37] On Mushimaro's time in the Eastland and his relationship to Umakai, see Inoue and Aoki, 116 and Nishikōri Hirofumi, *Takahashi no Mushimaro kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ōfū, 2011), 9–16.

[38] This assumption is based on the suspected role of Umakai in the completion of this *fudoki*, the overlap in content between *Hitachi no kuni fudoki* and Mushimaro's poetic oeuvre, and Mushimaro's known affinity for legends, which he frequently used as fodder for his poetry. See Inoue and Aoki, 113–116.

[39] *Man'yōshū* IX: 1759. *SNKBZ MYS* II: 426.

[40] *Utagaki* was not an exclusively Eastland practice but seems to have been associated with the past/agrarian life in the capital region by this time. For instance, a western *utagaki* belonging to an earlier period is depicted in the annals of Buretsu in *Nihon shoki.* See Buretsu's pre-accession account in Kojima Noriyuki etal., *Nihon shoki*, Vol. 3 in *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1996), II: 268-275; W. G. Aston, trans., *Nihongi*: *Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle, 1972), 399–403.

[41] Uegaki Setsuya 植垣節也, ed., *Fudoki*. Vol. 5 in *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1997), 362–363.Translation is my own with reference to Michiko Y. Aoki, *Records of Wind and Earth*, 41.

[42] Tatsumi Masaaki has recently published a book-length study of Book XIV that draws heavily on theories derived from how similar "song festival" rituals are practiced today by groups living in southwest China, particularly the Zhuang ethnic group of Guangxi province and the Sui ethnic group of Guizhou province. See Tatsumi Masaaki 辰巳正明, *Azuma uta wo yomu: Kaji no riron kara yomitoku Tōgoku no kayō* (Tokyo: Shintensha, 2022), 9–14. Other recent book-length publications that take varying approaches to understanding *utagaki* through modern analogues include Cao Yongmei 曹咏梅, *Utagaki to Higashi Ajia no kodai kayō* (Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 2011); Kudō Takashi 工藤隆, *Utagaki no sekai: utagaki bunkaken no naka no Nihon* (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2015); Okabe Takashi 岡部隆志, *Ajia no utagaki ron: tsuketari Chūgoku Unnan-shō Pēzoku no utagake shiryō* (Tokyo: Miyai shoten, 2018); Endō Kōtarō 遠藤耕太郎, *Man'yōshū no kigen: Higashi Ajia ni ikizuku jojō no keifu* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2020).

[43] L.J. Newby, "The Chinese Literary Conquest of Xinjiang," *Modern China* 25.4 (Octobr 1999): 461. In her discussion of Qing travelers in Xinjiang, Newby also notes how travelers' preconceptions about the region shaped their engagement with its present reality (464).

[44] *Man'yōshū* IX: 1757. *SNKBZ MYS* II: 424.

[45] *Man'yōshū* IX: 1758. *SNKBZ MYS* II: 425.

[46] *Man'yōshū* IV: 521. *SNKBZ MYS* II: 290.

[47] For a detailed breakdown of the structure of Book XIV, See Vovin, 3.

[48] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3388. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 470.

[49] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3390. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 470.

[50] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3396. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 471.

[51] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3359. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 461.

[52] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3393. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 471.

[53] Mushimaro's *chōka* on this story is IX: 1809, with 1810–1811 as envoys. See *SNKBZ MYS* II: 448–450. The story is also referenced in other poems by Tanabe no Sakimaro (IX: 1801–1802) and Ōtomo no Yakamochi (XIX: 4211–4212).

[54] These verses are 3384, 3385, and possibly 3349. Mushimaro's *chōka* is IX: 1807 (plus envoy 1808).

[55] On the much-discussed five *zō* verses from identified provinces, see Mizushima Yoshiharu, "Azuma uta shōtō goshu," in *Seminā Man'yō no kaji to sakuhin—dai jūichi kan, Azuma uta sakimori uta kōki Man'yō no dansei kajin tachi* (Osaka: Izumi shoten, 2005), 29–37.

[56] Mizushima Yoshiharu, *Man'yōshū Azuma uta no kenkyū*, I: 6–8.

[57] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3404. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 474.

[58] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3497. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 499.

[59] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3499. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 499.

[60] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3418. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 477.

[61] The interpretation of *muranape* as referring to a type of divination is from Vovin, 108-109.

[62] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3460. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 489.

[63] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3506. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 501.

[64] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3467. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 491.

[65] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3472. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 492.

[66] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3494. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 498.

[67] The name of the mountain here, *komochi*, literally means "with child" or as a gerund, "conception."

[68] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3373. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 465.

[69] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3484. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 495.

[70] *Man'yōshū* XIV: 3351. *SNKBZ MYS* III: 458.

[71] Atkins, 56–59.

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