Primary Sources:


Secondary Sources:


google.com.dictionarydefinition


How Women in Heian Japan Reflect and Alter Ancient China’s Ideal Woman:

The Warriors of Virtue

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
Honors Studies in History

by

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May 2015
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Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Dr. Markham for not only introducing Heian Japan to me, but for also heavily guiding my work throughout this process.

I also would like to thank Dr. Hare who continually gave me advice and guidance throughout this process.

Also, a special thanks goes out to the Study Abroad Office at the University of Arkansas for helping me get to South Korea, where I would start my thesis, and who also gave me the opportunity to study in England where I found *The Admonitions Scroll.*
Abstract

*The Warriors of Virtue* centers around a single poem and scroll which would create a guide for court women and their behavior in ancient China. Created in 6th or 7th century A.D., *The Admonitions Scroll of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* had a presence in the court’s social and political system. This magnificent piece of history distinguishes how a proper wife and women should behave in honoring men, their husbands, and families. First written by Zhang Hua in A.D. 292, the original poem was created to reprimand the actions of Empress Jia. This young woman, who rose from a concubine to empress, would disrupt the court and cause chaos throughout the empire. Not so long after Empress Jia’s reign another female would appear with the same disruptive tendencies, and Gu Kaizhi (c. 344-c. 405) would create a painted scroll based on Zhang Hua’s poem. With twelve separate illustrations, each scene showcases how various females must act in accordance to the expectations associated with honoring others, heavily emphasizing characters traits, and or virtues, such as: humanity, loyalty, filial piety, and propriety. From this scroll a standard was distinguished in China, but how would these lessons translate through time and within a separate nation? Turning our attention towards Japan, specifically the Heian (794-1192), a period of tranquility and development, and using three prominent female Heian authors, readers will be able to follow how concepts captured in this ancient scroll were also maintained or disregarded in the lives of Heian court women. Not only will readers discover how transfer of knowledge and impact occurred from China to Japan, but
once that is mapped out, readers will also be introduced to life in the Heian. Beauty was understood in all things (e.g. nature for example), and the standards for love and affection are different from our 21st century point of view. Keeping this in mind, how did individuals like Lady Murasaki (born 973 A.D.) or Sei Shonagon (Born 966 A.D.) view marriage, motherhood, and education, when China first left their impression in Japan?
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