

On the Bureau of Medications and Scroll 37 of the *Engi shiki*

典薬寮と『延喜式』巻三七について
アレッサンドロ・ポレット

Alessandro Poletto

I. THE *ENGI SHIKI*

The *Engi shiki* (“Protocols of the Engi era;” hereafter, *Engi shiki*) is a Japanese text in fifty scrolls compiled in the tenth century. It is named after the era during which its compilation was commenced, the Engi era (901–923), and consists of practical regulations concerning all domains of government activity, ritual and daily life.

The term *shiki*, here translated as “protocol,” is one of the four partitions of the legal systems of premodern East Asia. Originating in China, this legal structure comprised four elements: *ritsu* 律, *ryō* 令, *kyaku* 格 and *shiki* 式. *Ritsu* corresponds to the penal code in modern legal systems, while *ryō* covers all other aspects of government function, thus including both civil and administrative regulations. *Kyaku* consist of amendments of previously established laws in either the *ritsu* or *ryō*, or any supplemental article of law issued addressing aspects that were not included in the *ritsu* and *ryō*. *Kyaku* were originally issued as free-standing articles of law, but were later collected into compendia that were also referred to as *kyaku*. A system of government based on this Sinitic legal model is commonly referred to in Japanese scholarship as *ritsuryō* system or state; in Japan, it was fully operative from the beginning of the eighth to the tenth century, and in name only long afterwards.

Shiki, the last element of this four-fold legal structure, are detailed regulations that concern the execution of the laws established in the *ritsu* and *ryō*. They consist of inner regulations that the various organs of government had put in place to fulfill their functions; as such, they differ from *ritsu*, *ryō* and *kyaku* in their practical dimension, as they addressed issues of execution rather than theoretical concerns. As for *kyaku*, *shiki* were also collected into compendia, and the *Engi shiki* is the only extant compilation of this kind. It can be thought of as a practical manual for the government officials of the

ancient Japanese state, one that however concerns not only administrative issues, but also sheds light on all aspects of ancient society, including economy, ritual, productive activities, food culture, craftsmanship, and so on.

The compilation of the *Engi shiki* began in the eighth month of the fifth year of the Engi era (905) at the behest of Daigo Tennō (885–930; r. 897–930). A committee led by Fujiwara no Tokihira (871–909) was put together, but progress was slow and, after Tokihira's death, it was his younger brother Tadahira (880–949) to take the lead. It was finally completed and submitted to the ruler on the sixteenth day of the twelfth month of the fifth year of Enchō (927), but not enforced for forty years, until the fourth year of Kōhō (967), when it was finally distributed to all provinces and promulgated on the ninth day of the tenth month. The first ten scrolls of the *Engi shiki* are entirely devoted to regulations and protocols for the Council of Kami Affairs (*Jingikan* 神祇官); scroll eleven to forty cover the Council of State (*Daijōkan* 太政官) and the eight ministries, and all the bureaus and offices under their jurisdiction; all other offices and departments are included in scrolls forty-one to forty-nine, while the fiftieth and last scroll is devoted to miscellaneous protocols (*zōshiki* 雜式).

The *Engi shiki* was not the first text of its kind to be compiled in ancient Japan. We have indications of two previous collections of *shiki*, the *Kōnin shiki* 弘仁式 (“Protocols of the Kōnin era [810–824]”) and the *Jōgan shiki* 貞觀式 (“Protocols of the Jōgan era [859–877]”). Except for fragments quoted in other texts, these two collections are no longer extant, but it is understood that the *Jōgan shiki* only consisted of additions and elaborations on the *Kōnin shiki*, which is why when the former was officially enacted the former was not revoked. On the other hand, the *Engi shiki* followed models of recently issued collections of *shiki* in Tang China, and was not merely undertaken as a revision of previously existing protocols. It is worth noticing, however, that since it consists, among other things, of revisions and expansions on previous compilations of *shiki*, the aforementioned *Kōnin shiki* and the *Jōgan shiki*, it would be misguided to think of the *Engi shiki* in its entirety as a product of the tenth century. It is necessary to examine each article in its own right in order to ascertain whether it reflects the social and cultural circumstances of the time when the *Engi shiki* was compiled.⁽²⁾

II. THE BUREAU OF MEDICATIONS (TEN'YAKURYŌ 典藥寮)

The Bureau of Medications, one of the departments placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Royal Household (*Kunaishō* 宮内省), was in charge of the well-being of the *tennō*, his family and of court aristocrats at large. It was one of the two main technical bureaus established on the basis of continental models under the *ritsuryō* state — the other being the Bureau of Yin and Yang (*Onmyōryō* 陰陽寮), placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Central Affairs (*Nakatsukasashō* 中務省). The two bureaus also shared another important aspect, as some of their early members were Buddhist monks who were laicized (*genzoku* 還俗) by royal command (*choku* 勅) in order to serve as

technical bureaucrats. The most notable case for the Bureau of Medications is the monk Keishun 惠俊, a specialist of *ijutsu* 医術 — a term that designates continental therapeutic modalities that in Japan became primarily associated with court physicians, which were, however, brought to the archipelago by Buddhist and non-Buddhist technicians — from a lineage of immigrants from the Korean kingdom of Baekje better known under his secular name, Kichi no Yoroshi 吉宜 and, later, Kichita no Muraji Yoroshi 吉田連宜, who according to the *Continued Chronicles of Japan* (*Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀), on the seventh day of the intercalary seventh month of the tenth year of Tenpyō (738) was appointed head of the Bureau of Medications.⁽³⁾

Below the four top administrative posts — *kami* 頭 (director), *suke* 助 (vice-director), *jō* 允 (third-rank manager) and *sakan* 属 (secretary or fourth-level manager) — the bureau was organized into multiple domains of specialization: *i* 医 — a complex term that broadly designates the practices of court physicians on the continent, but that here seems to primarily designate the compounding of medications, — needles (*hari* 針), *jugon* 呪禁 and *anma* 按摩. Each of these specializations consisted of three ranks: master or instructor (*hakase* 博士), base practitioner (*shi* 師) and student or apprentice (*shō* 生). In addition, there were those in charge of the physic garden (*yakuen* 薬園), organized into two levels, base practitioner and student; and other menial workers.⁽⁴⁾ *Anma* designated a type of massage, but there are no traces of this practice or its practitioners in extant sources, while *jugon* seem to have been a type of protective and defensive technique, based on those practiced by *fangshi* 方士 (masters of methods) of southern China, meant to reinforce the body and prevent attacks from malicious entities, and to disentangle oneself from assaults. The characters for *jugon* can be translated as “incantation and interdiction,” but I will leave it untranslated here. While there are instances of practitioners of *jugon* in the *Continued Chronicles of Japan* and the *Family Biographies of the Fujiwara Clan* (*Tōshi kaden* 藤氏家伝)⁽⁵⁾, such as Karakuni no Muraji Hirotari — who would eventually be appointed head of the Bureau of Medications — and Yo no Ninkun, there is no actual descriptive account of *jugon* being practiced. Discussions of *jugon* can only be found in legal codes and commentaries. In any case, both *anma* and *jugon* were eventually discontinued; the last recorded *jugonshi* is Sue no Omi Mochitari in the first year of Jingo Keiun (767), and by the time the *Engi shiki* was compiled, no mention can be found of either specializations.⁽⁶⁾

While the Bureau of Medications would eventually be responsible for the welfare of the *tennō* and other court officials with no distinctions, there are fragmentary records that seem to suggest that the division between the *tennō* and his close relatives on one hand, and court aristocracy at large on the other, had ancient roots. In an entry in the *Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihon shoki* 日本書紀) dated from the first month of the fourth year of Tenmu Tennō’s reign (675), we find mention of an Outer Bureau of Medications (*Geyakuryō* 外薬寮) — most likely the name under which the Bureau of Medications was known at the time,— while in an entry from the *Continued Chronicles of Japan* from the twen-

ty-seventh day of the first month of the third year of Monmu Tennō's reign (699), an Inner Division of Medications (*Naiyakukan* 内薬官) is mentioned. This dichotomy between “inner” and “outer” suggests that such division was operative from very early on. It would be officialized under the *ritsuryō* system with the establishment of the Inner Office of Medications (*Naiyakushi* 内薬司) for the *tennō*, his consort and his close relatives, and of the Bureau of Medications for the broader audience of court officials. This two-tiered structure would continue until the ninth month of the eighth year of Kanpyō (896), when the Inner Office of Medications was merged with the Bureau of Medications, and its members — including *jii* 侍医 (physicians dedicated to the *tennō*) and *nyoi* 女医 (physicians specialized in women's health) — were transferred to the Bureau of Medications.⁽⁷⁾

It is worth noting that despite the various specializations that can be found within the Bureau of Medications as established in the Rules on Personnel (*Shikiinryō* 職員令) of the *ryō*, its procedures as outlined in the *Engi shiki* gravitate heavily towards herbalism and the compounding of medications, their distribution to the *tennō*, his close relatives, court officials, and their supply to other offices of the ancient Japanese polity, as it will be elucidated in the next section.

III. SCROLL 37 OF THE *ENGI SHIKI*: “BUREAU OF MEDICATIONS”⁽⁸⁾

Scroll 37 of the *Engi shiki* comprises regulations and protocols for the Bureau of Medications; hereafter, I will refer to this scroll as the “Protocols for the Bureau of Medications.”

As it has been previously mentioned, in the eighth year of Kanpyō (896) the Inner Office of Medications was merged into the Bureau of Medications. This entailed that the two separate sections in the *Kōnin shiki* and *Jōgan shiki*, the two collections of *shiki* preceding the *Engi shiki*, were also merged into one in occasion of the compilation of the *Engi shiki*. There are hints in this sense; in Article 6 of the “Protocols for the Bureau of Medications” called “On miscellaneous provisions (雜給料),” it is written that in the firewood provided to officials of the fifth rank and above for the production of medications was also included the firewood for the production of medications meant for the *tennō*. Likewise, in Article 9, “On the *kamutachi* 麩 for the compounding of medications (合薬麩料),” it is written concerning the total amount of wheat (小麦) used as the basis for *kamutachi* — an ancient name for of *kōji* (*aspergillus oryzae*), the mold still commonly used today as a starter for the fermentation of soy beans and rice — that it included allocations for officials of the fifth rank and above, and the *tennō*. This seems to confirm that following the incorporation of the Inner Office of Medications into the Bureau of Medications, the *shiki* of the two departments were also merged.

In terms of content, the “Protocols for the Bureau of Medications” can be broadly divided into five parts:

1) Articles 1 to 17: regulations concerning the job specifications of the Bureau of Medications, including established and recurring duties (1-14), for example in occasion of annual rites or fixed

occurrences; and extraordinary duties (15-17), for example in occasion of the enthronement of a new *tennō*.

2) Articles 18 to 31: regulations concerning the allocations of medications from the Bureau of Medications to other government offices (18-25), and to envoys to foreign countries, including Tang China (until its fall in 907), Balhae and Silla (26-31).

3) Articles 32 to 37: regulations concerning the education of officials in the bureau (32-35), the sustenance of the four *tokugōshō* 得業生 — apprentices selected on basis of their outstanding accomplishments — (36), and the levies imposed onto officials appointed provincial physicians (37).

4) Articles 38 to 44: regulations concerning the storage and handling of crude medicinal herbs, the mineral and animal products used in the compounding of medications, and the tools necessary to fulfill the bureau's functions (38-40); and regulations concerning fields planted with pasture, the bureau's cows, and the supply of *jiō* 地黄 (*Rehmannia glutinosa*) (41-44).

5) Articles 45 to 98: regulations establishing yearly provisions of medicinal herbs, and the mineral and animal products used to compound medications that the provinces and Dazaifu were required to supply to the Bureau of Medications.

A complete English translation of scroll 37 is currently ongoing as part of the research project “Multidisciplinary Research on the *Engi shiki*: Japan's Ancient Encyclopedia” led by the Museum of Japanese History. However, to give a sense of the possibilities for research that the “Protocols for the Bureau of Medications” offer scholars, in the next section I will introduce and examine article 1, “On the august medications of New Year's Day.”

IV. A CASE STUDY: ARTICLE 1 — ON THE AUGUST MEDICATIONS OF NEW YEAR'S DAY

The first article of the “Protocols of the Bureau of Medications” concerns the provision of medications to the *tennō* and his consort on the first day of the traditional lunisolar East Asian calendar. It provides a detailed description of the ingredients necessary to compound the medications, the objects needed for their transportation and presentation to the sovereign, and the highly ritualized procedures to be followed in each of those moments. In this sense, this article encapsulates the ritualization of daily life that was observed at the time at the Heian court, and that the *Engi shiki* so compellingly illustrates.

The four medications presented to the *tennō* in this occasion, rather than being meant to cure any specific illness, functioned as auspicious markers for the health of the sovereign throughout the new year. This aspect is made especially clear by some passages of the ritual that will be discussed below.

The medications in question are *byakusan* 白散 (lit. “white powder”), *doshōsan* 度嶂散, *toso* 屠蘇 and *sensōmanbyōkō* 千瘡万病膏 (lit. “ointment for a thousand poxes and ten-thousand maladies”).

After listing all the herbs, plants, roots and animal products (such as the lard of wild boar) necessary for the medications and how to obtain them — whether from the bureau’s own warehouse or other government offices, — the article details other aspects that are of particular interest; for instance, we read that all those involved in the production of the medications with a rank lower than *kanjin* 官人 (high-ranking administrators) and higher than minor functionary, should be supplied with pure clothes (*kiyomawariginu* 潔衣). Likewise, those who would later offer the medications on New Year’s day were also to be supplied with pure clothes. It is worth noting such outfits were worn in contexts in which ritual purity was a concern, and the production and provision of medications to the *tennō* undoubtedly fell within that purview.

As for the ritual of presentation itself, carried out on the last day of the twelfth month, we read:

On the last day of the twelfth month, in the first quarter of the time of the hare [5–7 AM], the Ministry of the Royal Household and the Bureau [of Medications] will proceed together outside the Ensei gate [one of the gates on the eastern side of the royal palace enclosure]. After the Office of Inner Gatekeepers have announced them to the *tennō*, the high ranking officials of the bureau, preceding the apprentices of medications and the others, will carry the stand on which the medications have been placed, and will together enter the courtyard and put the stand down south of the post; after this, they will withdraw. After the Ministry of the Royal Household has announced them to the *tennō*, they will again enter the courtyard and leave with the stand; then they will pass it on to the director of the Office of Medications. As for the *tosō*, however, the officials will guide the apprentices of medications and, on that same day, at the time of the horse [11 AM – 1 PM] will place it inside the pouch and steep it into the well. Have officials from the Office of Water Management guard it. On New Year’s Day, in the first quarter of the time of the tiger [3–5 AM], the officials will guide the apprentices of medications, approach the well and take out the medications, then a vice-director of the Ministry [of the Royal Household] and the officials of the Bureau [of Medications], will enter carrying the medication, then will proceed and place it down. Afterwards, using the silver tripod pot, they will heat up the *sake* and steep the *tosō* into it. The Office of the Brewery will provide the *sake*; and the Bureau of Supplies will prepare the furnace. A vice-director of the Office of Medications will take the sake cup and guide the female attendants to the hall; he will have the young female attendants from the Office of Medications lick [the *tosō*] beforehand, and will then offer it to the monarch. Following this, he will do the same with the *byakusan* and *doshōsan*. Once it is the morning of New Year’s Day, end [the ceremony]⁽⁹⁾.

What immediately hits the eye is the highly choreographed nature of the sequence, which spans

over hours and involves a numbers of actors, all elements that suggest that its structure was not primarily informed by practical concerns, but rather by established ritual procedures.

The plethora of details recorded in the “Protocols of the Bureau of Medications” in the *Engi shiki* presents new stimulating avenues for research. While in general the activities of officials in the Bureau of Medications have not been the object of sustained scholarly attention, the few scholars who did look at them have tended to partition the activities of court physicians on one hand, and of Buddhist monks and *onmyōji* (yin yang masters) on the other, in epistemic terms, so that while court physicians were concerned with the physical body, the others were not. This distinction, which suspiciously echoes the modern differentiation between “medicine” and “religion,” is however inadequate to account for the complexity of the cultural and therapeutic arena of premodern Japan. The thorough ritualization of seemingly mundane activities we have observed in the first article of the “Protocols of the Bureau of Medications” — and which can also be observed in some of the subsequent provisions — likewise suggests a more complex, hybrid epistemology at work, one in which the provision of medications to the *tennō* cannot be executed as a simple transaction, but has to be placed within a carefully choreographed ritual environment that involves a complex ensemble of people, objects and places. This urges us to rethink neat taxonomies and sanitized epistemological spaces in order to explore the complexity of daily court life in premodern Japan.

V. CONCLUSION

The *Engi shiki* is a treasure trove of data concerning the culture of ancient Japan in all its aspects, one that offers innumerable new avenues of research. While it is a well-known research tool within Japan, it is still largely unknown outside of the country. The multi-pronged approach adopted in the research project “Multidisciplinary Research on the *Engi shiki*: Japan’s Ancient Encyclopedia” led by the Museum of Japanese History is an attempt to deal with this situation by, among other things, promoting the publication of English-language introductory articles on the *Engi shiki*, and the translation of selected scrolls into English. This short article, as part of that ongoing research project, is an attempt to introduce and contextualize scroll 37, “Protocols of the Bureau of Medications.”

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Annotation

(1) — As for the *Kōnin shiki* and *Jōgan shiki*, extant passages are collected in Torao Toshiya, ed. *Kōninshiki Jōganshiki itsubun shūsei*. Kokusho kankōkai, 1992: 1-137.

(2) — Essential and accessible introductions to the *Engi shiki* in Japanese are Ogura Shigeji. “Engi shiki.” In *Koko ga wakarū! Nihon no kōkōgaku* (Fujio Shin’ichirō

and Matsugi Takehiko, eds. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2019); and Id. “Engi shiki (Heian jidai hen).” In *Kodai shiryō o yomu, ge, Heianchō hen* (Satō Makoto and Oguchi Masashi, eds. Dōseisha, 2018).

(3) — On the laicizations by royal command carried out in the late seventh and eighth century, see Hashimoto Masayoshi. “Chokumei genzoku to hōgi kanryō no keisei.” In *Onmyōdō sōsho 1: kodai*. Meicho shuppan, 1991.

(4) — For a detailed examination of the institutional structure of the Bureau of Medications, see Shinmura Taku. *Kodai iryō kanninsei no kenkyū : Ten’yakuryō no kōzō*. Hōsei daigaku shuppanyoku, 1983. On the Regulations on Therapies and Illness (*Ishitsuryō*) from the Yōrō code and a comparison with the corresponding Tang code, see Maruyama Yumiko. “Nittō ishitsuryō no fukugen to hikaku.” In Id. *Nihon kodai no iryō seido*. Meicho kankōkai, 1998 (first published in 1988).

(5) — The editors of the edition of *Tōshi kaden* I have consulted define, in the notes to the passage in question, *jugon* as “the technique of healing diseases by chanting Buddhist formulas (*bukkyō no ju wo tonaete*)”, but this is probably a misunderstanding based on an entry from *Nihon shoki* (Bidatsu 6 [577]/11/1) in which *jugonshi* actually seems to refer to a Buddhist practitioner. However,

the *jugonshi* in the entry in question and the *jugonshi* that appear as officials in the Bureau of Medications — and in *Tōshi Kaden* — belong to different lineages. See Okimori Takuya et al., eds. *Tōshi kaden: chūshaku to kenkyū*. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999: 379.

(6) — On *jugonshi*, see for instance Shimode Sekiyo. “Ritsuryō taisei to dōshihō.” In Id. *Nihon kodai no jingi to dōkyō*. Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1972 and “Ritsuryōka no jugon.” In Id. *Nihon kodai no dōkyō, onmyōdō to jingi*. Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1997. Both works are somewhat dated but still informative.

(7) — *Ruijū sandaikyaku* (*Kyaku* of three reigns arranged by theme): directives of the Council of State (太政官符) issued on Kanpyō 8/9/7 and 10/5. See Kuroita Katsumi and Kokushi taikai henshūkai, eds. *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai 25: Ruijū sandaikyaku, Kōnin kyakushū*: 148 and 159.

(8) — Here I am using the critical edition found in Torao Toshiya. *Yakuchū Nihon shiryō: Engi shiki, ge*. Shūeisha, 2017. For the protocols for the Bureau of Medications, see in particular 336–413.

(9) — For the text in Japanese, see *Yakuchū Nihon shiryō: Engi shiki, ge*, 336–339. The translation is mine.

Alessandro Poletto (Columbia University)

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