

# A Study on Kentoshi Abeno Nakamaro's Prolonged Stay in Tang China and the Psychological Analysis of His Longing for Homeland

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## **Abstract:**

Abeno Nakamaro, a student of Kentoshi (Japanese missions to Tang China), was a special figure of ancient Sino-Japanese exchange. More than 1300 years ago, he arrived in China during the Tang Dynasty as a student sent by Japanese government to study various Chinese cultures and served as a permanent official in China. The study of his life in Tang dynasty China for over fifty years has not been systematic or well documented. This study investigates both the political and private aspects of his stay in China over a period of fifty years in the Tang Dynasty through research and analysis of Chinese and Japanese historical sources and poetic writings, and summaries the reasons for his stay in China as a voluntary stay in the early stages of his life due to his personal “ attachment to Chinese culture”, a retaining by the Tang government for his official duties in the middle stages, and a lifelong stay in the later stages of his life hindered by the harsh natural environment in which he had set out on his return journey. The study also focuses on Abe's longing for his homeland in a foreign country, China, from the perspective of the psychological correlation between changes occurring in the human psyche and changes in the social environment, and takes the Chinese poems and waka composed by Abeno Nakamaro as the main clues to analyze his homesickness in various periods in China, and concludes that Abe's longing for his homeland did not disappear or diminish as his surroundings in China became better, but grew stronger over time. This leads to the point that the psychological emotion of homesickness is a specific human psychology, a psychological emotion that arises as a result of changes in the social environment, yet resists changes in the social environment. This is evident in the case of Abe and other members of Kentoshi. This study enriches the knowledge of this particular figure of Abeno Nakamaro, and also provides a scholarly reference for the study of members of Japanese missions to Tang China as well as their psychological emotions.

**Keywords:** *Abeno Nakamaro, Kentoshi (Japanese missions to Tang China), prolonged stay, longing for homeland.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Abeno Nakamaro, 698-770 (also 701-770), whose Chinese name was Zhao Heng, also written as Chao Heng or Hu Heng. Abeno Nakamaro came from a bureaucratic middle-class noble family in the Nara period of Japan, and was not technically a Kentoshi (Japanese missions to Tang China), but went to China as a foreign student. He was chosen by the Japanese government in 716 to be a foreign student to the Tang dynasty and went to Tang in 717, after which he lived and served in the Tang dynasty until his final years without returning to Japan. In 753 during the Tang dynasty, he attempted to return to Japan at the age of 56, but was caught in a sea storm and wandered to Annan (modern day Vietnam) before managing to return to Chang'an. In his old age, he also held the post of Tang imperial official, Duhu Fu (Protectorate, a type of administrative division controlling frontier regions in Imperial China), in Annan, and served as the Duhu (protectorate governor). Given today's geographical boundaries, it can be said that Abeno Nakamaro was an international person whose footprints covered both East and South East Asia, and spanned three nations: Japan, China and Vietnam. He served three reigns: that of Emperor Xuanzong, Emperor Suzong and Emperor Daizong for more than fifty years, and reached the position of Third Rank in Imperial court (after his death, he was posthumously awarded the deputy position of Second Rank). The Old Book of Tang included the following record about Abeno Nakamaro, "In the beginning of the year of Kaiyuan, the members of Japanese missions to Tang China arrived again..... Zhongman, the side Asomi (retainers in the imperial system of Japan), stayed in Tang due to his passion for Chinese culture, and changed his name to Chaoheng, and then went on to hold the position of Zuo Buque (official position in Imperial China, mainly responsible for giving euphemistic advice to the emperor), Yiwangyou. Chaoheng stayed in the capital city of Tang for fifty years. Since he was fond of reading Chinese books, he chose to stay in China when he was relieved of his official positions and allowed to return his homeland ..... In the middle of the years of Shangyuan, he was promoted as the Zuo Sanqichangshi (official position in Imperial China) and the Zhennan Duhu (protectorate governor of Zhennan)"; [1] While the New Book of Tang mentioned the followings about Abeno Nakamaro, "In the beginning of the years of Tianyuan, Awata visited the imperial court again and requested to study the scriptures with the Confucian scholars. Zhao Xuanmo, the Secretary of Honglusi (official position in Imperial China, mainly responsible for the affairs of the visitors and the rituals), was pointed to be the teacher. Awata offered a large cloth as a gift and traded the entire reward for books before returning to Japan. But the side Asomi, Zhongman, was reluctant to leave due to his passion for Chinese culture. He changed his name to Chao Heng and went on to hold the position of Zuo Buque (official position in Imperial China, mainly responsible for giving euphemistic advice to the emperor), Yiwangyou. He then returned to homeland after learning a lot about Chinese culture. .... In the 12th year of Tianyuan, Chao Heng came back to Tang. In the middle of the years of Tuanyuan, he was promoted as the Zuo Sanqichangshi (official position in Imperial China) and the Zhennan Duhu (protectorate governor of Zhennan)" [2]. In the Shoku Nihongi, the Japanese chronicle text, it was included the comments as followings, "The only two students of our country who have made their names known in Tang were Daijin (official position, same to Minister) and Chao Heng. ...." [3] (the "Daijin" in this quote refers to the Kibino Makibi (695-775), the Japanese scholar and statesman of the Nara, who went to study in Tang at the same time as Abeno Nakamaro and returned to Japan, where he held the position of Right Minister of the Second Rank). The main focus of studies on Abeno Nakamaro in China has been placed on the

background of his arrival in Tang, his life, his poetry, his engagement with Tang poets, and his contribution to Sino-Japanese communication, such as Jin Chengcheng (2017) [4], Zhang Baiyang (1999) [5], and Guo Zhusong (1999) [6]. During the long stay of Abeno Nakamaro in Tang, he had close contacts with many literary bureaucrats of the Tang Dynasty, for instance the famous poets Li Bai, Wang Wei, Chu Guangxi, Zhao Hua and Bao Ji, and left poems and writings about their contacts. The author of this paper has also discussed the interaction between Abeno Nakamaro and the Tang poets in her former papers such as “The Engagements of Japanese Missions to Tang China, Abeno Nakamaro and His Tang Poet Friends - Abebo Nakamaro and Wang Wei” [7] and “The Engagements of Japanese Missions to Tang China, Abeno Nakamaro and His Tang Poet Friends - Abebo Nakamaro and Li Bai and Others” [8] written by the author of this paper. In Japan, the A Study of the Biography of Abeno Nakamaro by Sugimoto Naojiro is a masterpiece of systematic study on Abeno Nakamaro’s career. A Study of the Biography of Abeno Nakamaro [9] by Sugimoto Naojiro and Abeno Nakamaro [10] by Mori Kimiyuki are considered to be the representative works on Abeno Nakamaro’s career in Japan. Nevertheless, the existing studies on the details of Abeno Nakamaro's life during his stay in the Tang dynasty, as well as the reasons for his stay and the psychological analysis of his stay with regard to psychology have not been fully developed or specifically explored.

Abeno Nakamaro came to Tang China as a young man (some say at the age of 17 or 19) and lived the rest of his life in the country. How did he live in Tang during the fifty years he stayed there? And what were the reasons for his long stay? And what were his psychological feelings towards his homeland during his stay in Tang? The author studies the life of Abeno Nakamaro in Tang, analysing the reasons for his stay as well as his longing for homeland with reference to relevant historical documents and poetic writings from both China and Japan.

## II. LIFE OF ABENO NAKAMARO DURING HIS STAY IN TANG

### 2.1 The Length of Abeno Nakamaro’s Stay in Tang

Regarding the length of Abeno Nakamaro's stay in Tang, the Japanese historical sources, for instance the Great Chronicle of Japan, record the following, “In the 2nd year of Reiki (716), Abeno Nakamaro was selected to be part of Japan missions to Tang China at the age of sixteen to learn Chinese cultures. .... On the New Year of the 1st year of Hōki (770), he died in Tang at the age of seventy.” [11] Accordingly, it can be calculated that he stayed in Tang for about fifty-two or three years. Given the above-mentioned record in the Old Book of Tang (Vol. 199, I Dongyi biography) that Chao Heng stayed in the capital city of Tang for fifty years, it can be assumed that this was an approximation calculated by excluding the period of more than a year (December 753-June 755) during which he wandered in Annan (Vietnam) (for at that time Annan was part of the Tang dynasty, but not the capital). The Sugimoto put Abeno Nakamaro's time in Tang at fifty-four years, while he lived in the capital Chang'an for about fifty-one or two years. Summing up the above relevant documents, it would be possible to compile a detailed timeline on the stay of Abeno Nakamaro in Tang as follows.

Total stay in Tang (China): approx. 52 years (October 717 - January 770)

Length of stay in the capital Chang'an: approx. 50 years (36 + 1 + 13 years) (Chang'an) (October 717 - September 753) + (June 755 - May 756) + (December 756 - 770)

Time spent wandering in Annan: approx. one and a half years (October 753 - May 756)

Length of stay with Emperor Xuanzong in the capital of Shu: approx. 6 months (June 756 - December 756)

## 2.2 Life of Abeno Nakamaro during His Stay in Tang

Based on the study of Sugimoto, Abeno Nakamaro enrolled on the Imperial College soon after his arrival in Tang, in which he studied Tong culture diligently and achieved excellent results. He graduated from his studies probably between 721 and 727 and was passed as a scholar in the imperial examinations, assuming the post of Zuo Chunfang Jiaoshu (official position in Imperial China, mainly responsible for book proofreading) in Sijing Ju (Imperial Library, one of the central government departments of the Imperial China). The preface to Wang Wei's poem "Sending Off the Secretary Chao back to Japan" includes the lines "(Heng) rose to fame as a scholar in Imperial College, and served as a guest minister" [12], and in the poem "To Jiaoshu Heng in Luoyang" by Chu Guangyi, there was also a line read as follows, "The student Chao Heng from Japan was graceful and talented, he served as Jiaoshu in the Imperial Library of the Crown Prince... He studied in the Imperial College like Liang Hong from the Eastern Han Dynasty". (The full text of this poem by Chu Guangyi reads as follows, "All the envoys and students from all the nations came to Luoyang, the center of the world, to make pilgrimages, while Japan in the east was the furthest away. The student Chao Heng from Japan was graceful and talented; he served as Jiaoshu in the Imperial Library of the Crown Prince. He often ventured out among the mountains and wandered at ease along the shores of the blue waters of the River Yi. He studied in the Imperial College like Liang Hong from the Eastern Han Dynasty, and often stayed up late into the night studying and achieving excellent results. The sun was setting in the west over the high corners of the grand hall, while the chilly autumn breeze blew into the deep corner of the inner chamber. We had a long time together to share the longing thoughts of our prolonged separation, and the next dawn was already upon us before we were aware of it.") [13]. All these poetic writings also proved what life was like for Abeno Nakamaro in this period.

However, no record has been found in the ancient books of either country regarding the achievement of the title of scholar in the Imperial Examination. In the Records on Explorations of Japanese Monks to Song China by Jōjin by Takakusu Junjiro, (based on the descriptions in the Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho, Travels of the Monks Series, the Third Collection, during the years of Kaiyuan, there was a man named Chao Heng, he was subordinate to the Imperial College and then passed the Imperial Examination. He reached and assumed the position of Buque. (The author has referred to this sentence from the relevant discussion on page 322 of Literature [9], A Study of the Biography of Abeno Nakamaro by Sugimoto Naojirou. No

direct confirmation can be found in the document *Records on Explorations of Japanese Monks to Song China* by Jōjin by Takakusu Junjiro ), which confirmed that Abeno Nakamaro earned the title of scholar by passing the Imperial Examination. It was the general rule in the Tang dynasty that students had to take the Imperial Examination to become officials to obtain a scholarship. However, the author believes that Abeno Nakamaro's status as a foreign student also cannot be ignored. Under the regulations of the Tang dynasty, the Imperial College only admitted officials of the Third Rank and above, as well as the descendants of county officials, and Abeno Nakamaro was granted permission to enter as a foreign student. In the Tang Huiyao (*Institutional records of Tang, Volume 35: Schools*), the followings can be found, “After the fifth year of Zhenguan, Emperor Taizong of Tang visited the National Academy and the Imperial College. .... The Si Men Academy (central governmental schools in Imperial China) of National Academy and the Imperial College also enrolled new students from the countries such as Goryeo, Baekje, Silla, Gaochang, and Tibetan Empire states. The tribal chiefs also sent their descendants to the National Academy. At that time, there were more than 8,000 students studying at the National Academy, which was unprecedented.” [14] The author assumes that the admission of the Abe's to the school was probably a case of “sending their descendants to the National Academy”. In this way, he might not necessarily have had to take the Imperial Examination to become a scholar as ordinary Tang people did. (It is also common to find references in ancient records regarding the various preferential policies implemented by the Tang Dynasty for international students.) If not, it would be difficult to explain why the preface to Wang Wei's “Sending off the Secretary Chao back to Japan” provided a general overview of his career, but made no mention at all of the such important fact that he was able to pass the Imperial Examination. Therefore, the author believes that the possibility of whether Abeno Nakamaro passed the Imperial Examination is still open to further discussion.

Abeno Nakamaro spent roughly forty-three years as an official in China, and it is fair to say that his life in the Tang dynasty was a life as an official from a public point of view. Regarding his official career, the *Old Book of Tang* (Vol. 199, I, Biography of Dongyi) recorded that he “went on to serve the posts as Zuo Buque and Yiwangyou... and in the middle of the Shangyuan years, he was promoted to the post of Zuo Sanqichangshi and Zhennan Duhu”, [1] meanwhile, *Dai Nihonshi* (a historical book of Japan) recorded the followings, “Emperor Xuanzong granted him the title of the Zuo Buque, and then Yiwangyou. He was appointed to the post of Secretary in Imperial Library and later became the Secretary and Minister of Weiyu.... Emperor Suzong promoted him to the post of Zuo Sanqichangshi and the Annan Duhu.” He was appointed to the position of Grand Master of Guanglu, and was also the Minister of Imperial Censorate, the Duke of Beihai County, with a fief of 3,000 households. On the New Year of the 1st year of Hōki (770), he died in Tang at the age of seventy. The Emperor Daizong awarded him the title of Luzhou Dadudu (Grand Commander of Luzhou). [11] Here it can be seen that there are similarities and differences in the ancient records of the two countries. Furthermore, poets such as Li Bai, Wang Wei, Chu Guangxi and Bao Jie addressed him by various official titles in poems written in his honor. The Sugimoto have studied a side variety of historical sources and established the official positions of Abeno Nakamaro after compiling all the information together, which I believe has been the most complete research of his official career to date. It can be summarized as follows.

Jiaoshu in Zuo Chunfang Sijing Ju (Junior Ninth Rank) → Zuo Shiyi (Senior Deputy Eighth Rank) → Zuo Buque (Senior Deputy Seventh Rank) → Yiwangyou (Junior Deputy Fifth Rank) → Secretary General (also served as Wei Yuqing, Zuo Sanqichangshi) (Deputy Third Rank) → Zhennan Duhu (Third Rank) → Annan Jiedushi (military and civil governor of Annan) (Deputy Third Rank) → posthumously appointed as Luzhou Dadudu (Deputy Second Rank)

His official career lasted for three emperors (Emperor Xuanzong, Emperor Suzong and Emperor Daizong), and achieved an unprecedented promotion that even the Tang people did not receive. At the same time, he engaged with many poets and talented scholars and travelled widely for Japanese students, monks and envoys in Tang, making a great contribution to the communication between Tang and Japan. His life as a government official in the Tang was just as Emperor Ninmyō wrote in his imperial edict in the third year of the Heian period (845), “The former student, Abeno Makamaro, who was posthumously awarded the Second Rank official, travelled through turbulent waves to arrive in Tang China, and studied hard to become a rare and noble talent with extraordinary qualities of character and outstanding academic practice, and was promoted to a prestigious position with his wisdom widely spread, ...)” [11]. From the edict of Emperor Ninmyō, it is evident that Abeno Nakamaro achieved considerable success from a public point of view during his stay in Tang.

On the other hand, what was his private life like in Tang? We will also explore this briefly here.

Regarding the private life of Abeno Nakamaro in Tang, here I would like to focus on the issue of whether he was married or had a family in Tang.

Concerning his family, an entry was included in the Shoku Nihongi (Vol.35) in the fifth month of the tenth year of Hōki (779) under the reign of Emperor Kōnin, “the former student Asomi Abeno Nakamaro died in Tang. There was no funeral for him as the family was sparse. So he was awarded with 100 bolts of silk and 300 tons of white cotton.<sup>3</sup> (See this reference to page 4332 of Shoku Nihongi, Vol.35, Entry 26 recorded in the fifth month of the tenth year of Hōki (779)), which proves that he had a “family”.

Neither of the two countries' histories recorded anything about his marriage. There is a suggestion in previous studies that he married a woman from the Tang dynasty, but this is not verified in detail. The Sugimoto believes that the lines in the preface of Wang Wei's poem “(Heng) must marry to someone like Qi Jiang, but not to ones from the noble families” may explain the fact that Abeno Nakamaro did not choose to marry to someone from the noble family in Tang. The Sugimoto presumed the reason for this may be that although he stayed in Tang, he still observed his Japanese nature and insisted on marrying to a steadfast and meek woman from his own country. In the meantime, Sugimoto affirmed that he had family in Tang based on the above-mentioned entry in the Shoku Nihongi. It finally concluded that Abeno Nakamaro had a family in Tang, but was not officially married. Probably due to the influence of the Sugimoto, the story of Abeno Nakamaro falling in love with a court maid named Gao Feng but not getting married can be found in some books.

However, the author believes that the appropriateness of the line in the preface of Wang Wei's poem, "(Heng) must marry to someone like Qi Jiang, but not to ones from the noble families" deserves further discussion. In modern Chinese, this line could be interpreted as "(Heng) didn't return due to marry to someone from noble family like Qi Jiang in Tang", which would mean that "Abeno Nakamaro married a steadfast and meek woman from noble family in Tang". We can even trace a line in the poem that Chu Guangxi wrote for Abeno Nakamaro, To Jiaoshu Heng in Luoyang, and "The sun was setting in the west over the high corners of the grand hall, while the chilly autumn breeze blew into the deep corner of the inner chamber". I believe that the phrase "the inner chamber" here refers to the "bridal chamber", which indicates the new marriage of Abeno Nakamaro. Also, it is reasonable to assume that Abeno Nakamaro would have gotten married was between since he was between 25 and 30 years old when this poem was written.

The historical sources and books show that there were many example of Japanese people who came across the border to Tang (either members of Japanese missions to Tang China or students / scholar monks, etc.) getting married and having children in Tang at that time. One of the members of Japanese missions to Tang China, Fujiwarano Kiyokawa, who wandered with Abeno Nakamaro in Annan, married a Tang woman and had a daughter named Kijō. Kijō married Hagurino Yoshimaro, who later entered Tang, in Chang'an and had two sons, Tsubasa and Kakeru. Ben Sei, a scholarly monk who came to Tang before Abeno Nakamaro and lived there for the rest of his life, married a Tang woman and had two sons named Asao and Asamoto, and Asamoto later returned to Japan. Hence it was not surprising that Abeno Nakamaro, who stayed for the longest time in Tang China, took a wife and held a family in Tang. Taking into account the description of "spares family" in the Shoku Nihongi, I would suggest that it is more appropriate to say that he was married without children in Tang. If he had any children, they would have returned to Japan in 778 with Kiyokawa's daughter.

The above summarizes Abeno Nakamaro's political and private life during his fifty years in Tang, and the following will analyze the reasons for his long stay in Tang China, as well as the longings for homeland he embodied during his stay in Tang.

### **III. REASONS FOR ABENO NAKAMARO'S STAY IN TANG**

The The Old Book of Tang included the following, "the side Asomi (retainers in the imperial system of Japan), stayed in Tang due to his passion for Chinese culture..... Chaoheng stayed in the capital city of Tang for fifty years. Since he was fond of reading Chinese books, he chose to stay in China when he was relieved of his official positions and allowed to return his homeland.....", which clearly shows that the reason for Abeno Nakamaro's stay was his admiration for the Chinese culture, and even though he was allowed to return to Japan, he did not do so. However, the National historical record of Japan included that "in the twenty-first year of the Kaiyuan period, Heng admonished to ask for leave due to the elderly parents but was rejected". By this account, the reason for his stay in Tang was that Emperor Xuanzong would not allow him to return to his homeland. These two accounts are contradictory, so what is the consistent reason for the facts? He stayed in Tang for more than fifty years, and it would be a one-sided statement to draw conclusions from just a few remarks. Based on Sugimoto's studies and the relevant

historical documents, the author proposes to divide his life in Tang into the three periods below, and to study and analyze the reasons for his stay in Tang.

### 3.1 The Period from his Arrival in Tang until His Appointment as Jiaoshu (717-circa 727)

This was the period during which Abeno Nakamaro stayed as a foreign student, and the study of Tang culture must have been his main focus. I believe that the main reason for his stay during this period was his “attachment to the Chinese culture” as stated in the Old Book of Tang. For the Japanese Imperial Court of this period was very keen to learn and assimilate the best culture of the leading country of the time, Tang Dynasty China, in all aspects from the national legal system to the daily habits of life. I believe that as a foreign student, Abeno Nakamaro went through tremendous hardships to reach China, and would naturally try to enter the Imperial College during his stay in Tang to learn about Chinese studies and culture as much as possible in order to fulfill his mission as a “foreign student to Tang China”. It is also evident in the preface of Wang Wei’s poem, *Sending Off the Secretary Chao back to Japan*, “(Heng) rose to fame as a scholar in Imperial College, and served as a guest minister”, and the lines from the poem of Chu Guangxi, “The student Chao Heng from Japan was graceful and talented, he served as Jiaoshu in the Imperial Library of the Crown Prince ... He studied in the Imperial College like Liang Hong from the Eastern Han Dynasty...” that Abe was deeply devoted to the study of Chinese culture and had no intention of returning to his country during this period. Also, the Japanese imperial court did not send any Japanese missions to Tang China during 717-732, so it was difficult for him to return during this period.

### 3.2 The Period from the Appointment of the Jiaoshu to the Appointment of Zuo Buque (728-752)

It is assumed that Emperor Xuanzong's reluctance to allow Abeno Nakamaro to return to his homeland was the important reason for his stay during this period. During this period, Abeno Nakamaro was promoted from Jiaoshu, a Ninth Rank post to Zuo Buque, a Third Rank post, and was favored by Emperor Xuanzong for his outstanding talents. He also assisted Emperor Xuanzong with the reception and communication between Japan and the Tang Dynasty (e.g. taking care of students/ scholar monks in Tang, receiving the members of Japanese missions to Tang China, etc.). It was likely that Emperor Xuanzong had also considered the role and the importance of Abe's work in diplomacy with Japan and did not feel too keen to have him return to his country. Hence, when the ninth Japanese missions to Tang returned to Japan in 733, he requested to return with Kibino Makibi and Genbō, who had come to Tang at the same time, but was not granted permission by Emperor Xuanzong. Just as Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty said, “The only way to govern a country is to have the right people”, and it is well known that the Tang dynasty attached great importance to talent. The excellent talent of Abeno Nakamaro made his career a success, and he was highly valued by Emperor Xuanzong; but on the other hand, it could be argued that this was what made his return to the homeland very difficult.

### 3.3 The Period from the Wandering in Annan to His Departure from the World (753-770)

It was mostly the natural and objective causes that prevented his return during this period. In



November of 753, when the tenth Japanese missions to Tang China, Fujiwarano Kiyokawa, was returning to Japan, Abeno Nakamaro requested again to return at the age of 56 and was finally granted permission. However, when he set out on his journey home, he encountered a storm while crossing the sea and was drifted to Annan (now Vietnam). Apparently, natural disasters and the immaturity of navigation technology at the time were important reasons for his inability to return to his homeland this time. After surviving against the odds, he returned to Chang'an once again in June 756. But there was no Kentoshi to Tang China again after that time until he departed from the world, and his dream of returning to the homeland was not realized after all.

#### **IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF LONGING FOR THE HOMELAND IN ABENO NAKAMARO**

Psychologically speaking, there are two main factors that influence human psychological development: the natural environment, such as geography and climate, food and nutrition, air and water, which are necessary for living beings to survive; and the social environment, including family and society, which is constructed by human beings. The environment exerts a huge influence on the psychological development of the individual. Apart from the psychology of other animals, human beings are very much connected to their social environment and are engaged in its practice and improvement themselves, so the social environment in which they live is in a constant state of change. Generally speaking, the human being and its psychological emotions also change in response to changes in the environment. However, there is a particular psychological emotion that arises as a result of changes in the social environment, yet resists changes caused by the social environment, which is the psychological emotion of homesickness. The psychological change of longing for one's homeland is the result of leaving one's familiar environment, including the natural and social environment, but also the fact that human beings do not want to or cannot forget their feelings for their homeland, which is why they have the psychological emotion of longing for their homeland, and this psychology becomes stronger as they leave their homeland and changes happen in the environment. The arrival of Abeno Nakamaro and other Japanese missions to Tang China across the sea to Tang brought considerable changes to both the natural and social environments. They saw the renowned cultural center of the world, Chang'an City, and studied the Chinese literature and culture they admired and, in particular, Abeno Nakamaro spent a great part of his life living and serving as an official in China. This change of environment would certainly lead to many changes and developments in them, including psychological ones, so how did they feel in terms of the psychological emotion of "longing for homeland"? What features did they present? Here we take Abeno Nakamaro as an example, and discuss it along with Han poetry and waka.

First of all, in terms of conclusion, there were both historical and objective reasons for Abeno Nakamaro's long stay in Tang based on the above studies. But it is evident from many facts that even though he was an official in Tang, he was still longing for his homeland, and it might even be said that his longing for his homeland continued throughout his life in Tang. His nostalgia for his country, Japan, that is, his longing for homeland, did not disappear as he lived for a long time in China, a place with many changes from his country, Japan, in terms of natural and social environment, but became stronger and more

pronounced the longer he lived in China.

In 733, Abeno Nakamaro applied for permission to return to his homeland in the name of “visiting elderly parents”, but was not granted, and he then wrote a Han poem entitled “When Shall I Return to My Homeland” [15], conveying his longing for his homeland. The poem reads as follows:

The pursuit of fame is futile, and loyalty and filial piety cannot be achieved in two.

When shall I return repay the grace of the imperial court? Nor shall I know when I will return to my homeland?

The line “Nor shall I know when I will return to my homeland?” conveys strong longings for his homeland, as well as his sadness at not being able to return.

The Japanese scholar monk Ben Sei arrived in Tang before Abeno Nakamaro, and completed his study there. During his time in Tang China, he had frequent interactions with Abeno Nakamaro, and the two of them often shared their longing for their homeland and comforted each other. This longing for their homeland could also be seen in the Han poetry “To Master Chao” [16], which was presented to Abeno Nakamaro by Ben Sei. The poem reads as follows.

The beating of the bells and drums resounded to the city gate; envoys from Xirong and Tubo are preparing the marriage to the imperial family of Tang;

The deity that dominates the Han people today pacifies the remote areas to calm the fierce flames from the soldiers of the Barbarians;

The chanting of a willow song comes from the back of a horse in spring with the elegiac and mournful sound of a lute;

The bright moon over the Guanshan Mountains is there only to welcome the envoys from the Northern frontiers.

There was a moon in Chang'an that was as bright as the one in the homeland, but instead of welcoming those who had travelled from Japan; it welcomed those from the Northern frontiers. This would explain the overwhelming loneliness of foreign students like Abeno Nakamaro and Ben Sei, who left Japan for the Tang dynasty and could not contain their longing for home.

When Abeno Nakamaro was granted permission to return to his country in 753, he composed a Han poem entitled “Return to the Homeland with Orders”, which was included in the Complete Tang Poems, vol. 732 (p. 8375). There was a line in the poem, “the road to Penglai is far away, but it was like the woods in the garden next door”. It could be interpreted as meaning that no matter how far it is, the road back to his homeland feels like it was right next to him. That was the year he finally could set sail for his

homeland, and the night before he set sail, while gazing up at the moon on the shore of Suzhou (also say Ningbo), Abeno Nakamaro composed a waka that has been immortalized for thousands of years and has become very popular, Morokoshi Nite Tsuki wo Mite Yomikeru (The Moon Chant in Tang)", to express his longing for homeland. The text of the waka is "Ama no Hara Furisake Mireba Kasukanaru Mikasa no Yama ni Dedeshi Tsukikamo (it means when I look up into the vast sky tonight, is it the same moon that I saw rising from behind Mt. Mikasa at Kasuga Shrine all those years ago?)" [17]. This waka was not only included in the Kokin Wakashū in Literature 14, but also included in the literature such as Tosa Nikki [18] and Hyakunin Isshu, [19]etc.

The bright moon of his homeland (i.e. his homeland), even in a foreign country, has always held and occupied his heart, regardless of the decades that had passed. Anyone who has seen this waka would be able to feel his intense longing for homeland.

As recorded in the Dai Nihonshi of Japan, "Abeno Nakamaro had been in Tang for about fifty years, and although he had enjoyed all the glory and wealth, there was never a moment when he did not think of returning to his homeland, and he couldn't help but feel sad at the mention of it." [11]

We can assume that this same kind of longing for the homeland existed in the case of the other Kentoshi. Judging from the experiences of the members of Kentoshi, such as Abeno Nakamaro or his friend Ben Sei, and the various kinds of longing for home that still occur in modern society, it is evident that longing for home is indeed a special human psychology, a psychological emotion that arises from changes in the natural and social environment in which one grows up, yet does not change as a result of changes in the social environment.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper takes a more detailed look at the life of Abeno Nakamaro, the member of Japanese missions to Tang China, during his fifty years of stay in Tang China, based on relevant historical sources and documents, and explores and analyses the reasons for his long stay in Tang China. Abeno Nakamaro stayed more than 52 years in Tang, where he entered the Imperial College to study Chinese culture, and assumed various positions after graduating from his studies. He went on serving the posts ranging from the Ninth Rank, Jiaoshu in Sijing Ju of Zuo Chunfang, to the Second Rank, Great Governor of Luzhou, which was posthumously given awarded after his death. He was highly valued by Emperor Xuanzong and also engaged in frequent contacts with many literary bureaucrats. On the private front, he might have had a family with a woman in Tang but had no children. The reasons for the Abe prolonged stay in Tang could be traced to a voluntary stay in the early stage of his life as his "attachment to the Chinese culture", to the retention of the Tang Imperial Court due to his official duties in the middle stage of his life, and to a lifelong stay in the late stage of his life when he had set out on his return journey but was hindered by the harsh natural environment. His longing for the homeland, which grew stronger during the Tang period, could be seen in the Han poetry and waka he wrote, as well as in the poems he received from his friends. Although he studied Chinese culture in Tang, possessed a profound talent for Chinese

literature, and served in various official positions during the Tang dynasty, he might even have formed a family with the Chinese; his mental and psychological feelings were still strongly present. From a psychological perspective of the development of human psychological change and social environmental change, it is evident that the psychological emotion of longing for home is a special kind of human psychology, a psychological emotion that arises due to social environmental change, while resisting it and making changes. This mental state of mind remained the same among the members of the Japanese missions to Tang China, such as Abeno Nakamaro, who travelled from Japan to China more than a thousand years ago. The study of Abeno Nakamaro's life during his stay in Tang Dynasty, the reasons for his stay and his longing for his homeland, is a valuable reference for the study of this particular figure and will also help to understand the Sino-Japanese exchanges between China and Japan during the Tang Dynasty.

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