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# International Memory of the World Register

## Midokanpakuki : the original handwritten diary of Fujiwara no Michinaga (Japan)

2012-68

### 1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

*Midokanpakuki*, the original handwritten diary of Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), is undoubtedly one of the most important historical materials in Japan. Michinaga was arguably the most influential person in the Japanese imperial court from the late 10th to the early 11th century, and he achieved great wealth and prosperity with his political and economic power. As an immeasurable source of information, the original diary written by Michinaga, together with an early transcription of it produced in the second half of the 11th century, should be recognized as a part of the Memory of the World.

The original diary, in particular, is not only the world's oldest autographic diary, but is also the personal record of a historically important person. This diary includes vivid depictions of political, economic, social, cultural, religious, and international events and matters at the center of power during a time in the Heian period (794–1192) when Japan's court culture reached its peak, making it an extremely significant document for both Japanese and world history.

### 2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

The Selection Committee for Memory of the World of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

### 2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

The nomination of *Midokanpakuki* to the international register of the Memory of the World was decided in accordance with the decision of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO and upon consultation with the related government departments and organizations.

### 2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

Mr. Masanori Aoyagi, Chairperson of the Committee

### 2.4 Contact details

*Name*

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### 3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

#### 3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

Name:

Midokanpakuki : the original handwritten diary of Fujiwara no Michinaga

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#### 3.2 Catalogue or registration details

The diary *Midokanpakuki* is a group of 26 handscrolls consisting of 14 originals and 12 transcriptions. The 14 original handscrolls are listed below. Each scroll is written on *guchureki* (a type of calendar with annotations), for which a year was divided into two scrolls, or volumes (the first for the first month to the sixth month; the second for the seventh month to the twelfth month).

List of the originals

- 1) Chotoku 4 (998) volume 2, one handscroll (L. 30.1, W. 1241.0 cm, 26 sheets)
- 2) Choho 1 (999) volume 2, one handscroll (L. 30.6, W. 1072.0 cm, 23 sheets)
- 3) Choho 2 (1000) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 30.3, W. 1192.0 cm, 25 sheets)
- 4) Choho 6 (1004) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 32.3, W. 1229.0 cm, 25 sheets)
- 5) Kanko 2 (1005) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 31.2, W. 1213.0 cm, 25 sheets)
- 6) Kanko 4 (1007) volume 2, one handscroll (L. 31.4, W. 1223.0 cm, 26 sheets)
- 7) Kanko 5 (1008) volume 2, one handscroll (L. 30.8, W. 1097.0 cm, 24 sheets)
- 8) Kanko 6 (1009) volume 2, one handscroll (L. 30.3, W. 1068.0 cm, 23 sheets)
- 9) Kanko 7 (1010) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 30.0, W. 1326.0 cm, 29 sheets)
- 10) Kanko 8 (1011) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 30.3, W. 1167.0 cm, 25 sheets)
- 11) Kanko 9 (1012) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 31.0, W. 1315.0 cm, 28 sheets)
- 12) Kannin 2 (1018) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 30.4, W. 1536.0 cm, 32 sheets)
- 13) Kannin 3 (1019) volume 2, one handscroll (L. 30.3, W. 1117.0 cm, 23 sheets)
- 14) Kannin 4 (1020) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 30.8, W. 1240.0 cm, 26 sheets)

The 12 handscrolls of the transcription are listed below. Excepting the first and the twelfth scrolls in the list, which both cover three years, each scroll covers one year.

- 1) Chotoku 4 (998) volume 2, Choho 1 (999) volumes 1 & 2, Choho 2 (1000) volume 1, one handscroll (L. 29.2, W. 907.0 cm, 17 sheets)
- 2) Choho 6/Kanko 1 (1004) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.2, W. 2464.5 cm, 48 sheets)
- 3) Kanko 6 (1009) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 28.8, W. 1254.0 cm, 23 sheets)
- 4) Kanko 7 (1010) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.5, W. 1671.0 cm, 33 sheets)
- 5) Kanko 8 (1011) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.5, W. 1569.0 cm, 30 sheets)
- 6) Kanko 9/Chowa 1 (1012) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.5, W. 2518.0 cm, 47 sheets)
- 7) Chowa 2 (1013) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.6, W. 2952.5 cm, 58 sheets)
- 8) Chowa 4 (1015) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.5, W. 2039.5 cm, 38 sheets)

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- 9) Chowa 5 (1016) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.5, W. 2670.4 cm, 51 sheets)  
10) Chowa 6/Kannin 1 (1017) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.7, W. 2450.5 cm, 53 sheets)  
11) Kannin 2 (1018) volumes 1 & 2, one handscroll (L. 29.2, W. 2038.5 cm, 38 sheets)  
12) Kannin 3 (1019) volumes 1 & 2, Kannin 4 (1020) volume 1, Jian 1 (1021) volume 2, one handscroll (L. 29.7, W. 543.5 cm, 11 sheets)

< Detailed information on *Midokanpakuki* >

### 1) Diaries in Japan

In large contrast to diaries kept today, which are mostly about private matters and personal feelings, diaries of court nobles in Japan from the Heian period (794–1192) onward recorded in detail the daily life, ceremonies and social situations at court. They serve as an important source of literature for understanding the politics, society and culture of the time in which they were written. Diaries were handed down through the generations in court nobles' families. When attending ceremonies and other official events, court nobles were supposed to behave following the examples of their fathers and grandfathers. Therefore, in each household, diaries served as valuable reference books, almost like encyclopedias, for imperial court ceremonies. The diaries were strictly guarded and accessible to only a very limited group of people, such as members of related families with equivalent social status.

### 2) Michinaga, the writer of the diary

*Midokanpakuki* was written by Fujiwara no Michinaga, who held the highest position in the Heian-period court society and enjoyed remarkable prosperity. He was born in 966 as the fifth son of Kaneie (929–990). After his father became regent, Michinaga quickly climbed the organizational hierarchy of the imperial court. At the age of 30 in 995, when his elder brothers Michitaka (953–995) and Michikane died, he came into power by being appointed to the position of *nairan* (inspector of documents sent from or to the emperor) for Emperor Ichijo. He also served as principal ministers, as well as keeping his positions as *nairan* and as the ranking council member of the *daijokan* (Great Council of State) for a long time.

With no political enemy to worry about after exiling Michitaka's heir, Korechika (974–1010), Michinaga successfully overcame delicate situations with emperors Ichijo and Sanjo to bring about a golden period of rule by regency. For example, he was able to make his three daughters, Akiko, Kiyoko and Takeko, empresses of emperors Ichijo, Sanjo and Goichijo respectively.

In 1016 Michinaga became regent to Emperor Goichijo, who was his grandson, and next year gave up this position to his heir, Yorimichi (992–1074), and became *daijodaijin* (Prime Minister). Known as *otono* (grand lord), he continued to be influential until his death in 1027 at the age of 62.

### 3) Dates and contents

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Michinaga began to write the diary from 995 (Chotoku 1) when he came into power, and after several breaks, kept writing continuously from 1004 (Kanko 1). The extant portion of *Midokanpakuki* covers the period between 998 (Chotoku 4) when he was 33 years old and 1021 (Jian 1) when he reached 56. The descriptions were comparatively brief until 998, but become more detailed and informative from around 1000 (Choho 2), when Michinaga's eldest daughter married the emperor. The events covered in detail include the birth of the prince Atsuhira (who later became Emperor Goichijo) in 1008 (Kanko 5), when Michinaga's position as a blood relative of the emperor was consolidated. Similarly, the marriages of his second and third daughters, Kiyoko and Takeko, with emperors in 1012 (Chowa 1) and 1018 (Kannin 2)

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respectively also receive detailed accounts.

The contents of the diary therefore create a thorough description of how Michinaga established his position as a blood relative of the imperial family. His feelings and emotions are also displayed throughout the diary, offering glimpses of his unrestrained character and his view of life. The golden period of rule by regency is depicted in Michinaga's generous, easy brushwork and unique prose style.

#### 4) Format and quantity

It is thought that originally 36 handscrolls formed *Midokanpakuki*. The 14 extant original handscrolls are written on *guchureki* (a type of calendar with annotations). Each year's *guchureki* is divided into 2 scrolls (the first for spring and summer; the second for autumn and winter). A calendar is drawn in grids on the scrolls, with notes on the days' and seasons' fortunes written in the grids. Michinaga wrote his diary in *sumi* ink in the blank spaces of the calendar, and on some occasions he used the reverse side of the paper. Michinaga wrote his diary in the blank spaces of each day's columns. The scroll of the first half of the year 1010 (Kanko 7) is particularly important, since it maintains the original appearance of the *guchureki* calendar. Its label, with the title "Calendar for the seventh year of Kanko, vol. 1; the year of *kanoe-inu* in the Chinese zodiac", *hasso* (a narrow strip of wood attached to the edge of the cover) and whitish-brown silk cord (ca. 74 cm long) are all precious examples of calendar formats from a thousand years ago.

In the late Heian period after Michinaga, in the time of Fujiwara no Morozane (1042–1101), a transcription of the diary was produced, consisting of 16 scrolls, each covering a whole year. Also in the late Heian period, an excerpted version of *Midokanpakuki* was produced, with Morozane probably the compiler. This version, *Midogyokisho*, is currently in the collection of the Yomei Bunko Foundation. It is a very important document as it is the only extant text to include the entries of 995 (Chotoku 1), when Michinaga began to write the diary.

As described above, the fact that an autographic diary of a thousand years ago exists in the world is significant enough, but the original mounting adds further to its importance.

#### 5) Characteristic 1

The diary is a valuable source for shedding light on Japan's court culture. For example, *Midokanpakuki*, Kannin 2 (1018), volume 1, records that a large banquet was held on 23 January at the residence of the regent Fujiwara no Yorimichi. Prior to the banquet, it was decided to prepare screens with *yamato-e* style paintings featuring the four seasons. It was Fujiwara no Yukinari (972–1027), one of the three master calligraphers of the period, who wrote the poems on the squares attached to the screens. In this way, the diary describes an event during the mid-Heian period when Michinaga and Yukinari were both active, allowing a glimpse of court life at that time.

#### 6) Characteristic 2

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The diary is also an important document for considering the emergence of *kana*, written characters which are unique to Japan. The entry for 6 February 1004 (Choho 6) includes poems reflecting Michinaga's concern for his eldest son Yorimichi, who had left the previous day for the Kasuga Shrine in Nara as an imperial messenger. The part written in *kana* appears on the reverse side of the *guchureki* calendar. Through the efforts of many people over a long period of time, *kana*, which could be termed the Japanese alphabet, made it possible to write the Japanese language using Chinese characters.

Originally, the Japanese language did not have its own writing system, so it was natural that people used Chinese characters as a basis for creating their own written language. This is

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because Japan belonged to a cultural sphere where Chinese characters were used. However, Japan did not simply absorb the teachings of the advanced Chinese civilization as a whole; instead, people developed a method of reading and writing by arranging Chinese characters so that they could be understood as Japanese. Michinaga's diary is mostly written in this Japanese-style Chinese. Further, Japanese people gradually developed phonetic *kana* characters, with which they could write in Japanese without having to change its structure, yet still allowing them to freely incorporate ideogrammatic Chinese characters. The extreme flexibility of the Japanese language structure made this possible. This development is an example of "Japanese spirit and Chinese methods", the concept which led to the idea of "Japanese spirit and Western methods" later in the Meiji period. Michinaga also uses these convenient and important *kana* characters in his diary. The form of his *kana* illustrates the final stage of development of the characters from the original Chinese characters to the much more simplified *kana*. As there are extremely few Heian-period writings in *kana* whose authors are known, the diary is important for tracing the history of Japanese calligraphy.

Japanese *kana* characters are not simply phonetic symbols, but also have aesthetically appealing forms, similar to Chinese characters. *Kana*, with a flowing, moderate beauty that has an elegance unique to Japan, are noted around the world for demonstrating the East Asian sensitivity that seeks beauty in letters and characters.

#### 7) Characteristic 3

The diary records Japan's connection with other East Asian countries. Michinaga describes in detail the exchanges between China and Japan after the abolishment of imperial missions to Tang-dynasty China in 894. For example, he records minutely the government's reaction to Chinese merchant ships when they arrived in Japan. This record includes the discussion on whether or not their visits and trade were allowed, and how and what the Japanese, including the emperor, obtained from the objects produced in China or brought via the Silk Road.

Moreover, written materials mentioned in the diary such as letters Michinaga entrusted to Japanese priests who traveled to Song-dynasty China and the Buddhist book *Ojoyoshu* (dated 985) by Genshin, as well as other gifts sent to China, shed light on the exchange between China and Japan. In this regard *Midokanpakuki* is therefore an important source for knowing some of the actual details of relations between Japan and China during the mid-Heian period, when Japan is considered to have had a rather exclusive attitude.

#### 8) Characteristic 4

The diary is a good source for learning about religious life in Japan at that time. In *Midokanpakuki*, Kanko 4 (1007), volume 2, Michinaga scrupulously writes how he buried 15 scrolls of sutras in a gilt bronze sutra case at Kinpu Mountain. The scrolls included a 10-volume set of *Hokekyo* sutras which he transcribed in 998 (Chotoku 4), an *Amidakyo* sutra and a *Hannyashingyo* sutra. Kinpu Mountain is a sacred place for Shugen Buddhism and was deeply worshipped by court nobles in Kyoto during the Heian period. The gilt bronze sutra case was discovered in 1691 and is now designated as a National Treasure. The buried sutras have also been recovered and kept until now. This act of burying sutras reflects the sincerity of Michinaga's Buddhist faith.

In this way, in *Midokanpakuki*, Michinaga narrates his participation in various religious activities, recording his faith and his religious policy.

The diary is also important for its references to ancient cultural properties. The authenticity of extant historical objects referred to in the diary can therefore be verified. In other words, there exist historical objects that substantiate the matters recorded in the diary, so that events that

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occurred around a thousand years ago can be confirmed by both the written record and the physical object. This situation is rare in Japan, and this rarity is another factor which makes *Midokanpakuki* worthy of being listed as an item of the Memory of the World.

#### 9) Characteristic 5

*Midokanpakuki* is written on *guchureki* calendars from a thousand years ago. The calendars were produced by experts in calendars, onmyodo and astrology, and they included detailed notes on fortunes for the year, the months and the days. Therefore, the diary is also both a calendar and a book of divination. Surprisingly, correct information on coming solar and lunar eclipses including the dates and times of occurrence and even eclipse percentages at the maximum phase are given, based on calculations during the previous year.

#### 10) Characteristic 6

Ancient Japanese historical materials often record natural disasters in detail. The descriptions of many earthquakes, typhoons, floods and droughts in *Midokanpakuki* make the diary very valuable as a historical research material on world weather and natural disasters.

#### 11) Characteristic 7

Michinaga was a patron of women's literature produced by the ladies who served the eldest daughter, Akiko. The world-famous *The Tale of Genji* by Lady Murasaki is an example, and there were several other important authors in this group, such as Izumishikibu and Akazomeemon. Michinaga supported economically, politically and culturally their production of literature. Through studying *Midokanpakuki*, we can discover clues for understanding the basis of the court society in which women's literature prospered.

The autographic diary of the noble who dominated and controlled the imperial court serves to reveal details about court life as it was and the setting of *The Tale of Genji*. This diary is a first-hand source for shedding light on the politics and society of the Heian period as well as people's thoughts at that time.

#### 12) Characteristic 8

Michinaga often held gatherings for composing Chinese-style poetry, thereby contributing to the flowering of Chinese-style literature in this period. *Midokanpakuki* documents such gatherings in detail, and therefore serves as a valuable source for understanding actual aspects of culture at the time.

#### 13) Characteristic 9

The contents of court nobles' diaries are mostly records of their duties at the court and formal ceremonies, and often had the specific purpose of serving as a future reference. *Midokanpakuki* is a typical example of such a diary. As the contents and procedures of court council meetings have been written clearly, it is an indispensable source for knowing court matters under rule by regency during the mid-Heian period. The detailed account includes the opinions of the participants, the Emperor's order, and the final decision.

#### 14) Summary

*Midokanpakuki*, the original handwritten diary of Michinaga, is undoubtedly one of the most important historical materials in Japan. Michinaga was arguably the most influential person in the Japanese imperial court in his time, and he achieved great wealth and prosperity with his political and economic power. As an immeasurable source of information, the original diary written by Michinaga should be recognized as a part of the Memory of the World.

The original diary, in particular, is not only the world's oldest autographic diary, but is also the

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personal record of a historically important person. This diary includes vivid depictions of political, economic, social, cultural, religious, and international events and matters at the center of power during this time when Japan's court culture reached its peak, making it an extremely significant document for both Japanese and world history.

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### 3.4 History/provenance

1) *Midokanpakuki* can be regarded as the oldest autographic diary in the world. It was preserved almost in the same condition as when it was written, by being handed down through the generations of the Konoe family, who are the direct descendants of Michinaga, until October 1938. Since the establishment of the Yomei Bunko Foundation in November 1938, it has been kept by the foundation to this day. Such a unique provenance makes this diary even more precious.

2) It is thought that there were originally 36 scrolls written by Michinaga, each of which covered a half year (according to *Kyuki Mokuroku* (List of ancient documents) and *Midogoryaku Mokuroku* (List of Michinaga's diary)). Later, during the lifetime of Michinaga's grandson, Morozane (1042–1101), a transcription was produced consisting of 16 scrolls, each covering a year. A portion of the diary was lost at a later date.

3) The Yomei Bunko Foundation in Kyoto presently houses 14 original scrolls and 12 scrolls of the transcription, around a thousand years after they were produced.

4) The Yomei Bunko Foundation is the institution responsible for the conservation, preservation and accessibility of the historic materials referred to in this nomination. The foundation was created in 1938 by Konoe Fumimaro (1891-1945) for the collective safekeeping of the cultural properties which had been preserved by the Konoe family for many generations. The Yomei Bunko Foundation was recognized by the Kyoto prefectural government as a publicly beneficial institution and will become a Public Interest Incorporated Foundation on 1 April 2012.

5) The Konoe family, owing to its high status, had members of successive generations occupy high, influential positions in the court, including those of regent and chief secretary to the emperor. This resulted in a great accumulation of important written records and documents. The family has also produced outstanding cultural persons, and, as a result, for generations a considerable quantity of materials associated with their study and learning has been preserved. In addition, the family has made efforts to protect these materials, for example by swiftly moving cultural properties to safer places during the Onin War in the fifteenth century when most of Kyoto was lost to fire, and in later wartimes, to save them from dispersal. The family has therefore come to possess an incomparable treasury of valuable materials which have been preserved by successive generations to this day.

## 4.0 Legal information

### 4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

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Name

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Foundation

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#### 4.3 Legal status

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- 1) Private ownership is held by the Yomei Bunko Foundation.
- 2) As it is the oldest known autographic diary and it possesses high historical value, *Midokanpakuki* was designated as a National Treasure by the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in 1951.

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#### 4.4 Accessibility

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Describe how the item(s) / collection may be accessed

- 1) For conservation reasons, the viewing of items in the collection of the Yomei Bunko Foundation is limited to those with a recommendation from a scholar or researcher. Requests for viewing are accepted during three-month periods in spring and autumn.
- 2) *Midokanpakuki* has been made viewable to the public in various exhibitions. Recent exhibitions include *Courtly Millenium – Art Treasures from the Konoe Family Collection* in 2008 (Tokyo National Museum), *Treasures for the Future: The Story of Conservation in Japan* in 2011 (Kyushu National Museum) and *Ocho Waka Bunka Issennen no Densho* (Waka poetry culture of the Heian period – 1000 years of heritage) in 2011 (National Institute of Japanese Literature).
- 3) The text of *Midokanpakuki* is available in the form of photographic reproduction in *Yomei Sosho* (ed. Yomei Bunko Foundation, Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1983–1984), and was put into print and included in *Dainippon Kokiroku* (ed. The Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo, and Yomei Bunko Foundation, Iwanami Shoten, 1952–1954). In addition, *Midokanpakuki Zenchushaku* (ed. Yamanaka Yutaka, Kokusho Kankokai, Takashina Shoten, Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1985–) features the original text put into print with text in Japanese reading and commentary notes. A modern Japanese translation, *Fujiwara no Michinaga 'Midokanpakuki' Zen Gendaigoyaku* (translated by Kuramoto Kazuhiro, Kodansha, 2009), has also been published.
- 4) French translation: *Notes journalières de Fujiwara no Michinaga, ministre à la cour de Heian (995-1018) : traduction du Midô kanpakuki* (Francine Hérail, Publications de l'École pratique des hautes études, 1987-1991). A Russian translation is also being planned by Shabalina Maria.
- 5) The original text is electronically accessible as part of "The Full-text Database of the Old Japanese Diaries" on the website of the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo, and the text in Japanese reading is scheduled to be included as the first data in the "Heianki Kokiroku Database (Heian period written records database)" on the website of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

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All access restrictions should be explicitly stated below:

For conservation reasons, the viewing of items in the collection of the Yomei Bunko Foundation is limited to those with a recommendation from a scholar or researcher. Requests for viewing are accepted during three-month periods in spring and autumn.

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#### 4.5 Copyright status

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Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection

The copyright of the author has expired as the term of copyright protection provided by the Japanese copyright law (50 years after the author's death) has ended.

Copyright of the submitted nomination form is held by The Selection Committee for Memory of the World of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO.

Copyright of the photographs provided herewith is held by the Yomei Bunko Foundation.

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#### 5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

##### 5.1 Authenticity.

1) The authenticity of *Midokanpakuki* has been proved by the fact that Michinaga's descendants, who also served as regent and chief secretary of the emperor, have protected and preserved Michinaga's autographic diary. The diary has the unusual history of having been handed down carefully through many generations of the Konoe family, who are the direct descendants of Michinaga, until October 1938. Since November of the same year, when the Yomei Bunko Foundation was created, it has been kept by this foundation.

2) The 14 original handscrolls which have been handed down as the autographic diary of Michinaga, and which are currently owned by the Yomei Bunko Foundation, are written in the blank spaces of *guchureki* (a type of calendar with annotations). The scroll of the first half of the year 1010 (Kanko 7) is thought to maintain the original appearance of the *guchureki* calendar as it was produced a thousand years ago, complete with its white label bearing the title "Calendar for the seventh year of Kanko, vol. 1; the year of *kanoe-inu* in the Chinese zodiac", *hasso* (a narrow strip of wood attached to the edge of the cover) and whitish-brown silk cord (ca. 74 cm long).

3) In *Kyuki Mokuroku* (List of ancient documents) written by Fujiwara Tadazane, one of Michinaga's descendants, he mentions that there were 36 handscrolls of diary written by Michinaga. It is certain that the 14 handscrolls referred to in this nomination are part of these 36 scrolls of the diary, and that they were written by Michinaga.

4) It can be confirmed from differences in ink shades, brush strokes, calligraphic styles, scripts and sizes of individual characters, as well as added notes, that the diary was written each day. It is a daily record of matters which could not have been written by any person other than Michinaga himself, and there is no doubt that the diary is original.

5) Michinaga's calligraphic style is broad, written erratically with many incorrect characters,

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omissions, use of phonetic equivalents, corrections by crossing out, and instructions on where to find added or rewritten sentences and paragraphs. These points all verify that this diary is the original written by Michinaga.

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## 5.2 World significance

- 1) As the autographic diary of an outstanding, influential person from the mid-Heian period, when the renowned novel *The Tale of Genji* was written, this is an incomparable historical source of information.
- 2) This is an irreplaceable part of Japan's historical materials as the oldest autographic diary in the country.
- 3) No other similar calendar has survived from this time throughout the world. In addition, the calendar records the weather and natural disasters of that time, which makes it extremely valuable for considering world meteorology.
- 4) It contains detailed descriptions of the duties and formal ceremonies at the court in Japan. This is important as an example for considering how countries around China adopted Chinese systems of governance as models for their own systems, modifying them to suit their particular situations and conditions.
- 5) Diaries in Japan were carefully preserved by court nobles' families as important sources for knowing precedents regarding duties and formal ceremonies at the court. The existence of a 1000-year-old written material by a known calligrapher is very significant.
- 6) The diary is important as substantiating evidence when considering the history of Asian religions, such as the concept of Mappo (a time of insecurity among people caused by the degeneration of Buddha's law) and faith in Maitreya Buddha.

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## 5.3 Comparative criteria:

### 1 Time

- 1) *Midokanpakuki* covers the period between 998 (Chotoku 4) when Michinaga was 33 and 1021 (Jian 1) when he reached 56. No other autographic diary from this period exists in Japan.
- 2) The registered items of the Memory of the World from East Asia (Japan, China and Republic of Korea) currently do not include anything dated back to the 10th century. In addition, there are no autographic diaries from the 10th century among the designated items of the Memory of the World.
- 3) Michinaga recorded daily events on *guchureki*, each volume of which covered a half-year period and which were produced by calendar specialists of the time. The calendars provide evidence of the dates of the diary, and, as mentioned before, include descriptions of unusual weather and other natural phenomena.

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- 4) As the diary was written by Michinaga, the records of the court council meetings and political procedures and conditions were written without any compositional modification. This

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fact makes the diary one of the most important research materials for considering politics, social aspects, and the pattern of people's thoughts in the Heian period of ancient Japan, including the actualities of rule by regency during the mid-Heian period.

## **2 Place**

1) The diary was written mainly in Kyoto, though occasionally it was written in neighboring areas such as Uji, where Michinaga's villa was located, or Nara, where Kasuga Shrine, the family shrine of the Fujiwara families, is located. There were also times when he wrote it while traveling far from Kyoto, such as in Yoshino.

2) Kyoto was the capital as well as a cultural and economic center of Japan for 1100 years since 794. It is a rare type of city, with the history of Kyoto forming a large part of the history of Japan.

3) In contrast to early Japanese culture that was heavily based on Chinese culture, the culture that emerged in Kyoto around the Heian period and spread across Japan was nurtured in a Japanese environment and developed into a unique culture in accordance with the Japanese way of life. Since then, Kyoto culture has been a source of creation for the Japanese. In fact, Japanese culture can be understood by viewing Kyoto as a center of historical dynamism.

## **3 People**

1) The diary records not only Michinaga's association with a limited group of people such as emperors, the imperial family, people who attended court ceremonies, Michinaga's family, and close court nobles, but also mentions his relationships with a wide variety of people including Buddhist and Shinto priests. Of particular note is that Michinaga's diary includes the unedited transcriptions of words spoken by the living ruler of a country, something that is very rare throughout the world. This is a precious source that makes clear the spheres of action of court nobles at the time, as well as their social and private lives.

2) Michinaga, the writer of this diary, was arguably the most influential person at court in the mid-Heian period from the late 10th to the early 11th century, under the reigns of the emperors Ichijo, Sanjo and Goichijo. He became regent to his grandson, Goichijo, when he was enthroned as emperor at 9 years old, and with his three daughters all becoming wives of emperors, Michinaga achieved the highest status and great prosperity in the court society.

3) The diary describes vividly the life and activities of his wife Rinshi and other women close to him.

## **4 Subject and theme**

1) The diaries of court nobles were mostly records of their duties at the court and formal ceremonies, and were meant to be reference books for the future generations. *Midokanpakuki*, written by Fujiwara no Michinaga over a period of about 30 years, is a typical example of such a diary, and is an important source for knowing about the structure of rule by regency during the mid-Heian period.

2) The process of Michinaga establishing his political position as a blood relative of the imperial family can be traced from the contents of the diary. Michinaga also expressed his feelings and emotions throughout the diary, allowing glimpses of his daily life.

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3) As the diary records daily matters including natural weather phenomena, solar and lunar eclipses, as well as earthquakes, typhoons and other natural disasters, it serves as a research material for scientific history.

4) The information in the entries can only be obtained from an original contemporaneous source, such as this diary; not from later compilations.

5) In addition to being Michinaga's private journal, this diary also has an official, public aspect, in that it records clearly his duties at the court. As it shows that the roles he performed in public matters changed with time, this diary is important as a record of ancient Japanese politics.

6) As the diary also helps in understanding how ceremonies and rites originally from China were changed in Japan, the diary is an important historical source for comparative culture studies encompassing Asian countries.

7) *Midokanpakuki* contains accounts of religious activities, such as how Michinaga buried scrolls of sutras, including those he had transcribed. These activities reflect the sincerity of his faith, and allow glimpses of religious life at that time. As an object used in these practices, a gilt bronze sutra case (designated as a National Treasure) mentioned in the diary exists today. The diary serves as documentary evidence for the case's identification, as well as for that of other items mentioned by Michinaga. The events that occurred around a thousand years ago can be confirmed by both the written record and the physical object, a confirmation that verifies the object's authenticity.

## 5 Form and style

1) *Guchureki* calendars, on which Michinaga wrote his diary, were official calendars handwritten in red and black ink by calendar specialists from the *Onmyoryo* (office of experts in calendars, onmyodo and astrology). Each of the calendars dates from the actual year the diary was written on it. As these calendars have been preserved well by the Konoe family and the Yomei Bunko Foundation, not only the written contents of the diary, but also how the diary was handed down and used during the last thousand years can be presumed by studying the scrolls.

2) Of the 14 original scrolls, the first, second, seventh, tenth and fourteenth scrolls have vertical lines, which appear to be creases, with the same distance between them. There are also wormholes positioned symmetrically around the creases. These facts indicate that at one time these scrolls were in the form of an accordion-style folded book. This provides information on the situation of use and preservation of the diary by later generations.

3) This diary provides an example of a firsthand historical material, as *guchureki* calendars, gaining new importance with detailed historical facts written by the most influential person of the time.

4) *Kana* characters, which became a basis for the development of culture and education unique to Japan, appear frequently in *Midokanpakuki*. As an example of original writing, the diary serves as an extremely important source that indicates the use of *kana* by male court nobles. The transcription made two generations later shows *kana* in different forms, providing information on changes in the usage of the characters.

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## 6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

- 1) The diary was virtually an encyclopedia for higher-ranking court nobles to live in court society, therefore it forms an important firsthand historical source for knowing the duties, formal ceremonies, and Shinto and Buddhist activities of that time.
- 2) The diary describes in detail religious activities such as series of lectures on Buddhist scriptures such as the *Hokekyo* sutra.
- 3) The diary is an important historical material for understanding East Asian religious views such as faith in Maitreya Buddha. In connection to this, the authenticity of an object related to the burying of sutras at Kinpu Mountain can be verified by this diary, which makes the diary a document that has great significance for both Japanese and world history.
- 4) Fujiwara no Michinaga, who wrote the diary, is featured in Japanese textbooks in elementary schools, and junior and senior high schools as a historical person who attained the highest position in the Heian-period court hierarchy, and who enjoyed great prosperity by making his three daughters wives of emperors.
- 5) The poem Michinaga composed during a celebration banquet held when his third daughter became the empress is well known among Japanese people. The poem metaphorically expresses Michinaga's thoughts overlapping with his accomplishments, and can be roughly translated as, "This world is mine because my life is like the full moon that would never wane".
- 6) As the example above of his poem indicates, Michinaga is a well-known and familiar historical person to people in Japan, even after a thousand years.

## 6.0 Contextual information

### 6.1 Rarity

- 1) This diary is the oldest diary in Japan among those which include autographic originals. It also has high value because of its wealth of information related to the center of power to which its writer Michinaga belonged.

As it is the oldest known autographic diary and it possesses high historical value, *Midokanpakuki* was designated as a National Treasure by the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in 1951.

- 2) Diaries concern private and individual matters and are not merely records of facts. They reveal the writers' views on life and the world, and are one of the most valuable materials for understanding a person. In Japan, another historical diary, *Kanpyogyoki* by Emperor Uda, appeared in the late 9th century. This is an early diary even when compared to other examples from around the world, but the original diary was lost. *Midokanpakuki* is the oldest, extant autographic diary in Japan.

- 3) *Midokanpakuki* is not only important as an autographic diary. Since it was written by Michinaga, the most influential person in the period of rule by regency at that time, it has frequent references to political matters, therefore making it a first-rate source of information concerning the Japanese court.

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4) *Midokanpakuki* is a key for understanding the Japanese people and their culture. The mixed use of Chinese characters and *kana* made expressing thoughts and emotions easier and more nuanced. *Kana* is a representative example of the creation of unique cultural aspects by adopting something from a foreign culture. Clearly showing that Michinaga was also an excellent calligrapher, his *waka* poem in the diary is an important example of *kana* with a known date.

5) Michinaga's historical significance in the Heian court culture is his role as a patron of court culture, in particular his support of women's literature such as *The Tale of Genji* by Lady Murasaki and *The Pillow Book* by Sei Shonagon. He was also a forerunner for a new period in Buddhist faith, as exemplified by his 1) many pious acts, including the building of temples and production of Buddhist statues, 2) burial of sutras at Kinpu Mountain, and 3) visit to Mt. Koya for the burial of hair and ashes.

6) The transcription was made directly from the original diary. Together with the original, it forms a basic historical source for the research of politics, religion, culture, economy and astronomy in the mid-Heian period.

## 6.2 Integrity

1) It is said that originally, *Midokanpakuki* consisted of 36 scrolls, and according to *Midogoryaku Mokuroku* (List of Michinaga's diary), 30 of them were original scrolls by Michinaga. However, there are presently only 14 original scrolls together with 12 scrolls of the transcription by Michinaga's grandson Morozane, making 26 scrolls in total. The extant portion of *Midokanpakuki* covers about 20 years between 998 (Chotoku 4) when Michinaga was 33 until 1021 (Jian 1) when he reached 56. The scrolls for the years 1001 and 1002 (Choho 3 and 4) are missing. The 14 original scrolls and the 12 scrolls of the transcription are all in the collection of the Yomei Bunko Foundation.

2) Many cultural properties in Japan, with the exception of buildings and Buddhist statues, pass through many different owners after leaving the original place where they were made and kept. In regard to this historical background in Japan, it is known that previously the Konoe family had preserved a far greater number of cultural properties before the Yomei Bunko Foundation was established. *Midokanpakuki* was among them, and its authenticity is thus ensured.