

*Kogoshui* (A Scroll of Gleanings from Ancient Stories)

Tradition says that writing was unknown in old Japan, so that all people, whether high or low, youthful or aged, handed down from hoary antiquity their sacred traditions verbally among themselves, memorizing them from one generation to another. When, however, the art of writing was introduced, the Japanese began to discard the old simple way of transmitting orally their family traditions under the prevailing influence of the new tendency to ostentation and frivolity which caused the people to revolt against the ancient simplicity and despise those who remained faithful to the old mode of oral transmission. Hence, change after change occurred in the traditional accounts they handed down during long centuries, and, obviously, no one nowadays is competent to decide the true origin and the exact nature of those cherished venerable traditions. Even though there certainly exist some official histories and private family records which describe ancient things as they actually were, yet Your Imperial Majesty's humble servant Hironari finds that there still survive some others not mentioned in those written documents, which would probably by degrees sink into oblivion, unless Your Imperial Majesty's humble servant Hironari make so bold as to endeavour to bring them to light.