On the Transcription Activities of Books on Japanese Poetry in Reigen Imperial Palace
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This paper examines the history of transcription of books on poetry and the history of poetry collections in the Reigen imperial palace from the Tokyo period (1684-88) through the Shotoku and Kyoho periods (1711-1736) based on the records of court nobles and catalogs of poetry books. It also investigates reasons for the transcription of books on poetry at Reigen palace and describes what took place. Essentially, because books on poetry held at Reigen palace that were supposed to have been transferred to Emperor Higashiyama’s palace library stayed at Reigen palace, the collection of books swelled in size. In addition, the project of compiling the “Shinruidai Wakashu” (“New Collection of Poems on Various Themes”) planned from around the end of the Hoei period (1704-1711) to early in the Shotoku period (1711-1716) necessarily enlivened activities on the collection and transcription of poetry books held at Reigen palace. The transcription of individual poetry books and the removal of some sections and the correction of texts for the “Shinruidai Wakashu” that the Reigen palace promoted and for which it collected books took place from around April-May 1685 through to the end of the Kyoho period. Court nobles involved in these activities primarily belonged to the Reizei, Fujitani, Asukai, Sanjō and Nakano families, which were families of poets, and the Shimizudani and Jimyoin families, which were families of calligraphic artists. In addition to court nobles belonging to these families, members from the Oshikoji, Kuwabara, Kuze, Mushanokoji and Karasumaru families also took part in these transcription activities. It is believed that an office was created for the transcription of books held in the Reigen palace collection and for the compilation of the “Shinruidai Wakashu.” Namely, regular court nobles not only worked on transcription but also reported for duties involving the compilation of the “Shinruidai Wakashu” and went searching for selections of poems. We may presume that many of the books on poetry hanned over and lent for compiling these transcriptions came from the Reizei family. However, from records of court nobles from that time we learn that as time passed there was an increasing amount of interest in books owned by the Nakano, Hino and Karasumaru families, and that these too were handed over and transcribed. These persons from families of poets who owned poetry books mixed with court nobles from other professions as part of their palace duties. Consequently, their duties extended beyond writing poetry and records, so that at times they were involved with the transcription of books on
poetry from other families.