“Classical Japanese Poetics Through Commentary”
Edward Kamens

Selections:

1. Ki no Tsurayuki et al., “Kana Preface” from *Kokin wakashū*, ca. 905

2. Fujiwara no Shunzei, “Poetic Styles from the Past (*Korai fūteishō*, 1197)"

3. “Poetry Matches (*Uta-awase*)” (10th-12th ce.)

   [...] and an additional excerpt from the “Poetry Contest in 1500 Rounds (*Sengohyakuban utaawase*),” 1202]

KANA PREFACE

Japanese poetry has the human heart as seed and myriads of words as leaves. It comes into being when men use the seen and the heard to give voice to feelings aroused by the innumerable events in their lives. The song of the warbler among the blossoms, the voice of the frog dwelling in the water—these teach us that every living creature sings. It is song that moves heaven and earth without effort, stirs emotions in the invisible spirits and gods, brings harmony to the relations between men and women, and calms the hearts of fierce warriors.

Our poetry appeared at the dawn of creation. But that which survives goes back to Shitateruhime in the eternal heavens and to Susano-no-mikoto on the ore-rich earth. In the era of the mighty gods, the number of syllables in a poem was unregulated and statements were artless, so that it must have been difficult to grasp nuances of meaning. When the human era began, Susano-no-mikoto introduced the thirty-one-syllable poem. Thenceforth, conceptions and words became multifold and diverse as poets praised blossoms, admired birds, felt emotion at the sight of haze, and grieved over dew. As a long journey begins with an initial step and continues for months or years, or as a high mountain grows from the dust and mud at its base to tower where heavenly clouds trail, so too must it have been with poetry.

The Naniwazu poem was composed at the beginning of an imperial reign; the Asakayama poem is a playful poem composed by a palace attendant. Those two are, as it were, the father and mother of poetry, the first lines we learn in calligraphy practice.

Now, there are six Japanese poetic styles. (No doubt the same is true of

1. Superscript figures in parentheses indicate translations of the notes of an anonymous early commentator; they appear at the end of this preface, p. 8. The other notes are mine.)
Kokin Wakashū

Chinese poetry. The first of the six is the indirect style [soeuta; C. feng]. In the poem below, someone speaks obliquely of the Ōsagai Emperor.

naniwazu ni
saku ya ko no hana
fuyugomori
ima wa harube to
saku ya ko no hana

Flowers on the trees
in bloom at Naniwazu
say, “Now the winter
yields its place to the springtime!”
Flowers blooming on the trees.

The second is the enumerative style [kazoeuta; C. fu]. It is illustrated in the poem below.

saku hana ni
omoisuku mi no
ajiki nasa
mi ni itazuki no
iru mo shirazute

What a foolish thrush!
Enthralled by blossoming flowers,
he has no knowledge
of the arrow someone shoots
to penetrate his body. ¹⁷²

The third is the figurative style [nazuraeuta; C. bi]. It is used in the poem below.

kimi ni kesa
ashita no shimo no
oki to inaba
koishiki goto ni
die ya wataramu

If on this morning
you go your way and leave me
as frost leaves the sky,
will my spirit melt in grief
each time I long to see you? ¹⁷³

The fourth is the metaphorical style [tatoeuta; C. xing]. It is used in the poem below.

wa ga koi wa
yomu tomo tsukiji
arisoumi no
hama no masago wa
yomitsukusu tomo

If someone might count
every tiny grain of sand
on a rocky shore,
he still could not reckon up
the number of my yearnings. ¹⁷⁴

The fifth is the correct style [tadagotouta; C. ya]. It is used in the poem below.

itsuwarî no
naki yo nariseba
ika bakari

If this were a world
in which there were no such things
as false promises,

¹. The translation follows a variant text that reads go instead of ni in line 1. (See Matsuda Takeo, Shinshakuhō kokin wakashū, 2 vols., Tōkyō, 1968-75, 1: 93.) A play on kiyu ("melt," "vanish"; "be distracted with grief") implicitly compares the speaker to frost.

Kana Preface

hito no koto no ha
ureishikaramashi

how great would be my delight
as I listened to your words!¹⁶

The sixth is the eulogistic style [iwaieuta; C. song]. It is used in the poem below.

kono tono wa
mube mo tomikeri
sakikusa no
mitsuba yotsuba ni
tonozukuri seri

Prosperous indeed
is this splendid mansion,
its tree-branching halls
lining up with three ridgepoles,
lining up with four ridgepoles.¹⁶⁰

Because people nowadays value outward show and turn their minds toward frivolity, poems are merely empty verses and trivial words. The art of composition has become the province of the amorous, as unnoticed by others as a log buried in the earth; no longer can it be put forward in public as freely as the mischanus flauts its rassels.

In the beginning, it was entirely different. Whenever there were flowery spring mornings or moonlit autumn nights, the Emperors of past generations summoned their attendants and commanded them to compose poems suitable to the occasion. Sometimes the poets stayed in unknown places, drawn by the blossoms; sometimes they groped in unfamiliar darkness, hoping to see the moon; and we may suppose that the Emperor understood which man was wise and which foolish when he perused their sentiments. Nor was the practice of the art restricted to such times. Men found comfort in composing poems in which they expressed wishes for a lord's long life or for patronage through comparisons with pebbles or allusions to Mount Tsukuba, or in which they gave voice to gratitude for favors beyond their stations or for benefactions that filled their hearts to overflowing, or in which they compared romantic passion to Mount Fuji's smoke, or yearned for friends at the sound of waiting-insects, or in which they thought of growing old in the company of the Takasago and Suminoe pines, or recalled past days when they were like Man Mountain, or sighed over the brief blossoming of the maidenflower.¹ Likewise, they turned to poetry when they saw blossoms scattering on a spring morning, or heard leaves falling on an autumn evening, or lamented as the years brought snow and waves² to the reflections in their mirrors, or recognized in dismay their resemblance to dew on the grass and foam on the water, or lost yesterday's prosperity, or were treated coldly by former intimates after falling on hard times, or linked their love to the waves at Matsu-yama, or drank from field water, or gazed at the lower leaves of bush clover, or emulated the restlessness of the snipe beating his wings before

3. This sentence alludes to the following Kokinshū poems: 343, 1095, 865, 534, 200, 908, 905, 889, 1016.
4. White hair and wrinkles.
Kokin Wakashū

Not many people have known of the achievements of the past or been able to compose poetry of their own. We shall discuss the ones who have done so, omitting those of exalted rank and office as a matter of discretion.

Among well-known recent poets, Archbishop Henniō masters style but is deficient in substance. It is no more satisfying to read one of his poems than to fall in love with a woman in a picture. The poetry of Aritaya Narihira tries to express too much content in too few words. It resembles a faded flower with a lingering fragrance. Fun'ya no Yashide's language is skillful, but his style is inappropriate to his content. His poems are like peddlers tricked out in fancy costumes. The language of the Ujiyama monk Kisen is veiled, leaving us uncertain about its meaning. Reading him is like trying to keep the autumn moon in sight when a cloud obscures it before dawn. Since not many of his poems are known, we cannot study them as a group in order to evaluate him. Omo no Komachi belongs to the same line as Sosuihime of old. Her poetry is moving and lacking in strength. It reminds us of a beautiful woman suffering from an illness. Its weakness is probably due to her sex. The style of Otomo Kuranushi's poems is cruder. They are like a mountain peasant resting under a flowering tree with a load of firewood on his back.

We hear of many others—indeed, they proliferate like vines growing in a field and are as numerous as leaves in a grove—but they accept anything at all as a poem, apparently because they fail to understand the true nature of poetry.

The four seasons have recurred nine times during His Majesty's reign. The wave of his all-encompassing benevolence flows beyond the outermost reaches of the Eight Islands; the shelter of his boundless mercy is more glorious than the shade at the foot of Mount Tsukuba. He concerns himself with many matters when his innumerable state duties allow him leisure. Thus it happened that, desirous of preserving the memory of the past and of renewing what had grown old, and also having in mind both a personal inspection and a transmission to posterity, he addressed Major Private Secretary Ki no Tomonori, Mitumidokoro Librarian Ki no Tsurayuki, Former Kai Lesser Clerk Oshikoshi Mitsune, and Right Gate Guards Aide Mibu no Tadamine and caused them to present him with old poems missing from Man'yōshū, and also with compositions of their own. The date was the Eighteenth of the Fourth Month in the fifth year of Engi [905]. At his command, selections were made from among those poems—first, compositions dealing with plum blossoms worn on the head, followed by poems on hearing cuckoos, picking autumn leaves, and looking at snow; also poems in which masters were revered and friends congratulated with mentions of cranes and turtles; also poems in which the sight of autumn bush clover or summer grasses evoked nostalgia for a wife;
also poems offering prayers to the travel gods at Ōsaka Mountain; also miscellaneous compositions unsuited to seasonal categories. In all, there are 1,000 poems and twenty books. The name Kokin wakashū [Collection of Early and Modern Japanese Poetry] has been chosen.

Thanks to this collection, poetry will survive as eternally as water flows at the foot of a mountain; thanks to the assembling of these poems in numbers rivaling the sands of a beach, there will be heard no complaints of the art’s declining as pools in the Asuka River dwindle into shallows; there will be rejoicing for as long as a pebble takes to grow into a mighty rock.12

We, the compilers, regret that our own compositions lack the beauty of spring flowers, and that our reputations, though they may have endured like an autumn night, are not grounded in solid achievement. We shrink before the ears of others and contemplate the art of poetry with humiliation. But whether we are sitting, or rising like a trailing cloud, or lying in bed, or getting up like a calling stag, there is never a time when we, Tsurayuki and the others, do not rejoice to have been born in this era and to have lived to see poetry receive official recognition. Hitomaro is dead, but poetry lives. Time may pass and circumstances may change, pleasures and sorrows may succeed one another, but these poems will endure. If this collection survives—if the length of its life is like a long green willow branch, if it is no more scattered and lost than are the needles of a pine tree, if it goes on and on like a vine, if it lingers like a bird’s track, then those who understand the nature of poetry, and who have grasped the essence of things, will not fail to look up to the past as to the moon in the vast heavens, nor will they withhold their affectionate regard from our own times.

KANA PREFACE: INTERPOLATED NOTES

(1) This refers to the poetry chant when the female and male deities married below the heavenly floating bridge. [See Donald Philippi, tr., Kojiki, Tōkyō, 1968, pp. 49-50.]

(2) Shitateruhiime was the wife of Amewakamiko. The reference is probably to the rustic songs in which she sang of hills and valleys lighted up by her divine elder brother’s beauty. Those songs are irregular; they do not resemble waka. [See W. G. Aston, tr., Nihongi, London, 1936, part 5, p. 75.]

(3) Susano-no-mikoto was the elder brother of the divine Amateru. As he was building a palace in the land of Izumo, intending to live there with his wife, he saw an eight-colored cloud hovering over the spot. He recited:

| yakumo tatsu | A manifold fence |
| izumo yaegaki | I build, a manifold fence |
| tsugame ni | to shut in a wife |

12. Allusions to KKS 933 and KKS 543.

Kana Preface

yaegaki tsukuru
sono yaegaki o
Izumo manifold fence.
Where manifold clouds rise high.

[See Aston, part 1, p. 53. Yakumo, interpreted by lexicographers and other scholars as “many-layered cloud[s],” was apparently thought by the commentator to mean “eight-colored cloud.”]

(4) When the Osasagi Emperor [Nintoku] was a Prince at Ninawazu, he and his brother tried to cere the title of Crown Prince to one another, and for three years neither would ascend the throne. A man named Wani, who had been concerned about the situation, composed and submitted the poem. “Flowers on the trees” probably means plum blossoms. [See Aston, part 1, pp. 272-76. The poem appears in the text below.]

(5) When Prince Kazuraki [unidentified] was sent to Michinoku, he complained that a certain provincial official was treating him shabbily, and remained out of sorts even when offered a repast. A woman who had once been a palace attendant mollified him by taking up the wine bowl and reciting that poem. [The commentator’s note is paraphrased from the one following MYS 3807, the poem in question: asakayama/kage sase miyuru/yama no i no/“saki kokoro/ wa ga omowaranu/” ni/ (The love I bear you/ is not like the shallow pool,/ mountain spring water/ holding the mirrored image/ of Mount Asaka itself.)]

(6) The style meant here is straightforward and nonmetaphorical. Why is this poem cited? The [poem’s] meaning is obscure. The poem cited under the fifth style, tadagoto, would be appropriate.

(7) This style uses comparison: “This resembles that.” The illustrative poem does not seem to be very appropriate. One like the following might be better.

tarachine no
oya no kau ko no
mayukomori
ibuseku mo aru ka
imo ni awazure
Unable to meet
the maiden whom I adore,
I find life as dark
as do my mother’s silkworms,
entwined in their cocoons.

[MY 2931]

(8) In this style, the poet reveals his meaning by speaking of all kinds of plants, trees, birds, and animals. The illustrative poem contains no concealed element whatever. But since the style would appear to be indistinguishable from the first [soeuta] style [in that both are metaphorical], there must be a slight formal difference. Perhaps the poem below might be an appropriate example.

| suma no ama no | Yielding to the gale, |
| shio yaku keburi | it has drifted to a place |
| kaze o itami | I never dreamed of— |
| omowaru kata ni | the smoke rising from salt fires |
| tanabikinleri | tended by Suma seafolk. [KKS 708]

(9) This style is one in which there is order and correctness in affairs. The illustrative poem is completely inappropriate. It might perhaps be called a to-menta [meaning unknown].

| yamazakura | This is an epoch |
| aku made iro o | in which no stormy winds blow |
| mitsuru ka na | to scatter the flowers, |
Kokin Wakashū

Hana chirubeku mo
Kaze hakanu yo ni

Kusano ni
Wakana tsunime
Yozoroy o
Iwau kokoro wa
Kami zo shiraramu

Might such a poem as this be somewhat inappropriate? In general, it seems impossible to divide [Japanese poetry] into six categories.

(11). A poem by the Nara Emperor:

Rasurasagawa
Momiji midarete
Nagarumeri
Watarabi nishiki
Naka ya taenamu

By Hitomaro:

Ume no hana
Sore to mo mieru
Hisakara no
Amagiru yuki no
Nabete furereba

Honobono to
Ashido no ura no
Asagiri ni
Shimagakureyuku
Fune o shi zo omou

By Akahito:

Haru no no ni
Sumire tsumi ni to
Koshi ware so
No o natsumakashi
Hitoyo nenikeru

Wakonouna ni
Shio michikureba
Kata o nami
Ashithe o sashite
Tazu nakiwataru

[The first three attributions are questionable.]

Kana Preface

(12). [Poems by Henjō:]

Asamidori
Ito yorikakete
Shirarashu yo
Tama ni mo nukeru
Haru no yanagi ka

Hachisubu no
Nigori ni shimanu
Kokoro more
Nani ka wa tsuyu o
Tama no azamuku

Composed when he fell off his horse at Sagano:

Na ni medete
Ore zu bakari zo
Ominashiti
Wara ochiniki to
Hito ni katacu na

I have but plucked you,
Maidenflower, because I like
The sound of your name.
Please do not say to others
That I fall away from my vows.

(13). [Poems by Narihira:]

Tsuki ya aranu
Haru ya musaki no
Haru naranu
Wa ga mi hitotsu wa
Moro no mi ni shite

Oka wa
Tsuki o mo medeji
Kore zo kono
Tsumoreba hito no
Oi to naru mono

Is this not the moon?
And is this not the springtime,
The springtime of old?
Only this body of mine
The same body as before . . .

(14). [Poems by Yasuhide:]

Fuku kata ni
Aki no kusaki no
Shiromeba

The plants of autumn
Droop and wither at its touch—
This explains, of course,
Kokin Wakashū

mube yamakaze o
arashi to iuramu

Composed on the death anniversary of the Fukakusa Emperor [Ninmyō];
kusa fukaki
kasumi no tani ni
kage kakushi
teru hi no kureshi
kyō ni ya wa aranu

why a wind from the mountains
has come to be called a storm. [KKS 249]

[15]. [A poem by Kisen:]
wa ga io wa
miyako no tatsumi
shika zo sumu
yo o uijyama to
hito wa iu nari

Thus I live in a cell
southeast of the capital.
The Mountain of Grief
it is called, they say, by those
who find this life hard to bear. [KKS 983]

[16]. [Poems by Komachi:]
onoitsutsusu
nureba ya hito no
miertsuramu
yume to shiteba
samezaramashi o

Did you come to me
because I dropped off to sleep
tormented by love?
If I had known I dreamed,
I would not have awakened. [KKS 552]

iromiede
utsuro mono wa
yo no naka no
hito no kokoro no
hana ni zo arikeru

So much I have learned:
the blossom that fades away,
its color unseen,
is the flower in the heart
of one who lives in this world. [KKS 797]

wabinureba
mi o uikusa no
ne o taete
sasou mizu araba
inamu to zo omou

In this forlorn state
I find life dreary indeed;
if a stream beckoned,
I would gladly cut my roots
and float away like duckweed. [KKS 938]

A poem by Soroorihime:
wa ga seko ga
kubeki yoi nari
sasagani no
kumo no furumai
kanete shirushi mo

I know in advance
from the acts of this spider
like a tiny crab:
tonight is surely a night
when my beloved will come. [KKS 1110]

Kana Preface

Do you not know it—
that when my longing wells up
I walk by your house,
crying like the passing geese,
the first wild geese of autumn? [KKS 735]

kagamiyama
iza tachiyoretic
mite yukamu
toshi henuru mi wa
oi ya shinuru to

Before going on,
let me stop by Mirror Mountain
to inspect myself:
have I become an old man
after living all these years? [KKS 899]
THE KAMAKURA PERIOD

SHINKOKINSHÔ, TRAVEL, NO. 987
Composed when going to the eastern provinces.

Koe ni odoroku  
Natsu no hinobushi

Did I ever imagine

Koe no tabete  
Mata koyubeshi to

I would make this pass again

Omoi kya

Inoichi nairikeri

Such is life!

Sayononaka yama

Sayononaka Mountain.

SHINKOKINSHÔ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1613
On Mount Fuji, composed when carrying out religious practices in the eastern provinces.

Kaze ni nabiku  
Fuji no keburi no
Sora ni kite

Trailing in the wind,

Yukute mo shiranu

Fades into the sky

Waga omoi kana

Just like my own thoughts.

21. This is the first of a series of thirteen poems written by Saigyo late in life. It is thought that they were composed shortly after his second trip to Michinoku, around 1288. They are unusually playful and colloquial in tone and are thus called toawabure uta (playful poems). Some commentators believe, however, that these play poems contain deeper Buddhist connotations and that this poem in particular describes a moment of awakening analogous to enlightenment.

22. Sayonokaka Mountain, in present-day Shizuka Prefecture, was a difficult pass along the Eastern Sea Road. This poem was composed on Saigyo's second trip to Michinoki and refers to his amazement at being able to cross Sayonokaka some forty years after his first trip. The key to the poem lies in the fourth line, translated here as "Such is life!" Inoichi refers to the poet's life or lifespan, but it can also mean "fate" or "destiny." Long life is remarkable when one assumes that life is fleeting and insubstantial.

23. Nabiku (trailing), keburi (smoke), shiranu (destination unknown), and omoi (thoughts/longing) all are words traditionally used in love poems. The hi of omoi also suggests fire (hi). Mount Fuji was long a symbol of smoldering passion. Hence, this poem is placed in the love section of Seikyô shinsinkô, but it is placed in the miscellaneous category of the Shinkokinshô, and most commentators go out of their way to deemphasize the love imagery. According to Saigyo's friend Ien, Saigyo himself considered this perhaps his best poem (jinsaka), and it has received critical and popular acclaim. The nexus of meaning is thought to be in the word omoi. In a traditional love poem, these "thoughts" would imply a lover or longing. The first half of the poem, while suggesting love imagery, can also be interpreted as funerary, with the image of smoke fading away suggesting the smoke of a funeral pyre. The death imagery suggests that it is not only his thoughts but also himself that is trailing toward extinction, or nirvana. "Destination unknown" is a pivot phrase that modifies both the smoke and the poet's thoughts.

SHINKOKINSHÔ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1536

Fuku ni kero  
Waga yo no kage o
Omou ma ni

As I ponder

Haruka ni tsuki no

My waning shadow

Katabuki ni keri

Of life far gone,

In the distance

The moon sets.

SHINKOKINSHÔ, BUDDHIST POEMS, NO. 1978
On looking at one's heart.

Yami harate  
Kokoro no sora ni
Sumu tsuki wa

Darkness dispels,

And the moon shining clear

Nishi no yamabe ya

In my heart's sky

Chishaku narunamu

Now seems to near

The western hills.

[Introduction and translations by Jack Stoneman]

FUJIWARA NO SHUNZEI

Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204), also known by the alternative reading of Fujiwara no Toshinari, was the third son of Toshitada, a provisional junior counselor (gon-chûnagon) who died when Shunzei was ten years old. His mother was the daughter of Asui, the governor of Iyo. In his youth, Shunzei was the governor of Mimasaka, Kago, and other provinces, but in his middle years, his bureaucratic career stalled, eventually leading to his decision to take vows at the age of sixty-three and assume the Buddhist name of Shakua. After taking vows, he was supported by Kujô Kanezane, of the regent family, and concentrated on reviving his family fortunes through poetry.

According to an episode recounted in Kamo no Chômei's Mumyôshô, when

24. Fuku ni kero is generally used to mean night or autumn "growing deep." It can also mean "growing old." Saigyo puts on the word yo, which can mean "one's life" as well as "night." Kage can mean "shadow" or "one's physical form" (or face). If we take yo to be one's lifetime, then kage would be the accumulation of one's life experiences. If we take ma to be a moment, this becomes a sudden awakening to the reality of old age. If we take ma to be a period of time, we can imagine the poet pondering his long life throughout the night, only to notice that in the meantime the moon has begun to set.

25. The topic of this poem is kamishini (looking at one's heart)—that is, meditation on the heart and self-realization. Often in Buddhist discourse, the heart is compared to a mirror that, when clear and unperturbed, is able to reflect the full bright moon, a symbol of the Buddha and the Buddhist law. The darkness is that of attachment and sin. The "western hills" symbolize the Western Paradise of Amida Buddha. This poem was chosen as the final entry in the Shinkokinshô, occupying a privileged position.
asked about his “Seeing an Image of Cherry Blossoms” (Omokage ni hana no sugata) poem and his “As Evening Approaches” (Yū sareba noke) poem, Shunzei noted that the first could not be compared with the second. The first embodied the refined and elegant aesthetics of poetry up through the Shikushū (1151–1154), the sixth imperial waka anthology. But the second poem drew on a much earlier classical text (The Tales of Ise), creating a double image of both the present and a fictional past. This image, in turn, created a new kind of poetry and poetic world that was manifested in the Senzaishū (1183), the seventh imperial anthology of waka, which includes this poem, and later in the Shinkokinshū (1205), the eighth imperial anthology. For Shunzei, the essence of poetry was not the rhetoric or the novelty of the conception but the hidden depths (yūgen) that derived from rhythm and sound. Like many of the poets in this period, Shunzei wrote on fixed topics for public occasions, which meant composing on the established associations of the topic, but at the same time he tried to revive the subjectivity (emotional position and personal perspective) of the poet.

In the middle of a career that spanned most of the twelfth century, Shunzei came into his own in his fifties as a strong competitor of Fujiwara no Kiyonuke (1104–1172), head of the Rokujō family, which was highly conservative and stressed the study of the ancient period. In 1188, at the age of seventy-five, Shunzei was commissioned to serve as the sole compiler of the Senzaishū, an event that consolidated his eminence as leader of the world of court poetry and enabled him to establish his Mikohi family as the dominant poetry family in the service of the imperial household, against any remaining competition from the Rokujō family. Shunzei did his most influential work as a teacher and scholar in his last ten years, serving as a judge for the noted Poetry Match in Six Hundred Rounds (Roppyakubun Uta-awase) and writing Poetic Styles from the Past (Korai fiteishū, 1197), which explains his mature views of poetry. Among his many disciples were several major Shinkokinshū poets, including Priest Jakuren, Princess Shokushi, Fujiwara no Jotaka, his eponymous adopted daughter (known only as Daughter of Shunzei), and his son Fujiwara no Tetka. Seventy-two of his poems were included in the Shinkokinshū.

**SELECTED POEMS**

**SHINKOKUSHU, SPRING 1, NO. 57**

Composed when the retired emperor Sutoku made a royal visit to Kone Palace and announced the topic of “traveling afar to see mountain flowers.”

**omokage ni hana no sugata o sahotdate**

Seeing an image of cherry blossoms ahead of me

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ikue koekimyo</th>
<th>I crossed one mountain after another—white clouds on the peaks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mine no shirakumo</td>
<td>Will I ever again seek cherry blossoms in the royal fields of Katano?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| mata ya min | 山々を越え
| Katano no mina no | 倒在の花見
| sakuragari | 桜の華
| hana no yuki chinu | 雪の木の花
| haru no akaban | 春の朝

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26. The poet, who travels over one mountain after another, keeps “seeing” the cherry blossoms in his mind’s eye and “seeing” them ahead in the form of white clouds on the peaks. The weariness of a journey has apparently caused him almost to hallucinate. If the white clouds are peaks that he has already crossed, they suggest the disappointment of passing peaks that were snow-capped rather than covered with cherry blossoms. The poem has a moral ending, a characteristic of poetry of this period.

27. The verse breaks after the first and third measures and ends in a nominal, creating a fragmentary poem. The poem takes up the theme of age and impermanence, implying that the poet will not have the opportunity to enjoy this beauty again. The line “early dawn in spring” (hara no akaban) comes from the opening of Set Shōnagon’s Pillow Book, implying the most beautiful aspect of spring. The second and third measures recall The Tales of Ise, sec. 85, when Prince Konoe goes to Katano, to the Nightingale-in-a-Tree, a place noted for cherry blossoms, together with his friends, including Narihira, to enjoy cherry blossoms, drink wine, and compose poems, one of which was “It is because they fall soon that the cherry blossoms are so admired. What can we long in this fleeting world?” (pp. 180–200). Through allusion, Shunzei places himself in the position of Narihira and his companions, who wonder whether they will ever again be with Prince Konoe, who subsequently encountered misfortune. Shunzei composed the poem at a poet’s party hosted by the aristocrat and poet Fujiwara no Yoshitane in 1195, when Shunzei was eighty-two years old.

28. Shunzei composed this on the topic “Cuckoo” (hototogisu) for a hundred-poem sequence (byobushu) sponsored by Fujiwara no Katsuzane, minister of the right, in 1170. In the waka tradition, the mountain cuckoo lives in the hills and visits the capital in the Fifth Month, implying that the grass hut is in the hills and that the rains are the long, melancholy rains of summer. The mood of unceasing loneliness is further developed by an allusion to a famous verse in the Wakan Rōdō (no. 555), in which Bo Juyi compares his present situation, as an official who has retired to Mount Lu, with that of his three friends, who still are flourishing in government: "While flowers bloom at the Orchid Bureau, your tent beneath broad eaves. On Mount Lu a night of rain here in my thatched hut." The lines "...I long tonight for the past" refer to Bo Juyi’s thoughts of a happier time and also to the author’s memory of his days at the imperial court. Two years earlier, in 1175, Shunzei, after falling seriously ill, had taken holy vows and assumed the Buddhist name of Shakuza.
SENZAISHÔ, AUTUMN 1, NO. 250

As evening approaches
the autumn wind over the field
pierces my body—
a quail cries
in the deep grass of Fukakusa. 29

SHINKOKINSHÔ, LOVE 2, NO. 1107

Sent to a woman on a rainy day.

When I gaze off
toward your skies,
unable to bear the longing,
the spring rain falls,
parting the mist. 30

SENZAISHÔ, MISCELLANEOUS, NO. 1148

While composing poems for a one-hundred-poem collection on personal grievances, he composed the following on the topic ‘deer’:

Ah, this world!
No way beyond:
even entering deep hills
where my thoughts would dwell,
I hear the deer crying . . . 31

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The Kamakura Period

Poetic Styles from the Past (Xorai Fûteishô, 1197)

Poetic Styles from the Past was written by Shunzei toward the end of his long career. It is generally assumed that he offered the text to Princess Shokun (also called Shi-kishi) in 1197. The first volume begins with a general introduction that is followed by a history of waka from the ancient period to the Senzaishô (187). The second volume begins with another general statement on the essence of waka that is followed by poetry chosen from the seven imperial anthologies starting with the Kokinshô through the Senzaishô. 11

When Shunzei speaks here of the “heart” (kôro) of a poet, he is referring to the heart of many poetic predecessors, who composed with a communal heart/mind (kôro). According to Shunzei, to enter into the path of poetry is to participate in this communal mind, which he explains by drawing on Calm and Contemplation (Mokai shiguan; J. Maka shikan), a major treatise by the Chinese Buddhist thinker Zhiyi (Chigi, 538–597). In turn, Calm and Contemplation explains how the Buddha transmitted the dharma, the Buddhist law, from individual to individual. Shunzei then describes how poetry—and implicitly the communal memory—was passed down from generation to generation. Instead of listing famous poets, Shunzei recounts the major poetic anthologies: the Man'yôshû, Kokinshô, Genjôshô, and Shûshôshû. The Kana Preface to the Kokinshô notes that poetry comes from the seed of the heart. Shunzei, by contrast, states that poetry comes from the poetic heart that exists in the “original heart” (moto no kôro), and he implies that aesthetic sensibility is created, preserved by, and passed on through poetry. Poetry thus actively creates the world of sensibility.

Shunzei draws on Tendai thought for two purposes: to explain the notion of the transmission of poetry and to explain that the ways of poetry and of the Buddhist law are one and the same. Both points work against the doctrine that poetry is kyôgen kigo (wild words and decorative phrases), arguing that poetry shares many of the characteristics of Buddhism: the transmission of the holy truth (through the poetic anthropologies), a reverence for the way (of poetry), the difficulty of explaining the deeper meaning (of the poem), the importance of meditation (of calm-and-contemplation) in understanding the depths of poetry, and the recognition that the way of poetry and the way of the Buddha are one and the same.

Shunzei also implicitly invokes the Three Truths (Saotai): emptiness (ki), provisionalism (ke), and the middle way (sho), a paradigm acknowledging the consistence of emptiness and provisionalism and the transcendence of both. He uses these to

29. Fukakusa (literally, “deep grass”) is the name of a secluded village to the south of Kyoto. In a footnote to this poem in the Ichinashi jûka-awase (1902–1924), Shunzei notes that the quail refers to the woman in Fukakusa village in The Tales of Ise, sec. 125, in which the man is moved by the woman’s song and decides to remain (pp. 203–205). The allusion suggests that the speaker in Shunzei’s poem is the woman who has grown weary of waiting for her lover, that the cry of the quail is that of the abandoned woman, and that the grass has grown deep as a result of the man’s neglect. The autumn wind penetrates the body not only of the speaker but of the abandoned woman.

30. The headline to this poem is Chûshû einu, Shunzei’s personal poetry collection, notes: “During the spring, sent to the residence of a woman for whom I longed.” Shunzei apparently cannot visit his love. He can only look in her direction, but the view is blocked by the misty spring rain. The landscape becomes a projection of the apparent social barrier and a metaphor for the speaker’s melancholy.

31. This poem is a lament (yukai) about one’s own misfortune. In 1140 or 1141, when Shunzei was still young, around twenty-six or twenty-seven, he had difficulty rising in the bureaucracy.
advocate his own position, that poetry should not be regarded as dualistic, as consisting of only kokoro (meaning) and kotoba (diction), but should achieve the ideal of combining deep meaning and beautiful words. Although kokoro and kotoba are distinct, the ultimate goal—the middle way—is sugata, the poetic style or verbal expression, which emerges from both kokoro and kotoba and transcends the duality of the two.

The origins of Japanese poetry are distant, and the history of its transmission is long. Ever since the age of the powerful gods, when poetry became the art of this land, its expressions have encompassed the six modes, and its words have flourished for myriad generations. In the well-known words of the Kana Preface to the Kokinshū, the songs of Japan take the human heart as their seed and flourish as myriad leaves of words. As a result, whether we seek out the cherry blossoms of spring or view the tinted leaves of autumn, if we did not have what is called poetry, no one would know the color or the scent. What would we have for an original heart? For this reason, our emperors, one generation after another, have not abandoned poetry, and the members of various clans have never stopped competing to show their appreciation of poetry.

In the past as now, whether it is poetry rulebooks, poetic treatises, or collections of poetic diction, the recording of famous places in poetry, or attempts to clarify ambiguities, one house after another has eagerly recorded these texts. Therefore, even though the contents seem to be the same, these texts have appeared in the world in great numbers. But when it comes to the style and diction of this poetry, it is difficult to distinguish the good or characterize the bad. It is extremely difficult to explain, and those who understand are few in number.

Well, then, at the beginning of that text entitled Calm and Contemplation, a person called Master Zhanan wrote, “The clarity and tranquillity of calm-and-contemplation is beyond anything known to previous generations.” Having heard that, I have come to realize the liminescence of its depths and its profound meaning and admire it greatly. In the same way I have attempted to understand the good, the bad, and the depth of poetry—all of which has been difficult to describe in words. But I believe that it is possible to understand it by comparing it with calm-and-contemplation.

A passage in Calm and Contemplation makes clear the process by which the Buddha transmitted the dharma, the law of the Buddha, and informs us just how the way of the dharma has been passed down to the present. The great enlightened one, Shakyamuni, passed the dharma to Kanjya, who, in turn, transmitted it to Ananda. It was passed down in this fashion from teacher to disciple through twenty-three people. When we hear about the manner in which this law was passed down, we cannot help but feel great reverence. Japanese poetry has similarly been passed down from the distant past, and things called anthologies were compiled, and these enable us to attain a deep grasp of the forms of poetry, beginning with that in the Man'yōshū and continuing through that in the Kokinshū, Cosenshū, Shitokushi, and on down.

But the way of the Buddha as propounded by Shakyamuni has profound meaning, whereas poetry resembles the frivolity of floating words and spurious phrases. But the depth of things manifests itself here, and through this connection, poetry has led people to the way of the Buddha. Since the suffering caused by attachment is nothing other than enlightenment, the Lotus Sutra states that “if a non-Buddhist classical text advocates doing something that helps one to live, that is following the proper path of the Buddha.” The Fugen

33. Yamato uta, as opposed to Chinese poetry.
34. The opening to the Kosei fitteishō draws on the Kana Preface to the Kokinshū, which describes the history of the genre and outlines the “six modes” (sa) of poetic expression.
35. This echoes the “six modes” (sa) mentioned in the Kana Preface to the Kokinshū, which, in turn, derives from the six modes in the Great Preface to the Book of Songs.
36. That is, the waka tradition never dies.
37. The “color” and “scent”—that is, the beauty of the autumn leaves and flowers, which represent nature and the seasons in classical Japanese poetry.
38. Shunzei uses the term “original heart” (moto no kokoro), which suggests the term haru, or the poetic essence of a topic based on poetic or literary precedent. Shunzei describes two kinds of hearts (kokoro). The first is found in the preface to the Kokinshū: the emotions of this heart, which reach to the world, grow into the words of the poem. The second heart is the original heart, a subjective state that sees and grasps the world as created by poetry. Shunzei implies that without poetry, we would not recognize or know how to react to the beauties of nature.
39. Shiki (poetic rule books), man (poetic treatises), and shinmatsura (collections of poetic words).
40. Sugata indicates the style or expressive form of the poem. According to Shunzei’s poetic judgment, sugata is the rhythm that emerges from the fusion of kokoro and kotoba. As related to kotoba (diction), sugata stresses the flow of the words; as related to kokoro (meaning or content), sugata stresses conceptualization.
41. The opening line of Calm and Contemplation (Maya zikan), based on the lectures of the Chinese Buddhist thinker Zhiyi (Chi) and transcribed by his disciple Zheng’an (J. Shian, 538–597) and transmitted by his disciple Zhan’an (J. Shian, 561–632). In zikan (calm-and-contemplation), the zhi is the meditative act through which confused and random perception is brought to a stop. This stoppage is made possible through contemplation (kai).
42. Before the existence of the Tendai school.
43. Kanjya (J. Kaysh) and Ananda (J. Anzan) are two of the ten disciples of Shakyamuni.
44. Poetic style expression (sugata/kotoba) and implicitly the “original heart” (moto no kokoro) are passed down by poetic anthologies such as the Man'yōshū and the Kokinshū. The Kokinshū, Cosenshū, and Shitokushi are the Three Anthologies (Sandashiki), the first of the imperial walk anthologies.
45. Fugen kigo (floating words and spurious phrases), a variation on kyōgen kigo (wild words and decorative phrases), represents the negative Buddhist view of literature as deceptive and causing sin.
46. The depth of things in which the way of poetry and the way of the Buddha merge.
Bodhisattva Sutra states, "What should be called sin? What should be called fortune? There is nothing inherent in things that makes them either good or bad. The mind by its very nature is empty." Thus when I speak of the depth of the way of poetry, I speak of it in terms of the Three Truths, of emptiness, the provisional, and the middle way.

In attempting to speak of the positive aspect of poetry, Lord Kintō, the major counselor of the Fourth Ward, called his collection the *Collection of Golden Jewels,* and in the preface to the *Goshūshō*, it appears that Lord Michitoki said, "Its words [kotoba] are like brocade; its meaning [kokoro] is deeper than the ocean." Although poetry is not always like a brocade, if you read poetry aloud and recite it to a rhythm, it will sound both elegant [en] and moving [aware]. Poetry was originally something to be recited aloud, and so, depending on the voice, it can sound good or bad.

In regard to the preceding, over the years, I have wanted, in one way or another, to express this. But even though I have felt these things in my heart, it was difficult to put them in words; and even though I have thought about this, it has been difficult to speak of it and thus time has passed.

But now a certain exalted personage, having profoundly understood the way of Japanese poetry, stated, "One says that the style [augate] of the poetry is fine or that the words are beautiful. With regard to what kind of poems does one say this? About composing poems in general, even if the words are as long as the fisherfolk's cord, please gather them like seaweed and offer them to me."

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47. *Kan-fo-en-gyō* (Scripture on the Practice of the Contemplation of the Bodhisattva Sama-nadhana) is a sutra that expands on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

48. Shunzei here introduces the Three Truths (Sanjū), or Ki-ge-šū (emptiness, the provisional, the middle way), advocated by Tendai Buddhism. The first truth is ki (emptiness), that all phenomena are empty of self, that nothing is unconditional or independent. The second truth is ge (the provisional), that all phenomena exist provisionally. The third truth is shū (the middle way), which is the recognition of the independence of ki and ge, of the empty and the provisional. The world is empty, without anything permanent, but the world also exists as a phenomenon, as samurai. Shunzei brings in this notion of non-dualism, or the middle way, to show that there is no difference between the sacred and the profane. The two are one. This implies that poetic activity is Buddhist activity. In short, Shunzei uses the "Three Truths" or the Middle Way as a defense against the notion of hyogen aye, that the composition of poetry is a Buddhist sin.

49. *Kingo-to-shū* (1007), a private anthology edited by Fujiwara no Kintō (956–1041), with 78 poems. Kintō was the editor of *Wakan ō-shū*, *Shinsetsu zuhō*, and other poetic treatises.

50. Fujiwara no Kintō and Fujiwara no Michitoshi identify poetry with kotoba (diction) and kokoro (meaning). This kotoba/kokoro dualism dominated waka poetry from Ki no Tsurayuki onward. Drawing on the concept of the Three Truths of Tendai, Shunzei suggests that the two become one in augate. In expression and style, which can be appreciated fully only when read aloud to a rhythm. This represents a fundamental change in the approach to poetry, which had been thought to rest on the dualistic notion of kotoba and kokoro.

51. This refers to Princess Shōkō, for whom this collection was composed.

52. To study numerous poems.

53. "Dye my heart with the color of the pine's at Suminoue" means to pray for the protection of the god of poetry at Sumiyoshi. "Sway in the direction of the smoke at Shioya" means that "my writing has been lopsided."

54. That is, gather a large number of poems.
morninao dew; the ink that I have rubbed has been washed away, and the traces of
the brush of old age, increasingly uncertain, have come to an end. These
are the reasons that I have called this a collection of notes on poetic styles
[sugata] from the ancient period to the present.56.

As the months and the seasons change and as the cherry blossoms give way
to bright autumn leaves, we are reminded of the expressions [sugata koto-
ba] of poetry and feel as though we can discern the quality and character of poems.56

At the beginning of spring, the colors are many—the rose plum near the
evans, its blossoms emerging from beneath the snow, and the plum blossoms
in the hedge of the peasant's house—and yet their fragrance is the same, pen-
etrating the sleeve that breaks off the branches and clinging to the body. When
spring flowers are at their height, the cherry blossoms in the hills of Yoshino
become confused with the lingering snow, not to mention the cherry blossoms
in full bloom at the imperial palace, which look like layers of white clouds. As the
spring deepens, the frogs sing amid the mountain roses at Ide, and in the
waves of the wisteria on the riverbank, the evening warbler appears to regret
the eventual passing of spring—all these things leave a deep impression on me.
The iris in the Iwagaki swamps, the azaleas that lighten the foothills—on each
occasion there is nothing that does not move someone. . . .

When winter comes, frost forms heavily on the withered leaves of the reeds,
frozen by ice on the water's edge. Needless to say, when the snow falls, it is
mistaken for flowers blooming in the rocks. And as for the snow that lies on the
pines, green to the end, as the end of the year quickly approaches, I feel the
ice of my sleeves piercing my body. If one understands the style of Japanese
poetry in this fashion, thinking in this way of the passage of the four seasons,
truly, one's expression [sugata] will be elevated, pure, charming, and elegant.57

POETRY MATCHES (UTA-AWASE)

Poetry matches (uta-awase) were both a major literary and a social activity of
the Heian aristocracy. In this unique blend, literature, fine arts, aesthetic re-

55. Shunzei implicitly opposes the Konsō Taisōshō to the shiki (rule books), zuinō (poetic
treatises), and attamakura (fiction collections), which were about rules, precedents, and examples
but did not embody the way of poetry. One "awakens" to the way of poetry by immersing oneself
in the larger transmission, which includes poetry from the Man'yōshū to the recent present,
particularly the Sandōshō.

56. As the seasons change, we recall the various poetic associations with things in nature. In
the following description, Shunzei uses poetic expressions drawn from earlier poetry to transmit
the quintessential associations of seasonal topics.

57. The terms used here are "elevated" (takaku), "pure" (kyouge), "charming" (en), and "el-
egant" (yō).

58. The Seiryō Hall (Seiryōden) was the personal residence of the emperor in the Inner
Palace.
through the Meiji period (1868–1912), their direct influence on the development of poetry diminished sharply after the Kamakura period.

POETRY MATCHES AT THE INNER PALACE IN 960
(TENTOKU YO’KEN DAIKU UTA-ÅWASE, 960)

Hosted by Emperor Murakami on the last day of the Third Month of Tentoku 4 (960) after nearly a month of preparation, this event was to be remembered as the outstanding example of the courtly poetry match. Four different records, in both Chinese and Japanese, survive, recording everything down to the minutest details about the attire of the participants, who included some of the finest poets of the day. In charge of evaluating the poems and pronouncing the verdicts was the minister of the left, Fujiwara no Saneyori (900–970), a distinguished poet himself as well as the highest-ranking official in the court. The match consisted of twenty rounds on twelve different topics: “Mist” (kasumi, a seasonal motif for early spring), “The Bush Warbler” (two rounds), “Green Willows,” “Cherry Blossoms” (three rounds), “Late Winter,” “Wisteria,” “Late Autumn,” “Early Summer,” “White Verbena,” “The Cuckoo” (two rounds), “Summer Grasses,” and “Love” (five rounds). As many as thirty-six of the total of forty poems were later included in the twenty-one imperial collections of waka, which testifies to the great prestige that the event enjoyed in subsequent centuries. Also indicative of its historical significance is the wealth of anecdotes based on episodes in the participants’ lives. According to one of the most famous, the poet Taniami fell ill after losing to his opponent in the twentieth round and eventually died as a result.

Round 1: Mist

**LEFT (WINNER)**

Kurashishi no yama no kai yori
harugasumi
Tashi o tsunite ya
Tashiwatararu
Fujiwara no Aastada

**RIGHT**

furuse to wa
harumaki ni keri
Midaka no hara o
kasumi no kometari

The old capital
shows signs of spring:
mist engulfs
the plain of Mikaki
at fuki Yoshino.

Taira no Kenemori

After the poems were read, I was ordered to decide the winner but hesitated, saying: “I myself can barely put together thirty-one syllables.” It would be quite difficult for me to decide the winner. I humbly implore that His Majesty judge.” The emperor declared: “If a winner is not selected, the interest in today’s event will wane, and later generations will surely remember us with consternation. A decision must be made promptly.” His Highness’s refusal made the futility of my hesitation all the more apparent.

“Laying one new year upon another in the Storehouse Hills (Kurashashiyama)” in the Left’s poem is quite satisfactory. The same is true of linking “crosses” with “bridge.” And the configuration (furumat) of the poem leaves nothing to be desired. For the Right’s poem, how, after all, does “old capital” evoke the coming of spring? And “mist engulfs” [the plain] seems startling (oosoroshi), doesn’t it? Between the two, only His Majesty could decide. I looked repeatedly for him to make a sign, but His Highness expressed no preference. Hence, I declared the Left’s poem the winner.

65 A middle-rank courtier, poet, Kenemori (d. 990) reached the junior fifth rank upper.
Eighty-three of his poems figure in the twenty-one imperial collections (shokashu).
66 In other words, cannot compose a waka.
67 This exchange between Emperor Murakami and the judge Saneyori, aside from certain comic qualities, well expresses the participants’ consciousness of the historical importance of the event. Also, it was customary that the Left team win the first round.
68 The judge praises the skillful use of word associations (eigo). The name Kurashishi contains the word Ashiku (bridge) to which the image of crossing (wakari) is tied.
69 This event is also notable for the use of critical terms that become common currency in later poetic criticism and commentary. Configuration (furuma) denotes the form or shaping of a poem, as opposed to folklore (meaning, content). In later poetic criticism, the term nagatou is more commonly used.
70 The term oosoroshi was widely used to criticize the use of words that contrasted with the customary decorum associated with waka, especially at formal occasions such as poetry competitions. In this case, the judge condemns Kenemori’s use of the transitive verb kuru (to crowd, engulf) instead of the more common tetu (to rise, linger). The poem might have also been considered inappropriate for its inauspicious overtones. The Mikaki Plain was a pillow word used to refer to the old capital, Nara. Evoking the old city in mix contrasted with the festive atmosphere of the event.
first encounter with Hair Comb Fields, when he [transformed her into a comb and] placed it in his hair. 'I met you but once' implies that they already have met, but the final line, 'how I would like to set you right!' suggests that he has not yet done so. The text seems to contradict itself. In such cases one should ask the poet. This differs from the original text. Is there perhaps a mistake? No verdict can be pronounced.

Mototomi said: "I have never before seen phrases like 'How regrettable!' used in poems for poetry matches. This is beneath contempt. As the people of old said, in composing poetry both in Chinese and Japanese, one puts the blossoms [hanam] first, and the fruit [mi] second. Thus, such phrases are never used in any of the family collections or in poetry matches, let alone in an opening line. And 'the crane that lives in the shade of the clouds'—this is something I have yet to encounter in waka. I wonder whether it is a reference to a Chinese text. Perhaps it refers to the episode 'Crane Hovering Under the Sun' in the Shihuo. But the next line in that text reads: 'See the crane make its way through the blue clouds.' It obviously suggests that the crane is flying in the shade of the clouds, not that it lives in the clouds; or perhaps the poet is calling cranes the sons of Huainan that entered the clouds. The Classic of Cranes by Lord Genkin says: 'At the age of 180, cranes meet and bear offspring.' If that is the case, how can this be appropriate for a person? Furthermore, since there is no mention [in this anecdote] of 'dwelling in the shade of clouds,' it seems irrelevant. On the whole, neither the words nor the sense of this poem is acceptable. As for the Right's poem, there are no errors of diction, and the form is faultless. Would it be wrong to say that it is acceptable?"

77. Toshiyori is suggesting that the poem in question differs from the poem originally composed for the match.
78. Mototomi is right: the words do not seem to appear in previous poems.
79. The maxim is cited in Kiyomizu's Book of Riddles (Futakuro-shishi, mid-twelfth century), but a similar metaphor had already been used in the neme (Sino-Japanese) prose to the Kokushiki. It refers to the primacy of diction over content.
80. Mototomi has evidently mistaken the word tatsumi (dragon) for tatsu (crane), which would read identically in a kana transcription without disyllables marking the voiced and unvoiced consonants.
81. Shihuo zizhi (J. Senju: shingi), a (Liu) Song-dynasty (420-47) collection of anecdotes compiled in the first half of the fifth century.
82. There are several variants of this text, but the part cited by Mototomi does not appear in the most popular version.
83. A reference to another Chinese legend contained in the Shihonshu attributed to Ge Hong (J. Kakô) of the Eastern Jin (J. Shin) period (371–420). According to the legend, the king of Huainan (J. Enan) achieved immortality by drinking a magic potion. Having ascended to the sky, he left the container with the residual liquid in the garden. The house dog and hen drank it and also ascended to the sky.
84. An unspecified text in Chinese. Genkin is perhaps a pseudonym of the lord of Huainan.

POETRY MATCH IN SIX HUNDRED ROUNDS
(Roppyakuban Uta-Awase, 1194)

Held over several sessions in 1194 at the residence of the then great commander of the
left, Fujiwara Yoshitane, this event was the result of an extremely long and elaborate
process of compilation, requiring years to complete. In 1192 the host commissioned
hundred-poem sequences from twelve poets, for a total of twelve hundred poems. One
twenty topics were assigned, arranged in five categories: spring, summer, autumn,
winter, and love. Once the individual sequences had been submitted, the poems
were paired into rounds, read and commented on by the team members, and finally
submitted to the leading poet of the time, Fujiwara Shunzei (1114–1204), for a final
assessment.

The event remains one of the most important in the long history of poetry matches,
notably because it foregrounded the opposition between poets of the two leading poetic
houses: the Rokujô, headed by Kenshô (1107–1170?) and Fujiwara Aktüe (1135–
1211), and the Misokida, led by Monc Jakuren (d. 1128) and Shunzei's son Teika
(1162–1244). The debates that followed each round often became the occasion for
heated disputes. Ton's (1109–1173) writes in his Shitsuh (ca. 1150) that although some
poets must often attend every round, Kenshô and Jakuren were always there
and that their meetings would often turn into quarrels, with Kenshô brandishing his
stick and Jakuren straightening his curved back. Finally, the lucidity of Shunzei's
judgments as an exposition of his poetic ideals had a tremendous impact on genera-

Spring (second part)

Round 36: Spring Dawn

LEFT
kana yo ni wa
kakoro tomei to
omou ma ni
nagame zo hatenu
hara no akebono
Just as I vow
"I won't let my heart
dwell in the world,"
I gaze without end
on this spring dawn.9
Kenshô

97. Literally, Sixth Ward. The house probably takes its name from the location one of the
residences of the house. Fujiwara no Akitsune (1105–1175).
88. The house takes its name (literally, Prince of the Left) from Prince (nike) Kasanagi, one
of the sons of Emperor Daigo (r. 857–89) who for a period of time held the position of minister
of the left (hidari).
89. Haru no akebono is a double topic that stirs much controversy in the judgment. Here,
the beauty of the scene intervenes to complicate the poet's resolution to renounce the world.
The Right said: "Using the phrase ‘spring dawn’ in the poem shows lack of consideration. If the topic is ‘Spring Dawn,’ one ought to consider carefully how to express it.” The Left said there were no particular faults to note. The Judge said: "With regard to the Left’s poem, the Right claims that the explicit use of the word ‘spring’ dawn’ is thoughtless, but that really so? Even in the case of compound topics [musubirai], only certain words of the topic are to be avoided in the poem. But in the case of a topic like ‘Spring Dawn,’ not to include it explicitly in the poem amounts to ignoring the precepts. The words ‘just as’ [ma ni] in the Left’s poem sound quite insufficient here. Thus, I must declare the Right the winner.”

The Right said: “A field of grass’ does not sound right.” The Left said: “The Right’s poem is stale.” The Judge said: “The Left’s ‘How might I recall... a field of grass?’ is, on the contrary, charming [en].” The Right’s criticism of ‘field of grass’ is most inappropriate. Murasaki Shikibu was more accomplished as a writer of tales than as a poet. And indeed, ‘The Festival of the Cherry Blossoms’ (Hana no en) is especially charming. A poet who has not read Genji should be ashamed. The Right’s poem is lacking in neither meaning nor diction. Its style, however, must be considered quite ordinary. For its merits, the Left’s poem should be declared the winner.”

Love 7

Round 7: Love Through Marine Images

LEFT

kujira toru
sakashiki umi no
soko made mo
kimi dart sumaba
namiji shinogar

The mighty sea
where whales are caught:
were you to inhabit
its farthest depths
I would cross the trail of waves.

Kenbiko
The Right (winner) said: "The Left's poem is frightening." The Left commented: "No particular faults in the Right's poem." The judge said: "Although I seem to recall that the 'where the whales are caught' in the Left's poem appears in the Man'yōshū," it must be with those poems in the mad style [kyōkai]. In any case, it sounds very frightening. Even when the Qin emperor visited Pengai, he simply said, 'Shoot the big fish!" I have never heard that he said, 'Catch it!' As a rule, poetry should strive for beauty and refinement [kōretsu]; deliberately frightening people is of no benefit to either the Way or the poet. In the Right's poem, 'The inlet of Iwami' and 'my longing [resentment]' suggest the lament of one who has failed to attain a promotion at court. The love motif is insufficient. Nevertheless, the Left's poem is inadmissible." This is a victory for the Right.102

[Translated by Gian Pietro Persiani and Lewis Cook]
the poem should be new; its diction should derive from the superior poems in the Three Collections; and the superior poems of both old and new poets should provide a model for poetic style.

Teika also is concerned about plagiarism and the lack of originality. His rules for allusive variation (honkadori) on a base poem are an extension of those he prescribed for kotoba and represent a solution to the difficulties imposed by the necessity of using only "old" diction. At the end of the preface, which is written in kanbun, Teika notes that "one should always keep in mind the scene [keiki] of old poetry and let it sink deep into the heart." Keiki refers to not just the poetic scenes and images that appear in the poetic world but also its poetic associations. Significantly, Chinese poetry, which played a significant role in the development of Heian waka, became a major source for these associations. In the original text, certain lines appear to be notes—as they are in smaller print than that of the main text—and have been placed in parentheses in the translation.

When it comes to the meaning [kokoro] of poetry, newness must come first. (One must seek a conception or an approach that has yet to be used.) When it comes to diction [kotoba], one must use old words. (One must not use anything not found in the Three Collections. The poems of ancient poets collected in the Shinkokinshū can be used in the same way.) The style [futar] of poetry can be learned from the superior poems of poets of the past. (One should not be concerned about the period but just learn from appropriate poems.)

Regarding the conception and diction of recent poets, even if it is a new phrase, one should be careful and leave it alone. (In regard to the poetry of those poets, one should never use the words from poems composed in the last seventy or eighty years.)

Poets frequently use and compose with the words of the poetry of the ancients. That already is a trend. But when using old poems and composing new poems, taking three out of the five measures [ku]103 is too much, and these poems will lack freshness. It is permissible to take three or four syllables more than two measures [ku]. However, it is too much if the content is the same and one uses words from old poems. (For example, using a foundation poem on flowers to compose on flowers or using a foundation poem on the moon to compose on the moon.) One should take a foundation poem on the seasons and compose on love or miscellaneous topics, or take a foundation poem on love and miscellaneous topics and compose on the four seasons. If done in this way, there probably will be no problems with borrowing from old poetry.

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103. There are five (3/5/7/7/7) measures (ku) in a thirty-one-syllable waka.

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One should always keep in mind the scene [keiki] of old poetry and let it sink deep into the heart. One should learn in particular from the Kokinshū, The Tales of Ise, Cosmos, ShiÅshÅ, and from superior poets in the Thirty-six Poets' Collection. (Those who should come to mind from the Thirty-six Poets' Collection are Hitomaro, Ki no Tsurayuki, Tadamine, Ise, Ôno no Komachi, and so on.)

Even if one is not a master of Japanese poetry, in order to understand the seasonal scenes, the ups and downs of the human world, and the essence of things, one should always be sure to absorb the first twenty volumes of Bojoyô's Collected Works.104 These deeply resonate with Japanese poetry.

Poetry has no master. One simply makes the old poems one's teacher. If one does one's heart in the old style and learns from the words of one's predecessors, who would not be able to learn to compose poetry? No one.

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104. Seventy-one volumes in all, of which the first twenty are on Chinese poetry.
An “allusive variation” (honkadōri) poem, by Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241)

Poetry Contest in 1500 Rounds (1202); Shin kokin wakashū #487 (compiled ca. 1205)

[When he presented poems for a one-hundred-poem sequence [on Autumn, 4th round, 1202]:

**Hitōri nuru yamadori no o no shidario ni**

*shimo okimayou toko no tsukikage*

Taken for frost resting on its long drooping tail where the pheasant sleeps alone

--moonlight falling upon his bed

(an allusive variation [honkadōri poem] with Hitomaro’s (late 7th/early 8th ce.) poem as foundation:)

**ashihiki no yamadori no o no shidario no**

*naganagashi yo o hitori ka mo nemu*

Must I sleep alone through this long, long night,

long as the drooping tail of the mountain pheasant? (Shūi wakashū #778)

Teika’s own judgment on this poem: “The pheasant’s long drooping tail, the light of the moon on the bed, meandering thoughts on a frosty night: there are many ways in which these words are lacking [kotoba warau tokoro ooku] and I have the impression that the intended meaning may be hard to fathom [kokoro mo wakaregataku haberumex].” He awarded the win to the other poem in the round.

Image: detail from, “Poetry Competition Between Poets of Different Eras” in the Mary Jackson Burke Collection, New York City
or instruction. The poetry of the ancients makes this clear, and our own poetry should be the same.

We should be careful, though, about poetry by women. The anonymous poems in the Kokinshū 21 include some that begin with those Nara-period poets who came after the Man'yōshū and continue until the early years of the present capital. 22 If we recite these poems and compare them with those of the Engi period (901–923), we will see that the former imitate the Man'yōshū in that they have a wide range of subject matter and a rich and courtly spirit. They also are smooth and refined, though, so they are truly poems appropriate to women. In ancient times men were brave and manly, and so was poetry. But by the time of the Kokinshū, even men were composing in an effeminate style, so women's and men's poems were indistinguishable. So while one could say that it is enough for women to study the Kokinshū, this collection is from an age that had declined somewhat. People's hearts were full of artifice; their words no longer were sincere [makoto]; and their poems were crafted deliberately, so their poetry was naturally poor and cumbersome in conception.

We should grasp the ancients' straightforward, lofty-minded, and courtly qualities from the Man'yōshū and, only after that, study the Kokinshū. Generations of people have forgotten this principle and have studied the Kokinshū as the basis for poetic composition, so no one is able to compose poems like those in the Kokinshū. 24 And no one really understands the spirit of the Kokinshū. When we look up at things from below, they are blocked by clouds and haze and are unclear. But if we find a ladder, we can immediately climb up it, see what is at the top, and then look at what is below. As I have said before, we can see everything in a single glance, as when we look out across the land from on top of a high mountain. It is the same with people's hearts. Although it is difficult for those below to fathom the hearts of those above, it is easy for those above to know the hearts of those below. 25 For this reason the Chinese, also, have said that we should study by beginning at the top and climbing down from there.


21. Kokinshū, the first imperial anthology of waka, was edited in the early tenth century.
22. That is, the early Heian period. The capital was moved to Heian (present-day Kyoto) in 794.
23. This is the period during which the Kokinshū was compiled.
24. The idea here is that poets can compose properly in the Kokinshū style only if they have a thorough knowledge of the Man'yōshū. Makushō continues this line of reasoning in the following section, in which he explains the methodology of learning the Man'yōshū before the Kokinshū in terms of the perspective one gains by climbing to a vantage point in order to view what lies below.
25. Those “above” and “below” refer here to the rulers and the ruled.

MOTOORI NORINAGA

Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) was born in Matusaka in Ise Province (Mie), the second son of Ozu Sadatoshi, a wholesale cotton-goods merchant. When Norinaga was eleven his father died, and when he was nineteen he went to Yamada in the same province to be adopted as the son of a paper merchant. But things did not go well there, and he returned to his original family. A year later, in 1753, his elder brother died, and Norinaga became the head of the Ozu house. He found, however, that he was not suited to be a merchant, and in 1752 he moved to Kyoto at his mother's urging to study medicine. At that time he changed his surname to Motoori. In Kyoto he read the Chinese classics under Hori Keizan (1688–1757), a Confucian scholar and a friend of Ogura Sorai (1666–1728), the founder of the Ancient Rhetoric school. Keizan then introduced Norinaga to the commentaries of Kichū (1640–1701), whose philological methodology was a cornerstone of much of Norinaga's own work.

In 1757 Norinaga returned to Matusaka to practice medicine, and around this time he produced his first treatise, “A Small Boat Punting Through the Reeds” (Ashiwaika obune), an essay on waka. In the following year he began giving lectures on The Tale of Genji and wrote “Defense of Awā” (Awā ben), a short piece in which he introduced his theory that award (pathos) is the underlying theme of Japanese literature and transcends differences of genre. He followed these preliminary studies with two major works, both written in 1763, that present his literary thought in a form that remained largely unchanged for the rest of his life. The first of these, My Personal View of Poetry (Isomokami no sasamegoto), is a treatise on waka, and the other, The Essence of The Tale of Genji (Shibun yōya), deals with the monogatari (tale/novel), specifically The Tale of Genji.

Norinaga's literary thought is centered on the notion of mono no aware, or the pathos of things. He used this term to imply a certain emotional sensitivity to and capacity for empathy, as opposed to rational thinking or rigid morality, and regarded it as a key to understanding both literature and human nature. Norinaga describes human nature as fundamentally weak and emotionally susceptible and sees the strict moral self-control demanded by Confucianism and Buddhism as suppressing natural human emotions. On one level, Norinaga's view that literature is an outgrowth of mono no aware can be read as a kind of expressive theory, but he was ultimately concerned with intersubjectivity, with grasping the emotional essence (aware) of others. For Norinaga, the objective of emotional self-expression was not only the release of pent-up emotions but also the process of understanding others, of becoming the object of emotional empathy. Modern scholars have argued that Norinaga's idea of aware, particularly his deep sympathy for the emotional plight of others, grew out of the sense
of alienation experienced at the time by urban commoners (chōnin). They have also pointed out that his theory has much in common with the idea of ninjō (human emotion), which was the basis of contemporary kabuki and joruri, and was also developed in the early nineteenth century in Tamagawa Shunsui’s (1790–1843) ninjōbon.

After his early studies of Heian literature, Norinaga’s scholarship developed in a new direction when he turned his attention to Shintō and the earliest Japanese texts. He was interested particularly in the eighth-century Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters), a mythohistory that describes the creation of Japan by the gods and the descent of the imperial line from its divine ancestor. It is said that Norinaga was urged to study the Kojiki by Kamu no Mabuchi, who was the foremost kokugaku scholar of the time. The two met in a famous one-night meeting in Matusaka in 1763, soon after which Norinaga officially registered as a student in Mabuchi’s school and began corresponding with him, discussing poetry and scholarly matters. In 1771 he wrote the first draft of The Spirit of the Gods (Naobi no mitama), which encapsulates his view of the Way of the gods, or the ancient Way, and which later became the general introduction to the Kojiki, his vast commentary on the Kojiki, which he completed in 1798.

Norinaga valued the Kojiki as a pure example of the ancient Japanese language, and in the Kojiken he tried to recover the original oral text that he believed lay underneath the obscuring layer of Chinese characters in which the Kojiki had been recorded. Other important late works of Norinaga include a J eweled Basket (Tamakatsuma), a series of essays covering a wide variety of topics begun in 1793 and written over a period of several years; The Tale of Genji, a Sm all J eweled Comb (Genji monogatari tama no ogashi), a revision of the earlier The Essence of The Tale of Genji (Shibun gyo), completed in 1796; and First Steps in the Mountains (Uyamabumi), a guide to studying the Japanese classics, written in 1798.

In his writings on Shintō and the ancient Way, Norinaga argued against the position of Ogishi Sorai, who believed that before the appearance of the Confucian sages in ancient China, the world had no ethical order. Instead, in Norinaga’s view, the true Way was a creation of the Japanese gods, not of human sages, and allowed both the individual and the state to be governed without the need for the explicit rules and rigid moral codes that he saw as characteristic of Confucianism. In his commentaries on the Japanese classics, Norinaga, like Mabuchi, believed that Japanese texts provided not only pleasure but also ethical, aesthetic, social, and political norms—that is, a “Way” (michi), which he regarded as a superior alternative to the Confucian and Buddhist “Ways.” After coming under the influence of Mabuchi, Norinaga began to attack the notion of the “Chinese spirit” (karayō), a term that he used not only to refer to the adulation of Chinese cultural artifacts, such as the Chinese writing system and Chinese texts, but also to indicate the infiltration of a foreign mode of thought,

an ethical rationalism that divides all things into good and bad. Norinaga argued that before the importation of such external artifacts, the Japanese had expressed tender, honest emotions, as depicted in the thirty-one-syllable waka and monogatari of the early periods. Today, however, owing to the influence of the “Chinese spirit,” the Japanese have lost touch with their “real emotions” (jitsujō) or “sincerity” (makoto) and have no choice but to seek them again in ancient and classical Japanese literature.

Norinaga’s work was continued by his disciples, who at first were clustered in the Ise, Mino, and Owari Provinces, with Matusaka, Norinaga’s birthplace, at the center, but gradually spread throughout the country. Norinaga’s son Motoori Norinari (1763–1828), Suzuki Akira (1764–1837), and Ishizuka Kakumaro (1764–1829) continued his linguistic studies, and Ishihara Masamasa (1765–1827) and Fuji Takanori (1764–1840) carried on his literary studies. Norinaga’s philosophy of the ancient Way was further developed by Hinta Hatazane (1775–1843), who molded it into a religious-political ideology that had a powerful influence on the movement that culminated in the Meiji Restoration. The following is Norinaga’s most famous waka.

shikishima no
yamatogokoro o
hito towaba
asahi ni niou
yamazakura hanas
If I were asked
to explain the Japanese spirit,
I would say it is
wild cherry blossoms
blooming in the morning sun.6

A SMALL BOAT PUNTING THROUGH THE REEDS
(ASHIWAKE OBIHE, 1757)

In the following selection from the opening of “A Small Boat,” Norinaga advocates an autonomous role for waka poetry by declaring that it should be subordinated to neither politics nor personal moral cultivation but should simply be an expression of authentic human emotion. As one example, he challenges the view that Buddhist monks should not compose love poetry, arguing that even though their religious practices may demand that they suppress such emotions as love, in the realm of poetry

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6. Norinaga prefixed this poem to a self-portrait dating from 1790. It represents his ideal of seeking out an essentially Japanese spirit. Cherry blossoms are a conventional image in the Japanese poetic tradition, and the morning sun is associated with Japan, which, as the country furthest to the east, is described (in both Norinaga’s time and today) as the “land of the rising sun.” Shikishima no is a makura敷, an epithet for Yamato (Japan).
MY PERSONAL VIEW OF POETRY
(HON'NEKO NO BASSANEGOTO, 1763.)

In My Personal View of Poetry Norinaga further develops many of his ideas about waka poetry that he had first presented six years earlier in "A Small Boat Paddling Through the Reeds." In My Personal View of Poetry he describes poetry as the product of the emotional experience he often refers to as "emotions, no award, or the path of things." For Norinaga, even when "known means no award" has the capacity to be deeply moved personally, as well as to elicit sympathy from others, poetry serves to establish feelings of mutual empathy that form the basis for our relations with others. Norinaga argues that deep emotions can be communicated only through language that penetrates the conscious, or design, a term he uses for an elevated form of language associated with the total realization of poetry. He then discusses the total understanding achieved through poetry as bringing certain political and social benefits. While this may seem to contradict Norinaga's earlier statement in "A Small Boat" that the essence of poetry is not to aid in governance, he is careful to point out that these political and social benefits are a secondary effect of poetry and are not part of its essential nature, which is simply to express human emotions. Another key point presented in the selections translated here is the idea that poetry is the repository of an essentially Japanese spirit, a view that has much in common with Norinaga's later writings on Shinto.

Poetry is not just something that we compose when we are unable to bear much sorrow (the path of things) and that naturally lends itself to offering solace to the heart. When we feel sorrow (pathos) very deeply, composing alone will not satisfy our heart, so we have a person listen to us and are comforted. When another hears what we have composed and sympathizes, it greatly lessens the heart. Moreover, this is something natural. For example, if a person feels something strongly about something that is difficult to keep bottled up in his heart, even if he talks to himself about it in great detail, his heart will not be eased. So he tells someone else and has him listen, and then his heart is cleared. And if the person who

knows agrees with what he says and sympathizes, the poet's heart will be cleared even more. Therefore it is difficult not to tell others about the things that we feel deeply in our heart. When we see and hear things that are unusual, frightening, or surprising, we always want to tell others about them, and it is difficult to keep them bottled up in our heart. Although it is difficult not to tell others or others when we tell them about such things, it is natural that we cannot keep them to ourselves. This is the nature of poetry, so having someone listen is truly the essence of poetry and not an accidental aspect of it. Those who fail to understand this principle say that true poetry consists simply of saying what we feel, just as we feel it, whether well or poorly, and that the aspect that makes the listener not true poetry. Although this seems reasonable at first glance, it fails to grasp the true principle of poetry. It is important that poetry be heard by another who sympathizes, so that the essential nature of poetry that we create design [yokui] in our words and sing in a drawn-out and well-modulated voice, and it has been this way since the age of the gods.

Ordinary language can explain the meaning of things in great detail, and it requires no precise poetic language, but without poetry it is difficult to express the indescribable emotions of sorrow. The reason that such deep indescribable sorrow can be expressed through poetry is because poetry has design in its words. Because of this design, even limitless sorrow can be expressed.

Our angak country is the angak country of the ten goddess Amaterasu, Omihami. It is the beautiful and magnificent angak country superior to all other countries, so people's hearts and actions, as well as the words they speak, are straightforward and elegant. In the past, the realm was governed peacefully without incident, so unlike in other countries there was not the least trace of anything bothersome or troubling. But then writings came over from China, and people began to read and study them. When people see things written about other countries in these writings, they were impressed that everything appeared to be wise and profound, and they came to think of these writings as splendid. Soon they came to do nothing but emulate their spirit, and in the Nara period everything was as it was in China. But even at this time, poetry, alone, was different from all other things, so both its spirit and its language remained in accordance with the natural spirit of our angak country from the age of the gods.

Now I will speak about the benefits for people who are sensitive to sorrow. First, those who govern the people and the country must have a detailed knowl-

all The term "angak," which is meant to convey somewhat the sense of Norinaga's self-conscious aesthetic style in this passage, is used as a translation for various kibun forms pertaining to gods and supernatural beings. This kind of deliberate aestheticism is particularly prominent in The Spirit of the Gods.
The Essence of the Tale of Genji (Shibun Yōrō, 1763)

Norinaga is considered the first major Japanese theorist of prose fiction and is noted for fitting Japanese waka poetry into the theory of the monogatari (tale/novel), which had been traditionally treated on either Confucian or Buddhist grounds, usually negatively, as immoral or deceptive, but sometimes positively, as a means of leading to virtue or enlightenment. In the passage translated here from The Essence of The Tale of Genji, Norinaga argues that the monogatari needs to be judged according to its own value system, rather than those of Confucianism and Buddhism. This value system, which monogatari share with waka poetry, is governed by the emotional sensibility that Norinaga refers to as mono no aware or the pathos of things, a sensitivity to both phenomena in the natural world, such as cherry blossoms and other traditional objects of poetic beauty, and events in the human world, particularly those that cause sorrow and suffering. He argues that in The Tale of Genji those characters who are presented as "good" are not those who obey rigid moral strictures but those who "know mono no aware," or those who are emotionally sensitive and compassionate toward others. Norinaga does not go so far as to maintain that mono no aware is a reversal of Confucian and Buddhist values but contends that when reading monogatari, we should simply suspend such moral judgments and instead focus on the depth of emotion, or mono no aware, displayed by the characters.

All judgments of good and evil differ depending on the relevant Way. They also differ depending on time, place, and circumstance. Some things are considered good according to the Way of Buddhism but evil by Confucian scholars, and some things are considered good according to the Way of Confucianism but evil by Buddhist priests. In this manner, good and evil differ. Poetry and monogatari, unlike the Ways of Buddhism and Confucianism, are not a Way for freeing ourselves from delusions and entering enlightenment, nor are they a Way for cultivating ourselves, managing our household, and governing our country. Still, they naturally contain their own good and evil.

When we investigate what is good and evil in a monogatari, we find that even though it is not explicitly different form what is good and evil in both the Ways of Confucianism and Buddhism, it is nonetheless different. First, Confucianism and Buddhism are Ways that instruct and guide people, so sometimes they conflict with human emotions and severely reprimand people. According to these Ways, it often is evil to act in accordance with our natural emotions, and so it is good to try to suppress these emotions. But monogatari are not didactic writings, so they have no relation to the good and evil of Confucianism and Buddhism. Instead, what they consider good or evil is simply the distinction between what is in keeping with human emotions and what is not.

Until now, all commentators have emulated the theories of moralistic Confucian and Buddhist writings, so they also tried to force monogatari to become didactic. They comment on what this monogatari speaks of as good as if it were evil and claim that it is this or that admonition or teaching. Commenting in this way, they often mislead the heart of the reader and lose sight of the true intentions of the author. The reason is that when they try to force the monogatari into being an admonition and view it in terms of punishing evil, they also dilute the mono no aware [pathos of things]. Although perceptive people are not led astray by the commentary, most people use it as a guide and accept things just as the commentary says to, so they are greatly misled by it. We should not read this monogatari as an admonition at all, as this is not the true intention.