WAKA AS PREMODERN JAPANESE RHETORIC

by

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ABSTRACT

This project outlines some of the main characteristics of *waka* that warrant its consideration as a premodern Japanese rhetoric. Taking a pan-historiographic approach to waka theory and practice during the years leading up to and during the Heian period (794–1185), I use culture-centered rhetorical criticism guided by the comparative theory the art of recontextualization to examine the waka tradition for its rhetorical significance. By approaching waka as a rhetoric, this project adds to scholarship on non-Western rhetorical traditions and renews conversations regarding the relationship between rhetoric and poetics. The findings of this study suggest that the waka tradition may be perceived as a rhetoric due to the separation between content and form in waka theory and the attention to discourse contingencies in waka practice. These findings are significant because little has been done to conceptualize premodern Japanese rhetoric or to provide primary texts and terminologies for which to understand it. As such, this project provides important groundwork for understanding premodern Japanese rhetorical traditions and offers numerous avenues for further study.

Poetry *always was* “rhetorical,” and always was composed according to whatever understandings of discursive art and suasive eloquence were available to poets and their audiences.

– Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* 277, emphasis in original

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GLOSSARY

Japanese Words and English Translations

Amari no kokoro	overflowing soul, see also *yo-jō* and *aware*
Aware	sensibility, sensitivity, pathos
Ba	social setting, place
Bungei	literary, literature
Chōka	long poem
Dai	poetic topic
Daiei	fixed-topic composition
Daisaku	proxy writing
Hare	formal
Hito no kokoro	human heart
Hon'i	poetic essence
Honkadori	allusive variation
Hyakushu	verses on a hundred topics
Imikotoba	substitute word
Jitsuyō	practical usefulness
Jō	impression, feeling, emotion, the way things really are
Kakai	poetry gathering
Kakekotoba	"pivot-word," pun

Kami	Japanese deity, god
Kanajo	Japanese preface to the *Kokinshū*, see *manajo*
Kanshi	Chinese poetry
Karon	waka treatise
Ke	informal
Keigo	honorifics
Kigo	seasonal word
Kiroku	household diaries
Kodai kayō	ancient song
Kokoro	sentiment, meaning, heart/mind/spirit
Kotoage	declaration
Kotoba	words, diction, language
Kotobagaki	headnotes
Kotodama	"word-spirit"
Koto no ha	leaves, see *kotoba*
Kunimi	realm-viewing
Manajo	Chinese preface to the *Kokinshū*, see *kanajo*
Meisho	famous site
Miyabi	courtliness, elegance, refinement
Mono no aware	"the pathos of things"
Moto no kokoro	"original heart"
Norito	Shinto ritual prayers
Omoi	thought

Sama	elegant style
Tanka	short poem
Ushin	deep feeling, conviction of feeling
Uta'awase	poetry contest
Uta	song, verse
Utamakura	"poem pillow," poetic epithet
Uta no michi	"way of poetry"
Wa	harmonization
Waka	Japanese song/poem
Yamato kotoba	Old Japanese language
Yamato uta	Japanese song
Yo-jō	"aesthetic plentitude," see *amari no kokoro* and *aware*
Yūgen	mystery and depth
Zōtōka	poetic dialogue

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of Project

This project provides important conceptual groundwork and evidence for why we should look to Japan's poetic tradition for insights into Japan's premodern rhetorical traditions. The attention in this project is devoted to the poetic form known as *waka* as it was conceived of and employed leading up to and during the Heian period (794–1185). I have chosen to focus on the Heian period because the court culture of this era enabled the arts, and particularly poetry, to flourish in myriad ways, and as such, the Heian period has largely become synonymous with the waka tradition. Spanning a thousand years before the rise of the haiku, the waka tradition holds numerous insights into the ways language was used for affective and suasive purposes in premodern Japan.

The composition of waka was an integral part of courtly life, both as an art form and as a communicative practice. Over the course of the Heian period, theories and practices of waka varied in response to shifts in language, culture, religion, and politics. By extrapolating key rhetorical features and characteristics of waka from throughout the Heian period, I show waka as a heterogenous rhetorical form responding to these forces and made up of diverse emphases and applications. In doing so, this project provides a general foundation of waka as a rhetoric during the Heian period from which many more

studies can find bearing and proliferate, adding nuance to the gaps that will naturally arise from such an investigation.

The particular discourse community of which this project is concerned includes courtiers and members of the Heian imperial court. Much like Athens in Ancient Greece, the Heian imperial court (*Heian-kyō*), located in Kyoto, was the center of culture and political power in Japan during the Heian period. The imperial court was made up of a complex hierarchy in which the emperor reigned at the top and various networks of ranked courtiers managed affairs related to governance and taxes, religious worship and rituals, the arts and culture, and so forth.[1] Courtiers were highly educated and skilled in calligraphy, poetry, music, and other creative pursuits. Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner state, "In such a society, breeding, cultivation, style, and aristocratic tone were the standards of admission, and those who lacked them by birth or training were excluded" (167). In Heian society, one means for courtiers to display their elegance, express themselves, and garner sympathy from others was through poetry, specifically through waka. The composition of waka was a useful skill for courtiers to possess because, in short, everyone was doing it. Therefore, it was a way to assert one's belonging to the aesthetic-oriented court society that existed during this time. Being an acknowledged member of court society was important for one's material welfare in that it was helpful for securing gainful employment and a reputation with which to utilize in romantic pursuits.

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[1] For more regarding Heian court ranks and offices, see "Appendix A: Some Notes on Rank and Office," *A Tale*, vol. 2: 789–831.

During the Heian period, courtiers' refinement came to be measured by their ability to decipher the propriety of occasion in which poetry was necessary, understand and convey poetic allusions, and recognize and refer to canonized poems, all of which required close study of the imperial poetry collections, and in particular, the first imperial collection known as the *Kokinwakashū* (*A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, ca. 905, hereafter *Kokinshū*). Many occasions, both formal (*hare*) and informal (*ke*), warranted the composition of poetry, so it was necessary to have a strong knowledge of the poetic tradition and be well-adept at poetic discourse. A fine example of this is found in the story recounted by Sei Shōnagon (lady-in-waiting to Empress Teishi) in *The Pillow Book*: "[T]he Empress placed a notebook of *Kokinshū* poems before her and started reading out the first three lines of each one, asking us to supply the remainder" (Addiss et al. 42). After the women fail to recall the poems, the Empress tells them the story of the Imperial Lady of Senyō Palace to encourage their studies. When she was an Imperial Concubine, the lady's extensive knowledge of the *Kokinshū* was put to test by Emperor Murakami: "She answered without any hesitation, just giving a few words or phrases to show that she knew each poem. And never once did she make a mistake. . . . What a triumph for the lady!" (43). The lady's impressive knowledge of the *Kokinshū* garners her praise and social standing that sets her apart from the other concubines, a significant advantage due to the marriage politics of the era. Although it was not common for courtiers to have a perfect memory of the imperial collections, "familiarity with a large number of its poems became de rigueur for all courtiers, whose everyday lives offered innumerable opportunities, both public and private, to write the notes, messages, letters, and communications almost always accompanied by a poetic composition or citation"

(Okada 85). The variety of social occasions wherein waka composition was expected as well as the need for courtiers to be able to recognize and allude to canonized poems speaks to the usefulness and prevalence of poetic composition during the Heian period.

Despite the importance of waka for rhetorical ends as seen during the Heian period, Japan's premodern poetic tradition has not been explored in relation to rhetoric. Japanese and Western scholars alike have claimed that there is no rhetorical tradition in Japan prior to the introduction of Western rhetoric during the Meiji period (1868–1912), in part because these scholars assume that Japanese rhetoric must correspond to Western rhetoric.[2] Although it is well-known among waka scholars that waka exhibit rhetorical characteristics in their use of complex figurative devices, waka's rhetorical uses within Heian court society have yet to be connected to the wider conversation of rhetorical language practices and histories of rhetoric. Additional explanations for this oversight might be that the linguistic differences between Classical Japanese and English present difficulties in translation of waka content and form. Beyond these technical challenges, there also exist intellectual hurdles for Western scholars who have a preconceived notion of what "poetry" is and how it functions in society, as well as a general lack of understanding regarding Heian court culture. While these barriers are not insurmountable, overcoming them does require a willing suspension of one's own perceptions of poetry and room for new ways of thinking about language and its rhetorical capacity.

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[2] For a summary of scholars who have considered there to be little to no evidence of premodern Japanese rhetorical traditions, see Tomasi 26–27. See also John L. Morrison's article "The Absence of a Rhetorical Tradition in Japanese Culture" (*Western Speech*, 1972) and Dominic A. LaRusso's response in "Equal Time" (*Western Speech*, 1972).

In studying waka as a rhetoric, we are faced with questions regarding the convergences and divergences of language and aesthetics, beauty and meaning, poetry and rhetoric, and more. While I do not have the space to address all of these conversations in depth, I hope to show throughout the course of this dissertation that by placing waka and rhetoric within the same purview, we can better understand how waka functioned in Heian society, consider the many appearances rhetorical traditions take, and see how language practices gain meaning within their own contexts of production. By examining waka from a rhetorical perspective, we can better account for the ways waka were used in social and political contexts and place these uses within the wider framework of aesthetic sensibility that governed Heian court action. In doing so, we can begin to see similarities as well as significant differences between rhetorical traditions produced in the West and rhetorical traditions in early Japan.

As it is impossible to account for the entirety of the waka tradition in the length allotted for this project, my analysis of waka as a rhetoric is limited to the concepts, people, and events that have been given the most attention by waka scholars and other experts in the fields of Japanese history, literature, and culture, and to the main extant waka anthologies and poetic treatises. I rely on English translations of primary texts and peer-reviewed publications from within the field of waka studies for the translations and interpretations of these texts to ensure my claims are consistent with what is currently accepted in the field of waka studies. As such, my project relies on cross-disciplinary expertise to further claims that sit at the intersection of rhetoric and waka studies.

Waka as Genre

The poetic form known as *waka* (also *tanka* or "short poem") is a 31-syllable construction in a 5-7-5-7-7-syllable pattern. The long tradition of poetry in Japan includes many other forms as well, including the *chōka* ("long poem"), the *sedōka* ("head-repeated poem"), *renga* (linked verse), and the *haiku*, which is probably the most well-known form in the Western world today. However, waka was the most prominent form of Japanese poetry used for social interactions during the Heian period, and it was the main form included in the twenty-one anthologies produced by the imperial court (Brower and Miner 4–5).[3] Therefore, waka is arguably the most significant form in Japanese poetic history (11).

The term "waka," which may be translated as "Japanese song," comes from the combination of "wa" (和), the oldest recorded name for Japan, and "ka" (歌), meaning "song."[4] *Waka* was the term used to distinguish native Japanese poetry from poetry written in Chinese, which was known as *kanshi*. Waka arose out of the oral tradition of uta (歌 "song") and was traditionally written in Yamato (Old Japanese) whether through phonetic transcription of Chinese characters or through *kana* (Japanese phonetic syllabary). The form that we know as *waka*, however, does not fully express the reach of "waka" in style or content. What I mean is that the designation of "waka" to mean a short poem of 31-syllables (as opposed to "Japanese song" or "Japanese poem" more generally) gained its meaning gradually, so we must consider the history of variances

[3] See footnote 49 regarding the imperial collections of *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) produced during the ninth century.

[4] Reference to Japan as the "land of Wa" can be found in Chinese dynastic histories from the first century BCE (de Bary et al. xxiii). For an example, see *Accounts of the Eastern Barbarians* from the History of the Kingdom of Wei (ca. 297 CE) in de Bary et al. 6–8.

along the way to its more precise codification that eventually culminated in the waka form and take into account the meanings they supply to what we now understand as waka.

This positioning of "waka" as the eventual codification of a longer history is discussed in Earl Miner's work "Waka: Features of its Constitution and Development," which has become standard curriculum for waka studies in the West. In this article, Miner lays out nine propositions that describe the general features of waka. These propositions set a solid groundwork for both understanding and interpreting waka within the context of its production. Miner's first proposition is "Waka includes a variety of forms, with waka taken to be the gradually established norm" (670). Regarding this point, Miner cites the *Kōjien* (an authoritative Japanese dictionary) definition of waka, which bears repeating: "Poems/song (uta) practiced in Japan from ancient times and distinguished by contrast with Chinese poetry. Chōka, tanka, sedoka, katauta, etc. . . . Particularly tanka in the fixed form of thirty-one syllables" (qtd. in Miner 670). Miner explains that there is debate over whether to include within this definition the *bussokku sekika* (Buddha's footprint poems) and parts of the *norito* (Shinto ritual prayers). The reasoning for this is in part because "waka of all kinds are almost always written in pure Japanese, rather than in a medium including Sinified pronunciations," a point I will address more in Chapter 3 (670).

Early poems in which the Japanese pronunciation is stressed through the use of phonetic manipulation may be considered "waka" under the literal translation of waka as "Japanese poem." Therefore, the question of what a waka *is*, is not as simple as it seems. While my points concerning the rhetorical beginnings of waka do not require lengthy

investigation into each of the waka forms mentioned in the *Kōjien* or as speculated upon by scholars, nor is there space to accommodate such an examination, I do include a few examples of poems in various other forms and position them within the framework of "waka." I also touch upon the *norito* as a related form because of their relevance to Shinto beliefs and ritual practices and because of the similarities they share with waka.

Throughout this work, for ease and consistency, I use the word "waka" when referring to Japanese poetry of 31-syllables to indicate towards the eventual use of "waka." However, when speaking of early Japanese poetry, many scholars use the phrase "Japanese verse" or *uta* (song/poem) to account for the inherent prosody and the musical and performative aspects of early waka. Nowadays, the word "tanka" is commonly used when poets compose poems of 31-syllables, and "waka" is used to refer to the same style of poetry from an earlier time.

Waka as Predicate

To describe what a waka does is on one hand as simple as stating that waka are poems of the lyric variety in which the poet expresses themselves. On the other hand, this explanation relies on oversimplifications to make waka accessible to a Western reader. The statement that waka are "poems" is alone enough to mislead. To understand why this is the case, we must first consider what accompanies the Western notion of poetry. Because waka has been categorized by Western scholars as "poetry," it has been largely relegated to the realm of artistry. As such, waka are often praised for their beauty, but are less often acknowledged for their social usefulness. The uses of waka for social and political gain are seen in the ways courtiers used waka for interpersonal communication

within the Heian Court. When approaching waka, it is necessary to push against Western conceptions of poetry in order to avoid making false assumptions about how poetry was understood and the social frameworks in which it was composed in premodern Japan. By doing so we can see some overlaps as well as divergences in Western notions of poetry and the premodern Japanese waka.

Aristotle defined poetry in his *Poetics* as a "mode of imitation," and aside from William Wordsworth's famous description of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," Aristotle's definition is probably the most fundamental understanding of poetry in the Western tradition ("Poetics" 419; Wordsworth and Coleridge 291). The source of poetry for Aristotle is human nature: we are inclined to imitate, and we enjoy seeing things imitated ("Poetics" 421). The latter, Aristotle explains, is a way of learning through inference based on likeness (421). That which is a good likeness, a good imitation, tells us something about that thing. And just like we have an in-born desire to imitate, we are also similarly drawn to harmony and rhythm. Through imitation, harmony, and rhythm, poetry arose and "diverged in two directions, according to the individual character of the writers" (422). The two main types of poetry according to Aristotle—tragedy and comedy—are imitations of either lofty or trivial matters, respectively. In writing tragic or comedic poetry, one's stylistic choices vary in a way best suited to the imitation of the subject matter. Thus it can be seen that imitation, also referred to as *mimesis*, is central to Aristotle's conception of poetry and the arts in general.

Coming from this Western understanding of poetry and the arts, it can be easy to superimpose Aristotle's concept of imitation onto Japanese waka and assume a similar

function: that poetry is representative of, a reflection of, or a contemplation of reality through likeness. However, Miner explains that waka should not be viewed as mimetic or representational of reality, but as *responsive to* reality and constitutive of reality. He states that a waka "is not a representation, that tell-tale term revealing an inescapable (Western) mimesis. Waka of various kinds are all grounded in reality and inseparable from it" ("Waka" 675–76). As will be explored in the chapters that follow, it is this responsiveness and inseparability from reality that gives waka its fundamentally rhetorical characteristics. In other words, waka were often composed as a reaction to reality and meant to have an effect upon reality. Brower and Miner explain, "Japanese poetry is far more occasional than ours; it tends to arise from clearly defined situations, to deal with topics which are socially accepted and considered proper to poetry, and to convey these in ways suggested by tradition" (18). And Miner states "that in writing a waka a given poet offers . . . a predication," something, he explains, that might be said of all poetry that is considered lyric poetry; however, waka differs in that it exhibits "an emphasis on immediacy that is not to be seen in all poetics" ("Waka" 686–87). By offering a predication, waka interacts with reality in a way that is more responsive than reflective and which ties waka to its occasion or context of production.

Along these lines, it is important to keep in mind that whenever we are examining waka, they are inevitably removed from their immediate context. The context for a poem's interpretation might have been immediately present for those involved in the exchange, but when removed from the immediate context, such as when placed in an anthology or diary, either the context for interpretation is lost, or a headnote (*kotobagaki*) is included to inform the reader of the composer's original intent and/or the setting in

which the composition took place. The use of *kotobagaki* points to the dialogic nature of waka and how waka relied on their immediate context for their affective purposes. As is seen in many instances of poetic-prose, including *The Tale of Genji* and *The Tales of Ise*, wherein poems are similarly removed from their immediate context or used as poetic dialogue among characters, the reader is supplied with information to make sense of the exchanges. Should the meaning of a poem be sufficiently contained within itself, *kotobagaki* would not be necessary. This is not to say that every poem from the period is presented with headnotes or is dialogic in nature. However, that waka are often accompanied by contextualizing prose in both their anthologized form and in fictional works speaks to the occasionality of their communicative use.

The Poetic Beginnings of Rhetoric

Framing waka as rhetoric further requires us to reorient our understanding of rhetoric and what is fundamentally "rhetorical." The Western rhetorical tradition has been conventionally grounded in rhetoric as a mode of civic discourse, a perception that stems largely from Aristotle's writings on rhetoric and subsequent Roman treatises, such as *Rhetoria ad Herennium* and Cicero's *De oratore,* among other works. In recent years, there has been a reevaluation by many scholars regarding how rhetoric as the art of civic discourse should be positioned within the wider realm of rhetorical language practices. Although it has for a long time been the standard for interpreting and creating discourse, the civic model lacks wider hermeneutic application and can skew research efforts into non-Western language practices. In other words, "[t]he conceptual lexicon of Greek rhetoric is historically contingent; there is no transhistorical essence of rhetoric, and the

categories of Greco-Roman rhetorical theory do not 'map easily' onto the verbal practices of other cultures" (MacDonald 3). Therefore, it is necessary to approach non-Western traditions of rhetoric on their own terms and interpret them from within their own contexts of production.

In many early cultures, the separations between rhetoric, poetry, magic, and song are not as distinct as they are today. Rather, language and its inherent power to invoke, persuade, flatter, and affect reality were considered as one. So when we ask "What constitutes a rhetorical tradition?", we must be prepared to take into account the overlapping aspects of language use even if that means allowing for elements that do not resemble "traditional" understandings of rhetoric.[5] In other words, we must not let our assumptions about what rhetoric *is* dictate the meaningfulness of how language functions rhetorically in various cultures through time and space. Holding too fast to any one interpretation of "rhetoric" can skew our understanding and produce misleadingly homogenous views of language use.

In his book *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, Jeffrey Walker makes a case for the poetic or epideictic as the primary mode of rhetoric. The epideictic, he explains, "is a suasive 'demonstration,' display, or showing-forth (*epideixis*) of things, leading its audience of *theôroi* to contemplation (*theôria*) and insight and ultimately to the formation of opinions and desires on matters of philosophical, social, ethical, and cultural concern"

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[5] Robert N. Gaines describes ancient rhetoric as a "corpus," stating that "we should understand ancient rhetoric to be that body of information that contains all known texts, artifacts, and discourse venues that represent the theory, pedagogy, practice, criticism, and cultural apprehension of rhetoric in the ancient European discourse community" (65). It is this conglomeration of competing interpretations and applications of early notions of rhetoric that make up what is often referred to as "Western rhetoric" or "traditional rhetoric." By viewing "rhetoric" as a corpus, we acknowledge its heterogeneity as well as the "contested concepts" around which its theoretical and practical developments orbit (Gross 34).

(9). Walker argues that the epideictic is more fundamental to rhetoric than the pragmatic ("pragmatic" meaning civic discourse constituted in deliberative or forensic rhetoric) because it is the epideictic that influences the underlying assumptions within a culture on which the pragmatic relies for its effect. He explains:

> In this view, "epideictic" appears as that which shapes and cultivates the basic codes of value and belief by which a society or culture lives; it shapes the ideologies and imageries with which, and by which, the individual members of a community identify themselves, and, perhaps most significantly, it shapes the fundamental grounds, the "deep" commitments and presuppositions, that will underlie and ultimately determine decision and debate in particular pragmatic forums. (Walker 9)

If we consider rhetoric to be "fundamentally an art of epideictic . . . that derives originally from the poetic tradition and that extends, in 'applied' versions of itself, to the practice discourses of public and private life," as Jeffery Walker argues, then we must necessarily investigate traditions of poetry for their rhetorical significance (viii). Walker argues that rhetoric "originated from an expansion of the poetic/epideictic domain, from 'song' to 'speech' to 'discourse' generally" (ix). Rather than see rhetoric as tied to democracy and civic discourse, Walker argues for a broader understanding of rhetoric that "does not depend on, rise, or fall with democratic institutions" and that hearkens back to rhetoric's poetic beginnings (x). Victoria Kahn seems to agree in saying that "the poet and the orator do not perform a merely aesthetic function; rather, the aesthetic dimension is the pre-condition of the political" (qtd. in MacDonald 437).

To account for this, more recent definitions of rhetoric have been designed to broaden the function of rhetoric beyond its traditional civic center, such as in Keith Lloyd's definition: "Rhetoric is the shaping of *What* and *How*" (*The Routledge* 4). This and other recent definitions of rhetoric, which will be examined in Chapter 2, move

rhetoric to a more globalized position that acknowledges that rhetoric "is not the domain of Ancient Athens" despite the field's continued reliance on the term "rhetoric" (5). As more and more studies of non-Western rhetorical traditions are produced, additional insights can be added to our understanding of rhetoric and what it means for something to be a rhetorical language practice. Furthermore, by examining waka at the intersection of poetry and rhetoric, we necessarily engage not only with rhetoric, but also with the poetic, thus expanding the ways poetry is seen to function rhetorically in society.

Significance of Project

The significance of this project is twofold. First, by examining waka as a rhetoric, I help expand, while at the same time reinforce, the connection between rhetoric and poetics. These language practices are often considered separately despite the fact that their origins are intertwined. According to James A. Berlin, in the nineteenth century, rhetoric and poetic largely diverged when the meaning of the term "literature" changed in response to various social and economic developments from meaning "any written work" to referring solely to "aesthetic" or "imaginative" works. The subjective evaluation of written works through the notion of "taste" or "sensibility" was subsumed by the realm of art, or the poetic, leaving the non-aesthetic, or the political and scientific works in the realm of rhetoric. He explains: "Thus was inaugurated the division between art and science, literature and politics, high culture and low culture—in general, the distinction between poetic and rhetoric" (27). Putting rhetoric and poetics back in conversation helps to illuminate important aspects of these language practices and addresses questions about how rhetoric and poetics function affectively. By examining the ways waka functioned as

a rhetoric in premodern Japan, this project adds to conversations that consider poetic traditions for their rhetorical significance.

Second, this project adds to global histories of rhetoric by providing substantial analysis of premodern Japanese poetry as rhetoric. In doing so, this project contributes to a recent push in rhetoric studies towards the inclusion of non-Western histories of rhetoric in general and to a more informed understanding of Japanese rhetorical traditions in particular, which have yet to be properly recognized and understood in the field of rhetoric. This project responds to concerns brought up in the *Octologs* and in the recently published collection *Global Rhetorical Traditions* regarding the lack of primary sources and alternatives to Greco-Roman terminologies:

> *Global Rhetorical Traditions* is predicated on the argument that translated primary sources and diverse terminologies help expand the horizon of global rhetorics and inform their critical methodologies even for non-translational work—and moreover, that "comparative" rhetorical study deserves to become a commonplace approach, even for non-comparatists. (xxi)

This project helps address the lack of primary sources of premodern Japanese rhetoric by analyzing key texts, and it also provides Japanese terms and concepts relevant to Japanese discourse practices. In summary, this project responds to the global turn in rhetorical studies.

Following the publication of Robert T. Oliver's *Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China* in 1971, the field of rhetoric studies saw a significant increase in scholars theorizing about the history of rhetoric. In the 1980s and 1990s, discussions regarding rhetorical historiography skyrocketed. During this time, scholars considered the purpose of revisiting histories—for revisions, additions, reclamations—the methods used in writing histories, and the ideologies guiding such work (Ballif 1). The original

"Octalog," an eight-scholar panel discussion held in 1988 at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, was one result of this intense interest in rhetoric's historiography. Since then, three additional "Octalogs" have been produced,[6] along with numerous other collaborative collections,[7] that continue to examine the ways rhetorical histories are understood, produced, reinforced, forgotten, and taught.

Within the discourses of the Octalogs, much has been said regarding approaches to non-Western rhetorical traditions and what it means for rhetoric as a discipline to include in its history rhetorics outside of the "traditional" canon, that is, rhetorics outside of Greco-Roman or Euro-American traditions. In the first Octalog, "The Politics of Historiography," James Berlin importantly states: "[T]here must be multiple histories of rhetoric, each identifying its unique standing place—its ground for seeing—and the terrain made available from this perspective" (6). One important theme that permeates these works is the value of writing histories of non-Western rhetorics into the traditional narrative of rhetoric. In doing so, we not only gain a better understanding of what "rhetoric" is—in all its various instantiations—but we also gain a sense of contingencies and limitations of what has for so long been deemed *the* rhetorical tradition, namely Greco-Roman rhetoric.

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[6] The *Octalogs* currently include: "Octalog I: The Politics of Historiography" (1988), "Octalog II: The (Continuing) Politics of Historiography" (1997), "Octalog III: The Politics of Historiography in 2010" (2011), and "Octalog IV: The Politics of Rhetorical Studies in 2021" (2021).

[7] Some collections stemming from the "Octalogs" include *Writing Histories of Rhetoric*, edited by Victor J. Vitanza (Southern Illinois University Press, 1994) and *Theorizing Histories of Rhetoric*, edited by Michelle Ballif (Southern Illinois University Press, 2013).

Although Oliver's investigation into ancient Indian and Chinese rhetoric, which helped spark this widespread conversation, is not without its limitations and oversights,[8] Oliver makes some worthwhile points regarding the nature of rhetoric, especially in relation to non-Western traditions. He states: "Rhetoric always is authentic only in its cultural matrix. Everywhere and always it is intrinsic as well as extrinsic. It is real only as it is an emergent from the philosophy and practice of its theorists and its practitioners. Rhetoric inevitably shares and stimulates the vitality of the society of which it is a dynamic part" (ix). Much is said within these few lines regarding both the universality of rhetoric as a communicative practice and the culturally-contingent "singularity" of rhetorical events (Ballif, "Writing" 247). On one hand, it would not be possible to study non-Western "rhetorics" without the presupposition that there are shared aspects of rhetorical practices. On the other hand, each rhetoric is couched in its own meaning-making matrix. Therefore, by broadening the field of rhetoric to include non-Western histories and traditions, we gain insights into the universally shared and culturally singular aspects of global rhetorical traditions.

Naturally arising from the recent blossoming of historiographic work, comparative studies of rhetoric have found new light as well. With new histories and traditions to consider, comparison allows us to better see the social, political, and cultural contingencies that influence rhetorical practices. Although there are risks associated with comparison, as discussed in Chapter 2, we risk much more by not comparing. Susan

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[8] LuMing Mao points out the problems the occur when scholars work exclusively with secondary sources in his analysis of Robert T. Oliver's 1971 book *Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China*. Mao explains that "the sources he relies on are sometimes not reliable, and the conclusions he arrives at subsequently become either too general or somewhat stereotyped" ("Reflective Encounters" 404).

Stanford Friedman explains: “Scholars who develop narrative theory out of a purely Western literary archive—without global comparisons of different narrative traditions—are caught, politically speaking, in a hermeneutic circle that confirms Western narrative forms as dominant, universal” (756). Friedman also states that comparison is something we cannot *not* do: “We compare because we must. We compare because it is one way in which we think or know” (755). Comparison has epistemological implications, not just in the use of comparison to better understand one’s own way of knowing things, or in knowing things better through a comparison of them, but also in the different *ways of knowing* comparison exhumes.

Even when an explicit comparison is not being made, in the way we rely on or “translate” non-Western concepts and terms into more familiar, Western terms (such as using “rhetoric” to describe a communicative practice or “invention” to describe the use of available resources for composition), comparisons are being drawn (Geertz, *Local Knowledge* 10). However, the more that these connections are made, the more “continual production” that occurs, as Byron Hawk explains, the more we are able to “outpace dominant claims to truth via names and narratives” (112). Hawk’s description of a “networked historiography,” with its multiplicities and intertwining ends, shows the way every history includes its own theories and methods that tie it to the time and context in which it is written (124). It is the multiplicity of histories that allows for ongoing meaning-making in rhetorical studies, and the knowledge produced by the accompanying comparative work will necessarily strengthen the field of rhetoric. David Gold aptly states: “[B]y setting seemingly disparate and divergent locations and rhetorical traditions in dialogue we can often illuminate their significance, both locally and nationally, past

and present" (24). As more histories of rhetoric are accounted for, a more nuanced understanding of the ways rhetorical language practices function in their respective societies will inevitably be produced. My project works alongside these efforts to add to the histories of rhetoric and to engage in comparative practices, and in doing so, to further enhance our understanding of "rhetoric."

Literature Review

As efforts have been made to reexamine, modify, and add to rhetorical history in a way that better accounts for non-Western theories and practices of rhetoric, non-Western rhetorics have speedily claimed a place in rhetorical studies and have shaped the way "rhetoric" as both a practice and theory is understood and applied. As the field of rhetoric widens in response to new frameworks for understanding communication practices across cultures and in response to the accompanying reflections borne out of such endeavors regarding the heterogeneity and contingencies of Western rhetoric, the many gaps in rhetorical historiography have become ever more apparent.

Recent efforts to account for such gaps include Carol S. Lipson and Robert A. Binkley's well-known *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks* (2004) and, more recently, *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics* (2009), as well as *The Routledge Handbook of Comparative World Rhetorics*, edited by Keith Lloyd (2021) and *Global Rhetorical Traditions*, edited by Hui Wu and Tarez Samra Graban (2023). These collections have added significantly to the histories of non-Western rhetorics. However, among these and related works, little has been written regarding Japanese rhetorical traditions. Only two chapters in what is mentioned above are devoted to Japanese traditions: Kathy Wolfe's

"The Right Use of True Words: Shinto and Shingon Buddhist Rhetoric in Ancient Japan" from *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics*, and Massimiliano Tomasi's "The Study of Rhetoric in Japan: A Survey of Rhetorical Research from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present" from *The Routledge Handbook*. Of these, only Wolfe's chapter focuses on premodern Japanese rhetoric.

Wolfe's chapter explores Shinto and Shingon Buddhist rhetoric and touches on some topics that also relate to the study of waka, such as *kotodama* ("word-spirit") and *norito* (Shinto ritual prayers). Wolfe traces certain aspects of Shinto and Shingon Buddhist rhetoric to contemporary times, citing the notion *kuuki*, which "refers to the aura responsible for the mental concurrence that emerges when the members of a group, without discussion, simply come to a decision together" (214). Wolfe provides evidence of the ways Shinto and Buddhist thought permeated the lives of the premodern Japanese and influenced their behavior. Wolfe's chapter is the first of more recent scholarship to identify language practices in premodern Japan that may constitute a rhetorical tradition. In doing so, she provides an important foundation for the claims made in my dissertation.

Michael Day's earlier work *Aimai no ronri: The Logic of Ambiguity* from 1996 also discusses Buddhist rhetoric. Day discusses Shinto-Buddhist-Confucian rhetoric as embodied by the early Buddhist ruler Prince Shotoku (575–622 CE). He states, "Shotoku's emphasis on common ground building is the earliest instance of what we might call a 'rhetorical' pronouncement in Japanese history" (97). Day identifies the *Shijing* (*The Book of Songs*) as an important rhetorical Chinese text in premodern Japan, and he touches upon some aesthetic concepts, such as *yūgen*, noting "that political and spiritual thought are . . . inseparable from aesthetic and rhetorical theory in the poetry and

prose of this age" (29). However, this is largely the extent to which he links early Japanese rhetoric with Japan's poetic tradition. Day similarly approaches Japanese traditions from a Western perspective, but he employs Japanese terms to discuss Japanese concepts and works to contextualize his analysis within Japanese culture. In this way, Day's work sets an important methodological precedent for my project.

Massamiliano Tomasi's article in *The Routledge* is drawn from his earlier work *Rhetoric in Modern Japan* published in 2004. Like most studies that concern themselves with Japanese rhetoric, Tomasi's book deals with post-Meiji era Japan. It was during the Meiji era (1868–1912) that Westernization efforts resulted in the importation of Western rhetoric. Although Tomasi's work is focused on modern Japan and is not an examination of Japan's poetic tradition, in his review of previous studies on Japan's rhetorical traditions, including Day's work, he acknowledges that "[t]hese studies do not seem to consider that early classical Japanese poetry already shows substantial evidence of a refined linguistic and aesthetic awareness, an awareness reflected in an established repertoire of poetic forms and rhetorical techniques that are distinct traits of classical Japanese literary production" (27). Tomasi explains that both Western and Japanese scholars have "dismissed the quality and relevance of Japan's premodern rhetorical tradition" and that "it was common practice to regard the Meiji period as the beginning of rhetorical studies in Japan" (27). To corroborate his claim that there is evidence of an indigenous rhetorical tradition in premodern Japan, Tomasi provides a short summary of important poets, theories, and aesthetic techniques stemming primarily from the Heian period, many of which are elaborated on in my project.

Outside of the field of rhetoric, scholars of waka have hinted at the rhetorical aspects of waka and have discussed some of the more superficial "rhetorical" qualities of waka, such as word play or other figurative devices, as in Jon LaCure's *Rhetorical Devices of the Kokinshū* (1997), but little explicit connection has been drawn between rhetoric and waka. Among the most relevant of such works is Gian Piero Persiani's article "The Public, The Private, and the In-Between" (2020), in which he discusses several case studies that show the political significance of poetry in Heian Japan. His use of the term "poetic diplomacy" to mean poetry that is used as "a means to deal with people effectively and maintain harmonious relations when the circumstances threatened to deteriorate them" has clear rhetorical undertones, despite the fact that Persiani does not openly connect waka to rhetoric (18).

Michael F. Marra's article "Playing with Japanese Songs: Politics or Pleasure" (2010) makes similar claims regarding the political undertones of waka and the intersection of politics and aesthetics in Japanese poetry. His earlier works, *The Aesthetics of Discontent: Politics and Reclusion in Medieval Japanese Literature* (1991) and *Representations of Power: The Literary Politics of Medieval Japan* (1993), trace the relationship between literature and politics in medieval Japan. Although somewhat outside the realm of my project, these works reinforce the idea that literature functioned rhetorically in Japan in unique ways. As a "cultural production" of the aristocratic class, the "courtly language, aesthetic rules, [and] mythological thought" that came out of the Heian period were put to new applications in the changing landscape of Japan's sociopolitical economy during the medieval era (*Representations* 6).

Gustav Heldt's book *The Pursuit of Harmony: Poetry and Power in Early Heian Japan* (2008) is one of the more substantial contributions to the intersection of waka and rhetoric. Heldt makes a direct connection to the rhetorical dimensions of waka as seen through the practice of "harmonization" (*wa*) by early Heian rulers. Heldt approaches waka from a Confucian perspective and examines the cosmological rituals associated with poetic production. However, although Heldt provides key insights into waka as a rhetorical phenomenon, his claims remain specific to the use of waka by rulers and the relationship between sovereign and subject, and he does not consider Japan's poetic tradition more generally for its rhetorical significance.

My project contributes to these ongoing conversations in several ways. Although not the first to note the rhetorical nature of Japan's premodern poetic tradition, my project expounds on this claim by identifying and examining the main rhetorical features and characteristics of waka as they were understood and applied leading up to and during the Heian period. In doing so, my project is the first to trace the development of waka through its various rhetorical iterations, thus establishing a basis for further claims regarding the connection between Japanese poetics and rhetoric. My project also furthers the studies cited above by making explicit the connections between waka and rhetoric in the authors' analyses.

By providing an overview of the shifting rhetorical landscape of waka, I hope to show the awareness among premodern Japanese poets of the affective nature of language and the intentional employment of poetic language for affective purposes. The different iterations of waka poetry as a means for rhetorical influence illustrates the intersection of language and power in premodern Japan and provides avenues for ongoing study of

Japan's premodern rhetorical traditions. In short, my project illustrates the various ways waka poetry as a rhetoric created and reinforced cultural norms, values, and practices within the Heian court.

Summary of Chapters

In Chapter 2, "Methods," I discuss the methodologies employed in this project. To approach waka as a rhetoric, I use culture-centered rhetorical criticism guided by comparative theory—in particular the art of recontextualization as described by LuMing Mao. As an interpretive methodology, culture-centered rhetorical criticism allows for the rhetorical qualities of a communicative practice to be illuminated in relation to the culture that produced it. This process involves descriptive practices that detail the beliefs, values, behaviors, and norms of a society and the way the social, political, and cultural elements impact communication practices. Laying the foundation for understanding and interpreting a communicative practice in this way is essential to avoid separating the context from the communicative practice or superimposing an interpretive framework not derived from the culture itself.

At the same time, it is inevitable that some slippage will occur in any act of analysis, especially since I am a Western scholar approaching a communication practice, culture, and time period clearly separate from my own. To address this disparity, I rely on the art of recontextualization by recognizing that my analysis does not uncover truths or knowledge, but instead makes something new through the recontextualization that occurs in my representation of waka as a rhetoric. In this way, the art of recontextualization

works to showcase the evolving nature of culture-centered rhetorical projects like mine and provide space for continued interpretations and recontextualizations.

Because I cannot feasibly account for everything within the waka tradition, my project takes a pan-historiographic approach, as defined by Debra Hawhee and Christa J. Olson, by focusing on select aspects of the waka tradition through pre-, early-, mid-, and late-Heian periods. In doing so, I am able to present waka as a multifaceted and heterogenous rhetorical tradition and account for the "residual accumulation of *topoi*, beliefs, and strategic practices" over this period (93). In Chapter 2, I also discuss my use of the term "rhetoric," its implications and drawbacks, my ethical imperative as a scholar, and the limitations to studying waka in translation and from a Western perspective.

In Chapter 3, "Word-Spirit in Japanese Verse," I begin my investigation into waka as a rhetoric by laying some groundwork or "rhetorical underpinnings" that supply reasons for why waka should be considered within a rhetorical framework. Looking at the years leading up to the Heian period, I discuss the belief in kotodama ("word-spirit") and its tie to the Japanese language and Yamato uta ("Japanese song"). Pulling from Japanese myth-histories, Shinto beliefs and ritual practices, and early poetry, I show the early Japanese perception of language and its ability to influence the external world. I also show the origins of waka as a poetic form and the significance of poetry in instilling and reinforcing beliefs about Japan, its language, and its people.

In Chapter 4, "Chinese Influences on Japanese Poetics," I examine the influence of Chinese poetics on the development of waka and its rhetorical features and applications during the early Heian period. The sociopolitical influences of Chinese poetry are seen in the act of harmonization (*wa*) by Japanese rulers—the practice of

establishing one's authority through the ability to invoke poetic composition from one's people—and in the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, where Japanese poetics is explained in relation to Chinese works. A shift can be seen in the perception of where language gains its affective power away from earlier beliefs about the inherent power of the Japanese language and *kotodama* ("word-spirit") to a more aesthetic construction known as "oblique style," which was adopted from Chinese poetry. This style, which focuses on clever manipulations of language and experience, comes to dominate waka poetry and results in the aesthetic ideal known as *miyabi* ("courtliness" or "elegance").

In Chapter 5, "Poetic Dialogues and Marriage Politics," I build from these understandings of waka and its rhetorical shifts to consider the ways waka were used during the mid-Heian period in interpersonal communication for the purposes of courtship and maintaining relationships. By examining a number of individual courtiers who left behind records of their poetic exchanges (*zōtōka*), the pragmatic uses of waka as a rhetoric are clearly illustrated. Through examining waka in the context of marriage politics, the ritualization of waka exchange in courtship and other interpersonal relationships can be seen as contributing to its affective power.

In Chapter 6, "Topics, Treatments, and Poetic Truth," I conclude my analysis by looking at how poetry was positioned as an avenue to truth in the culmination of intense intertextuality over the years and in the use of Buddhist metaphors to describe poetic practice. I also consider how this positioning rhetorically constructed a way of seeing the world through the lens of poetic truth (*hon'i*). As changes in social structures during the late Heian period caused the pragmatic uses of waka to become overshadowed by artistic pursuits, waka as a poetic epistemology is emphasized in the "way of poetry" (*uta no*

michi), as seen in poetic treatises (*karon*), judgments from poetry contests (*uta'awase*), and in the continuation of other types of poetic gatherings and activities. These events operated through an agreed upon poetic sensibility that had been cultivated by the waka tradition.

Finally, in Chapter 7, "Conclusion," I reiterate the rhetorical aspects of waka that have been introduced and examined in this project. I consider some important elements that were not given attention in this project due to lack of space or because they were slightly outside my scope of investigation, and I offer suggested starting points for additional research that would contribute to a more thorough and nuanced understanding of waka as a rhetoric. At the end I have provided an appendix containing the Japanese and English titles of Japanese literary works that are mentioned throughout and a glossary of Japanese terms for reference.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

In this project, I approach the waka tradition through culture-centered rhetorical criticism guided by the comparative theory known as the art of recontextualization. My criticism takes a pan-historiographic approach by spanning roughly seven hundred years, from about the sixth to the twelfth century. This includes the years leading up to and during what is known as the Heian period (794–1185), an era synonymous with court culture, the arts, and especially waka poetry. Because Japan's literary history does not exactly map on to its historical eras,[9] it is necessary to account for aspects of the waka tradition prior to the Heian period in order to provide the context necessary for understanding waka's rhetorical iterations during the Heian period, which is the era of primary concern in this project.

Rather than attempt to "fit" the waka tradition into a Western framework of rhetoric, I endeavor to use descriptive practices that allow the "rhetorical framework of the text itself" to emerge from its own context of production (You 426). By allowing the rhetorical framework of waka to emerge through the examination of various aspects of

[9] Brower and Miner divide Japan's literary periods into the following: primitive song and poetry (ca. 550–686), the early literary period (686–784), the early classical period (784–1100), the mid-classical period (1100–1241), and the late classical period (1241–1350).

the waka tradition, we can see that every rhetoric embodies its own epistemology. As C. Jan Swearingen explains, in ancient China, "the study of rhetoric was not defined as a discipline or practice separate from literature, ethics, and philosophical wisdom" and "rhetoric has not always functioned alone, or as a separate discipline, even in the West (115). In other words, what rhetoric is/does is tied to the epistemology and cultural practices it arises out of. "The rhetorical is determined by the epistemological" (Duhamel 37). Therefore, we cannot understand what makes a meaningful or effective language practice in a society without knowing something about that society's meaning-making practices and view of reality, which is why I rely primarily upon culture-centered rhetorical criticism as the guiding methodology in this project.

Culture-Centered Rhetorical Criticism

I employ rhetorical criticism "as an interpretive methodology meant to illuminate the rhetorical nature and qualities *of a particular communicative act*" (Leeman 1667, emphasis in original). Rhetorical criticism as it was conceived in Herbert A. Wichelns's landmark essay "The Literary Criticism of Oratory" dealt with public address and thus presupposed its object of study to be rhetorical in nature. Rhetorical criticism has since expanded to encompass many types of discourse beyond political oratory, and this presupposition remains even when the object of study is not obviously rhetorical. By assuming at the start that one's object of study is rhetorical, it follows that it has some rhetorical qualities to be illuminated, making rhetorical criticism appear to rely on circular logic to confirm what it has already concluded. That is, rhetorical criticism does not ask whether a particular communicative act *is* rhetorical, but *in what ways* is it

rhetorical. This assumption is sometimes questioned because “the critic is disposed to find exactly what he or she expected to find” (Black 333). However, this is not necessarily the case. Rhetorical criticism functions as a kind of hypothesis by assuming rhetorical potential in all communicative acts. While the rhetorical critic arrives at their object of study presupposing its rhetorical nature, the critic then employs interpretive practices that will either confirm or deny this hypothesis.

A critic might also take an opposite approach and assume that a communicative act is not rhetorical. The combination of these hypotheses results in questions that could render more nuance to the object of study: In what ways is the communicative act rhetorical? In what ways is it not? How do instances where a communicative act does not appear rhetorical compare to instances where the same act does appear rhetorical? What is being accomplished in each of these cases? What is not? And so forth. Depending on the communicative act in question, different questions could be rendered from this combined approach. Whether or not all communicative acts or language practices are indeed rhetorical in nature is a more complicated question of how one perceives language use. However, because communicative acts are often assumed to be rhetorical in some way, more often than not the conclusions of rhetorical criticism are in quality, the ways a communicative act is rhetorical, rather than kind, whether or not it is rhetorical.

There is one central issue in rhetorical criticism when it comes to studying non-Western rhetorical traditions. It can be summarized with the following questions: When examining rhetorical language practices or communicative acts outside of the Western tradition, what do we mean by “rhetoric” and “rhetorical”? If we’re not looking to find rhetoric as it has been conceived of in the West, what are we looking for, and how do we

know we have found it? Bo Wang states that "we have to start from somewhere, but relying too heavily on classical Western rhetorical theory without transforming it from the perspectives of non-Western rhetorical traditions might perpetuate the idea that Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition is the only rhetorical tradition" (173). And Mary Garrett states that we need to be mindful of how we define "rhetoric," as whatever definition is "applied will determine, to what extent, what is seen and brought forward" (Wang 175). In response to these concerns, it is worth taking some time to reflect on my use of the word "rhetoric" and its adjectival form "rhetorical" when discussing waka.

In stating that the waka tradition might be considered premodern Japanese rhetoric or that waka were used rhetorically during the Heian period, questions arise regarding the meaning of the terms "rhetoric" and "rhetorical" in this context, as well as their relevance and suitability, and the ethical implications of using Western terms to describe a non-Western language practice. Questions of ethics come down to the dominant place rhetoric as both a term and signal towards Western traditions has been privileged to occupy for so many years and the imbalance of power embedded in this arrangement. Much has already been said on these points by scholars of cross-cultural and comparative rhetoric,[10] but it is worth highlighting a few of the more relevant insights that guide the methods I use in this project. I shall begin by addressing the meanings of the terms as I understand them and then proceed to discuss the ethical implications of using Western terms to describe non-Western language practices as well

[10] A few recent examples include "Delinking: Toward Pluriversal Rhetorics," by Cushman, et al. (2021), *Rhetorics Elsewhere and Otherwise: Contested Modernities, Decolonial Visions*, edited by Romeo Garcia and Damián Baca (2019), *Landmark Essays on Rhetorics of Difference*, edited by Baca, et al., and *Rhetorics of the Americas: 3114 BCE to 2012 CE*, edited by Damián Baca and Victor Villanueva (2010).

as ways I have used the art of recontextualization to orient my project away from assumptions and impositions that may arise when using these terms.

The first known appearance of the word "rhetoric" (*rhêtorikê*) appears in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias* (Kennedy 3). In the dialogue, Gorgias accepts that "rhetoric is a producer of persuasion," and Socrates concludes that rhetoric "is twofold, one part of it, I presume will be flattery and a base mob-oratory, while the other is noble—the endeavor, that is, to make the citizens' souls as good as possible, and the persistent effort to say what is best, whether it prove more or less pleasant to one's hearers" (Plato 143–144). In *Encomium of Helen,* Gorgias vindicates Helen by noting the power of speech [*logos*]: "For speech constrained the soul, persuading it which it persuaded, both to believe the things said and to approve the things done" (108; 51). Aristotle's definition, which has long been resorted to in composition classrooms in the West, describes rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" (37). These early definitions suggest the essence of rhetoric to be persuasion.

In its most fundamental sense, the term "rhetorical" means "of, relating to, or concerned with rhetoric" ("rhetorical"). By this definition, waka could never be said to have been used rhetorically because there simply was no conceptual framework of rhetoric in premodern Japan as it was conceived of in the Western tradition. Rhetoric arose in ancient Athens to serve a particular purpose for a particular group of people with particular needs, so there is no reason to expect the same conceptual framework to exist in premodern Japan. However, that does not mean that other peoples have not used language or communicative practices to achieve meaning or effect. Therefore, in order to use "rhetorical" in relation to waka, we must conceptualize rhetoric as one instance of a

wider phenomenon that exists in different iterations elsewhere around the world and throughout history. Doing so allows us to use "rhetorical" as meaning something closer to "relating to a society's system of meaning and effect" or "that which engages what a society's epistemologies deem meaningful or effective communication practices."

Granted, "rhetorical" may not be the best word choice because of its etymological relationship to "rhetoric" and the confusion this may generate in terms of invoking, to some degree, Western rhetorical traditions. Perhaps a better term than "rhetoric" could be used to counteract the disparity that favors Western discourse practices and its terms, but I agree, as Arabella Lyon and others have conceded, that "rhetoric" is "an acceptable placeholder, if only because it is so loose in meaning" (Mao et al. 244). Also, because I am coming at this comparison from the perspective of Western rhetoric, "rhetorical" is a meaningful and familiar term for my audience and has become the *de facto* term even outside the field of rhetoric to refer to any communicative act that is not strictly Western "rhetoric," but which exhibits characteristics comparable to rhetoric in either appearance or function. As such, "rhetorical" remains a meaningful and useful term for my purposes. Furthermore, I believe that as more studies consider non-Western language practices for their rhetorical significance, more is added to the term "rhetoric" such that its meaning moves beyond its ancient Greek origins and takes on wider applications.

Scholars and critics have supplied numerous definitions of rhetoric over the years to fulfill the needs of their hermeneutic endeavors. Recent comparative scholars have produced definitions that situate rhetoric outside of ancient Athens and its democratic system and within the varying cultural contexts in which a rhetoric occurs, thus accounting for the contingencies of language practices. These definitions reflect the

recent shift in the field of rhetoric studies to account for non-Western histories of rhetoric and to produce appropriate methods for engaging with non-Western rhetorical traditions. The following definitions have added to my understanding of rhetoric as a global phenomenon and are what I have in mind in my claim that the waka tradition might be considered a premodern Japanese rhetoric.

In his book *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie*, LuMing Mao presents the following definition of rhetoric:

> In this global context of ours, rhetoric, for me at least, represents the systematic, organized use and study of discourse and discourse strategies in interpersonal, intercultural contexts, reflecting and reinforcing rhetoricians' own ideology, their own norms of discourse production and discourse consumption, and their ability to persuade, to adjust, and to realign. (13)

Xiaoye You presents a definition of rhetoric reminiscent of Kenneth Burke, who defines rhetoric as "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (*A Rhetoric* 43). You speaks of "rhetoric broadly as the art of modifying human minds and behaviors through symbols" (430). And in the recently published *The Routledge Handbook*, Keith Lloyd states: "Rhetoric is the shaping of *What* and *How*" (4). Lloyd explains that the What is "a message that we wish to convey to ourselves or another," and the How is the way that message is relayed through "a variety of tones, vocabularies, languages, dialects, idiolects, media, registers, conventions, conscious and unconscious motives, etc." (4).

In each of these definitions, central to a rhetoric is recognition of the relationship between *content* and *form*—what is said and how it is said—or the interdependence of meaning and language. Unsurprisingly, these elements are also identified in Greek rhetoric, as logos (*res*) and lexis (*verba*) (Silva Rhetoricae). Any articulation of the

relationship between content and form displays an organized study of discourse, as this division is an artificial one applied retroactively for analysis and not inherent to language and thought itself. Further expressed in these definitions of rhetoric is the role of contingencies in discourse production. Attention to contingencies includes consideration of discourse opportunities, one's audience, and the best way to address one's audience (decorum) (Silva Rhetoricae). These contingencies are a result of the connection between culture and rhetoric, which leads us to the "culture-centered" part of culture-centered rhetorical criticism.

In short, culture-centered criticism is "a method of analyzing rhetoric from the perspective of the culture that produced the rhetoric" (Borchers and Hundley 238). As the name suggests, culture-centered criticism centers rhetorical practices within their own culture and considers them in relation to the cultural value-systems and time-space context in which they were produced. As Cobos, et al. explain, this mode of "inquiry understands constructions of culture and rhetoric as interdependent rather than stable categories" (141). Within this mode of criticism, culture is understood as both the "products produced by people in a particular society" and "the beliefs, norms, and values developed by a group of people in response to the demands of their day-to-day existence" (Borchers and Hundley 236–37). Through culture-centered criticism, rhetorical practices are often seen as being used to reinforce, question, and/or adjust the beliefs, values, and assumptions of a society within the meaning-making avenues produced by that society's own culture. While similarities to Western rhetorical practices may appear or be used to create a helpful comparison between societies, the aim of culture-centered criticism is not to superimpose Western notions of rhetoric, but to come to a better understanding of a

society's own conception of and use of rhetoric. The goal in culture-centered criticism is to understand a society's rhetoric by "how rhetors seek to achieve" that society's values (239).

This "culture-centered" aspect in my method of rhetorical criticism is rendered in two interconnected ways: through the use of local terms and through descriptive practices. In her 1998 book *Rhetoric in Ancient China*, Xing Lu suggests using "original terms and concepts from the culture under consideration" as one way to contend with the reducing effects of the word "rhetoric" when applied to non-Western language practices (69). She explains that "the use of the word *rhetoric* in Western studies to describe and interpret persuasive discourse in ancient China will affect one's perceptions of Chinese rhetoric" (70). This is because "the diverse and connotative meanings of original Chinese terms," or of any terms that might be used to describe non-Western rhetorical theories and practices, are lost when we rely on "rhetoric" to provide the sole understanding of theories and practices that did not originate in ancient Greece (70). Along these lines, "rhetoric" and other Greek terms have their own cultural nuances and evolutions wrought by "different thinkers and schools of thought" that ought to be taken into consideration as well (69).

A related problem Lu brings up regarding the use of "rhetoric" or other Western terms "is the assumption that the translations of key words from one language to another are accurate and complete" (70).[11] This assumption is a problem because it "will limit the reader's ability to discover the multiple and complex meanings of the rhetorical practices

[11] See also "Contested Grammars: Comparative Literature, Translation, and the Challenge of Locality" by Simon Gikandi (*A Companion to Comparative Literature*, 2011).

under consideration while increasing the likelihood of imposing one's own cultural meanings upon such a system" (70–1). Although there is no way to approach a rhetorical tradition in a vacuum, some steps can be taken to reduce what assumptions and impositions are made in cross-cultural analysis. In Lu's work, she fronts her argument with a chapter titled "Chinese Terminology of Rhetoric." In this chapter, Lu gives descriptions of key Chinese words related to rhetoric (69). Each of the Chinese words is followed by several pages of description that includes etymological information, a literary context for interpretation, and examples of the various uses the word has displayed through time. These descriptions provide the cultural context needed to understand each word's various connotations, and each word is also given several English words as a kind of denotative shorthand. This information allows for Lu's readers to engage in a more sophisticated comparison between Chinese and Greek rhetoric. Following Lu's example, my project relies on original Japanese terms and concepts to explain Japanese language practices and modes of thought. And while I do not have a chapter dedicated to such terms, I similarly use descriptive practices to contextualize and provide nuance to the interpretation of Japanese terms and concepts and to aid in the comparison to rhetoric as it is understood in the West today. The connection between culture and rhetoric is expressed by using concepts and terms endemic to the culture to express the characteristics and uses of rhetoric within that culture.

The descriptive practices I employ stem from anthropologist Clifford Geertz's related notions of "thick description,"[12] and "translation," which have become

[12] Clifford Geertz credits Gilbert Ryle for his concept of "thick description" as found in Ryle's *Collected Papers*, vol. 2 (*The Interpretation* 6).

commonplace approaches in cross-cultural and comparative rhetoric studies.[13] Geertz argues that "culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly—described" (*The Interpretation* 14). "Thick description" as Geertz describes it is "actor-oriented" (14). What he means is that to come to an understanding of "other peoples' symbol systems," our analysis must be built upon "the meaning particular social actions have for the actors whose actions they are" (14, 27). To do this, the social actions must be made intelligible by being considered within the context in which they arise for the actors, so that their symbolic meaning can be understood in relation to the "structures of signification" or socially "established codes" present in that culture (9). To account for actions in this way is "thick description," as opposed to "thin description," which remains detached from what is meaningful to the actors themselves and merely describes what exists or occurs in a general way, apart from the context that makes it intelligible (7). One example Geertz provides to illustrate his point is the action of a wink versus a twitch. Both actions may look the same, and a "thin description" might acknowledge the movement generally, that a movement of the eyelid occurred, but a "thick description" would take into account the intent of the movement as it may have been understood by the actors involved (6–7).

Of course, a culture is best described according to its own terms and concepts, a point I will return to shortly, and yet those particulars must also be conveyed in a way that renders understanding to the particular audience of which the analysis originates or is

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[13] See Day 8; Mao, et al. 242; and Gold 25.

being conveyed. To this end, I use the descriptive practice known as a "translation" as described in Geertz's book *Local Knowledge*:

> "Translation," here, is not a simple recasting of others' ways of putting things in terms of our own ways of putting them (that is the kind in which things get lost), but displaying the logic of their ways of putting them in the locution of ours; a conception which again brings it rather closer to what a critic does to illumine a poem than what an astronomer does to account for a star. (10)

This notion of "translation" has been employed by scholars when engaging in cross-cultural work,[14] and it highlights the way our language, or the way we talk about things, can result in unavoidable gaps of meaning across cultures. On one hand, it is necessary to put others' ways of thinking "in the locution of ours" so that we can better understand them, but at the same time, in doing so we risk romanticizing or othering another culture and its rhetoric in the process. The end goal, according to Geertz, is as follows: "Understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity" (*The Interpretation* 14).

LuMing Mao addresses the issue of how to best represent a culture "without either romanticizing it beyond its otherness or flattening its difference in such a way that we end up denying its otherness" ("Essence" 489). He relates three common pitfalls of comparative work that result when we do not approach a rhetoric from its context of production, the culture that gives it meaning. These include the "generalization approach," the "piecemeal approach," and "discursive hypercorrection." The *generalization approach* involves reaching "large-scale conclusions by relying on not so large-scale evidence" or assuming one framework of understanding to be a universal norm (489). This approach relies on "vacuous generalizations or extensions of the

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[14] See Michael Day 3; Cobos et al. 142–143.

dominant rhetorical tradition" that can only be made possible through the use of fallacies or by oversimplifying the complexities of a tradition (489). While the generalization approach distorts the whole of a tradition to fit a particular model, the *piecemeal approach* commits many of the same misjudgments, but on the level of particular points "as if these individual theories and concepts were free of their own internal disputes" (490). This approach assumes a homogeneity that erases difference both internally in each tradition and across them in their comparison. If an equivalent concept is not found in a tradition, the default is to "impose a deficiency label" on the tradition, which disregards the varying contexts of each tradition's creation and development (491). Lastly, *discursive hypercorrection* involves overcorrecting past ills of underrepresentation to the point of "representing the other beyond its otherness or flattening its otherness so that the other becomes no more than a mirror image" of the dominant tradition (492). This overcorrection often results in taking elements of a tradition out of their historical context and applying one's own "rhetorical exigency" to their analysis instead of examining the importance of the elements within their own tradition and timeline (492). In other words, discursive hypercorrection relies on an appeal to *kairos* for justification of the study of elements in a tradition regardless of what timeliness or importance the historical context itself supplies.

As might be gathered from these pitfalls, it can be easy for scholars to make assumptions and speculations that remove a rhetoric from its context and place it within a context more familiar to the scholar, even partially and unintentionally. Thus, it is important to acknowledge one's analysis is "intrinsically incomplete" and is what it is—an analysis, not the object being analyzed (Geertz, *The Interpretation* 29). Geertz

explains that we know "that the physical world is not physics," but the line between analysis and object of analysis is often blurred in our accounting of it (15). The first step, then, is to acknowledge that our interpretations are "fictions, in the sense that they are 'something made'" (15). To guide me in this reflective process, I turn to the art of recontextualization.

The Art of Recontextualization

By examining and framing the waka tradition as premodern Japanese rhetoric, I am implicitly drawing a comparison between Western (Greco-Roman and Euro-American) tradition(s) and theories of rhetoric and traditions and theories of waka. I have already addressed this point to some extent in the discussion of my use of the terms "rhetoric" and "rhetorical," but I would like to now consider the implications of my project as a whole, that is, its place in the here and now within the field of rhetoric. Mao explains that the "methodological turn to the local or to the internally developed," as is done through culture-centered criticism, "cannot stay there forever, and it has to participate in the art of recontextualization. That is, the rhetorically specific always finds ways to talk back to the 'imposed Other'—be it a Western rhetorical theory, principle, or category—and to use it as a frame of reference for comparison or for departure" ("Searching" 334). Therefore, in order to make apparent the comparative nature of my enterprise and the way my project represents waka from a particular vantage point, one that is both limited and carefully cultivated, I employ the art of recontextualization:

> [T]he art of recontextualization stands for a way of engagement that reads with an attitude and unsettles or shakes things up in the process of constructing new contexts. While this kind of engagement does regularly call special attention to local terms, meanings, and contexts, it does not mean at all that valuing or

> embracing them would lead us to the promised land where *true* representations of the other triumph over contingencies or instabilities and where any ethical challenges or problems recede completely into the background. Not only does such a destination not exist, but also the art of recontextualization, or any other credible method of inquiry for that matter, is not about helping write *true* histories but about anchoring a way of meaning-making that promotes dialogism, thick description, and consciousness of one's own claims and their limitations. (Mao et al. 242, emphases in original)

The art of recontextualization is a helpful temper to rhetorical criticism because it acknowledges the limits of representation, especially when that representation is built, in part, through comparison and is therefore wrought with historically "imperial" tendencies in how the other is represented (Fabian 756). Johannes Fabian addresses the issue of representation as "not in a difference between reality and its images but in a tension between re-presentation and *presence*" (755, emphasis in original). Through this viewpoint, "the Other is never simply given, never just found or encountered, but *made*" (755, emphasis in original). This altered focus on *presence* as the "sharing of time and place," stresses "the processual and productive nature of representation" as we create the other through movement "from here to there and from then to now" (755, 756). Fabian's theory showcases representations as "acts or sequences of acts, in short, as performances" (757). As such, representations are an act of rhetorical creation. There is not just one representation that projects reality, but many representations, many performances to be constructed. And within the process of creating these representations "contingencies" and "instabilities" persist in a productive way, which is to say that they are conducive to dialogue (Mao et al. 242).

I want to first address how through the art of recontextualization this kind of critical engagement is made possible, and then consider how the art of recontextualization offers an avenue for ethical inquiry through its negotiation of "the

subject matter under study and the subject position taken for that study" ("Essence" 492). The dialectic engagement that results from the art of recontextualization stems from contextualizing Western epistemological aims and ensuring that non-Western meaning-making practices have equal grounding without "imposing" an overarching paradigm on them (492). Because some epistemologies have not taken the same route to meaning-making as the West in terms of the importance given to essence-based definitions, it is necessary to push against dominant Western ideologies that necessarily accompany any discussion of rhetoric. To do so, a different question must be asked. Instead of asking "What *is* premodern Japanese rhetoric?"—a question that will seek to derive an essence and therefore inflict Western epistemologies on its subject—instead I employ what Mao has referred to as "the 'where' question" and ask, "*Where* is premodern Japanese rhetoric?" ("Searching" 329). The "where" question "foregrounds historical and practical concerns over the search for any single transcendental presence or agency" (330). In doing so, it allows for multiple responses rather than a single answer about the supposed essence of premodern Japanese rhetoric. Therefore, my claim that premodern Japanese rhetoric can be found in waka poetry does not exclude it from also being found elsewhere, such as in *norito* (Japanese Shinto prayers), as explored by Kathy Wolfe, or in *kanshi* (Chinese poetry).[15] The "where" question situates my inquiry outside of Western epistemological aims and suspends the "what" question to not as "importantly present" to premodern Japanese culture as it is in the West (qtd. in Mao, "Searching" 337).

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[15] See *Dance of the Butterflies: Chinese Poetry from the Japanese Court Tradition*, translated by Judith N. Rabinovitch and Timothy R. Bradstock.

Because "scholars must start somewhere" and this means "they most likely start with their own familiar concepts and points of reference," the art of recontextualization holds space for the "where" of premodern Japanese rhetoric and the "what" of Western rhetoric to coexist without imposing a dominant framework of interpretation (Mao, "Essence" 492). Mao explains: "Meanings or orders that emerge out of this kind of engagement are driven not so much by any underlying causal logic as by a dialectic such engagement mobilizes and by a creative, open-ended process it fosters and embodies" (492). Since I am putting the "what" and the "where" into dialogue with one another, it is important to specify what understandings of rhetoric I bring to this comparison and how I am using them as a starting point to interpret the rhetorical characteristics of waka. To draw a comparison, I necessarily choose which aspects and understandings of rhetoric and waka are put in conversation with each other, and in doing so, I present a carefully scaffolded perspective that contributes to rhetorical theory and provides new avenues for waka studies. Arabella Lyon parallels Fabian in explaining how the act of comparison creates what it compares: "Comparison is not recognizing the other, but constructing the Other because the comparer names what is compared and the theory of comparison" (Mao et al. 246). Furthermore, my use of translated texts highlights the constructed nature of my project and comparative studies like it. Translation is itself a kind of recontextualization, one that is full of gaps and slippages that cannot be entirely mitigated. Therefore, my project is a rhetorical enterprise because it recontextualizes the waka tradition and constructs a particular way of seeing waka—both as its own subject (waka as rhetoric) and in relation to Western rhetoric.

Pan-historiographic Approach to Waka Theory and Practice

In examining rhetorical practices within a society, it is important to not just consider the communicative acts themselves, but also the ways in which they are an expression of a wider epistemological or ideological framework at play in that society, one that is not static, but is shifting and adapting through time. My project does this by taking a pan-historiographic approach to waka theory and practice. Debra Hawhee and Christa J. Olson define "pan-historiography" as the practice of "writing histories whose temporal scope extends well beyond the span of individual generations. Pan-historiography can also refer to studies that leap across geographic space, tracking important activities, terms, movements, or practices" (90). In short, I use pan-historiography as a method for examining waka theories and practices "*across* time" (92, emphasis in original). Pan-historiography paired with local terms and descriptive practices emphasizes heterogeneity while responding to the "where" question by focusing on the social, cultural, and political changes through time and their influence on waka composition and development. Pan-historiography is a useful tool for my project because of the diachronic nature of discourse practices.

The pan-historiographic approach I take is referred to by Hawhee and Olson as "time-slicing" (96). This strategy spans time and space by placing "slices of time" side by side and examining them both synchronically and diachronically, with "the synchronic to attend to political and cultural specificities in a particular moment, and the diachronic to attend to a long-view history" (92–93). I use this approach to examine changes in waka theory and practice through time, focusing my "slices of time" on recognized waka theorists and important writings that have contributed to present-day understandings of

waka. My chapters are roughly broken up into "slices of time" that include the periods pre-Heian (before 794), early Heian (794–970), mid-Heian (970–1070) and late Heian (1070–1185) (Heldt, *The Pursuit* 287). These "slices" are roughly designated in order to provide a sense of chronology to my claims, but it should be noted that there is significant overlap in the theories and practices of waka over time. Therefore, these "slices" should not be taken as the start or end dates for how waka was conceived of or employed; rather, they serve to illustrate the "discursive continuum" of waka as a rhetoric Mao, *Reading* 15).

By examining these "slices" and placing them in conversation across time, I can better account for changes in waka theory and practice as they developed through the Heian period (Hawhee and Olson 92). Hawhee and Olson explain, "Pairing fine-grained analysis of the complexities in those slices with comparisons across slices helps ensure that our claims, though broad, are grounded" (96). Furthermore, using this time-splicing pan-historiographic approach to waka theory and practice allows for my claims about waka as a rhetoric to be couched in the "residual accumulation of *topoi*, beliefs, and strategic practices" employed throughout the Heian period (93). In order to account for the epistemological origins of language practices, such an approach is necessary to avoid detaching waka composition from the theories and practices that give it meaning.

Limitations

It will come as no surprise to readers familiar with the nature of translated works that "there is no such thing as a literal translation of Japanese poetry," (Brower and Miner 8). However, there are limitations to studying waka in English and from a Western

perspective that need to be addressed in order to avoid giving a false impression of what can be accomplished in hermeneutic endeavors of waka. Some of these limitations have to do with cultural differences that are manifest through allusions and concepts unfamiliar to Western audiences, and others have to do with linguistic differences that create unavoidable gaps in translation. While the former can often be mitigated through descriptive practices, the linguistic shift from Japanese to English presents a greater complication. Mark Morris states that "you can translate Japanese poems, you cannot translate Japanese poetic form" (580). In other words, to talk or write about waka in any language outside of the original is to lose some of the meaning-making mechanisms inherent in the language itself.

Due to the nature of classical Japanese as compared to English, certain syntactical and grammatical elements that make up poetic diction are nearly impossible to convey without extensive footnotes or explanation, at which point a poem would become inaccessible at worst and cumbersome at best to the average reader. Joshua S. Mostow illustrates this by examining various translations of a poem by famed Ono no Komachi (825–900) ("Waka"). To my point, the many translations and commentaries designed to elucidate the language and allusions in the poem are too lengthy to recount here; however, the following translation and accompanying notes excerpted from the Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū edition of the *Kokinshū* suffice to show the layers of meaning within this particular poem by Ono no Komachi and provide some insight into the layered meanings embedded in waka generally.

hana no iro ha	The colors of the flowers
utsurinikeri na	has faded indeed
itadzura ni	in vain
wa ga mi yo ni furu	have I passed through the world

nagame seshi ma ni while gazing at the falling rains.

1. [*hana*:] Superficially it is "flower," but underneath it points to the author's looks.
2. *Utsuru* [which in modern Japanese usually means "to move to"]: the fading of the flowers' color. Na means the speaker is speaking to herself, overcome with emotion (*Ayuhi Commentary*). It is attached to the conclusive form (*shūshi-kei*) of inflecting words.
3. [*Wa ga mi yo ni furu*:] My body has gotten old in this world. *Yo ni* can also be taken as an adverb meaning "extremely." *Furu* means "to grow old," to become chronologically late. It is the conclusive form of an r-line *kami-nidan* verb. . . . If *furu* is taken instead to mean "to pass time," it becomes an h-line *shimo-nidan* verb in the attributive form (*rentai-kei*), ornamenting "the long rains" of the following verse, which is trite. Here it is a pivot word with "[rain] falls (*furu*)."
4. [*nagame*:] While I was sunk in thought. *Nagame* probably includes the idea that she is gazing at the scenery of her garden; it is also pivoting on "(the spring's) long rains (*naga-ame*)." (59–60)

As can be gathered from these notes, interpretations of a poem can vary. Translators must decide which aspects of the poem to prioritize, whether that be syllable count, imagery, allusions, or otherwise. Brower and Miner explain that Japanese verbs are appended with "as many as fourteen morphemes expressing mood," such that poets work with "particularly fine adjustment of tone (ultimately beyond the reach of translation)" (7). Furthermore, they explain that the use of topics as well as subjects in Japanese, which are differentiated by "relative emphasis," is non-existent in English, so there is no way to account for when "the stress is taken from the participants in an action and placed upon the action itself" (7, 8). These are only a few examples of the linguistic differences that exist between classical Japanese and English. Descriptive practices can be used to bridge the gap between these differences to some extent, but it should be acknowledged that such conflicts make the hermeneutic work of translated texts a somewhat tricky endeavor and one that is necessarily always incomplete.

Waka scholar T. E. McAuley, who has translated an enormous amount of waka, including the 1,200 poems from *The Poetry Contest in Six Hundred Rounds* (*Roppyukuban uta'awase*), explains what he sees as the main conflicts of translation in his recent article "The Power of Translation: Issues in the Translation of Premodern Japanese Waka." McAuley discusses four main challenges of translating waka: "the identification of *waka* in translation as a poetic text; the use of poetic diction; the use of poetic metalanguage; and the use of intertextuality" (4). The first issue of identification of waka as a poetic text may seem, at first, to not apply to non-translators, as it deals with how to present a translated waka. However, McAuley's comments on this issue shed light on the interpretive biases and ways poetry is understood by Western audiences. In the West, waka are often presented in five lines of alternating 5-7-5-7-7 syllables, whereas in Japan, waka are often understood to be comprised of one line (Sato). This visual representation of waka is only the first of many decisions a translator must make when directing the reader's interpretation of the poetic text, and this topic has been a debate in Western scholarship on waka for many years.[16]

The linguistic differences addressed above suggest some of the translation issues regarding poetic diction. However, more might be said about the difficulty in translating the extensive artistic techniques developed for waka poetry, including "pillow words" (*makura-kotoba*) and "pivot words" (*kakekotoba*). "Pillow words" refers to poetic epithets, or common word or phrase combinations, and "pivot words" refers to puns derived from homophones. Tasked with translating multiple meanings condensed into

[16] See "Waka: Features of Its Constitution and Development" by Earl Miner and "Waka and Form, Waka and History" by Mark Morris.

one word or phrase, translators must decide which elements of the poem to emphasize or include. Similarly, poetic metalanguage, or the "connotations and associations" that add meaning to a word or phrase beyond the meaning of the words themselves, must be taken into account in the translation process (McAuley, "The Power" 8). As for intertextuality, McAuley suggests two main forms intertextuality takes in waka poetry. The first is through "allusive variation" (*honkadori*), in which a poet would refer back to a previous poem in order to "add an additional layer of meaning" to their poem (13). The second is to refer back to a "prior literary context" and thereby add "richness to the poem's imagery and semantics" (13). Intertextuality was a way for poets to extend the meaningfulness of their poems beyond the limitations of waka's short poetic form.

The cultural and linguistic differences that arise in the translation of poetic diction, poetic metalanguage, and the intertextuality found in waka are often addressed by the translator through their choice of which aspects of a poem to emphasize, whether that be literal interpretation, lyricism, wordplay, or otherwise. Since it is difficult to take everything into account, and because of the inherent differences between classical Japanese and English, a translation is always an approximation and some gaps in meaning are inevitable.

However, despite these limitations, much has been done to make waka accessible to Western audiences through the production of translations and commentaries, and much can be gained from the study of waka, even in translation. As the intersection of waka and rhetoric becomes of greater interest to scholars, cross-disciplinary approaches to this line of study could reveal additional insights. David L. Hall addresses the benefits of cross-disciplinary work by explaining that comparative work, or any work that involves

the convergence of literary traditions, is best served by experts on both sides. As a comparative philosopher with an interest in Sinology, Hall acknowledges both his expertise in Western philosophical concepts and terminology and his dependency upon his colleague, Roger Ames, for insights into classical Chinese language and culture, which are necessary for properly translating Chinese philosophical texts (25). Without both, translations of Chinese philosophical texts would either lack the appropriate cultural context needed for meaningful interpretation, thus resulting in oversights and misunderstandings, or they would lack a dialogic connection to Western terms and concepts, thus making their comparative application indiscriminate. Hall advocates for a collaborative approach, which he believes is essential to producing meaningful scholarship: "One simply cannot provide a responsible translation of Chinese philosophical texts without the possession of a rather sophisticated set of conceptual and interpretative skills resourced within the Western philosophical tradition" (31).

Language and culture can be obstacles when it comes to Western scholars studying non-Western communication practices, but they are not insurmountable. Hall's framework suggests that comparative insights rely on cross-disciplinary archives—and experts who can access them. And as Hall has suggested, for cross-disciplinary studies that require expertise in multiple disciplines, scholars will need to work together. To do so can be as simple as relying on experts in the field of interest for translations and interpretations of important texts and events as they relate to the study at hand, which is the approach taken in my project. While it would be ideal for a scholar to have expertise in both fields, this is often not possible due to the extensive time it requires to reach the level of serious contribution in a single field. And while there are certainly examples to

the contrary, it is also not a terribly likely occurrence that interests align in a way that would profitably result in the specific cross-disciplinary research that is currently being sought. In the recently published collection *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics*, Carol S. Lipson addresses this concern:

> In the case of rhetorical study, the examination of ancient non-Western rhetorics are mainly conducted by scholars who do not have expertise in the language and perhaps in the historical cultures involved. Such scholars are not involved in translating texts, but in studying texts based on translations to determine the rhetorical principles underlying such texts. Many such rhetorical scholars have inevitably been faced with the question as to whether they are fluent in the ancient language involved. At this stage, most are not. (5)

However, despite these present concerns, as the field of rhetoric adapts to better account for non-Western cultures and communication practices, it may become more common for a cross-disciplinary approach to become the norm and for educational institutions and departments to adjust their missions to better align with cross-disciplinary research goals in order to help address the many gaps in rhetorical histories.

Conclusion

In summary, my project examines the waka tradition as a premodern Japanese rhetoric by employing culture-centered rhetorical criticism guided by comparative theory. I use the art of recontextualization to consider my own ethical imperative and the power imbalances implicitly drawn out in my project. I critically engage with the terms "rhetoric" and "rhetorical" to make apparent their limitations and the historical baggage that accompanies any application of these terms. I organize my analysis of waka through pan-historiography by denoting "slices of time" that show how waka was conceived of prior to and during the Heian period. I interpret waka by first centering Heian ideals,

values, and assumptions from which waka gain their meanings and applications, and then I consider the theories and practices of waka as they relate to achieving those societal values. These factors serve to show how waka, as a rhetoric, helped to create and reinforce the aesthetic-oriented culture of the Imperial Court during the Heian period.

CHAPTER 3

WORD-SPIRIT IN JAPANESE VERSE

In this chapter, I consider the recorded beginnings of Japanese poetry and the various indigenous elements that influenced the development of Japanese poetics from around the end of the Asuka period (538–710) through the Nara period (710–794). It was during this time that the first poetry anthology, the *Man'yōshū* (*Collection for a Myriad Ages*, ca. 785), was being compiled and the myth-histories the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*, 712) and *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720) were completed. My analysis centers around the concept *kotodama* ("word-spirit") and the belief in *kotodama* as an intrinsic part of premodern Japanese language (*Yamato kotoba*) and a marker of national identity. This requires some explanation of Shinto beliefs and practices, including premodern Japanese beliefs about *kami* (Japanese deities) and the natural world, the recitation of *norito* (ritual prayers), and narratives relayed in Japanese myth-histories regarding the origin of poetry.

While it is not within the constraints of this chapter to detail every component within the history of Japanese poetry as it relates to the development of waka as a rhetorical discourse practice, this chapter will elucidate and connect some of the prominent elements that shaped the waka tradition and that added to its function as a rhetoric. We might consider these the "rhetorical underpinnings" of the waka tradition. I

have grouped these elements into Japanese, or indigenous, influences (Chapter 3) and Chinese, or continental, influences (Chapter 4). While it can be challenging to clearly distinguish between what might be considered Japanese as opposed to Chinese beliefs and practices, I use this distinction as a way to organize influences that appear to have developed from within Japan and those that appear to have arrived at Japan or were pulled from teachings and writings originating from the continent. Such separations are useful for the sake of argument, but it should be noted that the question of indigenous Japanese and non-indigenous beliefs and practices is not as clear cut as my distinctions may make it appear.[17] When possible, I do my best to acknowledge the ways beliefs and practices were modified and "made Japanese" through what might be called creative appropriation. However, it is less important to my claims how such creative appropriation occurred and more important to acknowledge the general existence of such influences, whether indigenous to Japan or not. As will be shown over this chapter and the next, the combination of Japanese and continental elements reveals rhetorical underpinnings for waka that have been largely overlooked in the analysis of premodern Japanese rhetoric.

***Yamato Uta* and Incantation**

Although we often refer to waka as "poetry," the word used to describe waka during this early period was *uta*, which translates to "song." Although I most often resort

[17] In his article "*Uchi*/*Soto* in Japan: A Global Turn," Dominic Ashby argues that "an inside-outside perspective," which he explains "helps to show how slippage occurs between inside and outside, and challenges notions of an unchanging cultural core" pushes against the notion that "any outside influence becomes domesticated and fundamentally changed" by the culture that incorporates it and "keeps us focuses on the historicity and rhetoricity of cultural and other group identities" (267). This perspective allows for a more nuanced account of "the meaning-making dynamic between incoming and indigenous cultural forces" (257).

to the descriptors “poetry” and “poem” for the sake of simplicity, “song” or “verse” more strongly implies orality and better represents the incantatory aspects of poetry in early Japan. *Yamato uta*, or “Japanese song,” encapsulates the beliefs that Yamato *kotoba* (old Japanese language spoken by the Yamato people) uniquely carries an ability to affect the external world through the power of *kotodama* (“word-spirit”). This is significant because many rhetorical traditions have song or verse at their beginning, and it is often tied to a magical ability to incant or otherwise make things occur through the power of language. Variations of this magical conception of language can be found in many early cultures, including the Greeks.

In “Encomium of Helen” by Gorgias of Leontini, one of the reasons Gorgias provides for why Helen is blameless in causing the Trojan War is that speech is an immaterial force that can cause things to occur beyond the will of individuals: “Speech is a powerful lord, which by means of the finest and most invisible body effects the divinest works.” He continues, “What cause then prevents the conclusion that Helen similarly, against her will, might have come under the influence of speech, just as if ravished by the force of the mighty?” (51). By comparing the power of speech to physical force, Gorgias suggests that Helen could have been made to act against her will by Paris’s words despite their immateriality. To further this claim, Gorgias also compares the power of speech to magic and witchcraft, which hold “the power of incantation,” and drugs, which “bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion” (51). If it were speech that persuaded Helen to go with Paris to Troy, Gorgias concludes, she is a blameless victim of its magical powers.

Ancient Irish rhetoric, which developed largely apart from Greco-Roman influences, held similar views of the magical aspects of language: “In Celtic Ireland, oral

and symbolic forms of language were a means for wielding power, especially magical power, and for passing along cultural norms and practices" (Johnson-Sheehan 267). In the Irish story "The Coming of the Milesian Celts," found in *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, a Celtic druid known as Amergin leads an invasion of Ireland after the land's people, the Danaans, kill the Celts's leader, Ith. The Danaans attack the Celtic ships; in some accounts they use "spells to enshroud the ships in mist" and induce "a vicious storm that scatters the fleet on the ocean" (276). In other accounts, various means are used to prevent the Celts from landing ashore, which would signal the Celts's prophetic coming and legitimate ownership over the land. In order to calm the storm, which has devastated the Celtic ships and resulted in the deaths of Amergin's kin, Amergin chants a magical spell, which we may nowadays refer to as a poem. In it, Amergin invokes a successful invasion of Ireland by "blending praise for and connection to nature, the Milesian Celts, and even the Danaans" (278). His poem begins:

> I seek the land of Ireland,
> Coursed be the fruitful sea,
> Fruitful the ranked highland,
> Ranked the showery wood,
> Showery the river of cataracts,
> Of cataracts the lake of pools,
> Of pools the hill of a well,
> Of a well, of a people of assemblies,
> Of assemblies the kind of Temair;
> . . .
> (qtd. in Johnson-Sheehan 277–78)

After successfully dispelling the storm and stepping ashore, Amergin recites another poem, the Rann, which consists of a series of rhythmic "I am" statements that "blends his own power as a human with that of nature and God" (279):

> I am the Wind that blows over the sea,
> I am the Wave of the Ocean,

> I am the Murmur of the billows,
> I am the Ox of Seven Combats,
> . . .
> I am the god that creates in the head of man the fire of thought,
> Who is it that enlightens the assembly upon the mountain, if not I?
> Who telleth the ages of the moon, if not I?
> Who showeth the place where the sun goes to rest, if not I?
> (qtd. in Johnson-Sheehan 278–79)

In each of these instances, the poems work as incantations to make happen the words that are pronounced within them. Richard Johnson-Sheehan explains, "Its rhetorical power seems intended to remake the natural order, realigning the relationships of nature and god and the people of Ireland" (279). By remaking the natural order of Ireland first in speech, Amergin ensures this outcome in the battle that takes place after the Celts arrive on land. Conquered, the Dannas retreat to an alternate realm, the Side, and the Celts, victorious, take legitimate rule of Ireland (279).

These are just two of numerous examples of how different cultures explain the magical power held in words. In these examples, the poem-spells gain their power not just from the words they contain, but also from the sounds and rhythms they create when spoken aloud. As seen in Amergin's poems, repetition is a common technique to achieve a rhythmic effect. In his first poem, repeating words thread together the lines of the poem, and more obviously in the Rann, the repeating of "I am" statements throughout and "Who" questions at the end create a particular cadence while also syntactically merging Amergin with god and the natural world.

Amergin also holds the role of a druid, giving him the authority to tap into the magical capacity of language. George Kennedy explains that such magical invocations "must be uttered in exactly the right words by the right persons, make frequent use of metaphor, are often not comprehensible to those who do not control the magic, and are

usually repeated several times. The magical words, if properly recited, are thought to constrain the object of incantation so that it has no choice in its action" (*Comparative* 74). In the example of Helen of Troy, we can see the power of words to compel or invoke action, and likewise for the Danaans people, who become subject to the powerful rhythmic poems recited by Amergin. A version of these beliefs also existed in premodern Japan known as *kotodama* ("word-spirit").

Kotodama, or "word-spirit," is an ancient Japanese belief that words hold a kind of magical power over things in the external world. It is through the belief in *kotodama* that we see a rhetorical orientation of early poetry, or Yamato *uta* ("Japanese song"), in premodern Japan. But to understand *kotodama*, we must first understand the Shinto beliefs and ritual practices that explain how *kotodama* functioned and was understood in early Japanese society. This will, in turn, lead us to an understanding of how the power of *kotodama* became fundamental to the waka tradition.

Shinto, Animism, and *Norito*

Shinto is generally considered Japan's indigenous religion or earliest belief system. The word "Shinto," which translates to "way of the gods" (*kami no michi*), is a combination of the Chinese characters *shin* 神 (meaning "gods"), and *tō* 道 (meaning "way" or "conduct"). Joseph M. Kitagawa explains that the term "Shinto" was used during the sixth century to differentiate Japan's native traditions from the influx of Confucianism and Buddhism coming from China (51, 260). [18] As the name indicates,

[18] Kuroda Toshio argues that at the time of the compilation of the *Nihon shoki* (720 CE), one of Japan's earliest myth histories that references Shinto, "the word Shinto is actually a generic term for popular beliefs" and the more specific usage of "Shinto" to refer to beliefs and practices indigenous to

Shinto practices revolve around numerous gods (*kami*), who are believed to inhabit the natural world: "Some kami were connected with geographical regions, such as villages and provinces, while others were believed to reside in mountains, trees, forests, rivers, or in celestial bodies" (141). Japan is considered the "land of the kami" because of the kami that reside in things and in the natural world (qtd in Kuroda 13; Kitagawa 49). Connected to this idea is the belief that only the language of Japan (*Yamato kotoba*) is able to enact *kotodama*, whereas foreign languages cannot.

Worshipping and attending to kami was a regular part of life for the premodern Japanese. Japanese family clans (*uji*) were considered descended from and thus centered their religious practices on a particular *kami*: "The kami of the clan was considered the founder or ancestor of the clan and was venerated as such" (Kitagawa 140). The clan chieftain would appeal to the *kami* on behalf of his clan for good fortune, favorable harvests, to avoid sickness, and so forth (141, 149–150). Eventually, this responsibility was given to clan members who were initiated into the Shinto priesthood (151). Frequent festivals and rituals meant to pacify, plead with, or otherwise satisfy the kami took place throughout the year. Such occasions often involved dancing, music, singing, offerings of food, recitation of *norito* (ritual prayers) for "thanksgiving or petition," and other means of pleasing the *kami* (122). Festivals of *kami* worship were held by clans who shared regional *kami* and took place on "unpolluted land" surrounded by trees or stones during important times of the year, such as at harvest or at the start of the new year (149). The *kami* were invited by marking off a sacred area with a rope (122).

Japan did not develop until much later in Japan's history during the nationalizing efforts of the Meiji era (1868–1912) (5, 19).

There is much within Shinto practices that signifies the importance of nature due to the beliefs that *kami* reside in natural landmarks and because of the animistic belief that non-human creatures and various objects in nature have a soul. As a result, nature imagery is a significant part of the Shinto ritual prayers (*norito*), a trope that is seen carried forward in the waka tradition. Brower and Miner add that these native beliefs also combine with "a mingled Buddhism and Taoism, of the oneness of all natural life," which is another factor that "gives what we call external nature a closeness and relevance to human nature" (15). On top of this, natural imagery is prevalent in Chinese poetry as well, which substantially influenced Japanese poetics, a point I will address in the next chapter. The prevalence of natural imagery in Japanese poetry can be seen stemming from these various influences, and significantly, from the belief in *kotodama*, which was the power by which one could make appeals to the kami, many of whom were synonymous with natural landscapes and parts of nature.

By the sixth century, power had been centralized in Japan by the Imperial/Yamato clan, which "claimed both religious and political authority by virtue of its divine and solar ancestry," from the sun goddess Amaterasu, who was invoked in order to establish the divine nature and legitimacy of the emperor to rule Japan (Kitagawa 149). Influenced by Chinese governmental systems, the Imperial clan developed the Department of Shinto Affairs and imposed a number of imperial edicts. Shinto rituals were recorded in the imperial *Edict Concerning Shinto* (*Jingi-ryō*), wherein one can find a list of Shinto festivals (150). Subservient clans were given various responsibilities related to *kami* worship, among which was the recitation of ritual prayers (*norito*) (151).

There are 27 official *norito* compiled in the *Engi-shiki* (a book of laws of the Engi era), some of which have been dated as early as before the seventh century.[19] *Norito* typically start out "with words praising kami, followed by lists of offerings and the identity of the petitioner and the reciter, closing with the subject of the prayer" (Kitagawa 67). *Norito* were recited at Shinto festivals, during ceremonies at court, and at shrines. Their recitation had many purposes, from celebrating the harvest, to warding off vengeful deities, to cleansing the entirety of the kingdom from sin, to justifying the imperial rule and invoking blessings for the emperor (Wolfe 203; Philippi; Kitagawa 207). In the preface to Donald L. Philippi's translation of the *norito*, Masayoshi Nishitsunoi explains, "Originally, the norito were transmitted as antique magic formulas, but in time took on a quite different character as words spoken in worship of the deities." The word "*norito*" has been interpreted to mean "magic by means of words" (qtd. in Philippi 2).[20] The magical properties embodied in *norito* come from the belief in *kotodama*, "the spiritual power residing in words" (Kitagawa 68).

Nature is an important component to the *norito* both in dictating the time of year a recitation would take place and in the kinds of *kami* that were addressed. Kathy Wolfe explains: "The predominant metaphors and similes in the norito make use of nature imagery, apropos of the centrality in Shinto of the kinship between humans and the natural world" (205). For example, *Norito* IV "Festival of the Wind Deities of Tatuta"

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[19] Because they were not written down until 927 CE, scholars are unsure how much the written *norito* resemble earlier renditions or what revisions may have been made to them over time (Wolfe 203; Brower and Miner 86).

[20] Donald L. Philippi explains that the meaning of the word *norito* is not universally agreed upon, but the first part of the word, *nori*, "is plainly related with the verbs *noru* 'to speak,' *inoru* 'to pray,' and *norofu* 'to curse.'" And the second part of the word, *to*, "has been variously explained to mean 'place' (as in *tokoro*), 'word' (as in *koto*), and 'magic'" (2). See also Shirane, *Traditional* 56.

was designed "to pray for abundant crops and their protection from damage caused by wind and water to the two Wind Deities of Tatuta" (Philippi 6). In this lengthier *norito,* the Imperial messenger recounts a story of two deities who have caused the destruction of crops for many years. The Sovereign Grandchild prays for the deities to reveal themselves so that he can pacify them and save the harvest. The deities reveal themselves in a dream and request that various items be presented to them and for a shrine to be built in exchange for their protection over the crops. In the second half of the *norito*, the offerings are presented to the deities with the promise that even more will be given to them at the autumn festival if they protect the harvest.

We can see *kotodama* at work in various parts of this *norito,* particularly at the beginning and the end. The *norito* begins: "I humbly speak before the Sovereign Deities whose praises are fulfilled at Tatuta" (Philippi 28). By praising the deities as those who protect their crops from "bad winds and rough waters," these blessings are made to occur (30). Wolfe explains that some of these prayers functioned as "speech acts of a sort, in which what was said would come to pass" (204). Once the various offerings had been presented to the deities in exchange for their protection, the *norito* concludes with a command:

> And before you, oh Sovereign Deities, like cormorants bending our necks low,
> As the morning sun today rises in effulgence glory,
> Do we fulfill your praises.
> You *kamu-nusi* and *hafuri*,[21] receive the noble offerings of the Sovereign Grandchild
> And present them without the slightest negligence.
> Hear, all of you, this command which I speak. Thus I speak.[22]

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[21] The *kamu-nusi* and *hafuri* were priests who participated in the ceremony (Philippi 92).

[22] Translation from Philippi 31.

The longest *norito* "is a prayer for abundant crops and for the prosperity of the Imperial House addressed to all the deities in the land" (Philippi 1, 5). As a kind of speech act, in order for these blessings to occur, it was pertinent that *norito* were recited correctly. Kitagawa explains that it was important "to create an aesthetically pleasing offering to the kami. This is the total context of the idea of koto-dama, sounds that are pleasing to the kami'" (Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Sociolinguistic" 146). As Buddhism gained popularity in Japan from the sixth century onward, it is likely that *norito* were also influenced by the ritualized recitation of the Buddhist sutras (Kitagawa 68). Furthermore, Philippi explains that the *norito* were performed in a way that gave precedence to prosody over clarity: "The rituals are cast in antique language of the most flowery sort. Sentences are long and loosely-connected; the grammatical relationship of parts is difficult to determine; the meaning of many words is unclear; and everywhere semantic clarity is sacrificed to sonority" (1). Philippi adds that evidence shows "there was a special musical technique for reciting these rituals, and that there were books of musical notation for this purpose" (2). Because of the importance of correct pronunciation in the invoking of *kotodama*, it becomes clear why the sounds of words in the *norito* were carefully preserved. "Not merely invocations, *norito* were, by their correct recitation, believed to summon the mysterious workings of kotodama in order to effect the very transformations they invoked" (Havens 398). The importance of prosody in the *norito* is also seen in the repetition and parallelism they contain. This focus on creating a pleasant-sounding appeal to the kami shows the belief in *kotodama* and illustrates the incantatory properties of the *norito*.

It is important to note that although the *norito* were eventually recorded in writing with special attention paid to the preservation of their sounds,[23] the effects of *kotodama* they invoked "could not be elicited through writing, but only through a human voice, using only the Japanese language, spoken with a solemn tone and style" (Wolfe 201). In Shinto, *kotodama* is traditionally released through *kotoage*, the declaration or "the 'raising' or 'lifting' of words in a significant and stylized way (as in song or intonement), and not just of any words, but only those thought to be charged with a particularly spiritual power" (Poulton 192). *Kotoage* relies on the spoken word, pronounced in the proper way, in order to manifest the word's soul (*kotodama*) and bring it into reality. What makes this possible is the Shinto belief of animism, that not just humans, but also animals, plants, objects, and natural phenomena all have souls, including the spoken word (Ignatieva and Trazanoval 1). Therefore, orality is an essential component to the invocation of *kotodama*, and the sounds used are specific to the native Japanese or Yamato language. Furthermore, Jin'ichi Konishi points out: "If too much normal language intervenes in the expression of animistic beauty, its spirituality will risk debilitation" (109). For this reason, and because "the kotodama brought on unexpected effects" and "must not be weakened by overuse," the fear of overstating *kotoage* can be seen in the brevity of Japanese poetic forms—particularly in waka and haiku (109).

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[23] Kathy Wolfe explains that the *norito* "were recorded in a phonetic script called *senmyo*, which consisted of Chinese characters chosen for their phonetic value, and arranged in Japanese word order with a gloss of Japanese particles and inflections. This script was considered the most precise for recitation of these important prayers; an effort was made to bring the language as close as possible to that assumed to have been spoken in the past, so that a person performing the rituals would still be attuned to the *kotodama*" (203–204).

***Kotodama* in Early Song**

While the word "kotodama" first appears on the *Man'yōshū*, the notion of *kotodama* can be seen in the ancient songs (*kodai kayō*) recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. In the narratives in which they appear, these songs often appear "as forms of elevated speech representing the thoughts and words of specific gods or historical figures" (Shirane, *Traditional* 49). That the gods spoke in and could be addressed in verse and that those spoken words had power over external reality is an expression of *kotodoma*. Wolfe explains, "The kami were thought to reside in nature and to be somewhat akin to humans, which meant that they could both speak and read to human language that addressed them correctly" (201). The *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*, 712) is Japan's oldest surviving literary document. This three-volume myth-history recounts the creation of Japan and the history of the gods from the great ancestor Amaterasu (the sun goddess) to the first ruler of Japan, Emperor Jinmu, and thirty-three subsequent sovereigns (Shirane, *Traditional* 21). The *Kojiki*, along with its later companion the *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720), contain the earliest recorded songs and narratives pulled from oral tradition. Combined, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* contain 240 *kodai kayō* ("ancient songs"), about half of which are *tanka* ("short poems"), the precursor to waka.

In the first song of both the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, we see *kotodama* at work in what is said to be the earliest expression of Japanese poetry,[24] a poem by the god Susano-

[24] In his translation of the *Kojiki*, Donald L. Philippi notes that whether it is indeed the oldest song "is quite out of the question," but "the song is admittedly old and may originally have been a ritual blessing for a new house" (9n5).

o, the younger brother of Amaterasu. In exchange for slaying an eight-tailed serpent[25] that had been tormenting a family, Susano-o requests their last surviving daughter in return. Once the serpent has been killed, Susano-o "sought a place in the land of Izumo to build his palace" for his new wife (Shirane, *Traditional* 31). Coming upon the place he intended, Susano-o recites the following verse:

yakumo tatsu	In eight-cloud-rising
Izumo yaegaki	Izumo an eightfold fence
tsumagomi ni	to enclose my wife
yaegaki tsukuru	an eightfold fence I build,
sono yaegaki o	and, oh, that eightfold fence![26]

In this verse, the verb *tsukuru* ("to make" or "to build") is in the present tense, such that "Susano-o is, in a sense, constructing his palace and home for his wife in the very act of enunciating his verse" (Graybill 26). In this example, Susano-o uses poetry to create something, to call it into being through the power of *kotodama*. The use of words for purposes of creation is a familiar trope in the Western tradition of Christianity wherein God uses the word to create the world. In Genesis 1 of the Old Testament, it reads: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). However, Susano-o's ability to use language in this way seems contingent on it being the Yamato language and in verse.

In other instances, we see *kotodama* illustrated in the way words work to either enable or prevent things from occurring, as in the use of "divine incantations" (Antoni 6). There are several instances in the *Kojiki* wherein Susano-o is banished via "divine

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[25] Jin'ichi Konishi points out that eight was "a sacred numeral" and "[w]e should pause, therefore, before we dismiss Susanoo's uta, recited as the clouds rise over his newly built palace at Suga, as mere repetition" (*A History* 185). For more, see pages 184–86.

[26] Translation from Shirane, *Traditional* 31.

expulsion" (see *Kojiki* 13:8 and 17:25). After being told something akin to "Be gone!" Susano-o is unable to "remain in the heavens" and must wander the lands (*Kojiki* 86n28). Much like divine expulsion, we also see the use of curses as another example of the power language has on the external world. In a later chapter of the *Kojiki*, a deity who refuses to pay his younger brother a wager he agreed upon is cursed by his mother with the following words:

> As these bamboo leaves are green,
> As these bamboo leaves wither,
> Be green and wither!
> Also, as this salt flows and ebbs,
> Flow and ebb!
> And as these stones sink,
> Sink down and lie!

The narrative continues: "Thus she cursed him and put [the magic articles] above the hearth. Because of this, the elder brother became dried up and withered and was ravaged with sickness for eight years" (107:19–27, square brackets in original). After suffering for many years, the deity pleads to have his curse reversed. His desire is granted, and "his body became as before, and he was well and at ease" (107:29). To reverse the curse, the mother "had the magic articles removed" (107:28). In some sense, the words she spoke were materialized in or attached to the items used for the curse, so once removed, the words were also revoked.

Attention to the way the power of language relies upon proper recitation is seen in the story of the deities Izanagi and Izanami in their attempt to bear children. Their first progeny is said to be "not good" (*Kojiki* 5:1). This is because Izamani, the female deity, spoke first during their conjugal ritual. After performing a divination, the following is revealed: "Because the woman spoke first, [the child] was not good. Descend once more

and say it again" (5:3, square brackets in original). After performing the ritual again, but this time having Izanagi speak first, the couple is able to successfully bear numerous children: "After they had finished saying this, they were united and bore . . . a child [the island] . . . Next they bore the double island . . ." (6:1–2, square brackets in original).[27] Following these children, which make up the island of Japan, Izanagi and Izanami, "went on to bear deities" (7:1). Izanagi and Izanami's success is due to the power of the spoken word and the correct sequence of recitation. In each attempt of their conjugal ritual, the same words are spoken, but the order in which they are spoken is what determined whether the children they bore were said to be good or not. Much like the *noritio*, how something is said appears as important as what is said in terms of the power of the language being released.

Kotodama* in the *Man'yōshū

The first cited use of the word "*kotodama*" is found in the *Man'yōshū* (*Collection for a Myriad Ages*, ca. 785), where it appears less attached to specific ritual significance or *kami* worship as seen in the *norito* but is still reminiscent of these uses in the way it is evocative of the power of language to enact change in the external world. The *Man'yōshū* is the oldest extant anthology of Japanese poetry and is made up of twenty books containing over four thousand poems. Aside from the enormous quantity of poems it contains, two features that set the *Man'yōshū* apart from later imperial anthologies of waka are the variety of poetic forms it includes and the disparate lifestyles of those whose poems are cited. While later imperial anthologies primarily draw upon poets living in the

[27] See also Heldt 205; Antoni 6.

capital, the *Man'yōshū* is believed to include poems by both those of the court and those living in the countryside (Brower and Miner 21–22; Japanese Classics xiii). As might be expected, the *Man'yōshū* poems were also recorded in the old Japanese (Yamato) language and are therefore believed to be imbued with *kotodama* (Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Times" 158). Because Japan had no written language of its own at the time, in order to record the *Man'yōshū* poems appropriately, Chinese kanji were used not for their actual meaning, but for their phonetic sound.[28] In the writing of the word "kotodama," there appears to be no differentiation in the minds of the ancient Japanese between the idea of "words" and that of "things." The kanji used in the spelling of *koto* varies, appearing either as 言 (word) or as 事 (thing, happenings, acts), with the second kanji, *tama* or *dama* 霊 meaning spirit (Marra, "The Poetics" 6; Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Times" 158). As a result, the interconnectedness between words and things is expressed in both the meaning of and in the literal writing of "kotodama," which could be understood as "word-spirit" or "thing-spirit." Regarding this connection, Michael F. Marra explains that "the spirit of language (kotodama) had the power to create reality, inasmuch as naming (*koto* 言) had a direct bearing on the construction of things (*koto* 事)" (6). One explanation of this is that for the ancient Japanese, there was no separation between the name of a thing and the thing itself:[29] "To say the name was to invoke the thing" (Poulton 189).

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[28] The system of using Chinese kanji for their Japanese phonetic value is referred to as *man'yōgana*. See also Kathy Wolfe's explanation of *senmyo* in footnote 23.

[29] Hara provides a diagram (Figure 2: The *Kotodama*-based Semantic Triangle) to illustrate the way *kotodama* connects symbols and referents in a way that confuses typical semantic separations (282–83).

The word "kotodama" appears three times in the *Man'yōshū*, in poems composed by Yamanoue no Okura (660–733?) and Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (fl. ca. 680–700). In one of the *Man'yōshū* poems wherein *kotodama* is named directly, it is referred to as a source of knowledge (from divination) or as a source of good fortune. In poem 2506 (vol. 11) by Hitomaro, we see *kotodama* at work in the practice of divination:

> On the forked-road full of language spirits [*kotodama*]
> Tried evening divination
> The oracle foretold that
> My love would see me[30]

The twilight hours were an important time of day because it was believed that spirits visited during these hours in places of human activity, such as on bridges and crossroads (Poulton 187). As expressed in Hitomaro's poem, people used this magical time for divination and would listen nearby for the spirits to reveal information to them through people's conversations: "The idea was that these disjointed vestiges of strangers' conversations would be given a new context and personal significance by the eavesdropper" (187). People would use these snippets of conversation as an oracle (Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Times" 163). The words spoken near a forked road during the evening were imbued with *kotodama* or "language spirits" and functioned as a source of knowledge of the future. By being spoken aloud by unaware passersby as they traversed this special place, the words had the power, through *kotodama*, to enact the very thing that they contained. In Hitomaro's poem, the last line *imo wa ai yoran*, "My love would see me," is imbued with this power and thus is assumed to come to pass.

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[30] Translation from Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Times" 163.

In poem 3254 (vol. 13) by Hitomaro, *kotodama* appears in the envoy (a short poem following a longer poem) and is translated slightly differently, as "word-soul" instead of "language spirits." It is said to be what brings about good fortune:

> The Rice-abounding Land of Reed Plains
> Is a land where things fall out
> As will the gods, without lifted words of men [*kotoage*]
> Yet must I lift up words:
> 'Be fortunate, and travel safe and sound!'
> If you be free from evils,
> Then shall we meet once more;
> So I lift up words over and over again
> As the waves roll a hundredfold,
> A thousand fold!
> The land of Yamato is a land
> Where the word-soul [*kotodama*] gives us aid:
> Be happy, fare you well![31]

It is believed that in this poem, Hitomaro calls forth *kotodama*'s power to ensure safety on "the official missions to China" (Yakushi, "Kotodama in Ancient Times" 160). We see a similar use of *kotodama* in poem 894 (vol. 5) by Yamanoue no Okura, who had experience visiting China and seeing through the treacherous passage safely (161). We are informed by the poem's headnote that this poem is "[a] wish for safety at the departure of Tajihi Hironari, ambassador to China, in the fifth year of Tempyō (733)" (Japanese Classics 207). The reference to *kotodama* appears in the first stanza:

> Since the age of the gods it has always been said
> That the Land of Yamato is
> A land where Sovereign-Gods hold solemn sway,
> A land where the word-soul [*kotodama*] brings us weal;
> Not only has it been so told from mouth to mouth,
> But all of us see and know it now.[32]

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[31] Translation from Japanese Classics 59.

[32] Translation from Japanese Classics 207.

The poem continues on to praise the ambassador and assure him that the Japanese gods will guide his voyage and return him safely home. This poem similarly invokes *kotodama* by stating what is desired so that it will come to pass due to the power inherent in the Japanese language. Some scholars believe that by including *kotodama* in this poem, the poem also reveals anxieties about Japan's relationship to the more developed China. What China doesn't have is the Yamato language and its inherent power, an idea that is implied by the emphasis on the power of the Yamato gods throughout the poem and in the fact that Okura, who was well-versed in Chinese, could have written the poem in Chinese but chose to write it in Japanese (Yakushi 162).[33] Regardless of one's interpretation, it is clear that *kotodama* holds an important place in the meaning of the poem, which hinges on the belief that by stating the ambassador would have a safe voyage, it would necessarily come to pass. Again, we can see the connection between words and things in the way words cause things to occur by virtue of kotodama.

Many other poems from the *Man'yōshū* similarly display a belief in *kotodama*, even when it is not explicitly mentioned. The following poem attributed to Empress Yamato-himé is said to have been "[p]resented to the Emperor Tenji on the occasion of his majesty's illness" (Japanese Classics 7):

> I turn and gaze far
> Towards the heavily plains.
> Lo, blest is my Sovereign Lord—

[33] Others have interpreted the lines about "Our Sovereign" to be about the emperor, such that these lines could also be read as a statement about Japan having become "a steadily unified nation" (Yakushi 162).

His long life overspans
The vast blue firmament.[34]

This poem is found among other elegies collected in the *Man'yōshū*. It was believed that "if this uta was recited near the sickbed of the tennō, the breath of the reciter was expected to reach the sick man and, through the action of the kotodama, effect a recovery" (Konishi, *A History* 327). By stating out loud through recitation of this poem that Emperor Tenji would have a long life, *kotodama* would be manifested into reality and make it happen.

Another poem addressed to Emperor Tenji but this time by Princess Nukada similarly evokes *kotodama*, but in a different context:

While, waiting for you,
My heart is filled with longing,
The autumn wind blows—
As if it were you—
Swaying the bamboo blinds of my door.[35]

While at first glance this appears as nothing more than a simple love poem, within the recitation of the poem is the expectation that "the kotodama within the reciter's breath will magically transform her dwelling into a place her lover will visit" (Konishi, *A History* 328). Although not always obvious, the underlying belief that *kotodama* would invoke an effect in the external world gives additional substance and meaning to this poem and potentially other poems that take love as their subject.

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[34] Translation from Japanese Classics 7. An alternative translation can be found in Konishi, *A History* 327.

[35] Translation from Japanese Classics 9–10. An alternative translation can be found in Konishi, *A History* 328.

While the *norito* contain formal addresses to important *kami*, Japanese poems might also be composed to lesser deities, revealing both the animistic beliefs of the time and the belief in the power of *kotodama*. For example, two poems composed by Prince Arima (640–658) recorded in the *Man'yōshū* show an expectation of *kotodama* in the poet's address to a pine tree. After being arrested for committing treason, Prince Arima was taken to away to plead his case, and it was likely at this time that he composed the following poems (Konishi, *A History* 328–29):

> At Iwashiro I bind
> The branches of a shore pine.
> If fortune favors me,
> I may come back
> And see the knot again.
>
> Now that I journey, grass for pillow,
> They serve rice on the *shii* leaves,
> Rice they would put in a bowl
> Were I at home![36]

The practice of binding pine branches was believed to be a kind of charm (Japanese Classics 8n5). In this poem, Prince Arima "tells the pine tree that his act will ensure a safe return, and if fortune protects him, he will revisit the tree to see its bound branches" (Konishi, *A History* 329). Like the recitation of a *norito*, which would be accompanied with an offering of some kind, Price Arima likely offered the rice mentioned in the second poem along with his address to the pine tree (329). Through the spirit of his words (*kotodama*), it was believed that the pine tree's spirit would be invoked for good fortune in relation to Prime Arima's plight.

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[36] Translation from Japanese Classics 8–9.

Because words were believed to have such power, taboo words and expressions were avoided, and the ancient Japanese would not share their real names with strangers for fear of their name being used in a curse (Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Sociolinguistic" 143; Hara 287–288). Knowing someone's name could grant you power over them, so names were only released in particular circumstances, such as after one's death or in marriage: "If a woman told her name to a man, it was considered to be acceptance of a proposal of marriage" (Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Times" 157–58; Japanese Classics 58n1). This is seen in poem 2497 (vol. 11) of the *Man'yōshū*:

> Now that I have uttered my name
> Clear as the famous call
> Of a Hayahito on his night-watch round
> Trust me as your wife, my lord![37]

Because of the ability for names to be used in curses, sharing one's name was a mark of trust suitable only for close relationships. Here *kotodama* can be seen in the belief that one's name might be used in tandem with evil or taboo words and bring about bad fortune (Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Times" 159).[38]

As a result of this belief, *imikotoba* ("substitute words") were often used to replace words that were prohibited from being spoken aloud. This included not only people's names, but also words that denote bad things (e.g., death and blood) or that sounded like bad things (e.g., the number "four" 四 *shi,* which sounds like 死 *shi* "death"). Because it was believed that animals also shared in the Yamato language, euphemistic *imikotoba* would be used to mention animals themselves or the hunting of

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[37] Translation from Japanese Classics 58.

[38] Yakushi provides several additional examples of poems from the *Man'yōshū* that exemplify people's belief in name taboo in "*Kotodama* in Ancient Sociolinguistic Concepts."

them (e.g., *kedamono* "a hairy creature" instead of "animal" or *umisachi* "sea luck" instead of "fishing rod") (Ignatieva and Trazanoval 2–3). In Hitomaro's well-known poem about finding a dead man on the rocky shore of Samine, we see how the subject of death might be approached in a way that avoided taboo words. The poem begins with scenic reflection and the animistic perception of the province as a deity itself:

> O Sanuki of beautiful seaweed
> On which I never tire to look!
> So fair is the province
> Because of its origin,
> And so hallowed the land
> For its divinity,
> With the very face of a god
> Enduring full and perfect
> With heaven and earth, with sun and moon.

The poem concludes with two envoys:

> Had your wife been with you,
> She would have gathered food for you—
> Starworts on Sami's hill-side—
> But now is not their season past?
>
> On the rugged beach
> Where the waves come surging in from sea
> You sleep, O luckless man,
> Your head among the stones![39]

Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner explain that "Hitomaro addresses the body of the dead man on Samine in terms of polite address, using honorific verbs and pronouns, and it has been suggested that one purpose of the poem may have been to remove the possibility of ritual defilement" (445). Hitomaro's focus on positive images, relating the beauty of the area and imagining a more prosperous outcome for the man, shows both a conscious effort to avoid the details that could be easily conveyed in such a scene of death as well

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[39] Translation from Japanese Classics 46–47.

as an emphasis on that which is good and beautiful—as opposed to taking a more neutral view of the scene. This tendency clearly indicates knowledge of *kotodama* and belief in the potential effects wrought by releasing *kotodama* through the declaration of auspicious or taboo words. *Kotodama* encompasses the notions that "beautiful words, correctly pronounced" could "bring about good" and "ugly words or beautiful words incorrectly pronounced" would "cause evil" (Kitagawa 68). In these and other examples from the *Man'yōshū*, we can see how the belief in *kotodama*, which originated in Shinto beliefs and ritual practices, permeates poetry and contributes to the power poetry had to enact change in the external world. As seen in the careful recording of Japanese poetry in a way that preserves Japanese phonetics, by similarly relying on the Yamato language, waka becomes the poetic form most associated with *kotodama*.

Although the word "*kotodama*" only appears a few times in the *Man'yōshū* and sparingly elsewhere, Jin'ichi Konishi argues that "Hitomaro's poetry relied thoroughly on the kotodama. Unless this facet of his work is acknowledged, many of his uta cannot be properly interpreted" (338). In an encomium of Empress Jitō (r. 686–697), which might easily be mistaken as having been written "simply to praise the fine scenery," Konishi explains that when understood in its proper context, the following poem can be read as an invocation of *kotodama* to infuse the sovereign with the powers of the natural world (339):

Yasumishishi	She who holds sway,
Waga ōkimi no	Our Sovereign Lady,
Kikoshiosu	Is pleased to rule
Ame no shita ni	The many provinces
Kuni wa shi mo	That make up the land
Sawa ni aredomo	Lying beneath the heavens;
Yamakawa no	Yet her heart is drawn
Kiyoki kafuchi to	To the mountains and the streams

Mikokoro o	That make the pure landscape
Yoshino no kuni no	Of the province of Yoshino:
Hanajirau	There, upon the fields of Akizu,
Akizu no nobe ni	Where cherry blossoms fall,
Miyahashira	She causes the great pillars of
Futoshikimaseba	Her dwelling to be firmly placed.
Momoshiki no	Courtiers from the palace,
Ōmiyahito wa	Built with stone and wood aplenty,
Fune namete	Cross the morning river
Asakawa watari	In boat after boat;
Funagioi	Cross the evening river,
Yūkawa Wataru	Boat racing against boat.
Kono kawa no	May her reign be everlasting
Tayuru koto naku	As the flow of this river;
Kono yama no	May her power be more exalted
Iya takashirasu	Than the heights of this mountain.
Mina sosoku	Detached Palace of the Torrent,
Taki no miyako wa	Where waters plummet,
Miredo akanu kamo	I never tire of beholding you!

Envoy

Miredo akanu	I never tire of beholding
Yoshino no kawa no	The river Yoshino where
Tokoname no	Evergreen mosses grow,
Tayuru koto naku	Perpetual as our lady's reign:
Mata kaerimin.	May she return to view it countless times [40]

In this poem, Hitomaro relies "on the kotodama unique to Yamato" by "putting into kotoba or language the spiritual aspects of the region" and then reciting them in the presence of the empress (342). Konishi notes that *shi* poems (Chinese poems) regarding the same region differ in that they refer to legends about Yoshino as "the realm of the immortals," which was a foreign concept for the Japanese (341). In order to invoke *kotodama*, Hitomaro ignores these foreign tropes and focuses instead on the natural landscape as full of living entities from which Jitō can draw strength and beauty. Konishi explains that when Hitomaro "sings of 'the mountains and the streams/That make the

[40] Translation from Konishi, *A History* 338–39.

pure landscape,' he does not use the word 'pure' as a concept. Instead, the fresh purity of the mountains and streams is to enter Jitō as a vital force" (340). It is also notable that "[t]he words used in this process were carefully chosen to include only those with auspicious meaning" (339). Furthermore, the well-known waka motif of falling cherry blossoms and its associated melancholic ephemerality renders a different interpretation when the belief in *kotodama* is considered in this context. For Hitomaro, falling cherry blossoms were seen "as a dynamic force, an event filled with vitality, and [this occurrence] was evoked with the anticipation that the healthy beauty of Jitō would be further enhanced" (340). The connection between words and happenings in this way shows how *kotodama* acted as the catalyst for the composition of such poems and provided the reasoning for selecting only the most auspicious words.

Conclusion

What can be learned from this brief examination of Japanese beliefs and practices is that there existed in premodern Japan an awareness of the power of words to enact change in the external world. The meaning of *kotodama* has evolved over time. Initially it referred to the supernatural power of the *kami* (Japanese deities) as found in the Shinto ritual prayers that addressed them. These were known as *norito*. Then the *norito* themselves were considered to contain souls. And lastly, auspicious words and phrases, as well as taboo words and phrases, were considered to contain souls that if released (through *kotoage*) would bring about good or evil, respectively (Hara 281; Ignatieva and Trazanoval 2). Like many other cultures who share a belief in the magical power of song and verse, premodern Japan is not without its own rhetorical orientation towards

language, which might serve as a starting point when considering Japan's indigenous rhetorical traditions. The examples of poems given also show the importance of careful composition in order to create a poem in which *kotodama* would dwell. The constriction of diction to that which is auspicious and beautiful became a hallmark of the waka tradition, and this trend clearly originates with the belief in *kotodama*—the knowledge that words carry power in their very enunciation.

By the seventh century, when Chinese had taken root in Japan, "[w]aka nonetheless persisted in its exclusive use of Yamato vocabulary because the waka tradition had been formed with the kotodama in mind" (Konishi, *A History* 206). Many poets of the *Man'yōshū* who were well-versed in Chinese continued to compose waka in Yamato (old Japanese) because to do otherwise would be to lose the power of *kotodama*. Furthermore, it was believed that *kotodama* more readily resided in words from the Age of the Gods, so the use of old diction was necessary to "lodge" *kotodama* (207). The hesitancy to use modern words in a waka is an idea that persisted into the thirteenth century, as seen in Fujiwara no Teika's *Eiga no taigai* (*Essentials of Poetic Composition*, ca. 1222), wherein he states: "When it comes to diction [*kotoba*], one must use old words." He continues: "Poets frequently use and compose with the words of the poetry of the ancients. That is already a trend" (qtd. in Shirane, *Traditional* 606). This shows a continuation of the belief that some words are more suitable (to house *kotodama*) than others. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the development of *kana* (Japanese phonetic script) at the start of the ninth century and its use as a replacement of kanji (Chinese script) in the composition of Japanese poetry suggests a continued focus on suitable language and its orality.

It is also significant that *norito* and early Japanese poetry share many characteristics, including their brevity, their orality, their use of nature imagery, and how the belief in *kotodama* permeated their creation and uses. The orality of waka can be seen contributing to its incantatory function in the same way that through *norito,* by speaking or chanting certain words aloud and in the proper way, events were expected to come to pass by virtue of *kotodama*. A similar attention to the importance of sound as found in the *norito* can be seen in the *Man'yōshū* as well as in the early myth-histories *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* wherein prose was written using Chinese characters for their meaning, but poems were relayed phonetically by Chinese characters to preserve the appropriate sounds of the Yamato language. "The compilers used this cumbersome method of transcribing the sounds of Japanese—one character for each syllable of a long word—because the sounds themselves had value, a kind of magic that went beyond the mere meaning" (Keene 52). In the *Nihon shoki,* classical Chinese is used throughout except for in the translation of the poems: "Since Yamato words were interwoven with kotodama, the poems could not be put into a foreign language" (Yakushi, "*Kotodama* in Ancient Times" 163). Therefore, the power of *kotodama* was not isolated to the *norito,* but it existed within the Yamato language itself and was used for similar purposes in early poetry.

Konishi uses the belief in *kotodama* to explain how well-known "rhetorical techniques" in waka (e.g., pillow-words and prefaces) were found to be moving to the ancient Japanese. Rather than see these techniques simply as "rhetorical" in the vague sense of meaning that they are contrived for clever effect, Konishi explains that through the power of *kotodama,* the layered meanings and homonymy created by the use of these

techniques would create a "guide phrase" that harbored *kotodama* so that it "could be transmitted into the essence of the poem" (211). The eventual use of *kana* in recording waka similarly enabled this ambiguity, which served as a necessary link in meanings and interpretations of a poem, even after the belief in *kotodama* waned. If kanji were used instead of *kana,* the multiple meanings so carefully crafted into a poem would be lost.

It is largely agreed that the belief in *kotodama* waned in the early Heian period, only to be taken up again much later.[41] Gustav Heldt aptly points out the overall lack of direct references to *kotodama* in extant documents and questions the value other scholars have placed on the belief. In relation to a poem composed by Fujiwara no Yoshifusa for Emperor Ninmyō's birthday celebration wherein the word "*kotodama*" is found, Heldt states: "While such beliefs clearly existed in early Japan, the fact that this is one of only a few places where the term *kotodama* is used should give us pause in overstating its heuristic value for describing linguistic praxis in the early Heian period" (61). This is a solid point when we consider that *kotodama* only appears three times in the *Man'yōshū* and then here and there in various other mentions, such as in Yoshifusa's poem. However, although not explicitly mentioned, the belief in *kotodama* not only clearly permeates the *norito* and much of the poetry of the Asuka and Nara periods, as illustrated in the examples given above, but the restriction of words to those within the Yamato language as well as an emphasis on words that are auspicious or beautiful persists consistently throughout the waka tradition.

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[41] Nativist scholars revived discourse on *kotodama* during the Edo period (1603–1868). For more details, see "'A Land Blessed by Word Spirit': Kamochi Masazumi and Early Modern Constructs of *Kotodama*" by Roger K. Thomas (*Early Modern Japan,* 2012).

To add to this point, there are several factors that help explain the lack of mention of *kotodama* in the Heian period. First, the *Man'yōshū* was largely inaccessible to poets of the tenth century because of the complicated way its poems were recorded. However, it is believed that at least some of the poems were known at this time because variations of them show up in the *Kokinshū* attributed to anonymous authors. Brower suggests that these poems "had been handed down orally through the years as songs" (165). This would explain how they were known to poets such as Tsurayuki and why variations of the poems appear included in the *Kokinshū* even though Tsurayuki claims in the preface that they were commanded not to include poems from the *Man'yōshū* (Brower and Miner 165; *Kokinshū* 46).

Another factor that helps explain the lapse in *kotodama* during the early Heian period is what Konishi identifies as a shift in beliefs that the affective power of words came not from *kotodama*, but from the beauty of contrived, decorous language. This is seen in the concept *miyabi* ("courtliness" or "elegance"). To better understand this change and how waka continues to develop in relation to it, we must consider the continental influences on Japan's poetic tradition. In the next chapter, I build on this brief examination of *kotodama* to examine a development in premodern Japanese values in relation to Chinese poetic ideals.

CHAPTER 4

CHINESE INFLUENCES ON JAPANESE POETICS

In this chapter, I consider the continental elements that had significant impact on the development of Japanese poetry and poetics, including Chinese poetics, particularly poetry from the Six Dynasties and the "Great Preface" to the *Shijing* (*The Book of Songs*). I also touch on continental modes of thought, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, as these elements relate to political and social developments in Japan. The Chinese influence on early Japanese culture has been well-established, including its impact on Japan's early poetic tradition. Poetry was just one of many Japanese court elements that had a Chinese counterpart. This "binarism," as Thomas LaMarre calls it, could be seen in "various modes of production and types of expression—bureaucracies (ranks, titles, court dress), scripts, poetry, painting, and architecture" (30).

One obvious Japanese and Chinese "binarism" within the realm of poetry is found in the two prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, the Japanese preface (*kanajo*) and the Chinese preface (*manajo*). The hybrid "doubleness" of Chinese and Japanese elements can also be seen as early as the *Man'yōshū* (Teele, "Rules" 148). Coming at a time just after the Taika Reforms (645), which adapted China's centralized system of government to move power to the Japanese Imperial house, the *Man'yōshū*, relied not only upon the Chinese writing system for its creation through the phonetic use of characters as discussed

previously, but also "the very idea of making such a collection of poems was in all probability inspired by the examples imported from China, where the work of compiling anthologies had early developed, and where in later ages it grew to be almost a national industry of unparalleled magnitude" (Japanese Classics xviii–xix).

The vogue of Chinese poetry reached its height during the early Heian period, and in this time we see important changes in how the Japanese perceived poetry. In the previous chapter, I addressed the belief in *kotodama* and its connection to *Yamato uta* (Japanese verse). There are a couple of main ideas from the last chapter that will be pushed forward in the following pages in relation to the Chinese influence on Japanese poetics that will grant us further insight into the rhetorical significance of waka poetry. First is the perceived role of poetry in society, and second is the rhetorical perception of words and of what grants words their affective power. In short, what makes words affective and what is that good for. While it would be a mistake to assume that Chinese ideas about poetry were taken wholesale by the Japanese, it would be inaccurate to ignore Chinese influences on the development of Japanese because of their significance in shaping the waka tradition.

By the seventh century, Chinese had become the official language in Japan for all administrative matters, including government and scholarship.[42] "Therefore competence in reading and writing Chinese was no doubt required to have the ability to function smoothly in this closed society" (Kumakura 12). In fact, Michael F. Marra argues that the incorporation of Chinese writings is what caused Japanese poets to reflect on their own

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[42] As Chinese was the classical language for educated Japanese courtiers, Brower and Miner suggest that rather than "being mere borrowers" of Chinese poetic techniques, it would be more appropriate to suggest Japanese poets participated in Chinese literary forms (25).

tradition and develop ways of composing as well as evaluating their own poetry ("Major Japanese" 27). Japanese envoys who were sent to China brought back thousands of Chinese books, among them volumes on literature, poetics, and rhyming (Rabinovitch and Bradstock 3–5). Thus, Japanese courtiers were familiar with a number of Chinese poems and writings about poetry, and they became skilled in composing what was referred to as *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) (4).[43] Two of the most important texts that relate to ideas about the role of poetry in society and perceptions about the power of words are the "Great Preface" to the *Shijing* (*The Book of Songs*) and the late Six Dynasties poetry found in the *Wen hsüan* (*Literary Selections*). Although the Chinese influence on Japanese poetics is not limited to these texts, I focus on these two in particular because of their influence in shaping beliefs about poetry's role in societal and political contexts and in shaping the stylistic norms of waka poetry from the *Kokinshū* onwards, both of which contribute to our understanding of waka poetry as a rhetorical practice.

The *Shijing* and Social Poetics

As Chinese poetic ideals took strong hold during the early Heian period, there also began to be a shift in ideas about the role of poetry in society**.** Without the belief in *kotodama* to serve as a catalyst for poetic composition, at least not as directly or strongly as it had in the past, we see that Chinese influences, particularly from the "Great Preface" to the *Shijing* (*Book of Songs*) contributed to beliefs about the use of poetry in social and

[43] For a list of Chinese texts found in Prince Shōtoku's (573–621 CE) *Jūshichijo Kempō* (*Constitution in Seventeen Articles*) from the seventh century (604 CE), see Konishi, *A History* 310. For other texts that were influential to Japanese poetics see Wixted, "The *Kokinshū*" 217–22. See also Konishi, "The Genesis" 66, 168; Brower and Miner 83.

political contexts. The *Shijing* 詩經 (also written *Shih ching* or *Shih-ching*, and given many English titles, such as *Book of Poetry*, *Classic of Poetry*, *Book of Songs*, and *Book of Odes*) is China's oldest extant poetry anthology, with poems dating from as early as the 10/11th century BCE. Compiled around 600 BCE, the *Shijing* is one of the Five Classics included in the Chinese Confucian canon along with the philosophical texts known as the Four Books (Owen, *Readings* 10). Confucius, who was born a century before Socrates and lived from 551 to 479 BCE, is said to have "placed great emphasis on the study of *The Book of Songs*, both as an essential part of a moral education and as training for political life in the courts" (Owen, Foreword xxiii). Under Confucianism, the *Shijing* was believed to function as both a moralizing force in instilling ethical conduct in the people and a legislative force in terms of providing precedent in argumentative discourse (xxiii).

Like many early traditions of song and poetry, the *shi* tradition existed orally in China long before being compiled in written form in what is known today as the *Shijing* (Hunter 4). Michael Hunter explains that the common translation of *shi* to "songs" "emphasizes the performative dimension of their orality," but does not fully capture the way *shi* were understood in their own time: "Early Chinese commentators tend to gloss *shi* as *zhi* 志, meaning 'intention' or 'what is on the mind'; thus, a *Shi* is an expression of a person's inner thoughts and feelings, not something made" (4). This distinction is important when it comes to understanding the role *shi* played in Chinese society and how poetry came to be viewed in premodern Japan in response to Chinese poetic influences. Not just a mode of performative discourse, *shi* was a rhetorical action.

Although interpretations of the *shi* included in the *Shijing* have been disputed and modified over time, when the *Shijing* became standard curriculum under Confucianism during the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), accepted interpretations were given to each poem regarding "the moral and social conditions of the age in which it was produced," despite the fact that not all of the poems easily lend themselves to such an interpretation (xxiv). As evidenced by these accompanying interpretations, the poems were seen as an aid in one's moral development. Stephen Owen explains: "The poems of the *Book of Songs* were meant to give paradigmatic expression to human feeling; and those who learned and recited the *Songs* [*shi*] would naturally internalize correct values" (*Readings* 39). Regardless of whether or not all of the poems support their didactic reading, their framing in this way was a crucial part of the *shi* tradition under Confucianism. Furthermore, in the *Analects*, Confucius states:

> Little ones, Why is it that none of you study the *Songs*? For the *Songs* will help you to incite people's emotions, to observe their feelings, to keep company, to express your grievances. They may be used at home in the service of one's father; abroad in the service of one's prince. Moreover, they will widen your acquaintance with the names of birds, beasts, plants and trees. (17:9)

From this passage, we might gather that part of one's moral development is tied to rhetoric in one's ability to "incite people's emotions" and "observe their feelings." In his analysis of the *Analects* as a rhetoric of ritualization, Xiaoye You comments on this passage, stating that "through studying the *Songs* [*shi*], one will sharpen his skills in handling situations both at home and in the office rhetorically," and in becoming acquainted with the *shi*, one is able to effectively participate in "the culture of rituality" because one has the knowledge of how to properly interact with others (441, 442).

Some of the specific ways the *shi* were utilized include "as objects of exegesis," "as sources of moral wisdom," "as a didactic discourse," and as a social indicator of "initiation into an elite group distinguished by their ability to talk about the *Shi*" (Hunter 17). Other times the *shi* were used "in various performative contexts" with elite individuals "peppering their speech with *Shi* quotations and allusions, and even using the *Shi* to code and decode messages on diplomatic occasions" (3). These varied uses show a deeply seated reliance on the *shi* in the creation of discourse and in the managing of social relations. The *shi* could serve to provide a talking point or explanation, teach a moral principle, or bring people together through shared knowledge. In this way, the *shi* were used as artifacts that held important truths about the world and the people in it.

The various performative, social, and didactic uses of the *shi* in the years following their compilation in the *Shijing* appear to stem from the way ancient rulers would use the *shi* tradition "to take the temperature of their people, to diagnose what ailed them, and to change their policies accordingly" (Hunter 6). This use of *shi* illustrates the translation of *shi* as "intention" or "what is on the mind" of the people. By gathering information about what was on the minds of their people, rulers could be provoked by the sentiments conveyed in the poems; and by composing *shi*, people could influence their rulers to act more virtuously. Therefore, the *shi* provided a kind of discourse between people and rulers built upon the expectation that change could result from the feelings expressed in the *shi*:

> Feelings of sorrow and joy stir in the heart and are given voice in song. Recited as words, they are called *shi*; drawn out by the voice, they are called "song." Thus, in ancient times there was an office for collecting *shi* for the king to contemplate the prevailing customs, to recognize successes and failures, and to examine and correct himself. (qtd. in Hunter 6)

Because of the importance of the *shi* as a mode of exegesis, moral instruction, and discourse between rulers and people, it is no surprise that the study of the *shi* was common among the elite classes. As such, it is difficult not to assign some rhetorical component to the *shi* tradition in both the composition of and in the later use of *shi* in social and political contexts.

In the following poem, given the title "Big Rat," we see how the *shi* might have been used to express the dissatisfaction with "greedy officials" (10):

> Big Rat, big rat,
> Do not gobble our millet!
> Three years we have slaved for you,
> Yet you take no notice of us.
> At last we are going to leave you
> And go to that happy land;
> Happy land, happy land,
> Where we shall have our place.[44]

The other two stanzas of this poem follow a similar pattern, with the narrator repeating the lines about the big rat, complaining about the big rat eating their food, and professing that they are going to leave to a happier place. Helen Craig McCullough describes this kind of poetry as "political satire and social protest," which are common themes in the *Shijing* (12). By couching the protest in patterning (*wen*), and thus making it recognizable as a poem, the statements were made indirect and therefore more acceptable in the social sphere. Stephen Owen explains: "Just as in the Western tradition fictionality or *poiesis* is granted special license to violate social taboo, so *wen** is supposed to place its user in a protected domain, free from the culpability normally attendance on criticizing authority" (*Readings* 46).

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[44] Translation from *The Book of Songs* 88–89.

Citing a famous statement on *shi* from the *Shu ching* (*Book of Documents*, "Canon of Shun") that states "The Poem (*shih**) articulates what is on the mind intently (*chih** [*shi*]); song makes language (*yen*) last long," Owen explains that calling a *shi* a poem is done "merely for the sake of convenience" (qtd. in *Readings* 26; *Readings* 26–27). A *shi,* he explains further, is not a thing crafted, it "is not the 'object' of its writer; it *is* the writer, the outside of an inside" (27). Therefore, *shi* as an expression of that which "is on the mind intently" is not synonymous with the will or intent to compose a poem; rather, it is "a relation to some object, event, or possibility in the living world outside of poetry" (28). It is an "activity" as opposed to something produced (28).

The second part of this statement on *shi*, "song makes language (*yen*) last long," refers to both the "stretching out the words in the act of singing" as well as the preservation of the text by way of "the patterning of song" through which "a text becomes fixed and repeatable (29). Owen explains this significance: "Unlike speech, which disappears as soon as it is uttered, song is one of the earliest examples of the fixed text" (29). By preserving language through song, it is able to "last long" both in the sense that the act of recitation is extended and in that it is more easily repeatable through time.

In similar fashion, Hunter explains that although the *Shijing* and the *shi* that make it up are often classified as "literature," such definitions as used today to differentiate between disciplinary modes of thought and their subsequent content "can be actively misleading" when applied to "premodern modes of sense-making" (2). Therefore, rather than impose classifications that stunt hermeneutic endeavors, it is better to widen our gaze to include the diverse functions of the *shi* as found in various applications. Hunter argues for the foundational influence of the *Shijing* on the Chinese philosophical

tradition: "The *Shi* established 'The Way' (*dao* 道) as the most emblematic concept in East Asian history. In these and other respects, *Shi* poetry inculcated certain basic patterns of thought and expression in the classical period" (1). We can see clear parallels from this understanding of the *shi* tradition and the poetic/epideictic view of rhetoric that Jeffery Walker provides, which suggests that the primary identifier of a rhetorical tradition is that it "shapes the ideologies and imageries with which, and by which, the individual members of a community identify themselves" (9). Therefore, it is clear why classifying the *Shijing* as merely "literature" does not account for its permeations of and applications in ancient Chinese society.

The "Great Preface" and *Feng*

The social, political, and ethical dimensions of the *shi* outlined above demonstrate the important social role poetry held in ancient China and the way poetry worked as a kind of rhetorical discourse in its ability to sway the minds of rulers and in its use as a mode of proof. These rhetorical aspects of the *shi* are emphasized in the first division of the *Shijing*, the *Guo feng* or "Airs of the States." The 305 poems that make up the *Shijing* are commonly divided into four sections: "Airs of the States," "Lesser Court Hymns" and "Major Court Hymns," and "Eulogies." The first section, "Airs of the States," (henceforth "Airs") contains more than half of the total poems (totaling 160 poems) divided into fifteen sections that correspond to different geographical regions of the Western Zhou dynasty from which the poems originate (Hunter 2).

Each poem in the *Shijing* is accompanied by a preface that provides the historical context of the poem's production.[45] The first poem in the book, "Guanju" 關雎 translated as "Fishhawks" or "The Ospreys Cry," is preceded by what has come to be known as the "Great Preface," or the "Major Preface." [46] The "Great Preface" works somewhat like an inductive treatise, to use a Western term, by using the poem as a starting point from which to relay a larger argument about the role of poetry in people's lives (Owen 38). The "Great Preface" is important to the discussion here because it is considered "the most authoritative statement on the nature and function of poetry in traditional China," and it also provided the theoretical groundwork for the development of Japanese poetics (37).

A key component to the poetics established in the "Great Preface" is the concept of *feng*. *Feng* is often translated as "airs" or "wind." The meaning, however, implies "influence," as illustrated in the "metaphor of the way in which the wind sways the grass and plants" (Owen 39). The "Great Preface" begins by explaining *feng* in relation to the social role of poetry:

> *Kuan-chü* is the virtue (*tê**) of the Queen Consort and the beginning of the *Feng**. It is the means by which the world is influenced (*feng**) and by which the relations between husband and wife are made correct (*cheng**). Thus it is used in smaller communities, and it is used in larger states. "Airs" are "Influence"; it is "to teach." By influence it stirs them; by teaching it transforms them. (qtd. in Owen, *Readings* 38)

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[45] Although not immediately relevant to the discussion here, the use of prefaces to contextualize poems and provide information for their interpretation was another feature of Chinese poetry that the Japanese adopted, as evidenced in both personal poetry collections left by Japanese poets and in the imperial anthologies.

[46] The authorship of the "Great Preface" is a matter of dispute, but it is often attributed to Confucian scholar Wei Hong (Svensson 1; Wixted, "The *Kokinshū*" 217).

From this passage we learn that by sharing one's intentions (*shi*), one is able to influence or teach (*feng*) others. Owen explains that the *shi* "were employed in roughly three ways in early oratory and in the prose essays that grew out of the tradition: first, to prove a point, by citing one of the *Songs* as authority; second, to express what the speaker 'was intent upon' (*chih**); and third, to persuade by 'stirring' (*hsing**) the emotions of the listeners in favor of the point of view presented by the orator" (*Readings* 39–40). Here we see a reiteration of the rhetorical use-value of *shi*. This passage shows a meta-awareness of using the *shi* deliberately for persuasive or affective purposes. Regarding the use of *shi* in Chinese oratory, Arthur Waley explains: "The emotional effect of the familiar poem is greater than that of any direct appeal" (qtd. in Kennedy 145). Because of the *shi*'s place in early Chinese society, their cultural meaningfulness could be used to powerful effect. This understanding is important to the development of Japanese poetics as seen in the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, which will be discussed shortly. But first, we can see that early Japanese rulers similarly found poetry to be a useful tool for reinforcing the legitimacy of their imperial rule.

Japanese Rulers and Harmonization

Although their system of rule varied, early Japanese rulers adopted the quasi-Confucian belief that poetry was useful in social and political contexts. Their use of poetry appears to function similarly to what is described in the "Great Preface" through the act of "harmonization" (*wa*), a poetic practice wherein "poets would produce verses whose rhyme schemes and words echoed those of their sovereign, thereby signaling not only their accord with his will but also their fitness to transmit his words throughout the

realm as officials representing his authority" (Heldt, *The Pursuit* 10). This practice often took place at *kyokuen* ("curving banquets"), during which important political issues were discussed, and during *kunimi* ("realm-viewing") or hunts, during which a sovereign might take the opportunity to reinforce his legitimacy and ownership of the land (31, 36–37).

Emperor Kammu (also "Kanmu") (r. 781–806), the first early Heian sovereign, employed harmonization in various contexts. In one instance, while visiting his son Prince Iyo after spending the day hunting at Kitano, Emperor Kammu composes a verse during a "realm-viewing" (*kunimi*). Heldt explains: "By the early Heian period, such hunts were one of the few instances in which this archaic ritual was enacted. On these occasions, the sovereign would ascend a hill and gaze out over the surrounding landscape in order to mark his ownership of it" (*The Pursuit* 37). Hunts were often held on "sacred sites marked by shrines to local deities," thus signaling "the sovereign's primacy over the capital's boundaries by asserting his entitlement to the products of the mountains, forests, and fields and the services of the local spirits who provided them" (38). In the poem recited, the deer mentioned may, in fact, represent one of these spirits (*kami*) (38):

kesa no asake	At break of dawn
naku chō shika no	the deer is said to cry
kono koe o	I'll not leave without hearing
kikazu wa yukaji	it give voice,
yo wafuken tomo	though deepest night may fall.[47]

The poem is followed by the note: "Just then, a deer cried out keenly. He commanded his assembled ministers to harmonize with his verse. After night fell they returned" (36). Heldt explains that Kammu's poem "displays his monarchical power by generating harmonies" through the "deer's vocal act of fealty in responding to his verse" and in the

[47] Translation from Heldt, *The Pursuit* 36.

harmonies provided by the ministers, who were commanded to compose their own poems in response (36–37). The ability to invoke these harmonies from the natural world and from his people was evidence of the emperor's legitimacy, but they also, through a lingering belief in *kotodama*, worked to invoked continued harmony over the realm and among the people under the emperor's rule. This harmonizing use of poetry by early Heian sovereigns was effective within "a larger Confucian system that encompassed cosmological, ritual, political, and economic dimensions" through an "economy of virtue" (Heldt 40–41, qtd. in Heldt 41). Virtue was measured by "the ruler's power to accumulate, refine, and redirect the energies of his subjects through his performance of ritual actions in synchrony with the celestial and seasonal cycles of Heaven, thereby ensuring material bounty and social harmony" (Heldt 41).

Emperor Kammu's son Heizei (r. 806–809) similarly used the harmonizing powers of poetry during his short reign. Always at odds with his younger brother, Saga, who eventually took the throne, Heizei can be seen attempting to ease underlying tensions during a poetic exchange initiated by Saga during a celebratory banquet (39):

> His Majesty went in procession to the Shinsen-en Park. Zither songs were performed and those of Fourth Rank and above placed chrysanthemums in their hair. His Majesty's younger brother then sang a song of praise:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *miyabito no* | Folk of the court |
> | *sono ka ni mezuru* | smitten by the fragrance |
> | *fujibakama* | of wisteria trousers |
> | *kimi no ōmono* | belonging to my lord |
> | *te oritaru kyō* | are breaking them off today! |
>
> His Majesty harmonized with this, saying:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *oribito no* | In following the desires |
> | *kokoro no ma ni ma* | of those who break them off |
> | *fujibakama* | these wisteria trousers |

ube iro fukaku indeed shine forth
nioitarikeri in shades of deepest hue!

The assembled ministers all intoned "banzai." Robes were conferred upon those of Fifth Rank and above.[48]

Heldt describes this exchange as "a carefully choreographed performance of fraternal harmony" (40). In one sense, Saga is praising Heizei by stating that those of the court are "smitten" by him. However, the fact that Saga was the first to intone a verse with Heizei's response to follow suggests a switch in the typical hierarchy of sovereign eliciting a harmonizing response from his people (40). Considering the dramatic conclusion to the brothers' relationship, which resulted in Saga taking the throne and executing both Heizei's consort and her brother while Heizei was forced into a monastic order, we might interpret this earlier exchange as Saga using the harmonizing power of poetry to imply his own legitimacy to the throne with the intent to gain the upper hand during a very public occasion (39).

His tragic family relationships aside, Saga has been credited with bringing poetic composition to new heights during his reign in the way he "invested new political significance in the practices associated with writing verse. This new relationship between poetry and polity, expressed in the slogan 'patterned writing binds the realm' (*monjō keikoku*), was in part an attempt to bind together a broken community" (Heldt, *The Pursuit* 45). Although clearly practiced in waka composition, Saga is described as a Sinophile who focused much of his efforts on *kanshi* (Chinese poetry). It was largely

[48] Translation from Heldt, *The Pursuit* 39–40.

thanks to Saga's efforts that three imperial collections of Chinese verse were produced, two of which were commissioned during his reign and one shortly thereafter.[49]

Fujiwara no Yoshifusa (804–872), who first conceived of the idea to rule as Regent (*Sesshō*) for his grandson Emperor Seiwa (r. 858–876) and thus began the infiltration of the Fujiwara line into the imperial household, has been noted as a likely reason for why waka composition eventually gained prominence after years of decline during the first part of the Heian period (Teele 148). At this time, the composition of *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) "was a recognized means for social advancement," and waka had yet to be recognized as a profitable endeavor (Kumakura 11). Despite this, we can see the influence of Chinese poetry—and Yoshifusa's attachment to Japanese poetry—in Yoshifusa's comparison of *shi* and *Yamato uta* (Japanese song) as equally capable of being able "to bind the realm together through writing" in a poem he recited at Emperor Ninmyō's birthday celebration in 849 (Heldt, *The Pursuit* 60). Yoshifusa's *chōka* (long poem) was unusual in that it was more common to recite Buddhist scripture than to recite a poem at such an event and in that it directly references *kotodama* ("word-spirit"). Heldt explains: "The unusual nature of this poetic performance is reflected in the poem's own self-conscious description of its choice of language" (*The Pursuit* 61):

Kara no	We have not borrowed the words
kotoba o karazu	of the Tang,
kakishirusu	nor employed scholars
hakase yatowazu	to write them down.
kono kuni no	In this realm
iitsutauraku	has it been said from of old:
hi no moto no	that the realm of Yamato,
Yamato no kuni wa	source of the sun,

[49] These include the *Ryōunshū* (*Collection Soaring Above the Clouds*, 814), the *Bunka shūreishū* (*Collection of Masterpieces of Literary Flowers*, 818), and the *Keikokushū* (*Collection for Governing the Country*, 827) (Heldt, *The Pursuit* 46).

kotodama no	is a realm where flourish
sakiwau kuni to zo.	the spirits of words.[50]

Indeed, the poem clearly notes the impact of Chinese poetry ("words of the Tang") and the resultant shift away from Japanese poetry and its power of *kotodama* ("word-spirit").

Before assuming the role of Regent, Yoshifusa served as Minister of the Right (*Udaijin*), and during this time, he oversaw the Lotus Sutra reading following the death of Emperor Ninmyō (Kumakura 8). Yoshifusa's appreciation for waka is seen in his decision to include waka composition in this official ceremony as well: "At this ceremony, aristocrats mourned the death of the deceased emperor by composing Chinese poems or *waka*. Without Yoshifusa, *waka*, which at the time enjoyed less public use and appreciation than Chinese poems, would not have been composed on such a formal occasion" (Kumakura 8). As waka began to take on some of the qualities of Chinese poetry in both style and in beliefs about its social and political use-value, it gained social grounding and eventually surpassed *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) in its sponsorship by the imperial court. These advancements were made official in the first imperially-commissioned anthology of waka poetry, the *Kokinshū*.

The *Kokinshū* Prefaces

The *Kokinshū* is the first of twenty-one imperially-commissioned anthologies of waka poetry. Emperor Daigo ordered its compilation around 905, at the end of the early Heian period. The *Kokinshū* contains 1,111 poems from both ancient and living poets at the time. The *Kokinshū* marks a period of transition in Japanese poetry. John Timothy

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[50] Translation from Heldt, *The Pursuit* 61.

Wixed outlines the connection between the *Kokinshū* prefaces and Chinese poetic theories in his article "The *Kokinshū* Prefaces: Another Perspective," a shortened version of which is included at the end of Laurel Rasplica Rodd and Mary Catherine Henkenius's translation of the *Kokinshū*, thus attesting to the importance of Chinese poetic theories in relation to interpreting the first imperial anthology of waka.

Leading up to the compilation of the *Kokinshū*, *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) was the main avenue of poetic composition for public matters. However, as Japan began to establish its independence from Chinese influence, there was a renewed "appreciation of the Japanese tradition and its unique qualities" (Rodd 6). The integration of waka poetry back into the public sphere at the beginning of the tenth century can be seen as a reflection of a nationalistic moment in Japan's history wherein "the Japanese began to feel a greater cultural independence and self-confidence . . . and began increasingly to adapt and alter the things they had been borrowing from China" (Brower and Miner 168). This effort can be seen in the dual prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, one of which was written in Japanese (the *kanajo*), and the other which was written in Chinese (the *manajo*).

The Japanese preface (*kanajo*) to the *Kokinshū* is often considered the starting point for Japanese poetics, and the overall impact of the *Kokinshū* on subsequent collections is not to be underrated: "The poetic vocabulary and the standard of elegance established in the anthology remained relatively fixed for a thousand years" (Rodd 4). Despite the obvious Chinese influences on the prefaces, the poetic vocabulary of the *Kokinshū* concerned itself with only Japanese words, excluding "all words of identifiably Chinese origin" (Brower and Miner 25). The anthology's chief compiler, Ki no Tsurayuki (872–945), set the stage for Japanese poetics to develop in the *kanajo*, which discusses

the origin and role of poetry and provides preliminary standards for poetic criticism. The *kanajo* begins with the following statement about poetry:

> The seeds of Japanese poetry lie in the human heart and grow into leaves of ten thousand words. Many things happen to the people of this world, and all that they think and feel is given expression in description of things they see and hear. When we hear the warbling of the mountain thrush in the blossoms or the voice of the frog in the water, we know every living being has its song. It is poetry which, without effort, moves heaven and earth, stirs the feelings of the invisible gods and spirits, smooths the relations of men and women, and calms the hearts of fierce warriors.[51]

The Chinese companion to this preface, the *manajo*, attributed to Ki no Yoshimochi (866–919) begins similarly:

> Japanese poetry takes root in the soil of one's heart and blossoms forth in the forest of words. While a man is in the world, he cannot be inactive. His thoughts and concerns easily shift, his joy and sorrow change in turn. Emotion is born of intent; song takes shape in words. Therefore, when a person is pleased, his voice is happy, and when frustrated, his sighs are sad. He is able to set forth his feelings to express his indignation. To move heaven and earth, to affect the gods and demons, to transform human relations, or to harmonize husband and wife, there is nothing more suitable than Japanese poetry.[52]

In comparing the start of the *Kokinshū* prefaces to the "Great Preface," the similarities are obvious:

> Poetry is where the intent of the heart/mind (*xin*) goes. What in the heart is intent is poetry when emitted in words. An emotion moves within and takes form in words. If words do not suffice, then one sighs; if sighing does not suffice, then one unconsciously dances with hands and feet.
>
> Emotions are emitted in sounds, and when sounds form a pattern, they are called tones. The tones of a well-governed world are peaceful and lead to joy, its government harmonious; the tones of a chaotic world are resentful and [angry], its government perverse; the tones of a defeated state are mournful to induce longing, its people in difficulty. Thus in regulating success and failure, moving heaven and

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[51] Translation from *Kokinshū* 35.

[52] Translation from *Kokinshū* 379.

> earth, and causing spirits and gods to respond, nothing comes closer than poetry. (qtd. in Miner, *Comparative* 85, square brackets in original).[53]

Both *Kokinshū* prefaces and the "Great Preface" make a distinction between the human heart/mind, language, and the external world. Michael F. Marra explains: "Heart (mind, will, the inner world) and the words (the expression of the same inner world) are two major concepts in Chinese poetic theory. To these they added a very early third concept, the cause of the heart's movement, the external world" ("Major Japanese" 27). The recognition of language as an expression resultant from inner as well as outer contingencies displays a clear rhetorical approach to poetry as a language practice designed to enact change in the social sphere. The prefaces state that poetry is born from a heart/mind affected by the external world. The role of poetry is to express emotions and, in doing so, redirect the affected heart/mind into language that is aimed at influencing other people and the gods.

In Thomas LaMarre's analysis of the *Kokinshū* prefaces, he states that rather than situate Japanese poetry as apart from Chinese poetry, the prefaces inclusion of the terms "Yamato" (to refer to Japanese poetry) and "Han" (to refer to Chinese poetry) "interact stylistically in ways that preclude any neat separation of cultural or linguistic identities" (143–44). Additionally, the prefaces do not state that Japanese poetry is better than Chinese poetry, but they compare Japanese poetry to Chinese poetry in order to substantiate its worth and validity (144). By relying on Chinese poetics in this way, we can see the admiration and reliance on Chinese models as well as the push for a more Japanese-centered poetics. "The compilers were aware of the weight and importance of

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[53] See alternate translations in Svensson 2 and Wixted, "The *Kokinshū*" 222.

their task: they were charged with returning Japanese poetry to the public arena after a period during which it had been relegated to the bedchambers and private correspondence of the aristocracy" (Rodd 3). It is no surprise then that the *Kokinshū* prefaces compare waka to Chinese poetry to suggest its value.

The *Kokinshū* prefaces also follow the "Great Preface" in presenting an affective-expressive view of poetry. It is largely agreed that Chinese poetry of the *Shijing* exhibits an "affective-expressive" function, meaning that the poet expresses an experience immediately after being affected by it (Svensson 2). The "affective-expressive" theory suggests that poetry arises out of an event or occasion, an idea that is also forwarded in the *kanajo*, which states: "Many things happen to the people of this world, and all that they think and feel is given expression in description of things they see and hear" (*Kokinshū* 379). However, it is sometimes mistakenly assumed in the "affective-expressive" theory that the composer of a poem is a passive participant (Svensson 6). Martin Svensson points out that *shi* were often rhetorically constructed to influence a situation, and Tsurayuki appears to apply this aspect of poetic composition to Japanese poetry as well (27).

Makoto Ueda explains that the expressive function of Japanese poetry as described by Tsurayuki has two parts that although distinct, often work together: the personal, in which one expresses deep emotions through poetry, and the public, in which poetry is used "to create a peaceful, well-governed state" (22). In Tsurayuki's conception of the poetic, the personal and public uses of poetry stem from the same thing, namely, "deep, genuine emotion" (23). By expressing one's deep emotions about a thing or event, one uses poetry as "a means of purgation" (24). And, as similarly noted in the "Great

Preface," sharing such feelings "can help communication between the ruler and the ruled, between men and women, between any two individuals in society" (24). Therefore, it can be difficult to determine when a poem is composed for personal versus public reasons; sometimes they are one and the same.

Marra explores the overlap between the personal and public uses of poetry in his analysis of "Glorious Wisteria," poem 101 from *Ise monogatari* (*The Tales of Ise*), wherein the poet's purposefully ambiguous use of words offers multiple interpretations to the poem. The poem is preceded with a story to provide context for the poem's composition. In it, we are told that Ariwara no Yuikira, the Commander of the Military Guards of the Left, is visited by some courtiers who are eager to drink his alcohol and be entertained. Yukihira courteously obliges and hosts a party, making Fujiwara no Masachika, the Middle Controller of the Left, the guest of honor. Yukihira has on display a vase of wisteria of considerable length, and it becomes the focal point of the evening's poetic composition. When Yukihira's younger brother shows up, the guests demand he compose his own poem in response to the wisteria. At first he declines, saying he is not adept at composing poetry, but finally he capitulates and composes the following:

Saku hana no	Longer than ever before
Shita ni kakururu	Is the Wisteria's shadow—
Hito ōmi	How many are those
Arishi ni masaru	Who shelter beneath
Fuji no kage ka mo	Its blossoms![54]

At first glance, this poem appears to be merely a reflection of the impressive wisteria on display. But we get the sense there is more to the poem when the story concludes with the courtiers questioning the meaning of the younger brother's poem: "'Why compose a

[54] Translation from Marra, "Playing" 139.

poem such as this?' they asked. He answered, 'I was thinking of how the chancellor has reached such heights these days and how his entire clan prospers.' No one could criticize the poem further" (*The Tales of Ise*).

Marra explains that the poem composed in this narrative by Yukihira's younger brother was written by Ariwara no Narihira, who was "a victim of Fujiwara power" ("Playing" 319). The word "wisteria" (*fuji*) requires the same Chinese character as used in writing the name "Fujiwara," referencing "Japan's most influential political family in the tenth and eleventh centuries" (318). By masking his commentary on the Fujiwara family by comparing them to the lengthy wisteria branches, Narihira is able to state that the Fujiwara family "had infiltrated all branches of government, similar to a vine of wisteria which clings to all the surrounding plants, and that eventually causes them to wither" (319). Peter MacMillan's translation emphasizes this reading:

> So many take shelter
> beneath the wisteria blossom,
> symbol of the Fujiwara clan,
> Its bountiful shade
> reaches further than ever.[55]

The ambiguity of the statements, however, allows this poem to also be interpreted positively, as the younger brother contends when he is pressed by the courtiers. However, Narihira gives the younger brother his same surname, Ariwara, which translates to "the field of the past" (319). Marra suggests that the two family names, "Fujiwara (the field of wisteria) and Ariwara (the field of the past)," provide a commentary on how the Ariwara family's "past glory" is a result of being left behind while everyone takes shelter under the wisteria (by aligning themselves with the Fujiwara family) (319–320). Pertaining to

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[55] Translation from *The Tales of Ise* 101.

this interpretation, Marra presents the following translation, which he states is "more literal" (320):

> Many are those people
> Hiding beneath
> The blooming flowers.
> The wisteria's shadow has become
> Even larger than in the past.[56]

Regardless of which translation one deems most appropriate, clearly there are both personal and political motives in this poem, once again showing the overlap between the expressive modes of poetry discussed by Tsurayuki.

One difference between the conceptions of poetry as found in the "Great Preface" and as discussed in the *Kokinshū* prefaces is the comparisons with the natural world. Tsurayuki emphasizes the closeness between poetry and other songs found in nature. This is unsurprising considering the Shinto belief in animism. Although the belief in *kotodama* is not mentioned in the *Kokinshū* prefaces, Tsurayuki does provide a summary of the mythological origins of poetry as stemming from Susano-o's eightfold cloud poem, and cites this as the beginning of the thirty-one-syllable *waka* (*Kokinshū* 35–36).

Following these statements about the origin and role of poetry in society, Tsurayuki discusses the six poetic principles (37). Here he explicitly states that Chinese poetry is also guided by six principles—which are listed in the "Great Preface" (*Kokinshū* 37; Owen, *Readings* 45). The six principles in the "Great Preface" are as follows: "1) Airs (*feng**); 2) exposition (*fu*); 3) comparison (*pi**); 4) affective image, (*hsing**); 5) Odes (*ya**); 6) Hymns (*sung*)" (Owen 45). The six poetic principles Tsurayuki includes correspond directly to those in the "Great Preface" and are given equivalent Japanese

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[56] Translation from Marra, "Playing" 320.

names: 1) Suasive (*soeuta*); 2) Description (*kazoeuta*); 3) Comparison (*nazuraeuta*); 4) Evocative Imagery (*tatoeuta*); 5) Elegantia (*tadagotouta*); and 6) Eulogies (*iwaiuta*) (*Kokinshū* 37–39). However, although Tsurayuki suggests corresponding poetic principles as a way to compare Chinese and Japanese poetics, Brower and Miner argue that Tsurayuki's categories "were not only meaningless in terms of Japanese poetic practice but also . . . conveniently ignored by the poets" (178).[57] What seemed truly important to poetic composition was "elegance and refinement: only words and images felt to be courtly, traditional, and beautiful were acceptable" (Brower and Miner 179). This is an idea that, although also existing in relation to *kotodama* ("word-spirit") in earlier poems of the *Man'yōshū*, became increasingly stressed due to the influence of Chinese poetry of the late Six Dynasties and early Tang periods.

The "Oblique" Style and *Miyabi*

As this chapter has discussed, at the beginning of the Heian period, Chinese poetry became so popular that waka was largely relegated to the realm of private affairs, while the composition of *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) took precedence in the public sphere (Brower and Miner 24; Harries 305).[58] Thomas LaMarre explains that the typical narratives used to explain this period of poetic history tend to suggest that Chinese poetic forms either overtook or were completely assimilated into Japanese poetic forms, which implies that Japanese poetry existed in some "pure form" prior to Chinese influence;

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[57] See also Ueda 9

[58] Nicholas J. Teele states that the "dark years of the uta" existed from 759 to 905 (148). However, Brower and Miner suggest a shorter duration of about fifty years, from 800 to 850 (163).

however, it is difficult determine exactly the extent of Chinese influence on Japanese poetics or when such interactions began (15).[59] From about the end of the Nara period and into the early Heian period, we see a shift in the way poetic words are perceived and in explanations of how words enact their influence on reality. As addressed in the previous chapter, the belief in *kotodama* ("word-spirit") indicates a careful attention to word choice in the composition of *norito* (Shinto ritual prayers) and in poetry found in the *Man'yōshū*. Good words, correctly pronounced had the power to bring about good, whereas bad words, or incorrectly pronounced words, had the power to bring about bad (Kitagawa 68). To summarize this conception of language, what constituted effective words had to do with *Yamato* (Japan) being the land of the *kami* (gods). As evidenced in Japanese myth-histories, the gods spoke in Yamato verse; and as seen in the careful preservation of old Japanese phonetics, only the Yamato language was capable of housing *kotodama*.

With the influx of Chinese modes of thought and poetic models, what constituted "good" composition began to take on another hue. Jin'ichi Konishi explains that influences from China, including the Chinese language itself and the rationalism of Confucianism resulted in the "unavoidable enervation of the kotodama" (*A History* 309). Although *kotodama* existed mainly in the realm of oral tradition, the documents wherein *norito* and waka poetry were recorded used Chinese *kanji*, as there was no other written

[59] Brower and Miner present an apt summary of this debate: "To state it simply, however, the Japanese would never have achieved their great literary flowering without the example of China; and yet their language and traditions were such that the poetry they created is in almost every important respect un-Chinese in its cast" (79).

language in Japan until the beginning of the ninth century.[60] Even after the Japanese phonetic script (*kana*) arose, Chinese remained the primary language for literate men working in the capital. Although we can see at least some version of the belief in *kotodama* permeating the Heian period, how closely this belief resembles earlier renditions can be difficult to say. It would not be far off to suggest that some general sense of *kotodama* persisted throughout the Heian period, but it does not seem to have been held with the same esteem as it had earlier in Japanese history. Konishi states that one effect of Chinese influence was that attentions were drawn to the inherent value of literature (in contrast to the belief in *kotodama* as providing the value to words): "Literary language was intrinsically worthy because it possessed refined techniques, and because people were moved by the beauty of its expression" (*A History* 316). Overshadowed by these ideas, the auspicious nature of poetic language as manifested in *kotodama* was subsumed by considerations of refinement and precedent. This can be seen in the Japanese concept *miyabi* ("courtliness" or "elegance").[61]

Brower and Miner provide the following description of *miyabi*: "In life the ideal implied the acquisition of courtly graces and accomplishments, sensibility, and good taste; in poetry, a strong tradition of decorous diction, avoidance of the ugly, and the basic congeries of subjective techniques inherited by generations of Court poets from the early classical age" (508). They explain that "the Japanese tradition was fundamentally

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[60] The Buddhist priest Kūkai is credited with inventing the *kana* script sometime in the early ninth century. However, it is more likely that *kana* emerged gradually over time.

[61] According to Brower and Miner, Ki no Tsurayuki uses the term *sama* ("elegant style") in the preface to the *Kokinshū* to refer to "the new subjectivity of the early classical period and the techniques employed to express it" (510).

and permanently affected" by "the esthetic ideal of *miyabi*," which gave waka "an aristocratic character and the enduring strength of a literary tradition that could last for centuries" (26). The ideal of *miyabi* came about in large part through the influence of the "oblique" (*i'pang*) style, which was popular in the late Six Dynasties (ca. 420–589) and early Tang (618–ca. 705) periods in China (Brower and Miner 25). Six Dynasties poetry collected in the *Wen hsüan* (*Literary Selections*) became part of Japan's university education in 798 (Konishi, "The Genesis" 168). It was around this time (between the years 810 to 860, according to Konishi) that kanshi (Chinese poetry) "absorbed many features of the Six Dynasties style" that subsequently made their way into waka ("The Genesis" 156). This culminated in what Konishi refers to as the *Kokinshū* style, which takes its features particularly from the oblique style.[62]

Konishi defines the "oblique style" as "the poet's tendency to deal with his subject indirectly, particularly through the use of witty 'reasoning'" ("The Genesis" 168). As such, the oblique style is characterized by poems composed with deliberate artifice, or roundabout conceits of reality "instead of by means of a direct response to personal experience" (118). Obliquity, Konishi explains, "is divisible into a number of fairly distinct elements" (79). Some of these include using a removed stance from one's immediate observation and describing "the moment of perception" using "highly contrived terms" (79); drawing a seemingly unrelated conclusion about a scene "instead of describing or speculating about a result" (91); making exaggerated statements (95, 140); engaging in word play (106); suggesting logical connections or "a rational

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[62] Konishi explains: "The *Kokinshū* style took shape during the age of the Six Poetic Geniuses—i.e., during the reigns of Emperors Seiwa (r. 858–876), Yōzei (r. 876–884), and Kōkō (r. 884–87)" ("The Genesis" 165).

judgment of some kind" (129–30); considering change vs. permanence and "the tendency to view phenomena in a temporal perspective" (132, 149)[63]; identifying "the incorporeal in the corporeal" (133); using statements of wonder or deception (this is often referred to as "elegant confusion") (135); and making paralleled comparisons (144).

Konishi offers ample evidence of specific Japanese poems that exemplify the oblique style of Six Dynasties poetry in his article "The Genesis of the *Kokinshū* Style," so I will only supply a few examples to illustrate this point. A beautiful example of the use of exaggeration can be seen in the following poems by Liu Huan and Ki no Tsurayuki, respectively. Konishi describes these poems as examples of a "kind of 'rational lyricism'" wherein the logic suggests "an excess of A" may result in B (95, 96). Liu Huan's poem:

> The slender waist has grown frailer still;
> Perhaps she will be unable to support her winter robes.[64]

Ki no Tsurayuki's poem:

> On a night
> When moonlight and blossoms merge,
> One may perhaps seek
> Even to break off
> A piece of the sky.[65]

Although they do so differently, each of these poems presents an exaggerated conclusion drawn from a reasonable premise. In Liu Huan's poem, the sensible proposition of a woman becoming frail is made more serious by the exaggerated conclusion that her body

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[63] Konishi believes the theme of temporality "may be an independent Japanese development" ("The Genesis" 106).

[64] Translation from Konishi, "The Genesis" 95–96.

[65] Translation from Konishi, "The Genesis" 96.

will not be able to carry the weight of her winter clothes. Similarly, Ki no Tsurayuki's poem presents a scene of moonlight on blossoms. Initially these two natural phenomena are separate, but in the conclusion they are combined in the suggestion that one might pluck a piece of the sky in the same way one plucks a flower. Through these exaggerated propositions, the emotional and aesthetic stakes of the poems are heightened, as is their affective power.

A different kind of judgment, one that results in a twist of the expected conclusion can be seen in the following poems by Shigeno no Sadanushi (785–852) and Ise (?877–?940). Shigeno no Sadanushi's poem:

> Capturing its image in the mirror, I yearn in vain for the round autumn fan;
> Catching its light on my sleeve, I try to gather it up, but nothing fills my hand.[66]

Ise's poem:

> Shall I each spring
> Confuse the flowing stream
> With blossoms, and drench my sleeve
> Seeking in vain to break off
> A spray of water?[67]

Konishi explains that these poems present the thought pattern: "Although it would seem that X would be the case, in actual fact it is *not* the case—which, on second thought, is quite natural" ("The Genesis" 130). In other words, Shigeno no Sadanushi's conclusion "nothing fills my hand" is to be expected since light cannot be gathered in that way, and the attempt Ise depicts to "break off" a branch full of blossoms that is reflected in the water is similarly done in vain. It is not that the poets themselves expected their results to

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[66] Translation from Konishi, "The Genesis" 130–131.

[67] Translation from Konishi, "The Genesis" 131.

be otherwise, but the contemplation provoked in these twists of events is what makes the poems moving. An effort done in vain, even when the doer knows "on second thought" that they do it in vain, creates a sense of remorse stemming from futility (130).

The oblique style as seen in Six Dynasties poetry became popular in Japan particularly in the private sphere because of its usefulness in interpersonal communication and love affairs: "Chinese modes of expression suited the fencing about the truth that characterized the romantic intrigues of the day" ("The Genesis" 164). As will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter, the oblique style takes on rhetorical significance when put in the context of Heian marriage politics. With the belief in *kotodama*, there was already an attention to choosing good or auspicious words (from the Yamato language and from the Age of the Gods) in order to ensure *kotodama* could be invoked. However, the poetic artifice typical of the oblique style suggested the affective power of words came not from *kotodama*, but from the beauty of contrived, decorous language. Brower and Miner explain: "The ingenuity and elegant conceits of which the late Six Dynasties poets were so fond were couched in language that was above all refined and 'beautiful.' Low, inelegant words were taboo to the Japanese poet, and at the same time poetic language had to have the prestige of long tradition and precedent" (178). The emphasis on using words that have been established by tradition and precedent takes on a new dimension in the early Heian period through the influence of the oblique style. Whereas previously it was important to use Yamato words from the Age of the Gods in order to correctly invoke *kotodama*, it becomes increasingly important in the centuries that follow to display a sense of refinement and elegance in one's poetic composition and to do so in a way that invokes tradition and precedent. The social and

political stakes involved in composing appropriate poems will be explored in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The Chinese influence on Japan's poetic tradition is important to examine not only because of its obvious impact, but also because Chinese theories on the role of poetry in society and of what grants words their affective power contribute to the rhetorical characteristics of Japanese poetry. As can be seen in the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, early Japanese poetry looked to established forms of Chinese poetry and Chinese poetic theory in order to substantiate itself and to provide reasoning behind the purpose of poetry and the affective nature of poetic language. Marra explains: "It was exactly the assimilation of Chinese poetry that made the Japanese poets aware of their own particular tradition, urging them to define rules and techniques in which the raw material of their own linguistic peculiarities could be organized. And they observed not only Chinese poetry but the way the Chinese themselves judged it" ("Major Japanese" 27). Japanese poetry, and waka in particular, developed from Chinese models and theories that suggested a rhetorical role of poetry in society and the affective power of beautiful words and clever conceits.

When discussing the origin of Japanese poetics, Ki no Tsurayuki's Japanese preface to the Kokinshū, *kanajo*, is the most common point of departure. However, both the *kanajo* and its Chinese counterpart, the *manajo*, reveal much about the Chinese influences leading up to the first Japanese imperial anthology and detail the ways in which Japanese poetics started to diverge from earlier theories and practices while still

relying on Chinese models and theories. Poetic principles and ideas about the role of poetry in society can be seen as stemming from the "Great Preface" of the *Shijing*. However, John Timothy Wixted argues that although clearly influenced by earlier Chinese models and theories of poetry, these ideas were "adopted by early Japanese critics in such a way that the expressive function of literature was stressed" ("Chinese" 387). Poetry as an expressive act could function rhetorically in both the personal and public realms to share strong emotions and have those emotions work to enact change in social situations.

The use of poetry by early Heian sovereigns for social and political purposes hearkens back to Chinese theories on the role of poetry in the lives of rulers and people, but it also reflects Shinto rites wherein poetry was used to communicate with the *kami* (spirits) residing in nature. The theoretical understanding of Chinese *shi* poetry combined with Shinto beliefs of *kami* and the inherent power of the Yamato language displays a clear rhetorical aspect to the use of waka by early Japanese sovereigns. In this sense, anything that has the power to hear can be commanded, provided one had the authority and spoke correctly. On the other hand, in the adopted Confucian worldview, the ability to establish harmony with the natural world and between "the human and heavenly spheres guaranteed [the emperor's] right to accumulate and distribute wealth" (Heldt, *The Pursuit* 22). Therefore, poetry was an important part of a ruler's ability to establish their legitimacy and maintain power.

These various aspects of early Heian poetics provide avenues for deeper rhetorical consideration and offer a glimpse into the Japanese rhetorical tradition as it responds to, incorporates, and modifies elements from Chinese poetry and poetic theories. By

examining Chinese influences on Japanese poetics, we can see a shift in beliefs about the role of poetry in society and in the way words gain their affective power that contrasts and builds upon earlier beliefs and uses of poetry in premodern Japan. In the next chapter, these and related ideas will be examined further in relation to the use of waka in establishing and maintaining relationships within the Heian court.

CHAPTER 5

POETIC DIALOGUES AND MARRIAGE POLITICS

So far I have shown how waka was perceived and developed through the early Heian period in response to both indigenous Japanese and Chinese influences. As a kind of embodiment of premodern Japanese values, waka worked to sustain beliefs about Japan as the land of the *kami* (gods), the power of its Yamato language through *kotodama* ("word-spirit"), and its relationship to the continent as a source of poetic inspiration. As Chinese modes of thought took hold in the early Heian period, the use of both *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) and waka poetry continued to be a way for rulers to establish their legitimacy over their lands and people. Perhaps more importantly, however, was the rise of the aesthetic ideal of beauty and refinement that had been adopted from the "oblique style" of Chinese poetry. This aesthetic ideal, which came to be known as *miyabi* ("courtliness" or "elegance"), contributed to people's perceptions about the affective power of language as stemming from beauty and poetic artifice (Brower and Miner 26). I also discussed the two expressive modes of waka forwarded by poet Ki no Tsurayuki—the personal and public—in the *kanajo*, the Japanese preface to the *Kokinshū*. It is from this point that I proceed to the mid-Heian period to examine the rhetorical developments of waka in relation to interpersonal communication and marriage politics.

The ninth century concluded with several important changes that influenced the rhetorical aspects of Japanese poetry. The first is that the Japanese imperial house stopped sending envoys to China due to internal conflicts faced by the Tang government that eventually led to its collapse (Hane and Perez 35). For the next several hundred years, Japan remained relatively isolated from the continent. As a result, Chinese influence prevailed less and less, while the national self-awareness that had grown out of Japan's dealings with China continued to develop (Addiss, et al. 33). The tenth century began with the last of the Six National Histories being produced, the *Sandai jitsuroku* (*The True History of Three Reigns of Japan*, ca. 901) and ended with the Fujiwara family completely controlling the imperial line. The Fujiwara family gained power "through the monopolization of the right to provide official consorts to the imperial house," and in doing so "guaranteed that emperors were born of Fujiwara mothers and dominated by their maternal kinsmen in Fujiwara mansions from birth" (Hurst III 36). This practice, which led to the favoring of family ties over a meritocratic-based rank system, contributed to the marriage politics of the era (Marra, "Playing" 316).

Also during the tenth century various amendments were made to the government system known as *ritsuryō*. Japan had adopted the *ritsuryō* system from Tang China as a way to collect taxes on land that was divided among family clans, but the system had become unmanageable and was in need of revision "to make the *risturyō* system more appropriate for Japanese social realities" (Hurst III 36). The concentration of power and wealth in the capital marked the mid-Heian period "as an age dominated by a small cluster of aristocrats who ruled under the aegis of the emperor by mastery of the civil rather than the military arts" (30). Thus, the Heian period was generally a time of peace

and prosperity for those living in the capital, Heian-kyō (modern-day Kyoto)—with "Heian" 平安 meaning "peace" or "tranquility." Because of this, the elite were able to devote much of their time to educational and recreational activities, including calligraphy, painting, music, and perhaps most importantly, poetry (Addiss, et al. 52).[68]

Aristocratic education was "oriented towards a career at court" and included training in these and other areas. For men, it was necessary to learn Chinese, as it continued to be the language of government and administrative matters, and to study *kiroku* ("household diaries"), which contained information from previous courtiers regarding "official proceedings, court regulations, etiquette, and attire" (Stilerman, *Learning* 10). Women were also prepared to serve at court, and their education included instruction in musical instruments, such as the *biwa* and the *koto* (11). Because they were excluded from learning Chinese, women's education in poetry focused on waka composition, as opposed to *kanshi* (Chinese poetry).[69] The invention of the *kana* syllabary during the ninth century "led to a burst in literary production, especially by court women," which is why many of the important works from this era have female authorship, an early literary characteristic that sets Japan apart from much of the world (Hurst III 36). The use of the *kana* syllabary was significant not only because it provided

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[68] Calligraphy, painting, and the composition of poetry were "the so-called three sister arts" that made up "the classical Chinese aesthetic canon," which had been incorporated to the Japanese court (Addiss, et al. 52).

[69] Stilerman argues that it was not uncommon for women to have "a basic knowledge of kanshi poetry," as seen with Murasaki Shikibu (author of *The Tale of Genji*) and Sei Shōnagon (author of *The Pillow Book*). Stilerman attributes this to the fact that the Chinese poet Bai Juyi's poetry was "studied by aristocrats of both genders" (*Learning* 11).

a Japanese writing system, but also because its use in waka allowed for various rhetorical techniques and possibilities in both style and address.

Much has already been written about the numerous rhetorical techniques or figurative devices employed in waka poetry in relation to the *kana* syllabary. In summary, the sole use of *kana* in the composition of waka as opposed to Chinese *kanji* enabled the continued development of homophonous puns, known as *kakekotoba* ("pivot-words") that allowed for the proliferation of interpretation through layered meanings. This is because kana is a phonetic script, as opposed to kanji, which is a logographic script. Therefore, words made up of the same *kana*, such as the Japanese verb "to wait" (*matsu*) and the noun "pine tree" (*matsu*) could be implied at the same time when written,[70] as seen in Yamanoue no Okura's poem from the *Man'yōshū*:

iza kodomo	Come along, men—
hayaku yamato e	let us be off, for Yamato!
ōtomo no	At Ōtomo Bay
mitsu no hamamatsu	the pines will be waiting,
machikoinuramu	pining for our return[71]

In this poem, Okura links the idea of loved ones waiting (*matsu*) for his and his companions' return from their voyage with the imagery of pine trees (*matsu*), a common representation of "patient, enduring steadfastness" (Carter, *How to Read* 26). Okura's pronouncement here works to invigorate his men before their long journey and appeal for their safe return. Steven D. Carter's reading of this poem provides a semblance of the

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[70] Gustav Heldt points out that the "*kana* script ignores many vocalic dimensions of the spoken language that were crucial for it to impart meaning; such as the relative pitch accent assigned vowels or the distinction between voiced and unvoiced consonants" (*Composing Courtiers* vi). Because of this, the homophonic capacity of *kana* is confined to the written, or visual dimension of waka, and not so much a part of its aurality.

[71] Translation from Carter, *How to Read* 26.

kakekotoba (“pivot-word”) at work with the word “pining” (25). Because of waka’s short form, techniques such as this were important to extending the meanings of a poem through word associations, which were rendered more easily by the kana syllabary.

Another important aspect of communicating through waka was the absence of linguistic hierarchies. Japanese is a “hierarchy-oriented language” wherein levels of formality are determined by the person one is speaking to (Gao 6). Formal expressions in Japanese consist of adding honorifics (*keigo*) to the ends of words. However, in waka, because of the brevity of the form, these hierarchies are not included, making it possible for people of unequal standing to communicate as equals. “In poetry, such honorific verbs or inflected suffixes are usually replaced by neutral forms which provide in themselves no clue to the speaker’s sex or social position” (Brower and Miner 7). The rhetorical power embedded in waka composition through the lack of linguistic hierarchies made it an important mode of communication. Mark Morris explains that this feature of waka “provided a special, less restrictive socio-aesthetic idiolect that allowed a kind of expression and communication between sites of unequal power that speech might inhibit or forbid” (555). Choosing to express oneself through waka as opposed to speech was, in part, a rhetorical move that enabled one to forego typical hierarchies regardless of differences in rank.

Although Chinese influence could still be seen in many aspects of Japanese life, Japanese poetry had begun to exhibit its own unique qualities. By the beginning of the tenth century, waka “had reemerged as a highly refined and prestigious literary form: a complex poetics had been developed; the first imperial anthology of *waka*, the *Kokinwakashū* . . . had been completed; and an elaborate set of rules for waka

composition, presentation, and appreciation had evolved" (Shirane, *The Bridge of Dreams* xv). With the completion of the *Kokinshū,* waka gained ground as an artistic endeavor. However, it was still widely employed in the private sphere as a means of interpersonal communication through *zōtōka* ("poetic dialogues") (Adolphson, et al. 115). Although composing and exchanging waka "was a fundamental aspect of aristocratic social life, both public and private," Ki no Tsurayuki appears grieved over the fact that waka had been relegated to the private sphere and not taken as seriously as an art form for public display (Watanabe 10). In the *kanajo,* he states:

> Nowadays because people are concerned with gorgeous appearances and their hearts admire ostentation, insipid poems, short-lived poems have appeared. Poetry has become a sunken log submerged unknown to others in the homes of lovers. Poems are not things to bring out in public places as openly as the opening blossoms of the pampas grass. Japanese poetry ought not to be thus.[72]

One of the objectives of the *Kokinshū* was to push waka into the public sphere so that it could gain higher recognition as an art form. The poetics established by Tsurayuki provide some basis for analyzing the artistry of a poem beyond its immediate social application, but so much private poetry, or *zōtōka*, was produced during the mid-Heian period that "it could not simply be ignored" (Persiani, *Waka After* 23). The prevalence of *zōtōka* is readily seen in Tsurayuki's acknowledgment of poetry "in the home of lovers" and in the five books devoted to love poetry found in the *Kokinshū*, which are arranged in an idealized progression of courtship, starting with "the first signs of love" and concluding with "the sorrow of separation" (23).

Considering the aim of the *Kokinshū* was to establish waka as a serious art form, it is not surprising that there is an obvious effort to disregard *zōtōka* in the poems chosen

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[72] Translation from *Kokinshū* 40.

for inclusion "despite the *zōtōka* being probably the most numerically significant poetic subgenre at the time" (Persiani, *Waka After* 22). Gian Piero Persiani notes that the second imperial anthology of waka, *Gosenshū* (*Later Collection of Japanese Poems*, 951), includes numerous *zōtōka*, many of which "are thought to date from the time of the *Kokinshū*, which suggests that they were deliberately omitted from the earlier anthology" (*Waka After* 22n31). Of the thirteen exchanges that are included in the *Kokinshū*, many are given anonymous authorship, which ensures the authors' privacy, but also works "to further weaken ties between the artifact and the real world," thus making the poems appear more abstractly artistic and formal (23). Although waka was moving towards becoming a more serious art form, during the mid-Heian period it still served as a common and expected means of interpersonal communication.

Akihiko Kumakura makes a helpful distinction between these two different approaches to waka composition during the Heian period: "*waka* as the product of a socially oriented poetics, by which poems were judged in large part in relation to the situations in which they were actually composed, and waka as the product of a more artistically oriented poetics" (ii). Ariel Stilerman notes this separation as well, with some waka being valued for their "'literary' (*bungei*) value, as well as for their 'practical usefulness' (*jitsuyō*) in social interactions within the aristocracy" (*Learning* 1). Like Tsurayuki's distinction between the personal and the public, Kumakura explains that these "two kinds of poetics are not mutually exclusive, but coexisted throughout the Heian period in a balance that varied" (3). Although the separation between socially oriented or private poems, and artistic or public poems seems straightforward, the terms "private" and "public" become confused to some degree when we consider how the place

or *ba* in which a poem was relayed determined a poem's level of formality, and thus whether it was seen as having a practical purpose or being more of an artistic or literary expression.

Gustav Heldt defines *ba* as "social setting," which he describes as "a point in time and space occupied by a particular speaker who bears a particular social relationship to his or her audience" (*The Pursuit* 149). Regarding the social setting (*ba*) of a poem, Ivo Smits explains, "A *ba* expresses a sense of focus on audience and moment" (Adolphson, et al. 116). The combination of audience and moment in *ba* places emphasis on the occasion that called forth the poem, whether it be formal (*hare*) or informal (*ke*). Formal compositions were poems "intended for such public occasions as poetry contests, gatherings at the Imperial Palace, banquets, or folding screens," whereas informal compositions consisted of "poetry composed for everyday situations with low 'visibility,' such as casual exchanges, love poems, and letters" (116). The same audience in two different social settings would be expected to "react differently according to the situation" (115). Because of this, the formality of a poem was more a matter of "degrees" than a hard line (116). Furthermore, the inclusion of private poems in imperial anthologies provided a new, more public, framing to the poems, which emphasized their artistic qualities.

As Kumakura makes clear, the poetics that governed the proper use of private waka "was largely a tacit body of conventions known more in practice than in analysis or discussion," whereas the artistically oriented poetics as articulated by Tsurayuki and later poets and theorists exists more concretely in *karon* (waka treatises), *uta'awase* (poetry contest) judgments, and other writings that set forth the rules and expectations of waka

composition (18). This chapter focuses on poetry that has been categorized as *zōtōka*, or what Kumakura calls the social or "situationally oriented poetics," that is, poetry written in the private, interpersonal sphere that "was valued for its rhetorical potential in the situation in which the verses were actually composed" (18). Through *zōtōka* we can see the ways waka were used for rhetorical ends during courtship and in maintaining other interpersonal relationships.

***Zōtōka* as Dialogue**

Zōtōka ("poetic dialogues") not only functioned to convey a message and express the poet's deep feelings, but they were also used to enact a rhetorical effect. The following exchange from the second imperial anthology, *Gosenshū*, provides an illustration of the way *zōtōka* might function rhetorically.

> The "Ōmi" Imperial Concubine had withdrawn to her home to mourn the passing of her mother. She sent this poem in response to a letter from the Retired Emperor.
>
> My sleeves, wet with the summer rains…
> are now soaked in the dew: the sadness of autumn.
> *Samidare ni nurenishi sode ni itodoshiku tsuyu okisofuru aki no wabishisa*
>
> The Retired Emperor's reply:
>
> Autumns are in general a sad season,
> yet I feel particularly for the sleeves no doubt soaked in dew.
> *Ōkata mo aki wo wabishiki toki naredo tsuyukekaruramu sode wo shi zo omou*[73]

Stilerman explains that the first poem in this exchange was sent some point after the concubine had left court to go home after her mother had passed away (*Learning* 3). We know from the headnotes that the Retired Emperor had sent her a letter, perhaps inquiring

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[73] Translation from Stilerman, *Learning* 2.

about her return. The language in the concubine's poem conveys that the seasons have changed from summer to fall, but her sorrow remains, and she is hesitant to leave her mother's home. Because death was seen as defiling, it was customary for those in mourning to leave the imperial court for a period of forty-nine days. Stilerman explains: "The poem thus works as a request for more time off-duty: the autumn has come but I still feel too sad to go back to court" (3). Although it would be expected for the concubine to return to court once the period of mourning was over, there was clearly some room for negotiating this point. The Retired Emperor's reply shows that he is moved by the concubine's poem and that he does not expect her to return immediately.

Although the concubine's poem was seemingly effective, we might question what about the poem made it so moving to the Retired Emperor. Mindful of her situation, the concubine acknowledges the passage of time in her poem through the seasons, and the images she uses depict an ongoing sadness that matches the natural phenomena associated with those seasons: "The summer rains belong in the Fifth Month, during the rainy season. Dew is, by convention, associated with autumn. Wet sleeves symbolize heartfelt sobbing: sleeves wet with tears. We glean from the poem that the poet's sadness started in the summer and continued well into the autumn" (2). By mapping her emotions onto the changing natural world, the concubine evokes poetic associations that would have been familiar to the Retired Emperor, who would have had knowledge of poetic conventions. Using these associations appropriately would have reflected positively on the concubine.

The Retired Emperor acknowledges and reinforces some of these images in his response, noting the sadness associated with autumn and sympathizing with the woman

whose sleeves are soaked with tears. Granted, the Retired Emperor might have already felt some affection towards her because of their relationship, and we do not know the content of the letter he sent her that initiated this exchange, but it seems apparent that the woman's poem was effective in expressing her feelings and thus moving the Retired Emperor to grant her additional time for mourning the death of her mother.

When individuals composed waka that would be part of a poetic exchange such as this, there were several things to take into consideration in order to produce a rhetorically effective poem. Stilerman explains that "skill in waka involved both a mastery of the poetic form and a sense of social etiquette: matching a good poem with the right social occasion. Learning waka meant both getting to know the poetic canon and understanding how poems were used in social life" (*Learning* 3). The concubine adeptly composed a poem that shows her knowledge of poetic associations and how to apply them in everyday contexts. She shows that she is familiar with poetic tropes and their associations as found in the poetic canon, and she knows that replying to the Retired Emperor's letter with a poem would be an appropriate occasion for doing so. Therefore, it is no surprise that her poem was well-received by the Retired Emperor.

Similarly, Kumakura identifies "situational dependency" and "timing, or timeliness" as important considerations for effective waka composition (ii). Situational dependency is the notion that a poem or a poetic response is induced by a situation, as seen in the example above. The circumstances that may require poetic composition would vary, but they often revolved around relationships between men and women. Awareness of situational dependency is seen in the fact that it was a common practice for courtiers to keep a record of their poems in a personal collection accompanied by descriptions of the

situation in which the poem came to be. The context of a situation might be readily apparent to those involved, but it would need to be explained in order for outside readers to appreciate the wit or aptness of the composition in response to the situation. Thus, the use of *kotobagaki* ("headnotes") became a common way to contextualize a poem within a personal collection or anthology. As previously mentioned, if deemed exceptional, private poems might be chosen to be included in an imperial anthology, making *kotobagaki* necessary for a poem's interpretation since it is removed from its immediate context and intended to stand the passage of time (Harries 303). Different situations called for different responses. Responding appropriately to a given situation was part of what made a poem effective, and it was timeliness, as well as precedent, that determined an appropriate response.

Timeliness in terms of waka composition can be understood in relation to the ritualized, performative aspects of poetic exchange. For example, it was common practice for a man to send a poem the morning after he spent the night with a woman: "It was essential for the man to send the *waka* in the morning. Otherwise, he would be considered to be uninterested in the relationship with the woman" (Kumakura 28). In other words, there was a limited window of time in which the ritual of sending a "morning-after poem" could be performed. Similarly, if a woman's response to a man's initial approach was not timely, she would be seen as rude and indecorous. To be able to compose waka on the spot when summoned was a valuable skill, but timeliness was also important to ensuring progression through the milestones of a relationship. Waka gained much of their symbolic and rhetorical weight from the social rituals they were a part of. Regarding ritual as a rhetorical practice, Xiaoye You explains: "Symbols, when arranged in a

particular sequence during ritual . . . convey meaning in various ways and possess the power to produce social transformations" (430). The avenue for social transformations induced by the exchange of waka, although functioning differently from the Confucian framework You presents, are similarly tied to ritual as a mode of rhetoric. You positions Confucius's *Analects* as a rhetoric whose suasive power comes from "the ritualization of both the self and the others" (427). In his argument, You shows the contextual limitations of verbal persuasion as found in the Western tradition and illustrates how through the process of performing particular rites and symbolic acts that are believed to lead one to the "Good," a "gentleman" is able to influence those around him. The waka tradition seems to function similarly in that verbal persuasion is not the primary rhetorical mode as was the case in ancient Greco-Roman rhetoric. Rather, by abiding by the ritualized sequence of poetic exchange and tapping into the aesthetic values of court society through sanctioned poetic language, Heian courtiers gained affective power.

The last, and perhaps most important, consideration for waka composition was precedent. Tradition dictated both what topics could be addressed in waka and the vocabulary that could be used in doing so. As shown in the example above, the concubine's knowledge of the poetic canon allowed her to compose a poem that was appropriate in both content and style. This knowledge would have come primarily from the *Kokinshū*. The twenty books of the *Kokinshū* are separated by topic, with the most common being the seasons and love. The books begin with spring, followed by summer, autumn, and winter. Books seven through ten contain the topics of felicitations, parting, travel, and wordplays, respectively. These are followed by the five books devoted to love, and the final books containing the topics grief, miscellaneous, and court poems. Religious

poems were also commonly written but were not included as topics in imperial anthologies until much later.

The five books on love were "ordered to clearly depict the progression and fluctuations of a courtly love affair" and to "establish a precedent for all aristocratic love poems to follow" (Gerber 4–5). However, most relationships did not closely follow this idealized "master narrative of courtly love," and it was more important for poets to adhere to the "topical and lexical decorum" that needed to be followed in order for a poem to be considered acceptable (Persiani *Waka After* 23; Rodd 15). Such elements were illustrated in the poems of the *Kokinshū,* which served as the main poetic model throughout the Heian period. The *Kokinshū*'s primary compiler, Ki no Tsurayuki, addresses these elements in the *kanajo*. There he provides examples regarding the importance of balancing of words (*kotoba*) and content of the poem (*kokoro*).

In a good poem, the *kokoro,* or heart of the poem, is adequately conveyed and fully supported by its words. If the words are too strong for the topic or vice versa, a poem will be found lacking. Tsurayuki cites Ariwara no Narihira as an example of a poet who "has too much feeling, too few words" (*Kokinshū* 44). He states that Narihira's "poems are like withered flower, faded but with a lingering fragrance" (44). Narihira's lack of balance between the feeling he tries to convey and the words he chooses to do so appears to be the crux of the issue. On the other hand, one might use "words skillfully but the expression does not suit the contents" of the poem, as Tsurayuki notes is the case with the poet Fun'ya no Yashuhide.[74] Tsurayuki explains that Yashuhide's "poetry is like a tradesman attired in elegant robes" (44). Both Narihira and Yashuhide were notable

[74] In Rodd and Henkenius's translation of the *Kokinshū*, the name Fun'ya no Yashuhide appears alternately as either "Yashuhide" or "Yasuhide." See *Kokinshū* 44, 119.

poets, so the imbalance of *kotoba* and *kokoro* is a poetic failing that even the greatest of poets are not exempt from. Aside from balancing the words and content of a poem, it was important to use only "Japanese words, and, of those, only those sanctioned by tradition as being poetic" (Rodd 16). This could be seen as a lingering notion of *kotodama* ("word-spirit") as well as a permeation of the fact that *miyabi* ("courtliness" or "elegance") had become the status quo.

By closely following the rules of decorum set by the *Kokinshū*, poets displayed their knowledge and refinement, and when it came to courtship, their desirability. In this way, a poet's ethos depended upon their adherence to poetic expectations: "Increasingly waka had come to be dominated by the rules of rhetoric and decorum. They served to make poetry 'an acquired skill, a learnable art.' Aesthetic judgment was based not on the degree of originality or complexity, and not on the seriousness of meaning, but rather on how well the poet handled his materials and operated within the rules" (Rodd 14). Massimiliano Tomasi adds, "Any deviation from these rules constituted an infringement of rhetorical canons, which disqualified the poem and its author" (33). More might be said regarding the specific ways waka were found to be apt and affective, but these elements provide a satisfactory starting point in showing how *zōtōka* often functioned rhetorically. Now that I have established a basis from which to understand the rhetorical characteristics of waka during the mid-Heian period, what remains is to provide some examples that illustrate these characteristics. The most obvious instances where this can be seen is in interpersonal communication between men and women.

Heian Marriage Customs

To understand the significance of *zōtōka* in establishing and maintaining relationships in premodern Japan, it is important to say a few things about Heian marriage customs. Shuichi Kato states that "there are few societies in which marriage, politics and family connections have been exploited on such a massive scale as they were in Heian period Japan" (92). While Kato makes this claim in relation to the Fujiwara family in particular, marriage politics in the imperial court affected courtiers as well, as can be seen in extant records of interpersonal communication held through waka poetry. For those living in the capital, the stakes involved in courtship and marriage were high. It was the goal of lower-ranking aristocratic families to marry their sons or daughters into higher-ranking families, thus securing the family's prosperity. Therefore, the process of attracting a good suitor became a family affair.

The social structure during the Heian period was such that women and men largely existed separately. Once a young woman reached marriageable age, she was kept apart from eligible men: "[A] Heian man wishing to initiate a relationship could either approach the woman through her male protectors, fathers, and brothers . . . or try to reach her secretly through her personal female attendants and set up a direct correspondence" (Arntzen 56). Oftentimes rumors or "stories" about the woman's beauty and accomplishments would be spread around to attract high-ranking suitors, and the woman's mother or a hired hand skilled in poetry would correspond with interested men to fuel their attentions (Kumakura 21). During the day, aristocratic women often stayed at home unless they were serving at court or on a religious pilgrimage and "tried to be seen by as few people as possible. Even when they went outside, they generally traveled in

curtained carriages. They held audiences from behind screens" (Arntzen 11). Since men were not permitted to see the women they became interested in, their correspondences held much of the weight in courtship. Waka poetry, which was often accompanied by gifts and letters, was the main avenue for communication between potential lovers.

Because women of marriageable age were kept isolated from potential suitors, letters and poetry were among the little communication women had with interested men. As such, a lot rested on women's ability to compose poems that would convey their desirability. In other words, it was important that the poems expressed a high degree of elegance that would, in a sense, convey the beauty and refinement of the women herself. If the woman was young or otherwise not adept at composing poetry, either a family member, such as her mother, or a hired hand would be appointed to compose poems on her behalf (Gerber 10). Thus, extensive measures were taken to produce the most appropriate poems possible. It was also common for a woman to have the initial exchanges written by proxy as a way to flirtatiously delay the presentation of her handwriting, which was all the more tantalizing because of the separation between potential lovers.

Marriage was signified by the man visiting the woman's residence for three consecutive nights, departing each morning.[75] Once the relationship had been made official in this way, it was common for married women and their future children to live with the woman's parents and for the husband to visit on occasion (Hane and Perez 33). Therefore, Heian marriages often functioned uxorilocally (McCullough, "Japanese

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[75] See McCullough, "Japanese Marriage" 104–05 for more details on what was usually required to constitute marriage during the Heian period.

Marriage" 105). This practice allowed men to easily pursue relationships with multiple women—at least those who had the wealth and ability to do so—and it was not uncommon for women to also establish relationships with other men.[76] The continuation of a marriage had much to do with whether there was ongoing communication and visits between the parties involved. And while a woman did not rely entirely on her husband for monetary support, as she would inherit the residence of her mother, and because her "clan status" remained unchanged after marriage (meaning she continued to be a part of her own clan and participate in its activities), divorce was a relatively easy process. Typically, all that was involved in a divorce was for the man to discontinue his nightly visits. If a man ceased visiting one of his wives at their residence, or if the couple simply drifted apart and stopped exchanging poetry, this was seen as akin to divorce (139).

The woman's economic status was a key driver in marriage relations (126). Although men would inherit some wealth and court rank from their family, a wealthy and well-connected father-in-law appears to have been more important to a man's social standing (127). Because aristocratic women were economically independent in terms of their land inheritance, only lower-ranking women depended on their husbands for monetary support. However, most all women depended on their husband to manage "the careers of the children, by arranging good marriages or posts as ladies-in-waiting at court for the daughters and seeking political advancement for the sons" (Arntzen 12). Therefore, it was in a woman's interest to maintain a relationship that brought with it some material assistance and the prospect of aiding her children's futures, and it was

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[76] McCullough explains that "the number of wives actually kept by a Heian aristocrat at one time was very small, usually no more than two or three, and monogamous unions were probably the majority" ("Japanese Marriage" 134).

important for men to maintain relationships with their wives in order to produce children that could be placed or married into positions of higher rank, thus extending the family's wealth and social standing. With this context in mind, the composition of "love poetry," which may at first appear trivial, must be taken more seriously in a society where the political economy revolves around marriage: "Despite its focus on romantic encounter, poetry in courtship was as much about lineage as it was about emotional attraction. The poems exchanged between the parties were an opportunity to measure each's commitment and merits" (Watanabe 13). In the examples below, I examine several real-life figures and their use of waka in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships to show how waka functioned rhetorically within the landscape of Heian marriage politics.

Example 1: Michitsuna's Mother

In *Kagerō nikki* (*The Kagerō Diary*), we are presented with a woman's perspective on courtship and marriage. From this account, we gain insight into courting conventions and the ritual, performative aspects of waka composition. The author of the diary was from a middle-ranking aristocratic family, and she is known throughout the work as Michitsuna's Mother (936–995?). In *Kagerō nikki*, Michitsuna's Mother records her poetic exchanges at length as she recounts her experience being courted by her eventual husband, Fujiwara Kaneie, a man of higher rank. Translator Sonja Arntzen comments: "Running through the narration is her record of correspondence and the exchange of poetry that was an integral part of communication in the period. In fact, in many respects, book one is more like an anthology of poetry than a diary, at least in

conventional Western terms" (55). Although appearing more like an anthology of poetry than a Western-style diary, the many poems included are necessary to show the interpersonal communication happening between characters, and they existed in their immediate transaction akin to dialogue, as actual words and ideas communicated between parties. As such, it is important to read the poems more as dialogic exchanges than as artistic productions, while keeping in mind that artistry was part of the rhetorical effectiveness of the poems.

The first poem Michitsuna's Mother shares is from her husband Fujiwara Kaneie when he has just begun courting her:

oto ni nomi	Only to listen
kikeba kanashi na	to your sound alone is sad,
hototogisu	cuckoo bird,
koto katarahamu to	would that I could speak with you,
omofu kokoro ari	this is what my heart longs for.[77]

As is typical in waka, this poem uses the natural world to express the composer's thoughts and intentions. The *hototogisu* (translated as either "cuckoo bird" or "nightingale") was associated with both the arrival of summer as well as the arrival of a lover (LaMarre 62). By merging the voice of the cuckoo bird with the voice of his intended lover, Kaneie's poem implies his desire to visit Michitsuna's Mother. Thomas LaMarre explains: "This is precisely the function of poetic signs in waka: to act at various levels and to align them. The anticipation of a lover and the anticipation of summer are aspects of one force, a force at once emotive and cosmological" (62). However, although Kaneie appropriately invokes the seasonal imagery of the cuckoo

[77] Translation from *The Kagerō Diary* 57.

bird, the last two lines of his poem contain extra syllables, making them "hypermetric," and his language is overall somewhat mundane, lacking a "creative" element (Gerber 28).

As a result, Michitsuna's Mother is disappointed with the poem and follows it in her diary with the statement, "and that was all" (*The Kagerō Diary* 59). She does not find the poem compelling enough to warrant a reply, though "feeling obliged" she commissions a response (59). Aside from the linguistic shortcomings, the explicit reasons given for Michitsuna's Mother's disappointment have to do with her suitor not performing the act of delivering the poem correctly—or at least not according to her expectations. When Michitsuna's Mother receives the letter from Kaneie, she notes: "An ordinary person would have sent a discreet letter using a serving maid or someone like that as a go-between to make his feelings known, but this man goes right to my father" (57). Before even reading the letter that contains the poem, Michitsuna's Mother has made an assessment about Kaneie's level of refinement based on how he has gone about conveying the letter to her. She has concluded that he lacks subtlety in his approach, which negatively impacts Michitsuna's Mother's perception of him. Here we can see the ritual, performative aspects of waka, that it is not just the letter or the poem it contains that is important, but also the way it is conveyed, that contributes to the receiver's interpretation of the poem itself. Matthew Gerber refers to this as the "poetic package," suggesting that a poem's effect depended in part upon the material and social conventions that accompanied it (29).

We learn more about the ritual, performative aspects of Heian courtship shortly thereafter when Michitsuna's Mother comments on the letter she received along with the poem: "When I look at it, the paper and so on are not what you would expect in such a

letter; I had heard from of old that in such a case the hand would be perfect, but the writing in this is so bad that I feel it couldn't be that sort of letter; it is so very strange" (*The Kagerō Diary* 57). These other performative aspects of delivery—the chosen paper and a suitor's handwriting—similarly contributed to the suasiveness of the poem they carried. A poet's handwriting, or their skill in calligraphy, was an important factor when it came to how a poem was perceived, and there are many references in both *zōtōka* and fictional works of people taking into account the handwriting of a poem.[78] In the *kanajo*, Ki no Tsurayuki notes the use of poetry "as the first texts for calligraphy practice" (*Kokinshū* 37). Therefore, poetry and calligraphy existed largely as one. They had a synergistic relationship wherein good calligraphy could make a less noteworthy poem stand out, whereas poor calligraphy could result in an excellent poem being perceived less favorably.

Arntzen provides additional explanation for Michitsuna's Mother's response to the letter and reveals a discrepancy between the actual experience of being courted and how the experience was embellished in romantic tales that portrayed men as ideal courters.[79] According to Arntzen, Michitsuna's Mother sees it as unromantic that the man was not discreet in his correspondence and went straight to her father instead of "through her personal female attendants . . . which would have accorded more with the progress of a love affair in a romance" (*The Kagerō Diary* 56). Unlike the romantic courtship often conveyed in stories, Michitsuna's Mother's account perhaps provides a more lifelike

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[78] For storied examples of the importance of calligraphy, see Addiss et al. 52–58.

[79] For more details regarding the way fictional romances of the time may have created unrealistic expectations in Heian women, see Mostow, "The Amorous Statesman and the Poetess: The Politics of Autobiography and the *Kagerō Nikki*" by Joshua S. Mostow (*Japan Forum*, 1992).

view of how courtship was experienced by women. Michitsuna's Mother's commentary also gives us insight into the way expectations were created for women by literary products of the time. A response to Kaneie's first poem is encouraged by Michitsuna's Mother's mother, despite Michitsuna's Mother's hesitancy. She commissions someone to write the poem for her, which was not an uncommon practice. The poem Michitsuna's Mother sent in reply is as follows:

katarahamu	Toward this village
hito naki sato ni	where there's no one to speak with,
hototogisu	cuckoo bird,
kahi nakarubeki	do not flutter a voice that
kowe na furushi so	will be quite to no avail.[80]

In this poem, we see Michitsuna's Mother repeating some of the same language and themes as Kaneie used, thus presenting herself as knowledgeable in poetic conventions and adept at composing waka.

As their correspondences continue, we gain a sense of Michitsuna's Mother's reluctance in the way she talks about the ongoing communication between her and her suitor. She fails to respond to his "missives one after another" and finally sends a note saying, "I will answer soon" (59). To this, Kaneie sends yet another poem. Michitsuna's Mother states that it was sent "so quickly that I wonder if he was in his right mind" (59). While in some contexts a quick reply was acceptable, the speediness of Kaneie's reply in this case indicates a lack of form by being too direct. After being criticized by her mother about her continued hesitancy to reply, Michitsuna's Mother employs "a suitable person [to] write a suitable reply" (59). Although Michitsuna's Mother shows a lack of enthusiasm in her efforts to attract the suitor, she would be aware of the necessity of

[80] Translation from *The Kagerō Diary* 59.

marriage. Furthermore, our knowledge that her account is written later in life, perhaps after the many occurrences that seem to have caused her marriage to wither, we might expect a bitter tone to accompany her memories.

As evidenced in the language of the first poem, we can assume from the mention of the cuckoo bird that "the season of their first correspondence is early summer" (56). Here Kaneie appears to be following preestablished conventions for poetry composition through the use of *kigo*, the inclusion of a seasonal word. Michitsuna's Mother had a reputation as a skilled poet, which means she would have been aware of poetic conventions, such as appropriate seasonal themes and metaphors (Arntzen 33–34). "To be skillful at poetry in this age meant to channel one's inspiration through the conduit of the poetic tradition already established by the *Kokinshū* poetry anthology" (35). In the *Kokinshū*, the cuckoo bird appears in 28 out of the 34 summer poems chosen for the anthology. Therefore, to mention the cuckoo during the summer months in a first correspondence was a safe choice.

As the exchanges between Michitsuna's Mother and Kaneie continue into autumn, we see an expected shift in the metaphors used in their poems that follows the conventions predetermined by the *Kokinshū*. To veer outside these boundaries could prove disastrous to the developing relationship: "It was poetically unthinkable to use a natural image from a season other than the season one was in" (Arntzen 37). Kaneie sends the following poem, using the familiar autumnal trope of deer cries:

shika no ne mo	Though I am living
kikoenu sato ni	where I hear no cries of deer
sumi nagara	to waken me,

ayashiku ahanu	strangely, my eyelids meet not
me wo miru kana	and see only our not meeting.[81]

Much like the cuckoo bird belongs to summer poems, deer (*shika*), and especially deer cries, belong to autumnal poems. The mention of deer cries hearkens back to these seasonal conventions set by the *Kokinshū*, and by using this natural imagery, additional associative implications are also presented: "The belling of the deer for their mates reminds man of his own longings and of the sorrows of autumn, the season of death and partings" (*Kokinshū* 109). While Michitsuna's Mother does not always include excerpts from the letters that accompany Kaneie's poems, she does so with this poem, granting us some insight into Kaneie's state of mind, which confirms this metaphorical reading. She explains: "In another letter he writes, 'How painful it is to me that you seem to regard me with such prudence; I have borne it till now, but how can we go on like this?'" (*The Kagerō Diary* 61). From Kaneie's letter we gain a sense of his emotions, which seem to parallel the "longings" and "sorrows" implicit in his choice of metaphor.

Furthermore, the idea of someone being awakened by the cries of deer alludes to a particular poem in the *Kokinshū* (60):

yamazato wa	here in this mountain
aki koso koto ni	village autumn brings special
wabishikere	misery all through
shika no naku ne ni	the night the sound of the
me o samashitsutsu	belling deer awakens me[82]

The natural imagery Kaneie selects for his poem (deer cries), the associative meaning embedded in this metaphor, and the specific reference to poem 214 of the *Kokinshū*

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[81] Translation from *The Kagerō Diary* 61.

[82] *Kokinshū* 109 (#214).

create layers that would be easily deciphered by someone of Michitsuna's Mother's poetic standing. Proper attention to the intricacies of poetic composition along with the ritual, performative conventions of poetic exchange worked to convey the elegance and refinement of the poet. Such display of one's knowledge and refinement was constitutive of the suasiveness of any given poem. Should the poem break poetic conventions or otherwise fail in its presentation, its sincerity would be called into question. Although Kaneie is a competent poet, his early indiscreetness and less-than-perfect handwriting nearly undermine his romantic pursuits. Thus, there was clearly much at stake in the composition of poetry for courtship—for the man, but also, and perhaps even more so, for the woman.

Since Kaneie was of higher rank than Michitsuna's Mother, his eventual proposal "must have seemed like a tantalizing prospect" for the author and her family (Arntzen 28). Arntzen explains that the author's father did not have the possibility for a prestigious court appointment prior to her marriage: "It is certainly more than coincidence that the author's father receives his first lucrative post as a provincial governor within the first year of the marriage" (28). Opportunities arising from marriage were a big concern for the bride's family; therefore, a lot of weight was placed on the ability for the exchanges from the woman to her suitor to be as effective as possible in conveying the woman's desirability.

It was custom that the possibility of marriage opened "[o]nce the correspondence had reached a certain level of intimacy," at which point, "the groom would visit the bride's house under the cover of night and sleep with her" (10). The man would leave in the early morning during the first two days, but on the third day, "he would stay until

morning" and the marriage would be official. Michitsuna's Mother shares the poems exchanged "on about the third morning" (*The Kagerō Diary* 63). First, her new husband's poem:

shinonome ni	White light before dawn
okikeru sora ha	rising in the sky . . . we parted,
omohoede	not understanding,
ayashiku tsuyu to	strangely, I felt as if I died
kiekaheritsuru	fading with the morning dew.

Her reply:

sadame naku	With no permanence,
kiekaheritsuru	fading with the morning dew,
tsuyu yori mo	then what about me
soradanome suru	left to rely in vain
ware wa nan inari	on such a fleeting thing?[83]

In this example, we again see Michistuna's Mother repeating the imagery conveyed in Kaneie's poem, that of fading morning dew (*kiekaheritsuru tsuyu*). This repetition shows her knowledge of how poetic discourse functions, which confirms her status as a refined and elegant lady, thus reassuring Kaneie of her desirability. Had Kaneie neglected to send a poem the morning after their marriage was made official, it would have reflected poorly on his character and may have even led Michitsuna's Mother to question his commitment to their relationship. Similarly, had Michitsuna's Mother not offered a swift reply, negative assumptions would have been made about her. By attending to the ritual, performative aspects of poetic exchange in this way, Michitsuna's Mother and Kaneie are able to successfully marry and begin their life as a couple.

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[83] Translations from *The Kagerō Diary* 63.

Example 2: Fujiwara no Morosuke

Fujiwara no Morosuke (907–960) was a court noble known for his *zōtōka* ("poetic dialogues") and for his extensive political influence, which Gian Piero Persiani aptly summarizes: "For about a hundred years after Morosuke's death, all emperors and senior court politicians were his direct descendants" ("The Public" 15n35). Morosuke was a high-ranking courtier who was appointed Minister of the Right in 947. Despite having an elder brother of higher rank, Saneyori (900–970, Minister of the Left), Morosuke's family line, known as the Kūjo branch, is considered to have had more extensive political influence (15). Morosuke owed this success to his careful management of relationships, which he maintained, in part, through the exchange of poems, several of which were included in the second imperial anthology, the *Gosenshū*. Like many court poets, Morosuke compiled his poems in a personal anthology, *Morosuke-shū,* wherein poems are often accompanied with headnotes that contextualize the exchanges.

Morosuke's influence can be seen in the relationships he had with his wives, three of whom were imperial princesses, with other officials of the court, including the rival Minamoto clan, and with religious leaders. This "network of power," as Persiani calls it, allowed Morosuke to exert his influence in ways that granted him power within the imperial court and a lasting impact on the imperial line. Persiani explains that "*waka* served as a formidable tool to build and manage these profitable alliances" (16). By exchanging poems with his wives and with powerful individuals within and outside the Imperial Court, Morosuke was able to gain "valuable symbolic capital" by way of children he could place or marry off into important positions, and he was also able to enact a sort of "poetic diplomacy" that promoted geniality amongst courtiers within the

hierarchical court structure (15, 18). “The importance of such exchanges of civilities for the smooth functioning of the political order,” Persiani argues, “would be difficult to exaggerate” (19). Not only was poetry useful for “maintaining harmony among the various stakeholders,” but also there were many instances in which consensus was required for the court to function properly (19). In a society where decorum was paramount, poetry acted as a way to “defuse tensions and minimize the risk of open conflict” (19). So while there were certainly other factors that led to Morosuke’s success, his use of poetry undoubtedly went a long way in establishing his reach and support of allies within the Imperial Court.

One way that Morosuke established ties to the imperial line was through marrying his daughter Anshi to the future Emperor Murakami (r. 946–967). However, another courtier, Minamoto no Moroakira (903–955), who was already connected to the imperial line by virtue of being one of Emperor Uda’s (r. 887–897) grandsons also married one of his daughters, Keishi, to Murakami, thus making Moroakira “a rival in the competition for power at court” (18). With each having a daughter as a consort to the future emperor, Morosuke and Moroakira’s relationship was capricious in that at any point one might surpass the other in rank. We can see Morosuke manage this tension in a poem he sent to Moroakira congratulating him on his promotion to the third rank. The headnote informs us that Morosuke’s poem was accompanied by a gift of an overcoat, a considerate reference to an earlier instance wherein Moroakira had sent him an overcoat when Morosuke had been promoted to the fourth rank, thus surpassing Moroakira. It should be noted that during this time period, “bolts of cloth themselves were a form of currency, and garments were one of the most common forms of reward or payment” (Arntzen 12).

Therefore, it would have been typical for one to send a gift of clothing in this context. Morosuke's poem is as follows:

Omoiki ya	Who would have thought it,
kimi ga koromo o	at the time when I took off
nugishi toki	my Lord's welcome robes
wa ga murasaki no	that soon He would be donning
iro o kin to wa	my lavender-colored ones?[84]

As noted earlier, at the time this poem was sent, Morosuke had surpassed Moroakira in rank. However, his poem courteously acknowledges his relationship to Moroakira and their past interactions. Fortunately for Morosuke, his daughter Anshi had borne a son to the emperor, thus producing the next heir, the Crown Prince Norihira (future Emperor Reizei). Moroakira's daughter had borne only daughters (19n54). However, Moroakira's reply to Morosuke's congratulatory poem indicates a polite capitulation that graciously accepts Morosuke's eclipsing reach within the court:

Inishie ni	Because you wore them
kisashite kereba	so long ago before me,
uchihabuki	I shall flap my wings
tobitachinikeri	and soar up to the sky in
ama no hagoromo	these immortal's feathered robes[85]

In *Eiga monogatari* (*A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*), which chronicles the life of the Fujiwara family, we are told that the birth of the Crown Prince through Anshi made Morosuke's position "even more secure" and that the "[t]he Emperor relied in a gratifying manner on Morosuke" (*A Tale*, vol. 1: 78).

In another example, we can see the attempt of Morosuke's principal wife, Senshi, to maintain their relationship as Morosuke is occupied with the pursuit of other women.

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[84] Translation from Persiani, "The Public" 18.

[85] Translation from Persiani, "The Public" 19.

Morosuke's collection includes poems to his other love interests, including to the imperial princess Gashi, who was sent to serve as vestal at the Ise shrine:

> When the Ise vestal departed for Ise:
>
> *Au koto no* You will be alone,
> *arashi ni magau* like a tiny boat at the
> *obune yue* mercy of the storm—
> *tomaru ware sae* But even I who stay here
> *kogarenuru kana* will be there with you, rowing![86]

In this poem, we see Morosuke reminding Gashi of his love for her in a way that beckons her remembrance of him while she is away. Morosuke's relationship with her—an imperial princess—allotted him additional status within the imperial court. In response to this and other relationships pursued by Morosuke, Senshi sent him the following:

> When His Lordship spent all his time at the Fourth Princess [Kinshi] and visited her rarely, she sent him a set of ritual blue garments with this poem:
>
> *Yamaai mote* I used indigo
> *sureru koromo no* to get the color right but
> *Kai mo naku* it was all for naught;
> *Kefu sae hito o* if today, too, no one comes,
> *Minu ya naninari* what will I have made them for?[87]

Here Senshi indicates her desire to be visited by Morosuke through the use of the word *yamaai* ("indigo") in the first line, which, because it includes *ai* ("to meet") "alludes to meeting one's lover" (18n49). Persiani reminds us that there is more at stake in this poem than merely "psychological well-being" on the part of Senshi, as "marriage was the foundation of the couple's social and political standing" (18). By expressing her desire to

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[86] Translation from Persiani, "The Public" 17.

[87] Translation from Persiani, "The Public" 17.

see Morosuke through the mention of the indigo clothing she has prepared for him, Senshi encourages Morosuke to remember her value in their relationship.

Despite his many other relations and the children produced through them,[88] it was through Senshi that Morosuke had Anshi, who "had monopolized the Imperial throne" (*A Tale,* vol. 1: 149). Therefore, both Morosuke and Senshi's well-being became largely tied to Anshi, and it was therefore necessary for them to maintain good relations with one another. Persiani explains that "[b]ecause power and status were so firmly rooted in interpersonal ties, the significance of even the most personal exchanges always went beyond the personal and merged in complex ways with sociopolitical considerations," as has been shown in the case of Fujiwara no Morosuke ("The Public" 23).

Example 3: Fujiwara no Sanekata

Fujiwara no Sanekata's (958?–999) life is somewhat of a mystery due to the fact that he did not leave behind a diary, so much of what can be gathered about him is drawn from his personal poetry collection. We know that his father died, leaving Sanekata to be adopted by his uncle, Naritoki (941–995), who had sons of his own and was unable to prioritize Sanekata's court career. Sanekata became part of the palace guards and eventually rose to the position of Middle Captain of the Inner Palace Guards, Left Division, after which he was demoted to Governor of Michinoku for unknown reasons (McAuley, *Sanekata-shū* v). Despite his somewhat unfortunate circumstances, Sanekata was a talented poet who "corresponded with a large number of court ladies" and

[88] Morosuke had either eleven or twelve sons, and either six or seven daughters. See *A Tale,* vol. 1: 149, 149n62.

eventually gained an almost mythic reputation that resulted in 67 of his poems being included in various anthologies after his death (vi). Today he is best known for being one of the poets included in *Ogura hyakunin isshu* (*A Hundred Poems by a Hundred Poets*, ca. 13th century), which was compiled by the famous poet Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241).

Sanekata's own personal poetry collection contains 348 poems written by himself and those he corresponded with. T. E. McAuley, who translated the collection, states that "Sanekata deploys all the techniques of the Heian poet" and that his poems are written with the expectation that his readers would be able "to interpret his wordplays, to identify passing references to other poems, poets or writings, and understand the conventional connotations of the seasons, and their associated plants and animals" (vii). That is to say, Sanekata's readers would need to be similarly familiar with the poetic canon and the precedent it set for poetic composition. In order to make Sanekata's poetry accessible to Western readers, McAuley provides detailed explanatory footnotes to each of the translated poems. Through these explanations, we can gain insight into the ways Sanekata used waka to develop and maintain his interpersonal relationships.

In a poem addressed to his uncle, we see Sanekata employing poetry as a way to restore their relationship after a hardship:

> Composed when the Major Captain, perhaps bearing some ill will against me for something and not seeing me for a while, sent to me saying, 'Why not come over to the Shirakawa estate?'

Sanekata's reply:

shirakawa ni	Had to Shirakawa
sasou mizu dani	Inviting waters
nakariseba	Not come,

kokoro mo yukazu Suffering
omowamashi ya wa Would have remained rooted in my heart[89]

McAuley notes that from other sources we may surmise that the reason Sanekata's uncle (the Major Captain[90]) was upset with him was because he "had been having a relationship with his daughter—his own cousin" (7). Upon receiving his uncle's request for a visit, Sanekata found it worthwhile to send his response as a poem. In doing so, he was able to express his innermost feelings regarding the invitation, something that would have been out of place in another medium, such as a letter. This hearkens back to the *kanajo,* in which Tsurayuki states that it is poetry that "smooths the relations of men and women" (*Kokinshū* 35). Sanekata expressing his feelings in this way could have shown his uncle that he felt badly about the state of their relationship and was open to making amends.

In another example, Sanekata uses poetry accompanied by a bamboo leaf to convince a lover that her anger at him is unwarranted and to express his disdain at her behavior.

> A woman with whom I had spoken was extremely resentful when I told her I could not visit, so I plucked some broad-leaf bamboo and sent it to her:
>
> *kashigamashi* How carping!
> *hitoyo bakari no* Just a single night
> *fushi ni yori* Spent apart!
> *nani ka wa hito no* Should it in a lady
> *takeku uramuru* Arouse such ire?[91]

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[89] Translation from McAuley, *Sanekata-shū* 7 (#9).

[90] McAuley explains that "it was customary to refer to men by title rather than name, and it was taboo to write the name of any noble woman, other than an empress" (*Sanekata-shū* vii).

[91] Translation from McAuley, *Sanekata-shū* 131 (#264).

McAuley explains that the accompanying bamboo (*take*) leaf, which is alluded to in the word *takeku* ("extremely") in the last line of the poem was a particular kind of bamboo "known for the size of its leaves, and so it was a useful symbol of the, to Sanekata's mind, excessive extent of her complaints" (131n2). Here Sanekata is playing with the common practice of sending a small gift whose meaning is paralleled in the accompanying poem. However, rather than sending a beautiful flower or a trinket and using it as a material representation of the woman's beauty or the state of their relationship, it appears Sanekata is performing this social ritual facetiously to show his annoyance at the woman's complaints. Unfortunately, we are not told whether his act appeased his lover by merely showing her some attention or whether it resulted in the end of their relationship.

In a successful exchange with another lady of interest, Sanekata sends a gift of paper along with his poem. He uses the similarity between the words "paper" (*kami*) and "god" (*kami*) to make a play on words, perhaps in order to impress the lady or to gauge her poetic prowess.

> On returning from Usa, I sent this with some paper as a gift for a lady.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *isa ya mada* | There are yet |
> | *chiji no yashiro mo* | A thousand, thousand shrines |
> | *shiranedomo* | I know nothing of, yet |
> | *ko ya so naruran* | From this one or that, I think, is |
> | *sukunami no kami* | Sukunami no kami – just a slip of paper![92] |

In the last line of the poem, *Sukunami no kami* could be interpreted as either an abbreviation of the deity *Sukunabikona no Kami* or as *sukuna* ("not much") and *kami*

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[92] Translation from McAuley, *Sanekata-shū* 30 (#55).

("paper") (30n4). The lady shows that she picks up on Sanekata's wordplay by including a reference to another god in her reply:

hiromae ni	In the Presence
masanu kokoro no	You have not been, yet
hodo yori wa	The generosity, rather,
ōnaomi naru	Of Ōnabi – such a bounty of
kami to koso mire	Paper do I see![93]

The god *Ōnabi no kami* is used to invoke the meaning "great" or "large" from the *ō* of his name, which also functions as a prefix in other words, such as *ōame* 大雨 ("heavy rainfall"). The resultant reading, "bounty of paper," presents a flirtatious twist to Sanekata's understatement of "not much paper" (31n1). In this exchange, we see how participants of a poetic exchange might abide by the conventions of poetic practice by attending to their audience and using elegant conceits to get their point across.

McAuley explains that waka used "a limited range of expressions which were accepted as being poetic, and part of a poem's impact and pleasure was provided by an understanding of the poetic connotations attached to individual nouns or expressions" (viii). As can be seen in the poems above, Sanekata's poetry made use of poetic words and expressions, which were expected to be understood by his contemporaries. An essential part of the success of a poetic exchange relied on mutual understanding and participation in these conventions. Sanekata also relied on poetry as a mode of expression for deep feelings. He used poetic exchange as way to initiate, maintain, and amend relationships with others.

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[93] Translation from McAuley, *Sanekata-shū* 31 (#56).

Example 4: Akazome Emon

Akazome Emon (957?–1041?) is another poet who is remembered largely in relation to her contribution to the *Ogura hyakunin isshu* (*A Hundred Poems by a Hundred Poets*, ca. 13th century). Akazome lived during the reign of Emperor Ichijō (r. 986–1011) along with several other well-known female writers, including Murasaki Shikibu (author of *The Tale of Genji*) and Sei Shōnagon (author of *The Pillow Book*) (Watanabe 3). In the personal poetry collection she left behind, *Akazome Emon shū*, a significant number of the works included are what are known as proxy poems (*daisaku uta*).[94] Because it was expected of Heian aristocrats to be able to compose waka for various occasions, there was inevitably a need for proxy writing when a person did not have sufficient skill, due to age or lack of talent, or when the circumstances called for an intermediary so as to not breach decorum. In such cases, having a proxy writer "mitigated directness, preserving dignity and softening potentially awkward interactions" (Watanabe 23). Proxy poems were thus a common resort for those who needed to "make a respectable showing on the multiple occasions, both private and public, when poetic production was expected at the Heian court," and they worked in favor of the proxy poet as a way "to demonstrate his or her mastery of the medium and to engage with the artistic possibilities afforded by taking on an imagined persona" (3).

Many of Akazome's proxy poems were written on behalf of her children during their courtship, but Akazome wrote on behalf of other family members as well, such as her sister, and she assisted her husband, Ōe no Masahira, in some of his literary dealings

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[94] *Akazome Emon shū* consists of 614 poems. 125 of the poems are written by others and are included as part of a poetic exchange. 70 are proxy poems composed either by Akazome or her correspondent (Watanabe 10).

(6). The ability to "temporarily assume other personas" was a rhetorical skill necessary for poets who composed *daisaku*, and the need for such poets adds to the pragmatic application of waka poetry during the mid-Heian period (15). Proxy composition was called for not only within the private sphere for interpersonal relationships, but "in public settings as well, where, as a demonstration of the capacity to requisition service from others, it could signify position and authority" (11). The use of *daisaku* to display one's power highlights this aspect of poetry as employed by Heian rulers. For courtiers, poetic composition through proxy might be used similarly to display one's refinement in court and thus gain favor with high-ranking individuals, but it also had the more routine application in the realm of courtship and interpersonal relationships.

In several poems that Akazome wrote for her son, Takachika, we see that Akazome must take into account her son's "less-than-attentive behavior" towards the women he was pursuing (16). In one poem, Akazome includes empathetic allusions that acknowledge the woman's distress:

> After Takachika began seeing Akinobu's Daughter, he was newly appointed as a chamberlain and had no time to visit her. "I want to send her a letter," he said, so I wrote in his place.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *Akatsuki no* | At dawn |
> | *shiga no hanegaki* | the snipe grooming its wings |
> | *me o samite* | awakened, |
> | *kakuran kazu o* | how many times have you tossed and turned— |
> | *omoi koso yare* | so I wonder.[95] |

Akazome's poem, which alludes to a poem from the *Kokinshū*, "uses the grooming behavior of a snipe to evoke the anxious restlessness of a woman waiting for a negligent

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[95] Translation from Watanabe 16.

lover" (16).[96] The original poem is from the perspective of the woman, and she compares her tossing to and fro to the snipe restlessly grooming its wings. By taking on the woman's perspective in the poem she composes for her son, Akazome portrays Takachika as an empathetic lover who is mindful of the woman's plight.

The poem sent in response, which was also written by proxy, shows the poet's knowledge of the allusion in the repetition of its imagery:

Yume ni dani	Even in a dream—
minu yo no kazu ya	how many nights
tsumoruran	must pass without seeing you?
shigi no hanegaki	The snipe exhausts herself
te koso tayu kere	in grooming her wings.[97]

Had the recipient not understood the allusion being made and responded in kind, it may signal to Akazome and Takachika that Akinobu's Daughter was not adequately cultured. By relying on a more experienced poet, Akinobu's Daughter ensures that her response aptly matches what she received and thus signals that she is a desirable prospect. Furthermore, she is able to have her current feelings of distress conveyed and advance the relationship by requesting a visit from Takachika.

We learn from Akazome's account that their courtship was successful and Takachika and Akinobu's Daughter were married for a time and even had a son. However, the relationship did not last, and Akinobu's Daughter moved away while their son stayed with his father and Akazome. In these circumstances, poetry continued to be a medium of communication between the estranged couple, and Akazome kept her role as proxy. In the following exchange, Akinobu's Daughter reaches out to her son, and

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[96] See *Kokinshū* 268 (#761).

[97] Translation from Watanabe 17.

Akazome, on behalf of Takachika, "reproaches Akinobu's Daughter for expressing her longing for the child after foregoing her maternal responsibilities" (Watanabe 18). The exchange is guided by headnotes that provide context for the poems' interpretations:

> As for the child, he was welcomed and kept here. One day, the mother sent a toy she had made in the shape of a pony [along with this poem].
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *Waga nobe ni* | I think of |
> | *natsukanu koma to* | the pony not taking |
> | *omou ni wa* | to my fields . . . |
> | *tenare ni keru o* | yet he was once in my care, |
> | *nagusame ni sen* | I console myself. |
>
> [I] responded [in Takachika's place].
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *Sono koma wa* | For this pony |
> | *ware ni kusa kau* | I certainly have |
> | *hodo koso are* | the means to provide pasture |
> | *kimi ga moto ni wa* | no matter how untamed he was, |
> | ikani hayareba | in your care.[98] |

Akazome's response to Akinobu's Daughter is stern and implies "that not all had gone smoothly while the boy was in his mother's care" (18). Here we see Akazome adopt a different persona with a less sympathetic voice of criticism. By moving between these voices, Akazome is able to effectively communicate on behalf of her son in a variety of circumstances.

Watanabe explains that Akazome's rhetorical prowess was flexible enough to account for the opposite perspective in such a situation as this, as seen in poems she composed on behalf of one of her daughters who was in a position similar to that of Akinobu's Daughter (18). In the following poem, Akazome presents the woman's point of view:

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[98] Translations from Watanabe 17–18, square brackets in original.

> Having had a person take in her small child, [another] person was feeling unsettled. On the fifth day of the fifth month, she sent a medicinal ball (*kusudama* 薬玉). To accompany it, I composed the following in her place.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *Ika sama ni* | How has it grown, |
> | *oinarinuran* | while out of my sight, |
> | *ayamegusa* | that sweet flag? |
> | *minuma wa ne nomi* | Ever more damp are my sleeves |
> | *taenu sode kana* | amidst the constant sound of weeping.[99] |

The language in Akazome's poem connects it to the Sweet Flag Festival, which took place on the fifth day of the fifth month: "Akazome's poem spins a web of related puns and metaphors around items associated with the day, the central one being the image of the sweet flag as the child" (20). Today known as Children's Day, the Sweet Flag Festival revolved around the sweet flag plant, an herb that was believed to "ward off evil influences" (20). By sending this poem on the day of the Sweet Flag Festival, Akazome provides a sympathetic image of her daughter by contrasting the prevalence of sweet flag seen all around hung on people's houses with the daughter's lack of own sweet flag, her child.

By relying on their mother's proxy compositions, Akazome's children were able to ensure rhetorical impact in the various circumstances where poetry was required of them. Such uses further illuminate the everyday need for waka composition and the stakes involved in effectively conveying one's emotions and intentions in Heian society. While the composition of poetry did offer a way to demonstrate one's artistic achievement, as seen in the collection and preservation of Akazome's personal poetry

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[99] Translation from Watanabe 19, square brackets in original.

collection, it was clearly a necessary part of negotiating the various power relations of everyday life.

Conclusion

There is large agreement among scholars that waka held an important place in social interaction during the mid-Heian period and for a while thereafter. It is perhaps not too strong a claim, as Brower and Miner have suggested, that poetry became the hallmark of Heian culture: The many "great poems" produced during this time "arose from a milieu in which poetry was a living part of daily experience, in which beauty was the counterpart of refinement, in which *bon ton* also brought aristocratic liveliness, and in which solemnity was but one aspect of the importance of poetry to human life" (159). Although there is not enough space here to account for all the ways fictional works also support a rhetorical reading of waka, particularly *zōtōka*, well-known works such as *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu exhibit the rhetorical use of waka in interpersonal communication. Shown in this and other fictional texts, paramount to one's success in establishing relationships was the ability to convey refined poetic expression, and such works often served as a model to courtiers for how to respond appropriately in given situations.

Waka functioned rhetorically in that its aim was to affect feelings: "Poetry was not looked upon as an art that could teach useful facts, but as an art that could make men (and gods) feel" (Brower and Miner 442). Sometimes the feelings expressed in a poem had to do with courtship and love, other times they had to do with gaining favor with higher ranking members of the court in hopes of receiving a promotion. In such instances,

the rhetorical aspects of waka are manifested clearly: there is an end sought from the exchange of poetry that hinges on real-world change, whether that be marriage, political gain, or otherwise. Expressing deep feelings in a poem rather than in the prose of an accompanying letter enabled poets to tap into the wider cultural milieu of beauty and refinement, and because persuasive influence for everyday occurrences during the mid-Heian period largely depended upon a socially accepted aesthetic orientation or way of seeing the world, composing waka was one of the most effective ways a courtier could show that they understood and embodied the aesthetic worldview that had been cultivated by literary products.

The repetition of Heian beliefs and values through stylized language and precedented allusions paired with the ritualized conventions of presentation made waka into a performative discourse. Like memorizing a script and choreography before a performance, to compose and deliver a waka required preparation and awareness of societal expectations. Part of this preparation included extensive knowledge of the poems found in the *Kokinshū*. Even after other imperial anthologies were compiled, the *Kokinshū* remained the *de facto* reference when displaying one's poetic knowledge. It included "an elaborate set of rules for waka composition, presentation, and appreciation," which courtiers were expected to know and exhibit in social settings (Shirane, *The Bridge of Dreams* xv). Michael F. Marra explains that the use of poetry for various purposes in court life was expected of all courtiers:

> At the imperial court of ancient Japan knowledge and practice of poetry became basic tools for survival. Without knowledge of poetry one could not understand the intentions, desire, fears, and commands of others. An encounter between a man and a woman always began and always ended with a poem, and whether the encounter was successful or not was often determined by the quality of the poem and the skill of the hand writing it down. ("Playing with Japanese Songs" 320)

Knowing about the poetic tradition as embodied in the *Kokinshū* and being able to compose poetry effectively granted a courtier inclusion and participation in court life. Within the court community, "recognition and esteem could be won mainly through artistic and intellectual prowess . . . and lasting esteem was won by inclusion in one of the many anthologies" (Adolphson et al. 116). Therefore, there was more at stake in the composition of waka than simply artistry. Artistry was bound up in social and political recognition.

CHAPTER 6

TOPICS, TREATMENTS, AND POETIC TRUTH

By the late Heian period, prosperity in the capital was slowly waning. Much of the wealth had been concentrated in the hands of the upper nobility, and various tax-evasion strategies in the provinces had slowed what resources were coming in.[100] The Fujiwara family began to lose power as the first emperor in almost two hundred years not of Fujiwara decadent, Go-Sanjō (r. 1068–1073), took the throne in 1068 and returned the governing power to the imperial line (Shively and McCullough 1). Outside the capital, insurgencies were brewing among the Taira and Minamoto clans, putting pressure on the comfortable lifestyles of the aristocracy. Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner explain that "although superfluous in society, the Court remained preeminent in culture and prestige. The change led courtiers to endeavor to sustain themselves and to reconcile their present position with their happier past by drawing upon the resources of their cultural tradition" (234). As courtiers attempted to hold onto their cultural inheritance in light of impending changes, attention to poetic practice intensified (Brower and Miner 234). As a result,

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[100] By the twelfth century, much of the land in the provinces had become *shōen* (private estates), granted to noble families as commendation. *Shōen* as well as temples and shrines were exempt from paying tax (Shively and McCullough 10, 73). Lower nobles and religious leaders saw this as an opportunity to increase their wealth and power by creating profitable alliances that "used the leverage of potential commendation to win still greater concessions from provincial officials" (234–35).

waka "lost its centrality as a form of sophisticated dialogue in everyday aristocratic society" and solidified itself in the realm of art and became "a serious, even grave, search for truth" (Stilerman, "Cultural Knowledge" 154; Brower and Miner 33).

As a result, most of the poetry produced during the end of the Heian period was formal (*hare*) poetry. That is not to say poetic exchanges (*zōtōka*) stopped completely, but there is a noticeable shift in the types of poems that were chosen for imperial anthologies. Whereas in previous decades, many of the poems included had been drawn from personal collections of poets, it became increasingly common in the late Heian period for imperial anthologies to select poems exclusively from formal events, such as poetry contests (*uta'awase*).[101] Such events were designed to sift out the best poems based on criteria set forth by poetic precedent. Haruo Shirane explains that "because an orthodox treatment of the topics often meant victory, the popularity of the matches also helped direct poets toward conservative treatments of themes, imagery, and diction" (*Traditional* 593). As discussed in previous chapters, the general conservative nature of waka composition had to do with beliefs about the Yamato language as that which housed *kotodama* ("word-spirit"), the Chinese influence on style, which resulted in a focus on elegance and courtliness (*miyabi*), and the custom of intertextuality through allusions to past poems, all of which resulted in the recycling of poetic topics and vocabulary.

While all of these things made for a cohesive, if not homogenous, literary tradition, such constraints were felt strongly by later poets who felt that they had run out

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[101] According to Royston, "there are some 470 known extant contests from the Heian period, with others presumed to survive as manuscripts in private collections" ("*Utaawase*" 101).

of ways to repurpose available material (Smits 360–361). In Minamoto no Toshiyori's (1055?–1129) treatise *Toshiyori zuinō* (*Toshiyori's Poetics*) from the start of the twelfth century, Toshiyori expresses the following frustration: "There are no more interesting ideas left, nor does one find any words that have not been used before. How then can we, the people in this last stage of the world, create a novel style?" (qtd. in Smits 361). Brower and Miner explain that by the twelfth century, it was not "that poetry was hopelessly fossilized, but only that change was slow, that new elements of diction, new modes, and new ideals of beauty had to undergo a period of probation before they were finally accepted as suitable for formal poetry" (236). Despite changes that did occur during the late Heian period, much remained the same in terms of poetic topics and vocabulary.[102] Even the dictum offered by prominent poet and scholar Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204), also known as Toshinari, of *kotoba furuku, kokoro atarashi* ("old words, new treatment")[103] remains linguistically tied to the past through the use of *honkadori* ("allusive variation").[104]

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[102] Brower and Miner explain that "for every poem Shunzei wrote in the new style, he has a dozen in the old" (277). The "new style" that Brower and Miner refer to here includes the use of "syntactical fragmentation" through adding a full stop to the end of a poem's third line, new handling of imagery through the use of nouns instead of verbs for their imagistic effect, an increase in poetic artifice due to more aesthetic distance between the poet and his narrator, and a focus on time as a poetic subject. See Brower and Miner 278–319.

[103] As mentioned in Chapter 3, Shunzei's son Fujiwara no Teika echoes this sentiment in his treatise *Eiga no taigai* (*Essentials of Poetic Composition*, ca. 1222).

[104] *Honkadori* ("allusive variation") "is primarily an echoing of an older poem or poems, not just to borrow material or phrasing, but to raise the atmosphere—something of the situation, the tone, and the meaning—of the original" (Brower and Miner 14).

As the interpersonal applications of waka diminished and discourse on waka as an art form and avenue to truth was emphasized, waka's rhetorical influence is best seen in the aesthetic epistemology proffered by late Heian poetics. Influenced by Tendai Buddhism, the practice known as *uta no michi* ("way of poetry") arose within the artistic milieu of elite Japanese culture and became the focal point for aspiring and experienced poets who sought to dedicate their lives to poetry. Ivo Smits explains, "Poets themselves came to speak of 'the way of poetry' (*uta no michi)* as the steering course of their artistic lives" (360). The "way of poetry" made the life of a poet into a vocation of reaching higher truth through the meditative practice known as *Calm and Contemplation*, or "Great concentration and insight" (*Maka-shikan* or *shikan*). Through this practice, poets could come to know the "poetic essence" (*hon'i*) of a topic (*dai*). By positioning poetry as an avenue to truth, the accumulation of poetic ideals embodied in the "way of poetry" resulted in a rhetorically constructed way of seeing and interpreting the natural world, one that preserved past values of the Heian court and reinforced its authority in the present. In this way, poetry functioned as "a symbol of the cultural superiority of the aristocracy in a period when their political powers had been all but lost" (Brower and Miner 237). Thus, the "way of poetry" served as a means of preserving waka's well-worn topics and vocabulary by positioning them as "poetic truth."

By making poetry into an epistemological endeavor, late-Heian poets constructed a reality based on poetic precedent and defended by poetic rhetoric. That is to say, in the late Heian period, poetry comes to engender its own "terministic screen" through which to comprehend the external world (Burke, *Language* 45). Kenneth Burke explains that like a "color filter," which changes the way a photograph portrays reality, "[n]ot only

does the nature of our terms affect the nature of our observations, in the sense that the terms direct the *at*tention to one field rather than to another. Also, *many of the* '*observations*' *are but implications of the particular terminology in terms of which the observations are made*" (45, 46, emphases in original). Because of the continued restrictiveness of poetic composition in both words (*kotoba*) and sentiments (*kokoro*), waka, as an avenue to truth, directed the gaze towards that which was most aesthetic or affective. As such, the poetic truths relayed through the "way of poetry" were also rhetorical truths.

Poetic Topics

By the late Heian period, fixed-topic composition (*daiei*) had become well established. Fixed-topic composition "imposed strict rules on the range of associations" that were tied to each topic, resulting in "a shared cultural vocabulary" among members of the imperial court (Shirane, *Japan* 55). Wiebke Denecke argues that topic poetry "developed four highly distinctive characteristics" (10). Topic poetry was "*occasional* and *panegyric*," "strongly *descriptive*," "highly *paradigmatic*," and constructed through the elaboration of "parallel threads of associative substitutions" (10–11). One reason for the intense paradigmatic and associative nature of topic poetry was due to a retrospective approach to poetic composition based on accepted poetic precedent. Although several more imperial anthologies had been produced by the late Heian period, the *Kokinshū* remained the primary model of poetic accomplishment. Shunzei explains why this was the case: "Since it is during the age of this anthology that good and bad poems were clearly differentiated for the first time, it is the *Kokinshū* above all which should be the

object of veneration and reliance for the basic styles of poetry" (qtd. in Royston, "The Poetic" 2). Somewhat ironically, poetry after the *Kokinshū* was seen by Shunzei to exhibit "a gradual degeneration" because of "sterile repetition" and "excessive concern with mere ingenuity" (Royston, "The Poetic" 2). But due to its past-facing orientation, topic poetry's paradigmatic nature was reinforced through the intertextuality that resulted in the "recycling" of words (*kotoba*) and sentiments (*kokoro*) of the *Kokinshū* poems (Kamens, *Utamakura* 44).

Each topic accumulated its associations over time through its poetic treatment, and these associations had become rigidly codified, resulting in each topic having its own "associative cluster" that could be used in poetic composition (Shirane, "Lyricism" 77). These associations were generally referred to as a topic's "poetic essence" (*hon'i*). Shirane explains:

> Rain, for example, took on a different name according to the season and the type. *Harusame* (spring rain) referred to the soft, steady drizzle of spring; *samidare* (literally, rains of the Fifth Month) meant the wet season or the extended rains of the summer; and *shigure* signified the brief, intermittent showers of early winter. In the poetic tradition these became seasonal topics with specific poetic associations, which were derived from classical precedent and commonly recognized as the most appropriate subjects of composition. ("Performance" 222)

One common example of the formation of "associative clusters" around a topic is the phenomenon known as *utamakura* ("poem pillow"). Edward Kamens succinctly describes utamakura as an "association-rich poetic nominal" (10). *Utamakura* originally referred to the collections of poetic words a poet would keep on hand for composition, but it came to mean the use of place names of famous sites (*meisho*) as well as noteworthy things found at particular places that gain "special significance and special utility in the making of poems" (10). For example, a particular type of flower, a notable

river, or a tall mountain. While there were occasions when a courtier might actually travel to a specific location in order to compose a poem, oftentimes an encounter with *utamakura* was imagined. In this way, *utamakura* served as an inventive technique in waka composition. Similarly, for poems written to accompany screen paintings, the poet's imagined sense of being in the depicted scene would guide the writing of the poem.

The association between places and particular things they were known for became so strong that a poet could name a place and its related thing(s) would automatically be invoked. For example, naming Yoshino Mountain in a poem would automatically suggest cherry blossoms or snow (or both simultaneously), naming River Tatsuta would bring autumn leaves to mind, and so on (Baskind 6). One of the earliest poems to connect Yoshino Mountain with cherry blossoms and snow is poem 60 from Book I of the *Kokinshū*, written by Ki no Tomonori:

miyoshino no	far in the distance
yamabe ni sakeru	on lovely Mount Yoshino
sakurabana	cherry blossoms must
yuki ka to nomi zo	have opened for as I gazed
ayamatarekeru	I thought I saw snowdrifts there[105]

Kamens explores the allusion and intertextuality at play in the *utamakura* ("pillow word") *umoregi* (bogwood), which is famously found in the Natori River (*Natorigawa*). Although *umoregi* is also found elsewhere, Kamens argues that Natori River likely gained significance in its association with *umoregi* because of the meaningfulness of the name of the river due to the puns it contains in relation to the characteristics of bogwood (*Utamakura* 26–27). Bogwood are trees that have fallen in a wetland area and become

[105] Translation from *Kokinshū* 66.

buried in a way that prevents them from oxidization and decay. Over time the wood hidden beneath the bog hardens and fossilizes. Kamens explains how the word "Natori" in the name of the river "signifies 'getting a [bad] reputation,' unjustly or otherwise, through the revelation of one's private affairs (*na-tori*: *na* is 'name, reputation'; *tori* is 'getting, taking')" (27). These meanings are also reflected in the way bogwood, hidden for a time, is eventually discovered. Private matters, such as love affairs, may be similarly hidden for a time, only to be revealed (27).

This example shows how associations came to be built around a topic, providing the poet with many meanings condensed into a single word or phrase. It also shows how poetic reality was more significant than actual reality. The fact that bogwood could be found in many places other than Natori River is largely ignored due to the aesthetic opportunities of the linguistic associations in the name *Natorigawa*. Therefore, when approaching a topic, such as a famous place or a thing found there, this "meant not just facing a present landscape but also the historic accretions that surround it like a discursive shell" (Carter, "Travel" 25). Poetic allusions were built up over time and standardized through continual intertextual reference. The more poets would include a particular *utamakura* ("pillow word") in their poems, the more precedent would be established for future poems to be written, and the "greater the precedent in terms of the number of poems surrounding a place . . . the greater the interest and attraction to the poet" (Baskind 6).

Even something as simple as a "phonic association" between the topic and similar words could add to a topic's associations (Shirane, "Lyricism" 78). For example, the *hon'i* of Mount Fuji is "a volcanic mountain that continually emitted smoke," or

figuratively, "a heart that never ceases to burn"[106] (78; qtd. in 78n7). Haruo Shirane explains that the latter meaning is drawn from the similarly sounding "phrases *fushi* 不死, which means 'undying,' and *fujin* 不尽, which means 'inexhaustible'" (78).

Understanding and successfully catering to a topic in waka composition meant turning to the poetic canon as a source of knowledge regarding the associations that made up a topic's "poetic essence" (*hon'i*).

Poetic Essence

Through *uta no michi* ("way of poetry"), poetry became less about individual expression and more about aligning oneself with a universally shared poetic conception of reality. To align oneself with this communal, aesthetic view of reality, one had to cultivate a poetic sensibility through careful study of the poetic canon. In doing so, one could come to understand the "poetic essence" (*hon'i*) of poetic topics (*dai*). Brower and Miner explain that the word "hon'i" has "a wide range of meanings" aside from its most often-adopted English translation of "poetic essence" or "essential nature." Other meanings include "'correct handling' (of a given topic), 'decorum of feeling' (toward a subject), 'conventional treatment' (of an image), and 'real significance' (of an event or experience)" (252–53). Furthermore, "*kokoro* was also often used by judges at *utaawase* [poetry contests] and in the handbooks and critical writings of the age synonymously with *hon'i*" (253). Even "Shunzei frequently used terms such as *kokoro ari* (having decorum, intense feeling, or conviction of feeling) and *aware* (moving the sensibilities or

[106] In the *kanajo*, Ki no Tsurayuki suggests that a poet might "compare his smoldering love to the smoke rising from Fuji" (*Kokinshū* 40). See also *Kokinshū* 202 (#534) and 353 (#1028).

evoking the proper response in a sensitive person) more or less synonymously with hon'i in its various meanings" (255).

Considering the varied meanings *hon'i* embodies, it may be simplest to say that *hon'i* signifies an accumulation of poetic ideals—particularly *kokoro* and *aware*—that converge at the point of poetic truth. Somewhat paradoxically, what is most true about a topic is that which is most poetic. What is "poetic" is determined by how affective or aesthetically moving it is. For example, the most aesthetically moving thing about the topic of cherry blossoms is their ephemerality. In his poetic treatise *Nameless Essay* (*Mumyōshō*, ca. 1211), Kamo no Chōmei (1154–1216) explains: "The poet may state that he would spare cherry blossoms at the cost of his life, but the ephemerality of the tinted maple leaves, he is not to lament so much for" (qtd. in Izutsu 19). What is most aesthetically moving about a topic is also considered to be that which is most essential, and "true," about the topic. As noted previously in the example of bogwood and Natori River, whether or not this "truth" corresponds to actual reality is beside the point:

> In such a context, Nature—the natural things and events—from the stylistic point of view may rightly be said to be stereotyped, being as it is completely detached from its factual, empirical subsistence. We should perhaps rather say, the things of Nature are conventionally idealized so that their function . . . consists now primarily in inducing a certain specific type of aesthetic plentitude . . . backed by a conventionally established associative network of the peculiar images and ideas which they evoke. Otherwise expressed, they no longer function as bearers of descriptive, objective meanings. (Izutsu 19–20)

Before discussing the "associative network" that is created by poetic tradition and which conveys what is aesthetically moving, and therefore essential and "true," about each topic, it would be useful to first consider what is meant by "aesthetic plentitude" and how it relates to *kokoro, aware,* and the poetic act.

The "aesthetic plentitude" that Toyo Izutsu refers to here, which he calls *yo-jō*, is more commonly known as "*amari no kokoro*" (15). The concept *amari no kokoro* can be translated as "surplus-mind" or "overflowing of the soul" (Izutsu 15; Teele 146). *Amari no kokoro* as a poetic concept "evolved from the influence of Shinto, Buddhism, Chinese poetics, and earlier Japanese poetics" (Teele 147). Centuries before Shunzei was born, the poet-monk Kūkai (774–835), advocate of Shingon Buddhism, discusses *amari no kokoro* in relation to Buddhist teachings. Nicholas J. Teele explains that Kūkai believed that "the highest levels of insight into Buddhist concepts of Consciousness could be expressed not through ordinary words but only through great poetry, in which the soul somehow overflowed from the words" (149).

Kūkai's work largely influenced later writings on the topic, including Fujiwara no Kintō's (966–1041) well-known treatise *The Nine Levels of Waka* (*Waka Kuhon*), written sometime after 1024. Kintō considered *amari no kokoro* "the most excellent quality in poetry" (Teele 146). With its apparent Buddhist configuration, his treatise *The Nine Levels of Waka* is divided into three sections—Upper Level, Middle Level, and Lower Level—each containing their own upper, middle, and lower subdivisions, reminiscent of the nine levels of consciousness. For each subsection, Kintō provides a couple of poems to illustrate the ranking. Of course, the upper division of the Upper Level is the highest and contains poems that embody *amari no kokoro*. Kintō explains the basic idea of *amari no kokoro* in the following manner: "The words are so magical that the soul of the poem overflows and lingers" (qtd. in Teele 160). Such a poem might also be said to exhibit the

poetic ideals *aware* ("pathos" or "sensitivity")[107] or *yūgen* ("mystery and depth") (Brower and Miner 260), which Izutsu argues are "two specified derivatives stemming from the aesthetic value of *yo-jō*" (16). Teika's poetic concept *ushin* ("a conviction of feeling") might also be understood as a derivative of *yo-jō* (Brower and Miner 258).

While *yūgen* and *ushin* do not become important poetic concepts until the late Heian and early Kamakura periods, *aware* is considered the "dominant aesthetic ideal of Heian literature" and had long been a mark of high literary achievement (Marra, "Major" 31).[108] *The Tale of Genji* is perhaps the most notable example of *aware* of the period and "was designated as a required text for serious students of Japanese poetry" (Yoda 523). Shunzei's own work was praised as full of *aware* by emperor Go-Toba: "I recall [Shunzei's] poetry as gentle and evocative, infused with deep feeling, and moving in its sensitivity (Brower, "Ex-Emperor" 35–36). Brower notes that this was "such high praise that he [Go-Toba] is willing to apply it only to Shunzei" (36n112).

The term "aware" first appears in Tsurayuki's preface to the *Kokinshū*. In the *kanajo*, "aware" comes up twice, once to explain the power of poetry, and later to comment on a poet's work. Mark Meli states that in each instance, "aware" is being used slightly differently (69). In the first occurrence, "aware" is used more generally to note "the ability of a work to move its audience," and in the second, "aware" is used in a way that "states something about the specific emotional tone or theme of the work" (72). The

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[107] Brower and Miner refer to *aware* as "sensibility," but because I have been using that term in a more general sense in the phrase "poetic sensibility," I have resorted to alternative, but common, translations here to avoid misunderstandings (187, 503).

[108] Wolfe makes the important insight that *aware* is "an unsurprising aesthetic for a culture in many ways homogenous, in which strong group orientations create common contexts and speech codes, leading to the feeling that excessive detail or explanation is a stylistic defect" (202).

more general usage of "aware" is seen at the beginning of the preface: "It is the poetry of Yamato that moves heaven and earth without the use of power, makes invisible demon gods feel *aware*, soothes the relations between men and women, and calms the heart of brave warriors" (qtd. in Meli 69). The specific usage occurs when Tsurayuki comments on the poetry of Ono no Komachi. He states: "Her poems are full of *aware* and lack strength. We might say they are like a beautiful woman who is burdened down by worries. I suppose this lack of strength comes on account of her being a woman" (qtd. in Meli 69). Komachi is not the only poet Tsurayuki critiques in this section of the *kanajo*, and while his comment might not be as negative as it appears to contemporary readers,[109] the main issue Tsurayuki takes with Komachi's and the others' poems has to do with an imbalance of *kokoro* ("sentiment") and *kotoba* ("words"). Komachi's sentiment (*kokoro*) is too strong for her words (*kotoba*). In Laurel Rasplica Rodd's translation, this passage reads: "She is full of sentiment but weak" (*Kokinshū* 45). While the two uses of "aware" may vary in their applications, in each case they suggest the aim of poetry is to relay "aesthetic plentitude," or *yo-jō*, which for Tsurayuki can only be done through the balancing of *kokoro* and *kotoba*.

Current understandings of *aware* are largely based on the work of Edo-period nativist scholar Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), whose writings on *The Tale of Genji* provide insight into *aware* as an aesthetic concept.[110] He explains, "*Aware* is in essence

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[109] Leonard Grzanka explains that this comment may not necessarily be negative and "may be taken as an expression of admiration in a culture in which helplessness and fragility exhibited in a framework of sensuality were appreciated" (*Kokinshū* 383n27).

[110] Motoori Norinaga's writings on *aware* include *Ashiwake obune* (1757), *Shibun yōryō* (1763), *Isonokami sasamegoto* (1763) and *Genji monogatari tama no oguishi* (The Small Jeweled Comb, a Study of *The Tale of Genji*, 1796).

an expression for deep feeling in the heart . . . *Aware* was originally an exclamation, expressing any heartfelt sentiment" (qtd. in Shigeru 43). It is "a primal form of emotionality" that "derives etymologically from the sound of a sigh"; therefore, it "is similar in this regard to such exclamatory words as *ana*, *aya*, and *aa*" (Fluekiger 177). Thus, like *yo-jō* or *amari no kokoro*, *aware* suggests an overflow of emotion or sentiment. For Norinaga, this overflow is the natural response of someone who has come to "know *mono no aware*" (Flueckiger 187). The term "mono" refers to that of physical substance, "things" or "stuff," while "no" makes its preceding noun possessive. In other words, to know *mono no aware* means to know the sentiment of things, or what makes them moving. Thus, *mono no aware* is most often translated as "the pathos of things." To say that someone "knows *mono no aware*" was akin to identifying them as a poet (Norinaga 187).

Glenn Kreuter argues that "experiencing *mono no aware* implies a process of 'knowing'" through an aesthetically-oriented encounter with things (42–43). By cultivating an aesthetic sensibility of things through the contemplation and knowing of them, *mono no aware* moves beyond merely an aesthetic concept and projects its own epistemology, one concerned with when it is appropriate to be moved and how that knowledge can be used. Kreuter explains:

> By being tied to knowledge, the question of the essence of *mono no aware* cannot be fully resolved in a spontaneous affection reaction. Put differently, because the emotional response transcends the moment of exclamation in the context of acquired knowledge of the impermanence of things, it becomes possible to be deeply moved by knowing what it means to be moved. (78)

The possibility of experiencing *mono no aware* requires a subject who is attentive to what it is to be moved. Brower and Miner explain that a person "who could not be sensitive

and . . . could not respond sensitively in decorous ways, could play no role in the activities of life in the capital" (187). Part of that ability came from "the Buddhist idea of a world of impermanence and illusion" (187). Therefore, *aware* contains the added nuance of emotion wrought from an understanding of temporality. *Mono no aware* as an aesthetic sensibility orients the poet in a way that enables them to comprehend the ephemerality that makes something moving and allows them to be moved by it. Norinaga believed that this was done through aligning oneself "with a universal human emotionality" (Flueckiger 187). This universal human emotionality reflects Shunzei's notion of a communal poetic sensibility, or the attunement to the "original heart" (*moto no kokoro*), that has been passed down through poetry—a point I will come to shortly.

Mono no aware in practice functions as both a frame of mind (an intellectual/emotional orientation) as well as an artistic aim. Regarding the former, Michael F. Marra defines *mono no aware* as "a person's ability to realize the moving power of external reality, and, as a result, to understand and, thus, communicate with others" (Introduction 17). The practice of writing poetry was a way for the poet to express the strong emotion that accompanies *mono no aware* and to convey it to others, thus also sharing the knowledge gained from the experience. Norinaga explains: "To know *mono no aware* is to discern the power and essence, not just of the moon and the cherry blossoms, but of every single thing existing in this world, and to be stirred by each of them" (Norinaga 185). Thus, knowing *mono no aware* is the result of a cultivated poetic sensibility, which leads the poet to *hon'i,* or poetic truth. This poetic truth is shared through poetry, which is why the cultivation of a poetic sensibility required close study of the poetic canon, where *hon'i* and *aware* are most readily expressed.

As a derivative of *yo-jō*, *aware* is a conveyance of *jō*. Like *hon'i*, *jō* may be translated in a variety of ways. The word I believe best captures *jō* is "impression." It is that which, as a feeling, sentiment, or emotion, first manifests itself to the individual heart/mind (*kokoro*). Importantly, it may also be understood as "the way things really are" ("jou"). Toyo Izutsu explains: "*Jō*, in the creative consciousness of the *waka*-poet, is none other than the 'phenomenally tinged' *kokoro* itself" (13). For Tsurayuki, *kokoro* is used to describe a general subjectivity that has yet to be "activated toward artistic creativity" (Izutsu 8). As discussed previously in Chapter 2, in the *kanajo*, Tsurayuki describes an affective-expressive mode of poetry: "The seeds of Japanese poetry lie in the human heart [*kokoro*] and grow into leaves of ten thousand words [*kotoba*]. Many things happen to the people of this world, and all that they think and feel is given expression in description of things they see and hear" (*Kokinshū* 35). Norinaga explains that "Tsurayuki's metaphor privileges the human heart (or mind) [*kokoro*] as the repository of feelings (or ideas) that, like a seed, sprout into words (*kotoba*) (or leaves, *koto no ha*) under the pressure of the surrounding reality (the perception of what is seen and heard), thus making a poem come into being" (Marra, Introduction 6). Tsurayuki's poetic ideal of the balance between *kokoro* ("sentiment") and *kotoba* ("words"), which became the bedrock of Japanese poetics, takes on additional nuance when "kokoro" is interpreted as not just the content of the poem and its treatment, but the experience of the poet's heart/mind. It is that "phenomenally tinged" heart (*jō*) which, if captured in the appropriate words (*kotoba*), works to relay *aware* (or *amari no kokoro* or *yo-jō*) (Izutsu 13).

For Shunzei's son, Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), *kokoro* is understood as a "state of mind" that influences how experience is verbalized (Izutsu 8–9). The poet's "state of mind" must be cultivated in a way that allows for *jō* to be "externalized and transferred onto the linguistic dimension of *waka*," thus creating "a kind of aesthetic plentitude [*yo-jō*] with which the poetic-linguistic expression is to be etherally-tinged" (15). *Yo-jō*, as well as its derivatives, can thus be understood as "the trans-linguistic plentitude of expression" (17). When a poet's *kokoro* (heart/mind) is affected by *jō* (impression, things as they really are), the experience is then articulated through *omoi*, the "inner language" of words, images, and finally verbalized through *kotoba*, the "external language" (12). It should be noted that *jō* (impression, feeling) cannot be "externalized directly" without the use of language. However, in the process of externalizing *jō* through semantic articulation, "it necessarily will lose its essential nature as an organic, non-articulated whole and transform itself into a mere unit of *omoi*" (14). What results from this process is a "double stratum" wherein "one single linguistic expression," that is, a single poem, "can now be approached from two definitely different aspects, namely the aspect of *kotoba* [language] as an immediate verbalization of *omoi* [thought] in the form of a linguistic articulation on the one hand, and the aspect of *yo-jō* [*amari no kokoro* or *aware* or "aesthetic plentitude"], the trans-linguistic on the other" (15). Izutsu's explanation here is reminiscent of Kintō's description of his poetic ideal: "The words are so magical that the soul of the poem overflows and lingers" (qtd. in Teele 160).

It is no surprise then that this overflow of sentiment—whether specific to *aware*, *yūgen*, or *ushin*—can be invoked from diction through well-chosen words (*kotoba*) or

their arrangement (*sugata*) in relation to "linguistic articulation," as well as from the connection between words and meaning (*kokoro*) or even their pleasant sound, both of which work on the trans-linguistic level. Phrases such as "*aware ni mieru*" ("appear in *aware*") and "*aware ni kikoyuru*" ("to resonate with *aware*") were commonly used by Shunzei in praise of poetry (Meli 79). When something is said "to resonate with *aware*," Shunzei is specifically referring to its aural quality. When it came to poetry, Shunzei gave primacy to orality over the written word. In *Korai Fūteishō* (*Poetic Styles from the Past*, 1197), he states: "Poetry is definitely based upon oral expression" (qtd. in Royston, "The Poetic" 5). Clifton W. Royston explains that orality was preferred "because it is non-corporeal" making it "somehow closer to the transcendental realm of poetry, and therefore [it] can better evoke the 'essential nature' of things" (6).[111] This results in the ability for poetry to convey that which is "timelessly true," and poetry that does so "fulfills the highest purposes of the poetic act" (6). Shunzei's attention to orality in poetry is somewhat reminiscent of the powers of *kotodama* ("word-spirit"); however, it seems Shunzei is more concerned with the way orality better expresses metaphysical truths, that which is "timelessly true," or the *hon'i* ("poetic essence") of a topic. During a poetry contest Shunzei judged, he explains the aural power of poetry:

> In general a poem need not always attempt clever conceits nor present its ideas fully and systematically. Yet when it is recited, whether it is simply read aloud or is formally intoned, there must be something about it which resounds with allure (*en*) and with profundity (*yūgen*). A fine poem seems to be accompanied by an aura of its own, above and beyond its diction and configuration. This aura hovers about the poem much as a veil of haze trails among spring cherry blossoms, as the belling of stags is heard before the autumn moon, as the scent of springtime

[111] Royston also proposes "that part of the declining use of pivot words in the late Hein is attributable to their unsuitability for aural performance" ("*Utaawase*" 106).

> pervades a hedge of plum blossoms, or as the autumn rains permeate the crimson leaves upon a peak. (qtd. in Royston 107)

The notion of an "aura" which "hovers about the poem much as a veil of haze" seems to be an expression *amari no kokoro* (the overflowing of the soul), otherwise known as *yo-jō*, "the trans-linguistic plentitude of expression," which contains essential truths by way of conveying the poet's direct experience with reality (Teele 146; Izutsu 17).

The "Way of Poetry"

In *Korai Fūteishō* (*Poetic Styles from the Past*, 1197), Shunzei explains what it means to participate in the "way of poetry." He begins his treatise by recounting the history of waka through the imperial anthologies. The poetic tradition as embodied in these anthologies is "passed down from generation to generation" much like the Buddhist transmission of dharma (Shirane, *Traditional* 587). Shunzei states: "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" (Shunzei 589). When one participates in the "way of poetry," one is tapping into the "communal heart/mind (*kokoro*)" that has been passed down through poetry. And it is from this communal heart/mind that "aesthetic sensibility is created . . . Poetry thus actively creates the world of sensibility" (587). Instead of viewing poetry as something that comes from an individual's heart/mind (*kokoro*) that is affected by the external world, as described by Ki no Tsurayuki in the *kanajo*, poetry for Shunzei is born from the communal heart, or the "original heart" (*moto no kokoro*) (587).

According to Shirane, the "original heart" is expressed when there is a "union of the 'human heart' (*hito no kokoro*) and the poetic essence (*hon'i*) of things" ("Lyricism"

82). Diverging from Tsurayuki's claims in the *kanajo* about the external world as what a poet responds to, Shunzei's belief in the poetic essence of things, which was influenced by Buddhist thought, "suggests that the phenomenal world does not exist apart from individual consciousness and that this consciousness is a mosaic of citations" (82). Shirane explains that where Tsurayuki and Shunzei differ is in that Tsurayuki "argues that poetry emerges in direct response to the events of the external world," whereas "Shunzei stresses that poetry is born of poetry. It is through poetry—especially the poetry of the *Kokinshū*—that we come to know 'nature,' understand its beauty, and cultivate the aesthetic/literary sensibility necessary for composing poetry" (80). The significance of this is that "'nature' does not exist independently of poetry but within and through it. It is not the external world that determines the standard of beauty, or the poetic/aesthetic essence of things, but the literary world of the Heian classics" (80). Therefore, poetic essence (*hon'i*) is determined not by truths derived from the external world, but by what has been established through the poetic cannon, in particular, the first imperial collection, the *Kokinshū*, and other Heian classics, such as *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*) and *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari*) (81–82).

In *Korai Fūteishō*, Shunzei states: "If there were no poetry, then, even though we were to view the cherry blossoms of spring or the scarlet leaves of autumn, there would be no one who understood their hue and fragrance. How, then, could we grasp the essential spirit of such things?" (qtd. in Royston, "The Poetic" 3). In Shunzei's view, poetry is the lens through which one sees and interprets the external world; the external world is created *through* poetry. As such, poetry holds the essential truths about the external world because they are "filtered through" the "original heart"—the process of

aligning the human heart with poetic essences (*hon'i*) as they have been expressed in the poetic canon (80–81). Poetic truths are the essence of a topic and therefore do not always correspond with the variances in actual reality. In this sense, poetic truth is rhetorical truth in that it is based on what is most affective or most aesthetic.

Shunzei describes the process of coming to a topic's poetic essence in Buddhist terms:

> [A]t the beginning of that text entitled Calm and Contemplation, a person called Master Zhangan wrote, 'The clarity and tranquility of calm-and-contemplation is beyond anything known to previous generations.' Having heard that, I have come to realize the limitless news 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. (Shunzei 589)

The process of calm-and-contemplation that Shunzei is referring to here, which Marra identifies as "'concentration and insight' (*shikan*)," was particular to the Tendai sect of Buddhism ("Major" 31). The idea was that by close study of a topic, one could come to understand its poetic essence (*hon'i*). Marra explains Shunzei's passage further:

> The concentration of the poet upon a topic in order to grasp the essence of that experience is the same concentration of the believer trying to reach a universal vision of the Buddha. This particular aspect of Japanese criticism confirms the high ambition of poetry in putting itself in the position of searching for the truth as if the poem's words were able to solve those problems usually answered through a Buddhist approach. ("Major Japanese" 31)

In this way, by participating in the "way of poetry," that is, by embodying the poetic canon and contemplating its topics as they were expressed therein, poets were able to access knowledge about the natural world via poetic essences (*hon'i*), making poetic practice its own epistemology.

The importance of meditation of the poetic canon can be seen in the account of Shunzei recorded in poet-monk Shinkei's (1406–1475) treatise *Murmured Conversations* (*Sasamegoto*, 1463–1464). Shinkei explains that while tutoring his son, Tameie (1198 – 1275), Shunzei's son Teika recounted this story in order to instill in Tameie a sense of discipline in his poetic practice (Brower and Miner 257):

> Very late at night he would sit by his bed in front of an oil lamp so dim that it was difficult to tell whether it was burning or not, and with a tattered Court robe thrown over his shoulders and an old Court cap pulled down to his ears, he would lean on an arm-rest, hugging a wood brazier for warmth, while he recited verse to himself in an undertone. Deep into the night when everyone else was asleep he would sit there bent over, weeping softly. (qtd. in Brower and Miner 257)[112]

Such dedication was required of a poet participating in the "way of poetry," for it was only though intense concentration on poetic topics that one could come to understand their poetic essence.

Scholars have drawn a comparison between Shunzei's notion of "poetic essence" (*hon'i*), literally, the "original meaning," of a thing and Plato's separation between "illusory" sense perception and the "eternal and unchanging ideal forms" of noumena (Shirane, "Lyricism" 78; Royston 3). Brower and Miner refer to *hon'i* as primarily a "quasi-Platonic" notion of "essence" (257). Like Plato's noumena, which purport the "'essential nature' of things," Shunzei's *hon'i* likewise suggests that truth lies beyond the senses, beyond the perceivable effects the external world has on an individual and is instead accessed through language (Royston 3). For Plato, the logical argumentation of dialectic is the method for coming to these absolute truths, whereas for Shunzei, the method is poetry.

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[112] See also Ramirez-Christensen 71.

As explained earlier, in order to access such truths, one's heart/mind (*kokoro*), or "aesthetic sensibility," must be properly cultivated—though study of the poetic canon—in order to allow *jō* to affect it. This is the goal of the Buddhist practice *Calm and Contemplation,* or *shikan,* which Shunzei discusses in his treatise *Korai Fūteishō.* Through the intense concentration in a meditative state, one can gain insight into the nature of reality. In other words, one can experience "pure Awareness" before such is articulated or verbalized (Izutsu 12). The goal of this practice is for the individual to perceive reality as it truly is. By overlaying *shikan* with poetic practice, the implication is that truth is found in the "poetic essence" (*hon'i*) of a topic and that this poetic truth transcends more mundane, everyday truths.

This practice is also the avenue for poetic composition. As Brower and Miner explain, the concentration of *shikan* enabled the "correct handling" of a topic (253). It is essential that the poet does not force the natural process of poetic composition, but through a kind of meditative practice, cultivate the "state of mind" through which *jō* can pass through. In his treatise *Maigetsushō,* Teika explains poetic production in meditative terms:

> [T]he powers of invention must be freed by reciting endless possibilities over and over to oneself. Then, suddenly and spontaneously, from among all the lines one is composing, may emerge a poem whose treatment of the topic is different from the common run, a verse that is somehow superior to the rest. . . . Such a poem is not to be composed by conscious effort, but if a man will only persist in unremitting practice, he may produce one spontaneously. (416–417)

Regarding his poetic ideal, *ushin,* Teika explains:

> Now among these ten styles there is not one in which the true nature of poetry may be felt more wholly to reside than the style of deep feeling. It is extremely difficult to achieve, for it cannot by any means be put together in a facile manner by making use of one technique or another. Only when a person has completely cleared his mind and thoroughly immersed himself in the unique realm of this

> style is it possible to compose in it, and even then success is rare. It is for this reason, no doubt, that fine poetry has been said to be possible only when every poem is suffused with deep feeling. (412)

And in the *Mumyōshō*, Kamo no Chōmei similarly states:

> Generally speaking, even if the content and expression are graceful, but look as if the poet had searched for them intentionally, the poem should be regarded as a failure. A good poem is one that describes what comes to the mind naturally, just like flowers of various colors naturally appear in spring and autumn on unbound branches in the mountains, or between the naturally green leaves and grasses of the fields. (412–413)

Furthermore, a good poem is one that expresses the topic's *hon'i* fully and does not stray from its point. In response to Kintō's writings on *amari no kokoro*, Nicholas J. Teele explains, "A poem with this quality contains an overpowering harmony and awesome beauty sharply focused upon one point" (147). In another of his poetic treatises, *The Essence of Poetry Newly Selected* (*Shinsen Zuinō*), written after he became a Buddhist monk, Kintō writes: "A poem that chains many images together is bad; an *uta* should be written with steady stress on one nerve" (qtd. in Teele 154). In this we can see a continuation of Buddhist ideology applied to waka composition from the early Heian period on and a clear avenue for the emergence of the Buddhist practice concentration and insight (*shikan*) found in the "way of poetry."

Poetry Contest Judgments

Expectations for poetic composition according to established *hon'i* could be seen in the various social functions that required poetry composed on assigned topics (*dai*), including poetry contests (*uta'awase*), poetry gatherings (*kakai*), and verses on a hundred topics (*hyakushu*) (Shirane, "Lyricism" 77). To perform well in such events was essential for high-ranking courtiers who wished to gain "poetic immortality" by having their

poems included in imperial anthologies (Brower and Miner 234). One of the most important factors to winning a poetry contest was to approach one's assigned topic (*dai*) through its poetic essence (*hon'i*). To do so, "the poet must possess a deep, if not unconscious, understanding of the waka tradition" and knowledge of the "emotional and aesthetic attitudes and associations developed by the literary tradition" (Shirane, "Lyricism" 80, 78). A topic's "poetic essence" (*hon'i*) was learned through careful study of the poetic canon, which is where poetic truths had been recorded.

As an accomplished poet and critic, Shunzei was often called upon to judge poetry contests, and he "quite often used the term *hon-i*" in his evaluation of competing poems (Marra, "Major" 31). Shunzei singlehandedly judged the famous *Roppyakuban uta'awase* (*The Poetry Contest in Six Hundred Rounds*), which was held from 1193 to 1194. The contest was the largest to date and included twelve poets who each composed one hundred poems to be judged against the others—fifty poems on various seasonal topics and fifty on topics of love. Records from the contest show that Shunzei's judgments were largely made based on the canonical associations that had been cemented over time. Thomas E. McAuley explains that although poetry contest judges would often take into account the criticisms supplied by participants, there were typically three criteria for final evaluation: "adherence to the conventional expectations of the set topic (*dai*); degree of formality (*hare*); and suitability for recitation aloud (*kōshō*) ("A Fine Thing" 711). However, among "these elements, representing reality—at least reality as it was conventionally understood in poetic topics—was highly significant" (712).

The degree to which Shunzei relied on poetic canon for his judgment is emphasized by the fact that the monk Kenshō, a participant in the contest, produced an

'Appeal' (*Chinjō*) wherein he debates Shunzei's claims by citing his firsthand experience. In one example, Kenshō uses the word "*kaiya*" in an unconventional way. The word "*kaiya*" was understood to mean "a small hut located near rice-paddies in which smoky fires, like mosquito smudges, were kindled in autumn to give marauding animals such as deer, or wild boar, the impression that there were human beings present, and so keep them away from the crop" (720). This meaning can be seen in the competing poem:

yamada moru	Warding the mountain fields
kaiya ga shita no	Beneath the *kaiya*
keburi koso	The smoke
kogare mo yaranu	Smoulders without end—
tagui narikere	And so do I![113]

However, Kenshō, who had spent time in the provinces outside the capital due to his position as a monk, uses the word to refer to another type of *kaiya* he had come across, which was designed "for keeping silkworms, and frogs swam beneath the huts in order to eat them" (qtd. in McAuley, "A Fine Thing" 721). Kenshō argues that "this is what peasants call them" (qtd. in "A Fine Thing" 721). Thus, Kenshō responds to Shunzei's judgments by making claims about reality derived from personal experience. Kenshō's poem is as follows:

yamabuki no	Golden kerria
niou ide o ba	Shine in Idé,
yoso ni mite	Indifferent;
kaiya ga shita mo	Beneath the *kaiya*, too,
kawazu naku nari	The frogs are calling.[114]

Shunzei defends his judgment by citing the spelling of the word using "the characters for 'deer' (ka) and 'fire' ([h]i)" as found in the *Man'yōshū* and by citing a

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[113] Translation from McAuley, "A Fine Thing" 720.

[114] Translation from McAuley, "A Fine Thing" 720.

confirming account on the matter found in Toshiyori's poetic treatise *Toshiyori zuniō* (721). That Kenshō's claim is based on his firsthand experience appears irrelevant since it does not coincide with how the word had been employed in the poetic tradition. It seems possible, and even likely based on his description, that *kaiya* could have multiple uses, including "for keeping silkworms," but because the use of *kaiya* as a "smoky fire" to ward off intruding animals became the accepted poetic association, we might assume that this was a more common or perhaps an earlier use. Therefore, although Kenshō cites his personal experience to justify his use of the word *kaiya*, his experience lies outside the common perception—and outside the accepted poetic association—which makes it appear unrealistic and, as a result, unacceptable for a poem, which is meant to convey the essential "truths" of reality.

In another disagreement between Shunzei and Kenshō regarding the latter's depiction of a skylark, Shunzei sees Kenshō's use of poetic liberties to be at odds with the responsibility "of the poet to seek out and express significant truth in language which is refined and evocative" (Royston, "*Utaawase*" 105). Kenshō's poem responds to the topic (*dai*) of "The Skylark," and as such, Shunzei expects the poetic essence (*hon'i*) of the skylark to be addressed in the poem. However, Kenshō's poem takes another approach:

Haru hi ni wa	On this spring day
Sora ni nomi koso	It seems to soar
Agarurame	Ever higher in the sky,
Hibari no toko wa	And the nest of the skylark
Are ya shinuran.	Now must grow desolate.[115]

[115] Translation from Royston "*Utaawase*" 105.

The concerns Shunzei raises regarding Kenshō's poem have to do with the fact that what is said regarding the skylark does not match the accepted view of skylarks:

> The details concerning the skylark—that it is impelled to soar even higher in the sky, and that it neglects its nest—are all wrong. When spring comes, the skylark lays its eggs in a nest in the grasses. At night it sits on the nest to warm the eggs. In the day, because the spring weather is fine, it flies aloft and watches over its young. Moreover it both rises and falls in its flight. Therefore one cannot say that it neglects its nest, and all that. (qtd. in Royston, "*Utaawase*" 105)

In defense of his poem, Kenshō states: "It is standard practice in Japanese poetry to seek elegant expression above all else, and not go into all the factual details. Since in the springtime the skylark *seems* to soar even higher, I wrote that its nest probably grows desolate, which is a logical enough inference" (qtd. in "*Utaawase*" 105). It appears important to Shunzei that the poetic truths reflect an accepted view of reality that has been reinforced through the poetic canon and do not stray into speculation or logical inference. Although Kenshō's depiction is not necessarily false, it does not reflect the accepted, poetic view of how skylark's behave and is therefore considered incorrect.

Both Shunzei and Kenshō approach truth in their respective ways, and the question is a matter of what was most "correct" in terms of poetic precedent provided by earlier texts and in relation to firsthand evidence. The reliance on truths developed through the poetic canon may be less accurate in the sense that they do not take on the nuances of reality, but they seem to rely instead on a kind of metaphysical truth of essence, what a thing is most like, as opposed to what many likenesses it takes. This "poetic truth" functions as the "terministic screen" through which reality was viewed during the late Heian period (Burke, *Language* 45).

Conclusion

Buddhism's impact on waka is not unique to the late Heian period. Since Buddhism's introduction to Japan during the sixth century, Buddhist concepts quickly became incorporated into Japanese poetics.[116] However, guided by Buddhist ideology, waka composition in the late Heian period became a mode of reaching truth. The "way of poetry" emphasized the Tendai practice of intense concentration (*shikan*) meant to help the individual gain insight into the nature of reality and cultivate the poetic sensibility necessary for a poet to come to know "poetic essences" (*hon'i*). To participate in the "way of poetry," a poet aligned their heart/mind (*kokoro*) with the "original heart" (*moto no kokoro*), the "many poetic predecessors, who composed with a communal heart/mind" (Shirane, *Traditional* 587). Thus, the "way of poetry" rhetorically constructed a way of seeing and interpreting reality according to poetic precedent. The "terministic screen" through which reality was seen and understood relied on continued intertextuality of both words (*kotoba*) and sentiments (*kokoro*). Along these lines, Shirane explains that waka "exists in an intimate intertextual (text to text) relationship with prior poems or established topics" ("Performance" 221). As a result of this intense intertextuality, prescriptions for waka composition became increasingly codified over the years, which contributed to waka's move from social discourse to a serious artistic endeavor and avenue to truth.

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[116] Despite the use of Buddhism to explain "poetic essence" (*hon'i*), poems resulting from the "way of poetry" are not necessarily religious poems (Marra, "Major" 31). Poetry that dealt explicitly with Buddhist themes, although certainly it was being written from early on, does not start appearing in imperial anthologies until the *Senzaishū*, the seventh imperial anthology, which was compiled in 1183 (Miller 70; Shōzen 95). The addition of a category for Buddhist poetry shows an increased crossover between religion and poetry in the late Heian period.

As waka evolved from being responsive to reality, or part of the social reality for Heian courtiers, to being constitutive of a *poetic* reality, we see how the beliefs, values, and assumptions embodied by waka were pushed into the realm of epistemology, where they continued to reinforce discourse practices, such as in *uta'awase* (poetry contests). This is illustrative of how the epideictic might be seen as the primary mode of rhetoric, or "that which shapes and cultivates the basic codes of value and belief by which a society or culture lives" and leads its audience "ultimately to the formation of opinions and desires on matters philosophical, social, ethical, and cultural concern" (Walker 9). This perception of rhetoric is key to understanding the ways waka functioned as a rhetoric in premodern Japan—in all its various instantiations.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In the previous pages, I have presented waka as premodern Japanese rhetoric. In my analysis, I approach the waka tradition using culture-centered rhetorical criticism as an "interpretive methodology" in order to showcase waka's rhetorical characteristics (Leeman 1667). This included using descriptive practices to contextualize waka within its contexts of production and reception, including its own time period, society, and culture. Because the theories and practices surrounding waka composition vary over the hundreds of years in which waka composition was an important part of court culture, I took a pan-historiographic approach that covers the years leading up to and during the Heian period (794–1185), which was when waka composition flourished. My intent in doing so was to show the heterogenous aspects of waka and the "residual accumulation" of waka's rhetorical emphases (Hawhee and Olson 93). My analysis was guided by the art of recontextualization, the act of "bringing both self and other into critical view" through the use of native terms to describe Japanese beliefs and discourse practices combined with the use of Western rhetorical terms as a "translation" of Japanese concepts for a Western audience (Mao "Writing the Other" 47; Geertz, *Local Knowledge* 10). I have also addressed the limitations of studying waka from my vantage point as well as why doing

so is still a worthwhile endeavor.[117] And I have considered how the recent shift in the field of rhetoric towards the incorporation of non-Western rhetorical traditions has made my dissertation project not only possible, but also inevitable.[118]

As more histories of rhetoric are accounted for, our understanding of rhetoric is enhanced, complicated, and better articulated. In addition to contributing to histories of rhetoric, my project emphasizes the poetic dimension of the rhetorical as well as the rhetorical dimension of the poetic and showcases the ways in which these distinctions might influence how we interpret language practices. Reintroducing the poetic into the rhetorical is especially important to recovering ancient rhetorical traditions that may not be visible or comprehensible otherwise.

As a rhetoric, the waka tradition displays an awareness of the interdependence of content and form. This is seen in the early belief of *kotodama* ("word-spirit") wherein auspicious and inauspicious words are noted for their respective good or ill effects. The relationship between content and form is also seen in Tsurayuki's division of *kokoro* (sentiment) and *kotoba* (words) and in the preface to the *Kokinshū*, which marks the beginning of Japanese poetics, and in subsequent poetic treatises (*karon*) from the late Heian period, wherein the aesthetic epistemology suggested in the "way of poetry" (*uta no michi*) presents poetry as an avenue to truth, or knowledge of "poetic essences" (*hon'i*), which come to be known through careful study of topics (*dai*), words (*kotoba*), and sentiments (*kokoro*) from the poetic canon.

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[117] For more on this topic, see Chapter 2: Methods.

[118] For more on this topic, see Chapter 1: Introduction.

As a rhetoric, the waka tradition also shows an attention to the contingencies of discourse production. Attention to such contingencies includes consideration of discourse opportunities, one's audience, and the best way to address one's audience (decorum) (Silva Rhetoricae). Attention to discourse opportunities is seen in the various occasions wherein waka composition was expected, such as formal banquets (*kyokuen*) or poetry contests (*uta'awase*), and in the ritualization of personal exchanges (*zōtōka*). Consideration of audience can be seen in the separation of formal (*hare*) and informal (*ke*) audiences and in how social setting (*ba*) determines a poem's level of formality. And lastly, consideration of the optimal way to address one's audience can be seen in the restriction of topics (*dai*) and poetic diction (*kotoba*) and in the many figurative devices used in waka composition, such as pivot words (*kakekotoba*), poetic epithets (*makurakotoba*), and place names (*utamakura*), to name a few.

Like many rhetorical traditions, Japan's rhetorical tradition is tied to its poetic tradition. Insofar as a society's poetics works to establish and reinforce cultural beliefs, values, and assumptions, we may consider it to be functioning akin to the epideictic. The epideictic's function as "suasive 'demonstration,' display, or showing-forth . . . of things" works to establish cultural norms and expectations that inform pragmatic applications of language practices (Walker 9). As has been shown in this project, over the course of the Heian period, the waka tradition spans the epideictic as well as the pragmatic by way of cultivating the beliefs and values, and assumptions of aristocratic culture and in determining the specific discourse practices of Heian court society. Waka as a form of discourse and social practice contained and reinforced beliefs about the superiority of the Yamato language because of its ability to house *kotodama* ("word-spirit") and influence

the gods (*kami*) and Heian values of beauty, refinement, and precedent. And as an art form, waka supported an aesthetic worldview that shaped how the natural world was perceived and understood.

Leading up to the Heian period, beliefs about the power of the Yamato language revolved around native beliefs regarding *kotodama* ("word-spirit") and Japan as the land of the *kami* (deities). It was believed that *kami* spoke in verse, and various rituals designed to interact with *kami* and the forces of the cosmos employed poetic language through *norito* (Shinto ritual prayers) and *uta* ("song"), the precursor to *waka*. In the earliest extant poetry anthology, the *Man'yōshū*, we see waka being used to invoke and incant through the power of *kotodama*. Thus, waka, because of its ability to house *kotodama*, was believed to affect external reality. Because of *kotodama*'s ability to affect external reality, there was an emphasis on using only good words, correctly pronounced, and the avoidance of bad words, or incorrectly pronounced words.

During the early Heian period, Chinese influences can be seen in the written language, in the prevalence of Chinese texts incorporated into Japanese education, and in the theories that guided poetic composition. The "oblique style" found in Six Dynasties poetry contributed to the way language and its affective power was understood. Contrived expression based on the "oblique style" was appreciated for its wit and beauty, which led to the Japanese poetic ideal *miyabi* ("courtliness" or "elegance") as the focus of literary composition. The "ingenuity and elegant conceits" of the "oblique style" were especially useful in interpersonal communication and love affairs (Brower and Miner 178). As *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) moved to the forefront of public poetry, waka remained steadfast in the private realm, where it functioned as an enjoyable pastime and social tool.

During the mid-Heian period, the creation of the first imperially-sponsored anthology of waka, the *Kokinshū,* gave new popularity to the composition of waka. The poetics heralded in the Japanese preface to the *Kokinshū*, the *kanajo,* present an affective-expressive view of poetry wherein the poet is affected by external reality and composes poetry in response. Positioned as responsive to reality in this way, waka becomes widely used in interpersonal communication. Personal exchanges (*zōtōka*) are recorded in many personal collections, and in them we see a clear suasive element to the composition of poetry. Poetic discourse is also seen in popular literary works of the time, such as *The Tale of Genji* and *The Tales of Ise,* which clearly illustrate waka's social usefulness.

During the late-Heian period, the emphasis of waka shifts from social skill to artistic endeavor and avenue to truth. Although intertextuality is a hallmark of the waka tradition from its early years, it reaches a new height in the late Heian period through the "way of poetry" (*uta no michi*), a Buddhist approach to reaching truth through the study and practice of poetry. In order to come to know "poetic essences" (*hon'i*), or that which is most aesthetically moving about a topic (*dai*), the "way of poetry" emphasizes the practice *Maka-shikan,* or Calm and Concentration, a Tendai Buddhist practice of focusing the mind on a single point in order to gain insight of ultimate reality. Through this practice, poetry becomes a way of reaching transcendental truth. However, the "way of poetry" demands that one's knowledge of reality be drawn from poetic precedent; thus, the "way of poetry" rhetorically constructed a way of seeing the world through the intertextual recycling of accepted poetic language (*kotoba*) and sentiments (*kokoro*). Intertextuality is seen in the accepted poetic diction established through the years in relation to the Yamato language, *kotodama,* and Chinese models and theories of poetry. It

is also seen in the allusions and associations developed around words, places, and concepts, and in the restriction of themes deemed appropriate for poetry, such as the seasons and love. Heian aristocratic values of beauty, decorum, and refinement are similarly preserved in the language and sentiments available for poetic composition. By positioning poetry as an avenue to truth and doubling down on restrictive modes of intertextuality in prescribed words and ideas, late-Heian poetics also functioned as a "terministic screen" and thereby rhetorically constructed how reality was perceived and understood (Burke, *Language* 45).

As has been shown throughout this project, viewing Japan's waka tradition as a rhetoric allows us to better understand the rhetorical uses and characteristics of waka during the Heian period. Furthermore, it supplies grounding for an indigenous rhetorical tradition in premodern Japan. As little work has yet been done to consider Japan's premodern rhetorical traditions, this project provides important groundwork for future studies. It has not been my aim to broach the waka tradition in full, as such a lofty goal is not only outside the realm of possibility, but also not necessary to illustrate my claim that waka functioned as an early native rhetoric in Japan. However, my analysis touches upon the primary beliefs, values, and social structures that provided waka with rhetorical power in premodern Japanese court society. A rhetorical perspective of waka is warranted due to the influence waka had on the beliefs, values, and assumptions within the Heian court and because of the affective and suasive functions waka exhibited in premodern Japan. This viewpoint paints waka in a particular light, one that is not without its limitations and required generalizations. However, it is my hope that this project will

serve as the groundwork and springboard for additional studies of particularities that are undoubtedly absent from my investigation.

Due to lack of space or because they were slightly outside my scope of investigation, many important elements and texts related to waka were not able to be mentioned or fully addressed in this project. Some of these include the numerous poetry contests prior to *The Poetry Contest in Six Hundred Rounds*, the imperial *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) anthologies produced, Buddhist sutra poetry, the role of music in waka recitation, additional collections of poetry and poetic diaries, such as *The Tosa Diary*, *The Izumi Shikibu Diary*, and *Sarashina Diary*, and deeper analysis of prose works that include waka, such as *The Tale of Genji, The Tales of Ise*, and *The Pillow Book*. These and other texts provide ample opportunities for analysis as more studies consider waka for its rhetorical qualities.

Another avenue of interrogation that appears profitable is the connection between the waka tradition and contemporary Japanese literature and culture. Toyo Izutsu states that waka, "with [its] formal structure and inner spirit kept intact and unchanged, [is] still quite vigorously alive in contemporary Japan, not merely exercising a strong influence on literature but serving as a structural basis for the whole of its intellectual and aesthetic culture" (3). Tracing Heian intellectual and aesthetic values through other forms of literature and social practices would be useful in showing the continuation and changes in Japanese rhetoric through time and space and in showing waka's continued presence in Japanese culture.

For example, at the end of a biography of Emperor Hirohito (r. 1926–1989), imperial attendant Osanaga Kanroji includes some of the waka Hirohito wrote over his

lifetime. Kanroji explains: “Emperor Hirohito, like his father and grandfather before him, and indeed like all Japanese emperors since the beginning of recorded Japanese history, have habitually expressed his thoughts and sentiments in a form of poetry called *waka*” (147). Although written hundreds of years after the Heian period, Hirohito’s poetry calls on familiar tropes and rhetorical figures. In 1928, a couple of years after acceding to the throne, Hirohito wrote the following:

Yama yama no	The mountain ranges
Iro wa arata ni	Looking lushly green and new,
Miyure domo	We cannot but say
Waga matsurigoto	Wishfully to ourselves,
Ikani ka aruramu	“How fares our reign?”[119]

Indeed, much more could be said regarding the rhetorical use of waka by emperors, which is something my project touches on only briefly.

In another example, the presence of poetry in contemporary Japanese culture can be seen in the recent choice of *reiwa* (“beautiful harmony”) for Japan’s new era name, which comes from a headnote in volume five of the *Man’yōshū* (Mainichi Japan). The English translation of the headnote reads: “In this auspicious month [*rei*] of early spring, the weather is fine and the wind gentle [*wa*]. The plum blossoms open like powder before a mirror while the orchids give off the sweet scent of a sachet” (qtd. in Abe). *Reiwa* marks the first time a Japanese work of literature has been drawn upon for an era name as opposed to a Chinese classic (Shimbun). The relationship between era names and this recent move away from Chinese classics to the oldest Japanese poetry anthology, *Man’yōshū,* offers another possible avenue of study regarding the rhetorical uses of poetry in contemporary Japanese practices.

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[119] Translation from Kanroji 148.

Based on the evidence that has been provided in this project and the many avenues of further investigation available, it can be concluded that the waka tradition is a worthwhile object of study for scholars of rhetoric. Waka span a variety of oral as well as written and artistic categories in a way that resists simple definition. Waka's long history and wide applications have made it so that waka are sometimes, and all at once, incantations, stylized statements, tools for communication, artistic displays, and more. To approach an understanding of waka and its various functions in its own time and place is to shed the constraints of the categories of poetics, politics, and rhetoric and let them all flow into each other. Waka has an accumulative essence that shifts and adapts, at different times emphasizing one aspect of itself over another. This project has attempted to capture that essence and present the rhetorical landscape of waka as evidence for a premodern Japanese rhetoric.

APPENDIX

JAPANESE WORKS

Histories

Kojiki (*Record of Ancient Matters*, 712)

Nihon shoki (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720)

Eiga monogatari (*A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 1028–1107)

Waka Anthologies

Man'yōshū (*Collection of Myriad Leaves*, ca. 785)

Kokinshū (*A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, 905)

Gosenshū (*Later Collection of Japanese Poems*, 951)

Senzaishū (*Collection of a Thousand Years*, 1183)

Waka Diaries/Personal Collections

Kagerō nikki (*The Kagerō Diary*) by Michitsuna's Mother (936–95?)

Morosuke-shū (*Morosuke's Collection*) by Fujiwara no Morosuke (907–960)

Sanekata-shu (*Sanekata's Collection*) by Fujiwara no Sanekata (958?–999)

Akazome Emon shū (*Akazome Emon's Collection*) by Akazome Emon (957?–1041?)

***Karon* (Poetic Treatises)**

Waka kuhon (*The Nine Levels of Waka,* ca. 1024) by Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041)

Shinsen zuinō (*The Essence of Poetry Newly Selected*, ca. 1024) by Kintō

Toshiyori zuinō (*Toshiyori's Poetics,* ca. 1100) by Minamoto no Toshiyori (1055? –1129)

Korai fūteishō (*Poetic Styles from the Past,* 1197) by Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204)

Mumyōshō (*Nameless Essay*, ca. 1211) by Kamo no Chōmei (1154–1216)

Maigetsushō (*Monthly Notes,* 1219) by Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241)

Eiga no taigai (*Essentials of Poetic Composition*, ca. 1222) by Teika

Sasamegoto (*Murmured Conversations*, 1463–1464) by Shinkei

Chinjō (*Appeal*) by Kenshō

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