The Methodological Development of Honka-dori in Medieval Waka, and the Formation of a Quotation Database

Tsuchida Kosuke
Osaka University, Osaka

Introduction

In reviewing modern literary theory, it seems evident that a belief in ‘originality’ has already been lost. Since language helps convey the essence of shared experiences, imprints of the past are certainly engraved, in some way, on whatever is written. For this reason, the act of intentionally quoting something written in the past tends to be evaluated positively. On the other hand, when one tries to create a work by, in part, quoting something, there is in the process a constant worry or apprehension as to why this new work is being created.

However, in the traditional Japanese poetry of waka, such quotations were both generally and actively used. A piece of waka poetry comprises only 31 syllables, divided across five lines of text containing five, seven, five, seven and seven syllables; within those lines, groups of words are often quoted from older works, unaltered. The quoted old waka poems are called honka, and the act of deliberately quoting the words is called honka-dori or ‘taking the honka’. These two factors—namely, quoting the excellent works of old poets and creating value in one’s own work—converge in the conscious act of taking honka.

The style of honka-dori came to the fore during the Shin kokin period, between the late 12th and early 13th centuries. The central figure to establish this style was Sadaie FUJIWARA, who was known as Teika (1162–1241). Concrete and practical references to honka-dori are found in his theory book of waka, which penetrated the world of medieval waka via many manuscripts. In studies of Japanese literature, it is often said that honka-dori both began and finished with Teika.

Certainly, it was Teika who recognised honka-dori’s potential and began to use this style actively. However, its style did not always align with Teika’s personal rules and ideals, and so there was the potential for him to expand upon honka-dori and create new varieties thereof. Theory from Tameie FUJIWARA (1198–1275), Teika’s firstborn son, with regards to honka-dori is noteworthy, because his theory also had great influence on the creation of medieval waka. On the surface, Tameie seems to follow Teika’s lead; however, he came to generate a form of honka-dori that was distinct from that of Teika. This paper, by making reference to the arguments of both representative leaders and the honka-dori wakas related to them, will clarify the aspects of each style.

Following the Shin kokin period, taking honka became commonplace in the composition of waka. This situation suggests that a quotation ‘database’, used as a foundation in the composition of waka, had been created. Developments in the methods used by Teika and Tameie correspond to qualitative changes in the elements comprising the database. Finally,
this paper looks to understand the creativity generated by accessing and using this database, by examining changes to that database’s various aspects. As such, this study will lead to a renewed appreciation of the medieval waka, which fell out of vogue following the Shin kokin period [1].

1. Teika’s Method: Renewing the Kokoro of Old Poems

The ways in which honka-dori progressed or remained unchanged in the Shin kokin period can be inferred from Teika’s writings. His cognizance of taking honka arises from his opinions concerning good waka. His attitude toward waka was consistent: according to Kindai shuka, one of his theory books, the use of waka marks a yearning for the old words and a seeking-out of new kokoro [2]. In Eiga no taigai, he says in greater detail:

As for kokoro, the newness should supersede all else (compose the waka with content that has never been formed) and the old words should be used. (Words other than those used by the old poets in Sandai shu should not be used. However, the old words in Shin kokin shu may be used.) [3]

In Japanese, kokoro usually means ‘mind’ or ‘heart’, and this word is used frequently in the waka world. This study makes use of the commonly held definition of kokoro as the full content of a waka, which includes both what it describes and what it expresses. Thus, Teika’s primary aim was to compose wakas with new kokoro that had never before been formulated, by inheriting and using the words that the old poets had used in theirs.

In Kindai shuka, Teika says that the waka poems from the period in which Sandai shu (Kokin waka-shu, Gosen waka-shu, Shui waka-shu) was compiled are excellent; he argues that simply by imitating these works, one could naturally compose good poems. In Eiga no taigai, he similarly points to Sandai shu as a work to emulate and reference, saying that:

You should imitate the styles of old and superior poets. (You should imitate the good styles of wakas of all ages and places.) [4]

In Maigetsu sho, Teika states that good wakas are naturally made only if one does not fail in performing keiko, a term that refers to the careful reading and study of old works. These arguments do not conflict with the fact that Teika’s books of waka theory have always contained selected anthologies. In view of these facts, we can reach the tautological conclusion that for Teika, ‘good’ wakas are the ‘good’ ones that the old poets had composed. Therefore, the very large number of words used and built up in the old-world waka canon were to be used as materials of composition, as they were; moreover, ‘good’ wakas could be composed only if they used those words in ways similar to how they had previously been used. Teika held such a view of good waka, and he felt it was natural that the active consciousness of taking honka would emerge as evidenced in Kindai shuka. As a result, he states that:

Regarding the longing for old wakas, ‘make it honka’ is about taking the words that were
used in old *wakas* and using them, as they were, in one’s own work [5].

*Honka-dori* progressed on the paradoxical idea of inheriting words used in the past and using them to compose *wakas* with new *kokoro* that had never previously been formed. Teika and his contemporaries were confident in the ability to compose new *kokoro* while relying on previously used words. What, then, are implications of creating new *kokoro* with old words, and how is it possible to do so? Let us refer to *Gomon kenchu*, which cites Teika’s *honka-dori* as one of the best examples obtained by this method.

*Gomon kenchu* was published in 1363. Tonna (1289–1372), one of the leaders of *waka* at that time, wrote with Yoshimoto NIJO (1320–88), who held political power and also protected many kinds of arts. This book was written in a question-and-answer format, with Yoshimoto providing the former and Tonna the latter. In this work of *waka* theory, Tonna lists five different ways in which one can compose *honka-dori wakas*; Teika’s *wakas* are considered examples of the following category [6]:

*Wakas* that have new *kokoro*; the poet relives the *kokoro* of the *honka*, but does not submit to it blindly [7].

Only in this category is there a reference to new *kokoro*; Teika’s *wakas* are not provided as examples in any of the other four categories. This classification of *honka-dori* in *Gomon kenchu* is reconstituted by arranging the original typology of *Seia sho*, another book by Tonna. In *Seia sho*, the original category that most closely resembles it is as follows:

The *waka* that has an exquisite *kokoro*, written by a poet who relives the *kokoro* of the *honka* without becoming immersed in it. Such can always be found in *Shui guso* [8].

*Shui guso* is Teika’s *waka* collection. Thus, in creating this category, Tonna must be bearing in mind Teika’s *honka-dori wakas*, regarding them as those that have new or exquisite *kokoro*. The word ‘new’ here, complemented by ‘exquisite’, expresses an investment of great value; it suggests that Tonna sympathises with Teika’s aim of seeking out a new *kokoro* by *honka-dori*. A close analysis of the examples provided in this category, therefore, makes Teika’s aim of creating ‘new’ *kokoro* clear.

In both *Gomon kenchu* and *Seia sho*, the following two pairs are taken as examples [9]:

A. The *honka-dori waka*:

| Ozora wa / Ume no nioi ni / Kasumi-tsutsu / Kumori mo hate-nu / Haru no yo no tsuki | (大空は 梅の匂ひに 霞みつつ 朧りもはてぬ 春の夜の月)  
| (Teika FUJIWARA: 1162–1241) | (藤原定家) |

Translation: The sky being misty with the scent of Japanese plum, the spring night’s moon is cloudy.
Its honka:

Teri mo se-zu / Kumori mo hate-nu / Haru no yo no / Oboro-zukiyo ni / Shiku mono zo naki

(Chisato OE: a poet from the early 10th century)

Translation: Nothing can be compared to a spring night with the hazy moon being not bright, but cloudy.

B.

The honka-dori waka:

Koma tome-te / Sode uchi-harau / Kage mo nashi / Sano no watari no / Yuki no yugure

(Teika FUJIWARA)

Translation: There is no shade to stop my horse and shake the snow from my sleeves, in the snowy evening at Sano crossing.

Its honka:

Kurushiku-mo / Furi kuru ame ka / Miwa no saki / Sano no watari ni / Ie mo ara-nakuni

(Okimaro NAGA: This waka was in Man-yo shu—the oldest extant anthology, which was made in the late 8th century.)

Translation: I’m in trouble, not being able to take refuge from the rain at cape Miwa. I wish there were a house at Sano crossing.

In example A, Teika takes three words from the honka and arranges them into ‘kumori mo hate-nu haru no yo no tsuki’. These words bring to mind the whole of the honka, because it is well known—that is to say, the 11 syllables serve as the core of the work, pulling together all 31 syllables of the honka. This means that these 11 syllables express the kokoro of the honka, which is the admiration for a dreamy spring night. Then, Teika expresses a different kind of beauty from a fantastic scene, by transplanting the setting of the honka into an original scene, with the sky being misty with the scent of Japanese plum.

In this waka, what is ‘new’ is not the kokoro—which Teika had created by himself—but the mixture of originality and the kokoro of the honka: the fantastic scene denotes a very new kokoro that appears to overlap with the honka scene and move delicately from there.

In example B, there is only one borrowed phrase in Teika’s waka: ‘Sano no watari’. This phrase, a place name, alerts the reader to the setting of the honka: a lonely trip where there is no shelter from the rain, which falls without mercy. In Teika’s honka-dori, the setting is changed from the fuzzy image captured in the phrase ‘Sano crossing’, to a crisp new scene: a bleak winter evening where there is no shade in which to stop the horse and shake the snow from his sleeves.

The ‘new’ kokoro in this waka cannot be formed without referencing the old kokoro that is brought to mind by the phrase ‘Sano no watari’. In line with the scene in the old waka at Sano crossing, the snowbound gray scene in twilight rouses much more loneliness than if it had been
in some different location—that is to say, by using a different phrase.

As stated above, a ‘new’ kokoro does not appear until it is mixed with the kokoro of the honka and they influence each other. In those works of Teika that achieve such ‘newness’, the kokoro of honka is, so to speak, ‘renewed’ by reusing it and mixing original words with old ones.

Let us now examine the rules of honka-dori, as provided by Teika. There is always the risk that the raison d’être of one’s work is disturbed when it is used in honka-dori. To mitigate this risk, Teika provides various rules from a practical viewpoint. Among them, a rule concerning the relationship between the kokoro of a honka and the waka that takes it is especially noteworthy. In Maigetsu sho, Teika says that:

There must be an expert way of composing a waka about a flower by taking honka about a flower, or a waka about the moon by taking honka about the moon. You should compose a fall or winter waka by taking from a spring waka, or one of miscellaneous items or a season by taking from one of love. Furthermore, you should compose in such a way as to make it possible for listeners to recognize the honka easily [10].

However, Teika breaks his own rule about variation: the previous example was a spring waka taken from a spring one, and a travel waka taken from a travel one. On the honka-dori of renewing old kokoro, it is imperative for the writer to try to stay within the work’s original realm and to compose his or her own waka while expressing the old work’s kokoro. In fact, among the wakas in Teika’s own self-chosen collection, most are composed in such an ‘expert way’—that is, in the way of renewing old kokoro. More than 100 years following Teika’s death, Tonna grasped precisely Teika’s sentiments in his own formulation of new kokoro; as such, he recognized Teika’s work as being of the highest value. Teika’s method is considered representative of taking honka in medieval waka.

2. Tameie’s Method: Enriching Words and Reusing the ‘Mould’ of Old Poems

Tameie was Teika’s firstborn son; he succeeded Teika and realised the prosperity of the House of FUJIWARA as a leader of waka. Following his death, the house split into three schools—namely, NIJO, KYOGOKU and REIZEI—with each competing to become the orthodox leader of waka. Tameie was no less worshipped as one of the House fathers than Teika, so like Teika’s work, Eiga ittei—that is, Tameie’s book of waka theory—also gave rise to many manuscripts and was distributed widely in the medieval waka world.

Tameie should have been closest to Teika and under his waka guidance, but Tameie’s arguments concerning honka-dori focus on points other than those found in Teika’s theory. Therefore, in this section, by referring to Eiga ittei, we will examine another form of honka-dori in medieval waka [11].

In Eiga ittei, Tameie takes the following three pairs as examples of ideal honka-dori.

C.
The honka-dori waka:
Na mo shirushi / Mine no arashi mo / yuki to furu / Yamasakura-to no / Akebono no sora

(名もしるし 峰の嵐も雪とふる 山桜戸の あけぼのの空)

Translation: It is worthy of the name of yamasakura-to. In the storm around the mountain, cherry blossoms are falling like snow. Like opening a door, here is the dawning sky.

Its honka:
Ashibiki no / Yamasakura-to wo / Ake-oki-te / Waga matsu kimi wo / Tare ka tomoduru

(Author unknown: this waka was in Man-yo shu)

Translation: Opening the door made from mountain cherry wood, I’m waiting for my lover, but who causes him to tarry?

D.
The honka-dori waka:
Chiru hana no / Wasure-gatami no / Mine no kumo / So wo dan no kokose / Haru no yamakaze

(Yoshihira KUJO: 1184–1240)

Translation: The cloud on the peaks is like the memento of the falling flowers. Leave that at least, spring mountain wind.

Its honka:
Aka-de koso / Omoua-m naka wa / Hanare-name / So wo dan nochi no / Wasure-gatami ni

(Author unknown: this waka was in Kokin waka-shu, the first anthology compiled by imperial order in the early 10th century)

Translation: While we love each other without becoming bored, I hope to leave you with at least this as a memento.

E.
The honka-dori waka:
Sakurabana / Yume ka utsutsu ka / Shirakumo no / Tae-te tsune-naki / Mine no haru-kaze

(Ietaka FUJWARA: 1158–1237)

Translation: Are those cherry blossoms in a dream or a reality? I do not know. The white clouds have disappeared and the transient spring wind blows around the mountain.

Its honka:
Kaze-fuke-ba / Mine ni wakaru / Shirakumo no / Tae-te tsure-naki / Kimi ga kokoro ka

(Tadamine MIBU: a poet of the 9th and 10th centuries; this waka was in Kokin waka-shu)

Translation: When the wind blows around the mountain, the white clouds have disappeared and the transient spring wind blows around the mountain.
Translation: As the wind blows, the white clouds become distant from the mountain and disappear. Your heart has become distant from me, in the same way.

All honka-dori examples are wakas of spring, composed by borrowing words from love wakas as honka; example C is Teika’s. The fact that Tameie dares to select this waka as an ideal example among the innumerable honka-dori wakas of Teika’s seems to show the direction in which he seeks to take honka. The implication is that he does not look to follow faithfully the rules provided by Teika, so much as try to find the potential to achieve a valuable new poem by making a kokoro that has no relationship with the kokoro of a honka, even as he takes words from it. Then again, the honka-dori wakas of examples D and E were compiled in Shin kokin waka-shu—like Teika’s works mentioned in the first section—and so it can be simply confirmed that they were generally regarded as excellent.

In what aspects of such honka-dori does he recognize value? It is suggestive that the word ‘mezurashi’ (‘unusual’) is frequently found in Eiga ittei. Concerning Ietaka’s honka-dori in example E, he says that:

In this waka, the phrase taken from the honka is put in the same place as in the honka, but there is no problem with doing so, because it is unusual to compose by changing a love waka into a spring one [12].

Thus, Tameie estimates well the choice of honka and the ‘unusualness’ of taking words from it; that is to say, Tameie considers a waka with kokoro that is not fully related to that of what is being composed to be more appropriate for a honka.

He also says the following:

On composition, you should make your works absolutely original, by utilizing your kokoro and contemplating. However, because a new kokoro is rarely born—even if the newly formed kokoro is the same as the old one—you should try to compose a waka with an unusual ring to it when arranging the words [13].

Thus, even when using the same kokoro as those found in old poems, Tameie tries to substitute ‘unusualness’ for the ‘newness’ of kokoro, the latter of which his father Teika emphasised. Therefore, on honka-dori, Tameie thinks that poets should alter the kokoro of a honka and arrange the words so that they sound unusual. We can see this ‘unusualness’ by examining his examples as extensions of these arguments.

In Teika’s waka in example C, two words—namely, ‘yamasakura-to’ and ‘ake’—are taken; nonetheless, it is difficult to specify the honka merely by examining these two words, because this old waka was not well known at that time. Before this, the word ‘yamasakura-to’ had never been used in wakas compiled in the imperially ordered anthologies. Certainly, this word can be found in Man-yo shu, but compared to ‘Sano no watari’—a word widely known at that time because it was an ‘Utamakura’ and poets thought about where it was—it’s renown as a word used in waka would necessarily be smaller. Using such a word is against Teika’s own rule,
which states that ‘you should compose in such a way as to make it possible for listeners to recognize the honka easily’. Thus, it is thought that this waka was composed with no attempt whatsoever to renew the kokoro of the honka; indeed, he had no cognizance of taking honka.

In this waka, however, it is important that the connection between ‘yamasakura-to’ and ‘akebono’ be made evident. The word ‘yamasakura-to’ is naturally what is opened in the honka; however, in Teika’s work, it becomes what is opened at dawn, because the word ‘ake’ can mean ‘dawn’. Moreover, by adding the traditional idea that falling cherry blossoms resemble falling snow, Teika produces ‘yamazakura’, as ‘cherry blossoms’, from the word ‘yamasakura-to’, which just described ‘the door made from mountain cherry wood’. Thus, by using old words benefit of the context of the old kokoro, the same words acquire new attributes and meanings. This is one aspect of Tameie’s ‘unusualness’.

In example D, the words taken by Yoshihira are ‘so wo dani’ and ‘wasure-gatami’. It is much easier in this example than in example C to specify the honka via the two words used, because this honka was very famous. In Yoshihira’s work, however, the two words do not express the full kokoro of the honka—namely, the feeling of love for each other.

In comparing Yoshihira’s kokoro with the old one, that which ‘wasure-gatami’ and ‘so wo dani’ interactively describe do not change, although they do have different contexts. In both wakas, something is the memento of something, and someone hopes to do something about it at least. It means that when these two phrases emerge together, a ‘mould’ is set for the meanings of the words that come into play. He composes by filling the ‘mould’ with a typical variation on a spring waka—that is, a feeling of regret at the falling cherry blossoms—and with a typical metaphor involving cherry blossoms and white clouds. By applying the ‘mould’ previously used in the love waka to a spring one, the spring kokoro assumes a certain ‘unusualness’.

In example E, the arrangement of the words ‘yume ka utsutsu ka shirakumo’ is of primary importance. There is no reference in Eiga ittei, but these words are thought to be taken from the following waka.

F.

Yo-no-naka wa / [Yume ka utsutsu ka] / Utsutsu tomo / Yume tomo shira-izu / Ari-te nakere-ba

(世の中は 魇かうつつか うつつとも 夢とも知らず ありてなければ)     (よみ人知らず)

Translation: Is the world a dream or a reality? I do not know whether it is a reality or a dream. The world exists, while not existing [14].

In this old waka, the ‘mould’ has been produced by the words ‘yume ka utsutsu ka shira-izu’, which mean ‘I do not know whether something is a dream or a reality’. Ietaka uses the ‘mould’ as the base idea of his composition, and fills it with cherry blossoms that fall soon after their full bloom. Then, he connects ‘shira-izu’ (‘I do not know’) to ‘shirakumo’ (‘white clouds’), the latter of which is a metaphor for cherry blossoms. After ‘shirakumo’ draws the word of the honka, he delicately alters ‘tae-te tsure-naki’, making it into ‘tsune-naki’; he also produces ‘mine no harukaze’ (‘spring winds around the mountain’) as that which is transient [15]. Thus,
when the ‘moulds’ are composed, the common subject of spring can be seen in the new work, from a new angle.

As seen previously—especially with regards to honka-dori making different kokoro from honka—words can acquire new attributes and meanings, and there is a ‘mould’ by which combinations of word-forms themselves can be reused within a different context. As a result, the kokoro can acquire new aspects, even if it has already been used time and again. Tameie considers such honka-dori ideal, as they offer the writer the possibility of deriving value from their elements. This is another form of medieval honka-dori.

3. The Formation of a Quotation Database, in the Methodological Development of Honka-dori

In the first and second sections, we confirmed two representative methods of taking honka, both of which were established in the medieval world of waka. It can be said that honka-dori became complicated as soon as it started to progress, given the examples obtained through Tameie’s method and followed by Teika’s contemporaries. Whether or not a waka expresses the kokoro of the honka that takes the words in it is a clear standard by which to classify them. Both of them hold in common an appreciation for achieving some measure of ‘newness’. When a poet dares to stay in old kokoro, ‘newness’ is derived by mixing in original words and making the work change organically. Meanwhile, when one tries to formulate different kokoro from an old waka, value is recognized in the application of words from an old waka to an area of the kokoro that bears a different context; doing so brings a certain measure of ‘unusualness’ to otherwise customary kokoro.

The former was considered by Teika ‘the expert way’ of composing. After he died, it was seen by Tonna as the supreme honka-dori. This section, however, will examine the first category of the honka-dori typology of the Gumon kenchu. That work states that:

As the usual honka-dori, the words of honka are taken into a context different from what they had been put into, and they are distributed to upper and lower parts of waka [16].

This category should cover examples obtained through Tameie’s method of reusing old words in a context different from that of the old kokoro. In fact, the example within is the same as example C in Eiga ittei—that is, Yoshihira’s waka and its honka. The fact that Tameie’s method is cited first as ‘the usual honka-dori’ suggests that in the post-Teika world of waka, Tameie’s method brought the essence of Teika’s method into the mainstream. This would mean that Teika’s method did not coexist with Tameie’s, but that the latter did develop from the former. From this viewpoint, the method of renewing old kokoro can almost be considered a bit of gold that had sunk to the bottom of the stream after Teika’s death, but which was retrieved by the work of Tonna.

As mentioned previously, Tameie’s method nowhere violates Teika’s rules. It seems self-evident that Tameie’s method came to represent ‘the usual honka-dori’; however, Tameie made no reference to Teika vis-à-vis the renewal of old kokoro as being better, and did not adopt it.
With regards to this fact, there is an important issue that should not be overlooked when generally reviewing words in medieval *waka*: what are the implications of the methodological development of composition, between Teika and Tameie?

In almost all the *wakas* of the *Shin kokin* period, we can find some influence from old works; it can also be said that this is a trend not seen prior to this period. Moreover, of the *wakas* chosen by *Shin kokin* poets as representative works and compiled in their collections, more than half were composed by *honka-dori*. These factors indicate that in the *Shin kokin* period, it was not so much that *honka-dori* was adopted as a compositional method; rather, the act of quoting classics had become a commonplace part of the composition act, and the vector of consciousness in composition always seemed to come to a point in the past. As a result, the poets who ‘longed for old *wakas*’ were no longer able to stop reviewing and searching through the ‘good works’ of the past. In parallel, a large number of old works accumulated and came to be seen as a ‘database’ for composition; this occurrence corresponds exactly with the fact that Teika and Tameie considered *keiko*—that is, referring usually to good *wakas*—as more important than any other compositional practice [17]. Indeed, since *Korai Futei Sho*, which was a book of *waka* theory written by Toshinari FUJIWARA, who was known as Shunzei (1114-1204) and Teika’s father, a theory book had tended to come to have a selected anthology for reuse in some ways. Moreover, in this time, many anthologies of old *wakas* were compiled by Teika or his contemporaries [18]. These events, taken together, make it possible to consider Teika’s and Tameie’s methods as ways to access the ‘quotation database’. From this viewpoint, we will attempt to compare these two methods.

Teika’s method looks to achieve ‘newness’ by renewing old *kokoro*; how does he access the database? Referring to the examples quoted in the first section, we can discuss it by making inferences about the compositional process.

*Ozora wa / Ume no nioi ni / Kasumi-tsutsu / [Kumori mo hate-nu] / Haru no yo no [tsuki]*

(*Teri mo se-zu / [Kumori mo hate-nu] / Haru no yo no / Oboro-zukiyo ni / Shiku mono zo naki*)

It is reasonable to infer that Teika decided to compose the *waka* of the hazy moon on a spring night, because he had chosen the subject of ‘spring’ prior to initiating his composition. He would have searched old *wakas* and found a famous one that expressed admiration for the beauty of a night with a hazy moon—that is, ‘*Teri mo se-zu*’. It shows that in his compositional process, he would have searched the old *waka*, giving primary attention to the *kokoro* associated with his chosen theme; after that, he would have drawn the words from this *waka* and arranged them in a way that made it ‘possible for listeners to recognize the *honka* easily’.

*Koma tome-te / Sode uchi-harau / Kage mo nashi / [Sano no watari] no / Yuki no yugure*

(*Kurushiku-mo / Furi kuru ame ka / Miwa no saki / [Sano no watari] ni / Ie mo ara-nakuni*)
Prior to composition, it was decided that this *waka* would have the subject of ‘winter’. The scope of ‘winter’ would impose too large a database search on the author, and the word ‘Sano no watari’ has no relationship to winter in the *honka*. Therefore, it is thought that Teika had thought of formulating the *kokoro* of ‘winter travel’ first, whereupon he would have searched old works and found the work ‘Koma tome-te’.

For both *honka-dori*, what was searched in the compositional process was the *kokoro* of old *wakas* that correspond to the primary theme. Following that search for *kokoro*, the selection and arrangement of words took place. It is reasonable, as Tonna explains with respect to these *honka-dori* *wakas*, that ‘the poet relives the *kokoro* of the *honka*’. Before transforming an idea into words, an old *kokoro* has already served as the compositional foundation—superseding even the poet himself. When composition is initiated within this context, it is methodologically natural to conclude that he will attempt to relive the *kokoro* that the old poem expresses.

Let us now turn to Tameie’s method.

*Na mo shirushi / Mine no arashi mo / yuki to furu / Yamasakura-to no / Akebono no sora*

*(Ashibiki no / Yamasakura-to wo / ake oki-te / Waga matsu kimi wo / Tare ka todomuru)*

As mentioned in the second section, in this *waka*, Teika is not cognizant of renewing the old *kokoro*. The selection of words relates closely to the subject chosen before composition was initiated—that is, ‘sankyo no haru no akebono’, or ‘dawn on a spring day in a mountain hut’. He finds the word ‘yamasakura-to’ in the process of transforming ‘sankyo’ into a word of *waka*. Upon finding this word, he likely found it straightforward to connect it to the ‘akebono’ of the subject by using the relationship between ‘to’ and ‘ake’ (‘door’ and ‘open’) and making ‘ake’ mean ‘dawn’. Clearly, what is searched by taking this compositional method is not *kokoro*, but the words themselves.

*Chiru hana no / Wasure-gatami no / Mine no kumo / So wo dani nokose / Haru no yamakaze*

*(Aka-de koso / Omowa-m naka wa / Hanare-name / So wo dani nochi no / Wasure-gatami ni)*

In this *waka*, what is searched first is also old words, because it is difficult to consider how the theme of ‘spring’ would lead the poet directly to the love *waka* ‘Aka-de koso’. The word ‘wasure-gatami’ (‘memento’) is found from his first idea, which is a typical variation of a spring *waka*—that is, the feeling of regret at the falling of cherry blossoms—and a customary metaphor drawing together cherry blossoms and white clouds (as ‘wasure-gatami’) functions to draw in the word ‘so wo dani’, based on the renown of the *honka*.

*Sakurabana / Yume ka utsutsu ka / Shirakumo no / Tae-te tsune-naki / Mine no harukaze*
The way by which one accesses the database is the same as in the aforementioned examples. To express the transience of fallen cherry blossoms, Ietaka found words that acted as a ‘mould’—namely, ‘yume ka utsutsu ka shira-zu’, from the old waka, ‘Yo no naka ha’. When the word ‘shirazu’ connects with ‘shirakumo’, the word that can be connected to ‘shirakumo’ is searched again; almost automatically, the word ‘tae-te tsune naki’ can be found in the old waka.

As discussed, the two methods differ completely in terms of what is searched in the database. This implies that in the methodological development vis-à-vis the composition of honka-dori, the quality of the database elements would necessarily change. It was kokoro that an old waka would first express, but it, so to speak, would ‘fall apart’ and become a collection of individual words.

What, then, are the aspects of each database? The database in which old kokoro that form one waka are searched as data seems to take an orderly form, such as in an anthology. However, it is naturally difficult to derive feedback on renewed kokoro from the database; this is because the feedback there refers to old kokoro that have been renewed and stored as information that can be searched, reused and renewed again.

This is theoretically possible, but the renewal of kokoro must be continuous, and the renewed form must be based on the kokoro of the old waka. In order to achieve such continuous renewal, one needs to simultaneously use words from both the old waka and the corresponding honka-dori waka, within the formal parameter of 31 syllables; as a result, there is scarcely any room for the poet’s own words. In anthologies following Shin kokin waka-shu, there is few wakas taking a honka-dori waka in the Shin kokin period as honka and renewing old kokoro. It can be said that the aspects of the database comprising old kokoro are static, and that it cannot change its state in the Shin kokin period.

Meanwhile, it can be assumed that a database consisting of individual words would not take the form of an anthology, but of a dictionary. In a database, the words of old wakas always ‘float’ as if in a dictionary, waiting to be applied to a new context. Once words are reused in a new context, they acquire new attributes that are later added to the database. A ‘mould’ comprising a combination of old words is also applicable to any context, depending on the idea at hand; the result of the application can also become part of the database. By repeating this cycle, the new connections among and attributes of words can be continuously reused; such a database, as per Tameie’s method, possesses an organic construction that constantly expands.

It is clear, which database can function efficiently when a writer’s compositional process involves an incessant ‘looking back’ at the past. Since the body of old wakas had been regarded as a compositional ‘database’, the consequences of the methodological changes between Teika and Tameie could not be reversed [19].

(Kaze fuke-ba / Mine ni wakaruru / Shirakumo no / Tae-te tsure-naki / Kimi ga kokoro ka)
(Yo-no-naka wa / Yume ka utsutsu ka / Utsutsu tomo / Yume tomo shira-zu / Ari-te nakere-ba)
Conclusion

This paper examined two methods of composing *honka-dori*, a form of quotation in medieval *waka*. They are best found in the arguments of Teika and Tameie; both of these writers understood how to achieve new value in their work and what conditions were integral to doing so. Moreover, by examining both writers’ methods from the viewpoint of qualitative changes in the database that inevitably forms whenever the quoting of classics becomes the norm, one makes a discovery: Tameie’s method does not so much compete with that of Teika. Rather, the latter naturally evolved from the former.

Even in the contemporary study of Japanese literature, it is often said that following the *Shin kokin* period—of which Teika is a representative—the artistic esteem of medieval *waka* quickly diminished [20]. This ‘fall from grace’ is thought to be related closely to changes in the elements of the lexical database. In this database containing individual old words, the connections among those words become clearer as they are more frequently accessed, and those connections themselves can draw new words into use. In this sense, such a database appears to be a self-organising system. The *waka* genre contains few elements of what modern thinkers consider ‘originality’, at least at first glance. Acts of composition by individual poets are equal in their ability to confer upon words new attributes, which then become part of, and overwrite portions of, the common database to which they belong. It is thought that the compositional subject changes from a single poet into a group of them. However, it can by no means be said that compositional creativity was or has been lost.

In a self-organising lexical database, networks form amongst words; those networks tend to be both close-knit and flexible and are based on a very large number of examples. A poet who accesses such a database can find that, when searching for words to express a *kokoro*, there are many lexical connections, many of which are unexpected. In terms of composition, poets do not create new arrangements of words; rather, they discover them by tracing networks of old words in the database. Therefore, the reuse of a previously expressed *kokoro* can help a poet create an idea that surpasses anything his personal limits of original thinking could have produced. By creating a quotation database that arose out of a ‘longing for old *wakas*’, individual expression achieved the potentiality of becoming constantly ‘new’. This was the method selected by the medieval *waka* world, following the *Shin kokin* period [21].

Notes

vol. 70-5, pp.15-34, Kyoto: Shibundo, 2001. It can be thought that these studies have the common viewpoint to regard honka-dori as one of the ways to compose waka. Meanwhile, this paper will consider honka-dori as the representation of the expression of consciousnes which is common in the whole of the medieval waka world.


[4] Ibid.


[9] Notes regarding poets or poems are my own.


[11] To examine the text of Eiga ittei, I referred to Taikei, and IWASA, op.cit. All translations and notes are my own.


[15] In both Mini shu and Hyakuban jika-awase, which are Ietaka’s collections, the fourth phrase in this waka is ‘Tae-te tsure-naki’, which is the same as that of the honka; however, it can be said that connecting it to the last phrase, ‘Mine no harukaze’, is not problematic.


[17] In Eiga ittei, Tameie says, ‘Some people say composition does not always depend on knowledge and waka is born from heart, but one cannot be seen as an expert without keiko’ (Taikei, p.388).

[18] For example, Hyakunin Issyu, compiled by Teika was a representative anthology. It also can be seen as a ‘quotation database’, because we can find many honka-dori wakas which take the waka in it as honka not only among Teika’s works but also the works of his contemporaries and followers.

[19] Moreover, in accessing this database, Teika’s method is not excluded. The searched words can properly express the kokoro of the old waka to which they belong. It should be said that because of the qualitative changes made to the database, the old kokoro expressed and exemplified by words in the old wakas came to be treated as an attribute of individual words that constituted the database.

[20] IWASA says that although there exist today many ‘representative’ wakas from the Shin kokin period, few people can immediately bring to mind representative wakas of Tameie (IWASA, op.cit., p.357). If this is the case with Tameie, surely it is also the case with other poets.

[21] Regarding the situation from the 14th century onward, I simply indicate that Yoshimoto NJO, a leader in developing renga, said the following in Kinrai futei, his own book of waka theory: ‘It is customary to take words of honka and make the fuzei differ from it, and then to place them on the upper and lower parts. Such a way is good’ (Shusei, pp.188-187, the translation is my own). Yoshimoto’s classification of honka-dori is thought to follow Tonna’s, as found in Gumon kenchu; however, it differs from that of Tonna, in that Yoshimoto ascribes the word ‘good’ only to honka-dori that changes old kokoro and holds it in high esteem. Moreover, in Yoshimoto’s work, we find
an argument not found in Tonna’s work: by stating that ‘taking only words is also customary’ (Ibid., p.188), Yoshimoto certainly aims to compose in such a way that honka words are severed from their original contexts. With renga, it is a compositional foundation rather than a rule that one attaches a phrase expressing a kokoro that differs from the preceding phrase and thus generates ideas that derive from those words. When deferring to this foundation, poets look to find words that connect their words with the preceding ones; in fulfilling this task, the database of waka words mentioned in this paper is highly functional. The adaptation of Tameie’s method by Yoshimoto—who was apparently a questioner in Gomon kenchu—clearly proves that the artistic status of renga had been raised on account of inheriting the database of waka words.