3-2-2013

Teika’s ‘Hokekyō rokubu kuyō hyōshi’ Poems (Shūi gusō #2754 – 2764)

Edward Kamens
Yale University

Follow this and additional works at: http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/waka2013

Part of the East Asian Languages and Societies Commons

Recommended Citation
http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/waka2013/11

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences and Symposia at EliScholar – A Digital Platform for Scholarly Publishing at Yale. It has been accepted for inclusion in Waka Workshop 2013 by an authorized administrator of EliScholar – A Digital Platform for Scholarly Publishing at Yale. For more information, please contact elischolar@yale.edu.
Edward Kamens

Teika’s *Hokekyō rokubu kuyō hyōshi Poems (Shūi gusō #2754 – 2764)*

I am drawn to poems and stories about poems that show their intimate physical inter-relationships with objects, physical things often made with those poems or as surfaces or media for their presentation and transmission. Such poems, such stories help me think about the thing-ness of poems, their materiality as written entities that can be sent out into, projected, and exchanged in three-dimensional space, tactilely manipulated in the hands of makers recipients, communicators, collections. Thinking about poems that we encounter as they travel in tandem with objects also helps me think about the “thing-ness” of poems in general, their material character. I will try to show what I mean.

SLIDE 1.

Just last week, in my graduate seminar—where we are reading narrative texts related to Lotus Sutra rites such as *Hakkō* and the like—we looked at this episode in *Makura no sōshi*. (See Matsuo Satoshi and Nagai Kazuko, eds., *Makura no sōshi*. [Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku
Edward Kamens, “Teika’s ‘Hokekyō rokubukyō hyōshi’ Poems (Shūi gusō #2754 – 2761)”

*zenshū* 18). Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1997, p. 76.) I’m not sure what it signifies, but I’m intrigued by the spatial detail: the poem is on the *ura,* the underside of the lotus, which may be real or artificial. Perhaps one should not make too much of “ura” here—but let’s do so anyway. Poems—and not just *waka* poems—do sometimes seem to come from or be the inner, inverse, flip-side or mirror of other experiences, utterances, encounters, perceptions. Perhaps that is why we care for them, interrogate them, remember them and reproduce them. (By the way, in *Senzai wakashū,* where this poem appears as a *Shakkyōka,* the *kotobagaki* omits the detail of the *hachisu no ha no ura.* Perhaps by doing so Shunzei directs our attention to other things about the poem.)

---

SLIDE 2. (Note: all images of *Heike nōkyō* (Itsukushima Jinja, Hiroshima) are adapted from the Yale University Visual Resources Collection accessed at digitalcollections.library.edu.)

In the realm of *Shakkyōka,* groups of poems such as this set of eight in Teika’s *Shakkyō* section of *Shūi gusō* capture my attention in part because of the description of their spatial deployment, not to mention their place in the lineages of *Hokkekyō* poesy. (See Kubota Jun, ed., *Yakucho Fujiwara no Teika zen kashū.* 2 vols. Tokyo: Kawade Shobō 1985. 1:468-9.)
Edward Kamens, “Teika’s ‘Hokekyōrokubukuyōhyōshi’ Poems (Shūigusō #2754 – 2761)”

Unless thus noted, the source of waka texts appearing in this paper is Kadokawa Shoten, ed., Shinpen kokka taikan CD-Rom version. In this case, we also get to know something of the circumstances of their making, their occasion. It is the first anniversary of the death of Teika’s mother, the woman we know as Bifukumon’in Kaga. She died in the second month of Kenkyū 4, 1193, so we can date these poems to 1194. Teika makes six copies of the Lotus Sutra himself as a memorial offering, and for inscription on their frontispieces, hyōshi, he composes eight poems that correspond to passages and topoi in the chapters of the sutra as conventionally grouped in their eight fascicles. As has been pointed out by others, the eight poems are also a seasonal cycle, two poems per season, marked as such by their dominant seasonal figures and indeed by explicit mention of “haru, aki, fuyu” in several instances. A year of mourning, a full turn of the seasons has passed; more are to come, now with these poems and these sutra copies among the material artifacts of commemoration.

In thinking about how these poems might have been ensconced on or in frontispiece paintings in this offering, I am showing images of the very familiar Heike nōkyō but only for the purpose of helping us to imagine the material medium for Teika’s original project. I do not mean to suggest that the Heike nōkyō structure or style of painting or its use of devices such as ashide would necessarily have been the same in Teika’s sutra, nor that the earlier Heike nōkyō, initiated in 1164, could have been a model for Teika’s copying project per se. I simply hope these images will help us visualize the devout, quite personal offering that Teika made and from which only the poems survive.

One specific thing about these poems about which I want to know more is the practice or convention of writing poems for inscription or re-inscription in or on frontispiece paintings, hyōshi no e. Here the poems are not on a significant underside, ura, as in Sei Shōnagon’s Bodaiji missive, but at the omote, the threshold, the entry-point to each scroll,
ushering us into the scriptural text and its space but in the idiom and form of the *uta*. My search for other poems explicitly identified in *kotobagaki* as having been composed for placement in or on *hyōshi* or *hyōshi no e* did not yield many examples, but some of them are intriguing and suggestive in their own ways. (See also Claire Akiko Brisset [クリール碧子・ブリッセ] 「院政時代における宗教的・詩的クリプトグラフィー ---『久能寺経』『薬草説品』巻第五の見返し絵をめぐって---」。クリスト・マルケ、アリアンヌ・シモン＝及川、クリール碧子・ブリッセ、パスカル・グリオレ共編、『日本の文字文化を探る---日仏の視点から』東京:勉誠出版, 2010, pp. 227-250. Brisset briefly discussed some of the poems also examined in the present paper.)

This example is in Toshiyori’s or Shunrai’s *Sanboku kikashū*, which as you may know happens to be the earliest of the *shikashū* to have a specifically entitled *Shakkyōka* section; but this poem is in fact in the preceding *Hitanshi* section, near the end of a sequence of poems from the period of mourning for Toshiyori’s father Tsunenobu, who died at Dazaifu in Eichō 2/Jōtoku gannen, 1097. (See Sekine Keiko and Ōi Yōko, eds., *Awa-bon*...
Sanboku kikashū: honbun, kōi hen. Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1979, p. 114.) For a kechien kuyō during that period, Toshiyori was assigned the fourth fascicle, which he copied himself; on the frontispiece, he depicted (or had someone depict) a man in mourning attire, facing a nun, and “from the letters of the sutra light streams, striking the nun’s head.” Beside this image, in ashide, he inscribed this poem, which says that his tears of sorrow are an over-flowing cascade—and, he asks, can his mournful cries (sakebu koe) be heard by the one who is now so distant?

The hyōshi image described here of course calls to mind this scene, the hyōshi for the Yakushi bon in the Heike nōkyō, where beams of light from the Bodhisattva’s person strike a devout female figure:

SLIDE 4: Yakushi bon detail.
Edward Kamens, “Teika’s ‘Hokekyō rokubu kuyō hyōshi’ Poems (Shūi gusō #2754 – 2761)”

…and also this scene, from the hyōshi for the Heike nōkyō Funbetsu kudoku hon chapter, where a gentleman in what appears to be mourning attire sits facing a nun in reverent attitude. Again, by juxtaposing these well-known images I seek only to share with you my sense of how these visual and textual conceptions—extant and otherwise—resonate with one another and suggest, perhaps, some commonality of practice in these treatments.

SLIDE 5: Funbetsu kudoku hon detail.
Edward Kamens, “Teika’s ‘Hokekyō rokubu kuyō hyōshi’ Poems (Shūi gusō #2754 – 2761)”

SLIDE 6

This poem appears in Myōe shōnin kashū, with a misleading kotobagaki due to a compiler’s error: Myōe didn’t compose this poem at Jingōji in the eighth month of Kenkyū 5 (1194— which just happens to be the same year as Teika’s memorial for his mother)— but rather that is when he copied Kazan’in’s poem on the hyōshi of “a certain book” or written object, as Prof. Hirano and others have explained. Teika certainly knew this poem: it is in Shika wakashū, and in Teika’s Hachidai shō: but I suspect he didn’t know it as a hyōshi no e no uta per se.
Moving ahead some generations in the Mikohidari family, we come to this example in *Shinsenzai wakashū* [complied 1359]. Tamefuji takes up pages of poems left behind by his sister Tameko (who died in 1319 or thereabouts) and copies the Lotus Sutra on their reverse sides *ura*. This re-casting and transforming of Tameko’s poetic traces is furthered by the addition of frontispiece paintings and poems on the essential purport of each fascicle (*maki maki no kokoro*).

I’m not entirely sure what’s going on in this poem, but I’m intrigued by this example of devotional re-purposing: in a metamorphosis somewhat analogous to the case of the Heian-era Shitennōji fans, *waka* manuscripts are being re-made, with the addition of the scripture text and the corresponding *Shakkyōka* series into…another thing of a different order while preserving the original “thing” that now takes on additional meaning, function, character.
I hope I’ve succeeded in suggesting that there is something we might call a practice here—one that may have had special significance in the extended Mikohidari lineage, perhaps even incombent upon family members in times of ritual mourning and its repeating cycles. In the time remaining, I will try to show another dimension of this practice as something that might also be read as the performance of significant inter-generational gestures in text, specifically occasioned by mourning and memorial rites.

You may recall that a sequence of *nijūhappon no uta* composed by Shunzei as one of several such sequences requested by Taikenmon’in no Chūnagon no kimi, daughter of Fujiwara no Sadazane, in or around 1142 to 1144 forms the core of his *Shakkyō* chapter in *Chōshū eisō*. (See poems #403-434, pp. 91-99, in Kawamura Teruo and Kubota Jun, eds., *Chōshū eisō, Toshitada shū* [Waka bungaku taikei 22]. Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1998.) I find it interesting that four, or half of Teika’s eight Lotus poems for his mother’s memorial, appear to take the
Edward Kamens, “Teika’s ‘Hokekyō rokubu kuyō hyōshi’ Poems (Shūi gusō #2754 – 2761)”

exact same scriptural passages as do Shunzei’s poems for the corresponding elements of his 28-poem sequence. (In Shunzei’s sequence the dai taken from the scripture are integrated in the text; in Teika’s they are present but invisible, though not wholly silent, as Kubota’s commentary shows.)

I will not take the time here to compare these four poems of Teika’s to Shunzei’s in particular detail, since that as such is not really my point. I think we would expect Teika to be fully cognizant of—that is, to have internalized—his father’s works but at the same time unlikely to make overt citational gestures toward them. Yet gestures he does make, and their meanings are multiple. After all, in 1194 Shunzei the widower is also among the living mourners for Bifukumon’in no Kaga—possibly the most bereft, or at least as much so as his son. So, when Teika here prays for a cool, refreshing breeze to bless the one who has “gone before us” (sakidatsu hito) as she approaches the long-sought-for thirsty-quenching waters that figure more metaphorically in the Hōshibon passage with which he works here, he may be speaking not only for himself but for other mourners, and he does so with the same Hōshibon passage and figures that Shunzei did in the earlier sequence (see Chōshū eisō #412.)
Teika’s poem on the Jūryōbon also works with the same passage in that chapter as does Shunzei’s (Chōshū eisō #418—a poem that Riley Soles will also talk about in his presentation.) This autumn moon that Teika calls upon to shine without cessation or impediment recalls many overlapping visual and textual moments: not only our many memorable images of the full moon rising or resting beyond mountain ridges in Buddhist paintings, where the symbolic meaning of the image is all too clear, but also in the secular waka realm: I am thinking, of course, of Narihira’s 

Akanaku ni madaki mo tsuki no kakururu ka

yama no ha nigete irezu mo aranamu

飽かなくにまだきも隠るゝか山の端にげて入れずもあらなむ

(Kokin wakashū 古今和歌集 884; Ise monogatari dan 伊勢物語, 段 82.)
This—Teika’s *Juryōbon* poem—is for me one of those moments in which citational gestures across space and time make of the particular exercise of memorial for a parent—Teika’s mother—also, at the same time, a memorial gesture of homage to the practice, the tradition, the textual and intertextual heritage, of *waka* itself, which is another way of saying that *waka* poems are always about *waka* poems. And perhaps I can also suggest that through such a gesture Teika does homage and honor to Shunzei, the living keeper and embodiment of that tradition, as well. If a devotional poem such as this is meant to have effect, a positive consequence or outcome (*kōka*), is its efficacy not strengthened, made possible, ensured through such layering of meaning?

Teika’s poem on this *Yakuōbon* passage is another that shares its specific referent topic text with Shunzei’s (in this case *Chōshū eisō* #425.) We all know that this chapter was
particularly important to women; the Heike nōkyō frontispiece cues the viewer to this, too. What I find moving is the way that Teika domesticates the message and ambience of his poem: he refers to his mother as hagukumitateshi uzumibi no moto, “she who comforted and kept me (or us) warm, tending fires on winter nights of rustling showers,” that is, a source (moto) of sustaining comfort whose soul must now be comforted and sustained with the sutra’s re-directed promised blessings (mukawareyo).

SLIDE 12

Teika’s eighth-fascicle Fumonbon poem, the last in his sequence, is the last of the four that clearly shares the same topic text as Shunzei’s. Shunzei’s poem for the 1140s sequence (Chōshū eisō #427) is relatively simple, and one might say that therein lies its power:

Chikaikeru kokoro no yagate umi nareba

*hito o watasu mo wazurai mo nashi*
Teika’s, on the other hand, startles us with his use of heavy, unaltered Buddhist terms even while it takes its place alongside Shunzei’s rendering and re-arranges and revivifies its figures:

*Ryakkō no gūzei no umi ni fune watase*

*shōji no nami wa fuyu araku to mo*

---

SLIDE 13

I must conclude with this poem: Teika’s memorial for the 13th anniversary of Shunzei’s death, so composed in 1216—but placed ahead of the 1194 memorial sequence in *Shūi gusō*. Once again there is a *kechien kuyō*, in which the extended family of mourners gather and share poems in accord with Shunzei’s explicit request (*yuigon*). Of course this poem and the act of its making and its inscription carry double meaning, as Kubota and others suggest: the Lotus teachings are the potent, everlasting heritage (*ato*) that show the way; so is the memory of Shunzei, whose traces and directives (*yuigon, ato*) likewise shine light that keeps the darkness at bay for the makers of *uta*, practitioners of and wayfarers on its “way.” And remember: the *Gon’ōbon* is a family drama: the
Edward Kamens, “Teika’s ‘Hokekyō rokubu kuyō hyōshi’ Poems (Shūi gusō #2754 – 2761)”

sons of King Fine Adornment do all they can to convert and enlighten their father. They “dance in empty space to a height of seven tala-trees,” they “display a variety of magical feats in empty space…In this way, by resorting to the power of expedient devices (hōben no chikara), they skillfully converted their father, causing his heart to believe and understand.” (Leon Hurvitz, trans., Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma. New York: Columba University Press, 1976, pp. 326, 328.) Teika’s poem of 1216 is not a hyōshi no e poem, but it is another feat, an act of paternal remembrance, an intervention of a son for a father, binding the present and the absent through gestures of commemoration, recapitulation, and the perpetuation of a powerful practice.