

# Traces of *Genji monogatari* in *Shinkokinshū*

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**Abstract** In this paper, after mainly dealing with the poetics of Fujiwara no Shunzei and of his son Teika, above all in relation to *Genji monogatari*, I analyse some poems from *Shinkokinshū* that evoke, through the so-called allusive variation, the world of the Shining Prince, and I wish to point out the peculiarities of the *shinkokin*-period poets' composition techniques.

**Keywords** Japanese poetry. Waka. Fujiwara no Shunzei (Toshinari). Fujiwara no Teika (Sadaie). *Genji monogatari*. *Shinkokinshū*.

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## 1 Fujiwara no Shunzei's Vision of *Genji monogatari*

*Shinkokinshū* 新古今集 (New Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern, 1205) appears to be an emblematic work when we look at the aptitude of Japanese scholars of the Heian period, and of the following ones too. Its peculiarity emerges when we focus attention on the literary production of the past which should be reinterpreted into something to be cherished, preserved and, to some degree, renewed.

It goes without saying that the golden age, which Heian and Kamakura poets turned their gaze to, was the so called *kokinjidai* 古今時代,

the time when *Kokinshū* 古今集 (Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern, ca. 905) was edited and, likewise, the period in which *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji, early eleventh century) is set. The main tool the poets of the *shinkokinjidai* 新古今時代 (the period of *Shinkokinshū*), above all those who belonged to Go-Toba's 後鳥羽 (1180-1239) *kadan* 歌壇 (poetry circle), would use to express their devotion to the past was, no doubt, *honkadori* 本歌取り, the allusive variation, one of the most frequently used technique in *Shinkokinshū*.

In his encyclopaedia of Japanese poetry, Ariyoshi Tamotsu (1982, 347) states that the anxiety of medieval authors to follow the trail of their predecessors was rooted in the shock they had received when the violent Hōgen 保元 (1156) and Heiji 平治 (1159) disorders broke out. The aristocrats, after crashing down to reality, as Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 describes in his *Hōjōki* 方丈記 (An Account of My Hut, 1212), reacted by refuging in a world of romantic beauty. In other words, the nobles of the Imperial Court, by devoutly studying the literary masterpieces of the past, tried to revive after three centuries the splendour of the golden age, on paper at least.

As we know, it was Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241) the one most responsible for canonising the right use of *honkadori*. He took a cue from his father Shunzei's 俊成 (1114-1204) idea, "old words and new spirit" (*kotoba wa furuki o shitai, kokoro wa atarashiki o motome* 詞は古きを慕ひ、心は新しきを求め), and set guidelines for an excellent allusive variation (Hashimoto et al. 1975, 471). When talking of "old words", he is above all up to the diction of *Kokinshū*, since he was absolutely sure that the first poetic anthology edited by an imperial order was the model par excellence for contemporary poetry. In his famous *Korai fūteishō* 古来風躰抄 (Notes on Poetic Style Through the Ages, 1197, revised in 1201), Shunzei claims that this is due to the fact that, during that age, for the first time a distinction between good and bad poetry had been made. That is why poets would worship *Kokinshū* and take it as a reference model for the basic poetic styles (Hashimoto et al. 1975, 288; see also Royston 1968, 2). Therefore it is not so strange that in the *Shinkokinshū* there are several poems that allude in a way or another to a *Kokinshū* poem.

But Shunzei did love another masterpiece of the past as well: *Genji monogatari*. In his *Shōji ninen Shunzei-kyō waji sōjō* 正治二年俊成卿和字奏状 (Lord Shunzei's Memorial in Japanese Script, submitted in 1200), the letter Shunzei wrote to plead his son's case with Go-Toba, begging the former Emperor to let Teika take part in the poetic contest the sovereign was planning those days, he chose, as evidence of his opponents' incompetence, their ignorance of *Genji monogatari*. Surprisingly, Fujiwara no Norinaga 教長 (1109-?) and Fujiwara no Kiyosuke 清輔 (1104-1177), in compiling the *Shūi kokin* 拾遺古今 (Gleanings Old and New, date unknown) had made a serious error:

In the first place, the poem “Of a spring night, neither shining brightly nor yet completely clouded...” they took to be on the subject of “summer nights” and placed it in the summer section. In the *Hana no en* chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, which takes place in the Second Month, it is this poem that the Chief Palace Attendant (Oborozukiyo) is depicted as quoting when she speaks of “the light of a misty moon”. But Norinaga and Kiyosuke have not read *Genji*, and certainly have not read [*Hakushi*] *monjū*. In one of his poems Haku Kyoji writes, “Neither bright nor dark, the misty moon; neither warm nor chill, the gentle breeze”. This is the Chinese poem upon which the Japanese poem is based. Knowing neither of them, they describe it as a poem on “summer nights” and place it in the summer section. Both Norinaga and Kiyosuke are a disgrace. (Harper, Shirane 2015, 164-5)

So, it is possible to affirm that at some point *Genji monogatari* was recognised as having the same artistic and literary quality as *Kokinshū*. As evidence of that, we can look at the way poets started using *Genji* as reference material for their *honkadōri* or *honzetsudōri* 本説取 (taking a foundation passage) (Minemura 1950).<sup>1</sup>

The statement once Shunzei made is pretty famous: *Genji mizaru utayomi wa ikon no koto nari* 源氏見ざる歌詠みは遺恨の事なり, that is to say, “writing poetry without knowing *Genji* is quite regretful” (Shinpen kokka taikan 1983-92, 5: 294). We will soon come back to it. In this regard, Minemura quotes a remark by Go-Toba, who was quite familiar with Shunzei’s poetry, which he loved a lot, to stress how the same Go-Toba was a careful reader of *Genji*: “I recall Shakua’s 釈阿<sup>2</sup> poetry as gentle and evocative [*en ni* 艶に], infused with deep feeling [*kokoro mo fukaku* 心も深く] and moving in its sensitivity [*aware naru* あはれなる]” (Brower 1972, 35-6).

This passage is illuminating, because in the “Azumaya” 東屋 (The Eastern Cottage) chapter of *Genji monogatari* we find the following words:

He was so kind [*en naru*], and he spoke to her so gently [*kokoro fukaku aware ni*], that despite bitter sighs over what her mother might be thinking, she plucked up the courage to get down as well. (Tyler 2003, 1003)

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between the two techniques is well known: the former is the allusive variation through the quotation of old verses, while the latter simply means that the author echoes an old prose passage in his/her verses.

<sup>2</sup> Shunzei’s priestly name.

Even though we can't be sure Go-Toba quoted this exact point by heart, the similarities between the two passages are impressive (Minemura 1950).

As mentioned before, Shunzei drew inspiration from *Genji monogatari* not just for *aware* あはれ, but for the ideal of *en* (charming, fascinating) as well. According to Shunzei, a poet who bases his own poetry on *en* can reach the highest degrees of poetic expression; and one can get plenty of *en* only by closely reading *Genji monogatari*, avoiding to consider it as a simple entertainment medium, because the greatness of *Genji* is neither limited to its plot and stories, nor to its numerous characters' love intrigues, high hopes, burning desires and disappointing delusions. When Shunzei affirms that it is not possible to compose good poetry without having read *Genji monogatari*, he seems to mean that a real poet must be able to easily handle all those elements hidden between the lines of the text, the exquisite style of Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (973?-1014?), and her incredible literary sensibility.

In order to show how important *Genji monogatari* was for Shunzei to reach high levels of poetic splendour, we can read in full his judgement briefly touched on earlier. It's the thirteenth match of the summer section of *Ropyyakuban utaawase* 六百番歌合 (Poetry Contest in Six Hundred Rounds, 1193), and the pre-assigned topic is the *yūgao* 夕顔 (Moonflowers). The opponents are Fujiwara no Yoshitsune 良経 (1169-1206) and Fujiwara no Iefusa 家房 (1167-1196).

265 かたやまのかきねの日かげほの見えて露にぞうつるはなのゆふがほ<sup>3</sup>  
*katayama no* Along the flank of the mountain  
*kakine no hikage* the shadows lengthen  
*hono miete* and you can hardly see  
*tsuyu ni zo utsuru* the *yūgao* flower  
*hana no yūgao* reflecting in dewdrops.

266 をりてこそ見るべかりけれゆふつゆにひもとくはなのひかりありとは  
*orite koso* I should really have  
*mirubekarikere* picked it up to admire  
*yūtsuyu ni* the light of the flower  
*himo toku hana no* that was blooming  
*hikari ari to wa* in the evening dew.

This match is quite interesting because, before the judge's decision, both opponents stated their points of view. Iefusa says: "It's true, the poem by the Left depicts the *yūgao* flower, but the spirit of the topic is quite weak". To this, Yoshitsune replies: "The poem by the Right clearly alludes to *Genji monogatari*, but I wonder if this is enough for a poet-

3 The text and poem numbers used are those appearing in Kubota, Yamaguchi 1998 (Author's transl.).

ry contest". The last word is Shunzei's, who states: "The poem by the Left does not fully respect the essence of the topic, but I wonder why, instead of *yūgao no hana*, the author writes *hana no yūgao*. He may be aiming at the effect of singularity". As we can see, explicitly naming the *yūgao* flower does not guarantee success. At the same time, Shunzei declares that "not only does the poem by the Right allude passionately to *Genji monogatari*, but its style is just superb. For this reason, victory goes to the Right" (Kubota et al. 1998, 99; Author's transl.).

The chapter alluded to is clearly the fourth one, "Yūgao". In the poem by Iefusa, two poems seem to resonate. The first one is addressed to Yūgao by Genji, who is asking to meet her:

I see, Genji thought, it must be the young woman in service. She certainly gave me that poem of hers as though she knew her way about! She cannot be anyone in particular, though.

Still, he rather liked the way she had accosted him, and he had no wish to miss this chance, since in such matters, it was clearly his way to be impulsive. On a piece of folding paper, he wrote in a hand unlike his own,

*Let me draw and see whether you are she, whom glimmering dusk  
gave me faintly to discern in twilight beauty flowers.* (Tyler 2003,  
57-8)

The second one is the poem Yūgao composes to answer Genji, later in the chapter:

"The place is eerie", he said, "but never mind: the demons will not trouble me". She was thoroughly offended that he still had his face covered, and he agreed that this was unnatural by now.

*The flower you see disclosing its secrets in the evening dew  
glimmered first before your eyes in a letter long ago.*

he said. "Does the gleam of the dew please you?"  
With a sidelong glance she murmured,

The light I saw the dewdrops adorning then a twilight beauty  
*was nothing more than a trick of the day's last fading gleam!*  
(Tyler 2003, 65-6)

We should also keep in mind that re-echoing *Genji monogatari* was not to be a mere mechanical reminiscence. In fact, these allusions had to widen the literary universe of Shikibu's masterpiece. In this regard, in his *Go-toba-in gokuden* 後鳥羽院御口伝 (Ex-Emperor Go-Toba's Secret Teachings, first half of thirteenth century), Go-Toba writes:

Shakua, Jakuren, and others have said that when composing poems for a poetry contest, a person may not be too free in expressing his originality. However, poems composed for such an occasion are actually put together no differently from other poems. “Give careful thought to the significance of the topic, make sure your poem is free of poetic ills, and use diction from the poems in the *Genji* and other romances if you like, but do not use poetic conceptions from such works”, they said. (Brower 1972, 34)

In this passage the author reproduces the opposition between *kotoba* 詞 (words) and *kokoro* 心 (spirit) and his statement could be read with reference to the “old words, new spirit” motto. However, such a reading leaves some doubts in that a poet like Teika, on drawing inspiration from *Genji monogatari*, used to resort to *honzetsu* rather than to *honkadori*, that is to say, he focused more on the spirit than on the wording of the *monogatari*.

Minemura (1950, 36-7) cites another comment by Shunzei to a poem by Fujiwara no Takanobu written for *Ropyyakuban utaawase* (turn eighteenth, right), which reads:

276 たそかれにまがひて咲ける花の名ををちかた人や問はば答へむ	
<i>tasokare ni</i>	If someone from afar
<i>magaitte sakeru</i>	were to ask you
<i>hana no na o</i>	the name of the flower
<i>ochikata hito ya</i>	that blooms shrouded in twilight,
<i>towaba kotaemu</i>	could you ever answer?

The judge says that the poem overlaps with the *monogatari*, which is not good as the lines do not open up new and original horizons, nor do they present any original resonances. According to Minemura, this shows once again Shunzei’s great respect for *Genji monogatari*.

## 2 Fujiwara no Teika’s Vision of *Genji monogatari*

In this respect, Teika seems to have well understood his father’s teachings. As we have already said, in his theoretical works, Teika attached great importance to *honkadori*. Nevertheless, when it came to *Genji monogatari*, he didn’t limit his inspiration to the poems interwoven in the text, but according to him the atmospheres and the *kotobazukai* ことばづかい (wording) of some particular scenes were to be worshipped as well.

This kind of attitude is already startlingly clear in the poems he wrote for *Shōji shodo hyakushu* 正治初度百首 (First Hundred-Poem Sequence of the Shōji Era, 1200). This *utaawase* was the first court poetry contest Go-Toba organised for his *kadan*, and hereafter it turned out to

be one of the most important sources for *Shinkokinshū*, with its 79 poems chosen for the anthology, second only to *Sengohyakuban utaawase* 千五百番歌合 (Poetry Contest in Fifteen Hundred Rounds, 1202-03).<sup>4</sup>

Obaishi (2014) focuses on the following *waka*, whose *dai* 題 (topic) is *sanka* 山家 (mountain hermitage):

988 浪の音に宇治のさと人よるさへやねてもあやうき夢のうきはし	
<i>nami no oto ni</i>	Even though at night
<i>uji no satobito</i>	Uji villagers can take some rest,
<i>yoru sae ya</i>	the sound of the waves
<i>nete mo ayauki</i>	will make their dreams
<i>yume no ukihashi</i>	floating like a river bridge. <sup>5</sup>

In most cases, the true spirit of a *dai*, such as ‘mountain hermitage’, was thought to be fully respected only if verses would depict someone who had fled from the world to live in a poor and shabby hut. For this reason, it was not so unusual that such poems were set in Uji, or in other places famous for their desolating panoramas, such as Yoshino, Fukakusa or Ōhara. That is why the poem just quoted does not seem to stray too far from traditional diction. But, until that moment, when a poet chose to set his verses in Uji, the suitable elements used to describe the place would be river wicker fences, whitebaits, the fog on the river, the Uji bridge, or the Maiden of the Uji Bridge and so on. But Teika focuses on the sound generated by the river. This is important, because, at that time, this kind of sound image was an absolute novelty.

So, where did Teika draw inspiration from? Obaishi (2014, 34-6) thinks the answer is in “Hashihime” 橋姫 (The Maiden of the Bridge) chapter of *Genji monogatari*:

It was a sadder place than he had been led to imagine, and considering who His Highness was, everything about his life there suggested the drastic simplicity of the grass hut built to last little more than a day. There are other quiet mountain villages with an appeal all their own, but here amid the roar of waters and the clamor of waves one seemed unlikely even to forget one’s cares or, at night amid the wind’s dreary moan, to dream a consoling dream.

Surroundings like these undoubtedly stir thoughts of renunciation in His Highness, the Captain reflected, inclined as he is to seek a holy life, but now must they affect his daughters? (Tyler 2003, 834; emphasis in the original)

<sup>4</sup> On the importance of each *utawaase* 歌合 (poetry contest) for the *Shinkokinshū*, see Huey 2002; 2000.

<sup>5</sup> The poem number refers to the numeration in Kubota 1985-86 (Author’s transl.).

The idea that the “roar of waters and the clamor of waves” prevent people from sleeping is something we find in “Ukifune” 浮舟 (A Drifting Boat) chapter as well, when the young Ukifune is tormented by Niou and Kaoru’s love. In that particular scene, the river sound becomes a meaningful counterpoint to the girl’s anxiety. Here, is Ukifune’s mother who is speaking:

Outside, the river roared menacingly past. “Not all rivers sound like that. No wonder he has taken pity of her, when she has had to spend so long in a place so dismally wild!” her mother remarked with satisfaction.

One of the women described how fast and frightening the river had always been. “The only day, you know, the ferryman’s grandson missed his stroke on the oar and fell in. That river has taken so many people!” With that anyone agreed. (Tyler 2003, 1032; emphasis in the original)

Once it was night again, she lay sleepless, planning a way to get out of the house without being seen. (1042; emphasis in the original)

At this point in the narration, we are approaching the end of the conflict between the calm and gentle Kaoru and the passionate Niou. Ukifune receives a letter from Kaoru, who is inviting her to the capital and her handmaids, ignoring their mistress’ state of mind, keep on preparing for departure.

Here, the roaring river waves become the perfect soundscape for the turmoil of Ukifune’s heart, torn on what to do. The suggestion that the river can kill is meaningful as well. Ukifune’s inability to sleep seems to blend well with the word *ayauki* used in the fourth verse of Teika’s poem, where we find an allusion to the last chapter of *Genji monogatari*, “Yume no ukihashi” 夢浮橋 (The Floating Bridge of Dreams), and to the maiden’s pain who can’t easily cross the “floating bridge of dreams”.

The poems inspired by *Genji monogatari* that Teika composed for *Shōji shodo hyakushu* are in all six, but not in all of them *honkadori* is used. The following *waka*, for example, is not inspired by another poem, but just to a passage in prose of the *monogatari*, and gives life to a *honzetsu*:



<p>982 浪のうへの月をみやこのもとして明石の瀬戸をいづる船人  <i>nami no ue no</i>  <i>tsuki o miyako no</i>  <i>tomo to shite</i>  <i>Akashi no seto o</i>  <i>izuru funabito</i></p>	<p>The moon rising from the waves  looks like an old friend  that reminds the capital city  to the boatman going out  of the Strait of Akashi.<sup>6</sup></p>
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The passage we can glimpse between Teika's lines is the following one from the *Akashi* chapter:

In this wilderness where I am a stranger, I have suffered every outlandish affliction, and yet no one brings me words of comfort from the City. Your fishing boat is a welcome refuge, when my only old friends here are the sun and the moon in their course across the sky! (Tyler 2003, 260)

Teika didn't make clear his devotion toward *Genji monogatari* only in his poetry, but in his theoretical production as well. In a text edited in 1228 by Fujiwara no Nagatsuna 藤原長綱 (unknown dates), *Teika-kyō sōgo* 定家卿相語 (Discussion with Lord Teika), we can find the following passage:

Lately, the way people read and annotate *Genji monogatari* has changed in some respects. To realise a *honkadōri*, they tend to pick up some poems from it; or, posing as real experts, they make a dispute about the identity of lady Murasaki's mother, debating about her genealogical tree. In the past it was not like that. The way I see it, even though we avoid speculating about Murasaki's ancestors, even though we do not make any effort to realise a *honkadōri*, since the words are used in an ineffable way, just enjoying the same Murasaki's style will clear our spirit up, and we will be stimulated to compose bewitchingly elegant poetry, refined in aspect and words. (Hisamatsu 1971, 335-6; Author's transl.)

To Teramoto (1961, 68), this passage is very interesting, because it lets us understand two different things. First of all, when Teika says "even though we avoid speculating about Murasaki's ancestors, even though we do not make any effort to realise a *honkadōri*", he shows his intention to distance himself from this kind of historical investigations about the small plots of the narration, and to be interested just in the poetical aspect of the work.

On the other hand, Teika in his *Kindai shūka* 近代秀歌 (Superior Poems of Our Time, 1209) wrote some words doomed to become extremely famous:

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<sup>6</sup> The poem number refers to the numeration in Kubota 1985-86 (Author's transl.).

If in diction you admire the traditional, if in treatment you attempt the new, if you aim at an unobtainable lofty effect, and if you study the poetry of Kampei and before – then how can you fail to succeed? (Brower, Miner 1967, 44)

We do find the same idea in the incipit of *Eiga taigai* 詠歌大概 (The Essentials of Poetry, ca. 1222) (Hisamatsu 1971, 299). There, while reaffirming that diction should be ancient but the spirit of poetry should be fresh and new, Teika stresses that it is the poetry of *Sandaishū* 三代集, the first three imperial anthologies of Japanese *waka* poetry, that has to be taken as a model:

In a poem, more than anywhere else, priority should be given to original inspiration. That is to say, one should compose poems in a spirit that cannot be found in poems written by others. As regards diction, it is necessary to use the words from ancient poems. These must never be different from the ones used by the great poets represented in *Sandaishū*. (Hashimoto et al. 1975, 493; Author's transl.)

Teramoto (1961), reasoning about the link between *Genji monogatari* and Teika's poetry, analyses the following five poems Teika wrote on different occasions.<sup>7</sup>

192 よそにてもそでこそぬるれみなれ棹猶さしかへる宇治の川長

*yoso nite mo  
sode koso nurure  
minare sao  
nao sashikaeru  
uji no kawaosa*

Distant he is, but my sleeves  
get wet with tears  
for the Uji ferryman  
who comes back sinking his oar  
so accustomed to water.

3075 さしかへる宇治の川長袖ぬれてしづくのほかにはらふ白雪

*sashikaeru  
uji no kawaosa  
sode nurete  
shizuku no hoka ni  
harau shirayuki*

The Uji ferryman  
who comes back  
sinking his oar,  
in shaking the drops off his sleeves  
ends up dropping the white snow as well.

2501 如何せんさすがよなよなみなれざをしづくににごる宇治の川長

*ikani sen  
sasuga yonayona  
minarezao  
shizuku ni nigoru  
uji no kawaosa*

Night after night  
the Uji ferryman sinks his oar  
so accustomed to water.  
What can he possibly do  
with those drops that stain it?<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The numeration of the following five poems refers to Kubota 1985-86 (Author's transl.).

<sup>8</sup> The real meaning of this poem is: now that I am accustomed to meeting you every night, what can I possibly do?

(2501) 浮舟のなにの契りにみなれ棹あだなる袖をくたしそめけむ  
*ukifune no* In what life did I,  
*nani no chigiri ni* wretched like a drifting boat,  
*minarezao* swear to let my sleeves rot  
*adanaru sode o* with this oar  
*kutashi somekemu* so accustomed to water?

2072 花の色のをられぬ水にこすさをのしづくもにほふ宇治の川長  
*hana no iro no* The drops dripping from  
*orarenu mizu ni* the Uji boatman's oar,  
*kosu sao no* sunken in the reflection  
*shizuku mo niou* of a flower you cannot pick up,  
*uji no kawaosa* seem to retain the fragrance of that flower.

All these five poems refer to the following poems exchange between Kaoru and Ōikimi we find in the “Hashihime” chapter:

橋姫のこころを汲みて高瀬さす棹のしづくに袖ぞ濡れぬる  
*hashihime no* While I try to guess  
*kokoro o kumite* the most secret  
*takase sasu* heart of the Maiden of the Bridge,  
*sao no shizuku ni* my sleeves get wet with the drops dripping  
*sode zo nurenuru* from the oar that sinks into the shallows.

さしかへる宇治の川長朝夕のしづくや袖をくたしはつらむ  
*sashikaeru* Day and night  
*uji no kawaosa* drops of tears soak the sleeves  
*asayū no* enough to waste them,  
*shizuku ya sode o* just like the ferryman's  
*kutashi hatsuramu* who cruises the Uji River.<sup>9</sup>

Teramoto (1961, 73) points out how these two *honka* fall into the category of the so called *jukkai* 述懐 (lament), but the first, the second and the fifth of the ones by Teika seem to be purely descriptive. Moreover, in the second and fifth ones, while quoting explicitly the *honka*, Teika introduces a paradigm shift in diction by using the image of white snow and flower scent along with the ferryman's oar, obtaining an absolutely new and fascinating effect.

<sup>9</sup> Abe et al. 1970-76, 5: 141-2; Author's transl.

### 3 *Mumyōzōshi* on *Genji monogatari*

Before starting the analysis of the poems of *Shinkokinshū*, it is impossible not to mention the *Mumyōzōshi* 無名草子 (Nameless book, early thirteenth century). As it is well known, *Mumyōzōshi* is an anonymous text, attributed to Fujiwara no Shunzei no Musume 藤原俊成女, Shunzei's daughter (1171-1252). It is a long dialogue between three or four highly educated ladies and an eighty-three-year-old nun who spends all the night talking to them.

To effectively present her material, the author takes as model the second chapter of *Genji monogatari*, "Hahakigi" 帚木 (The Broom Tree), in which we witness the famous scene of the discussion about the ideal woman during a long rainy night (*amayo no shinasadame* 雨夜の品定め). This is an important point of the *monogatari*, because Murasaki lays the theoretical foundation for further development of her characters.

Marra (1984, 124) claims that it is not by coincidence that *Mumyōzōshi* was written in a period during which other famous works of literary criticism were composed. During the late Heian period, the aristocrats had been weakened by the emerging military power, so they tended to tenaciously linger on the artistic values of the past. In that particular period *Korai fūteishō*, *Kindai shūka*, *Maigetsushō* 毎月抄 (Monthly Notes, ca. 1219), and *Go-Toba in gokuden* saw the light.

The influence of such treaties on *Mumyōzōshi*, Marra goes on saying, is evident from beginning to end. The first thing we can notice is the critical approach to prose by means of poetry. In the essay on *Genji monogatari*, for example, the characters are judged on the basis of their poetical skills. The whole exile to Suma scene is judged commenting on the poems Genji exchanges with Murasaki, the woman he loves most, and Hanachirusato, sister of the concubine of Emperor Kiritsubo.

Talking about *Genji monogatari*, at a certain point, the author says:

Perhaps in the future someone will be able to write a novel superior to *Genji Monogatari* in the light of his knowledge of that work. But Murasaki knew only *Utsuho Monogatari*, *Taketori Monogatari*, and *Sumiyoshi Monogatari*, and so to have written such a masterpiece under such conditions cannot be the work of an ordinary being. (Marra 1984, 137)

This is the same idea Teika expresses in his *Meigetsuki* 明月記 (The Record of the Clear Moon, 1180-1235), when, talking about *Genji monogatari*, he says:

"Wild words and fancy phrases", though it may be, this is a work of extraordinary genius. "The more I look up to it, the higher it seems; the more I probe into it, the more solid it seems". How dare anyone discuss it thoughtlessly? (Harper, Shirane 2015, 169)

#### 4 Traces of *Genji monogatari* in *Shinkokinshū*

In *Shinkokinshū*, which contains 1,978 poems (with minor differences depending on the version), there are thirty-three poems that refer to a poem of *Genji monogatari*. If we include in the scope the poems that simply allude to the *monogatari* without clearly taking a particular poem as reference, or those that have some resemblance with a poem of the *monogatari*, the number grows to fifty-one.

These poems inside the anthology are so distributed: 2+2<sup>10</sup> in the books on spring; 6+3 in the book on summer; 6+3 in the books on autumn; 4+2 in the book on winter; 2+2 in the book on grieving; 3+0 in the book on travel; 7+0 in the books on love; 3+6 in the books of miscellaneous. As can be seen, most of these poems are concentrated in the books on four seasons, meanwhile there are none in the gratulatory book and in the last two books that contain religious poems. This fact is quite interesting, as almost all the *honka* (original poems) are not simply descriptive seasonal poems, but strongly express human feelings; so, this kind of re-contextualization seems to be consistent with Teika's concept of a perfect *honkadori*. Among other things, he thought that one of the fundamental prerequisites for a good allusive variation was that the theme or the atmosphere should be renewed in the new poem.

If we look at the poems of *Shinkokinshū* that, in one way or another, refer to *Genji monogatari*, we can see that some chapters of the work are preferred over others. The two that poets of *shinkokinjidai* seem to have appreciated most are “Kiritsubo” 桐壺 (The Paulownia Pavilion) and “Yūgao”. We can possibly find the key of this in *Mumyōzōshi*, where, in the passage dealing with *Genji monogatari*, the author says:

“Which of the chapters do you think is the best and the most moving?” “How could there be a chapter superior to ‘Kiritsubo’? From its opening words, ‘In a certain reign...’, down to Genji’s coming-of-age ceremony, an intimately sad mood permeates this chapter as regards tone and content”.

[...] “‘Yūgao’ is a most touching chapter that arouses our sympathy”. (Marra 1984, 137)

With regards to the poets whose poems in *Shinkokinshū* were most inspired by *Genji monogatari*, we can give the following numbers: Fujiwara no Teika: 4+2; Fujiwara no Ietaka 家隆 (1158-1237): 2+1; Fujiwara no Yorizane 頼実 (1155-1225): 1+1; Fujiwara no Yoshitsune: 4+2;

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<sup>10</sup> The first digit refers to the poems that present a real *honkadori*; the second one indicates the number of poems that just present some kind of similarity with a poem contained in *Genji monogatari*.

Go-Toba: 3; Shokushi Naishinnō 式子内親王 (1149-1201): 2+2; Shunzei's daughter: 3+0.

It is interesting to notice how all of them were closely related with Go-Toba or his *kadan*. Three of them are particularly interesting in the way they handle poetic materials: they are Shunzei's daughter, Fujiwara no Teika, and Go-Toba himself. I chose not to put Yoshit-sune in this number because, even though he proves to be quite fond of *Genji monogatari*, he is not so innovative in treating *honka* taken from Murasaki's masterpiece, at least if we confine our analysis to the poems selected for *Shinkokinshū*.

#### 4.1 Shunzei's Daughter

The following *waka* is by Shunzei's daughter, and it is contained in the second book on autumn of *Shinkokinshū*.

515	とふ人もあらしふきそふ秋はきて木の葉にうづむ宿の道芝	
	<i>tou hito mo</i>	Nobody will pay me a visit any more
	<i>arashi fukisou</i>	Autumn has come and
	<i>aki wa kite</i>	its impetuously blowing wind
	<i>ko no ha ni uzumu</i>	has covered with tree leaves
	<i>yado no michishiba</i>	the grassy path to my house. <sup>11</sup>

This *waka* was composed for the *Sengohyakuban utaawase* and in judging it Fujiwara no Teika affirmed that autumn melancholy was overwhelming and well linked to the idea of passion. Actually, the poem is based on two *honka*. The first is an anonymous poem of the third book of *Shūishū*:

205	とふ人も今はあらしの山風に入松虫の声ぞかなしき	
	<i>tou hito mo</i>	Nobody will pay me a visit any more.
	<i>ima wa arashi no</i>	While I am waiting for that person,
	<i>yamakaze ni</i>	here in Arashiyama,
	<i>hito matsumushi no</i>	the wind blows from the mountain
	<i>koe zo kanashiki</i>	and the crickets' voice sadly echoes.

The second one is from the “Hahakigi” chapter of *Genji monogatari*:

<sup>11</sup> The poem number refers to the numeration in Tanaka, Akase 1992 (Author's transl.).



The *waka* by Shunzei's daughter is interesting in many respects. First of all, she introduces the image of the wind, which is quite typical of Uji in *Genji monogatari*, but not in former poetry. Moreover, withered fields make the reader think of the mountain village where Ōikimi lives. But there is more. The expression *okimayoi* をきまよひ contains an emotional element, *mayou* まよふ, reminiscent of Ōikimi's grief nestled in the locution *okidokoronaki* おきどころなき.

Another detail that we can notice is the inversion in the second line of the words *sode* 袖 and *tsuyu* 露. Furthermore, the line of the *honka*, *irokawaru sode*, which refers to the mourning dress, in the new poem is changed into *irokawaru tsuyu* 色かはる露, a locution that, on alluding once again to the word *kōru* 紅涙 (tears of blood), evokes the image of the dew condensing on autumn leaves. In so doing, the poetess can recall Ōikimi's sorrow very clearly.

#### 4.2 Fujiwara no Teika

This capability of adding elements of novelty and giving new shape to classical diction is perfectly in line with Teika's poetics. In this regard, the following *waka* by Teika contained in the summer book of *Shinkokinshū* can be considered emblematic:

247 夕暮はいづれの雲のなごりとはなたち花に風のふくらん	
<i>yūgure wa</i>	The wind is blowing
<i>izure no kumo no</i>	at sunset
<i>nagori tote</i>	amid the blossoming orange trees.
<i>hanatachibana ni</i>	Which cloud
<i>kaze no fukuran</i>	is it a memory of?

The cloud the poet is alluding to is the one produced by a funeral pyre. At the time people still believed that the smoke produced by the piles of wood incinerating corpses would become clouds.

In this case, Teika took two poems to compose his verses. The first *honka* is a poem from the "Yūgao" chapter of *Genji monogatari*:

見し人の煙を雲とながむれば夕べの空もむつまじきかな	
<i>mishi hito no</i>	When I stare at the clouds
<i>keburī o kumo to</i>	that seem to me the smoke
<i>nagamureba</i>	from her funeral pyre,
<i>yūbe no sora mo</i>	oh, I end up cherishing
<i>mutsumashiki kana</i>	even the dusk sky. <sup>14</sup>

14 Abe et al. 1970-76, 1: 262.



The second poem Teika recalls is one by poetess Sagami included in the book on summer of *Goshūishū* 後拾遺集 (Later Collection of Gleanings, 1086):

214 さみだれの空なつかしく匂ふかな花たち花に風や吹くらん  
*samidare no* The rain falls from the sky  
*sora natsukashiku* and there you can smell  
*niou kana* an intense melancholic scent:  
*hanatachibana ni* maybe the wind is blowing  
*kaze ya fukuran* amid the blossoming orange trees.<sup>15</sup>

In this *waka*, Teika cleverly combines elements taken from the two quoted poems. From the one of *Genji monogatari*, he takes the image of the funeral pyre smoke, meanwhile, from the poem by Sagami he pulls up the scent of blossoming orange trees and, consequently, the summer setting. His highly personal touch is given by enriching the image of the funeral pyre smoke, traditionally linked to a feeling of nostalgic melancholy, with the fragrance of the *hanatachibana* 花たち花, an evocative flower which reminds of a beloved person or of a lost lover, and that had a symbolic connection to the cuckoo, a bird considered a messenger to the afterlife world.

A synesthetic style is typical of Teika. In this regard, we can quote another poem of his, contained in *Shinkokinshū* as well. This poem, even though does not contain any reference to a particular poem of *Genji monogatari*, perfectly blends with Shunzei's enthusiastic opinions about Murasaki's masterpiece, particularly on the "Hana no en" 花宴 (Under the Cherry Blossoms) chapter: *hana no en no maki wa kotonenaru mono nari* 花の宴の巻はことにえんなる物なり, "the chapter "Under the Cherry Blossoms" is particularly fascinating" (Shinpen kokka taikan 1983-92, 5: 294). These opinions had a great impact on the poetic production of the poets represented in *Shinkokinshū*, especially for what concerned the image of the blurred moon (*oborozuki* 朧月), an image doomed to become one of the most typical elements of the anthology.

One of the earliest examples of this image in classical poetry is found in a *waka* by Ōe no Chisato 大江千里 (ninth-tenth century), a *kokinjidai* poet, chosen three centuries later for *Shinkokinshū*:

<sup>15</sup> The number refers to the numeration in Kubota, Hirata 1994 (Author's transl.).

55 てりもせずくもりもはてぬ春の夜のおぼろ月夜にしく物ぞなき  
*teri mo sezu* Nothing is more beautiful  
*kumori mo hatenu* than the pale moon  
*haru no yo no* of a spring night,  
*oborozukuyo ni* neither crystal clear  
*shiku mono zo naki* nor veiled by clouds.<sup>16</sup>

The *kotobagaki* that precedes these verses reads: “A poem on the topic “pale moon, neither crystal clear nor veiled by clouds”, a line of a poem about a spring night in Jaling, contained in Bai Juyi’s collection”. Teika took this Chisato’s *waka* as a *honka* for the following poem, chosen for the *Shinkokinshū* as well:

40 おほぞらは梅のにほひに霞みつゝくもりもはてぬ春の夜の月  
*ōzora wa* The celestial vault  
*mume no noio ni* is veiled by  
*kasumitsutsu* the plum trees scent.  
*kumori mo hatenu* And the spring night moon  
*haru no yo no tsuki* is clouded only in part.

Tanaka (2004) points out that this *waka* ends a triplet of poems extremely coherent in terms of topic. In fact all of them focus on a vague spring atmosphere. And maybe, it is not a coincidence that the first of these three poems is Teika’s famous poem on the floating bridge of dreams (*Shinkokinshū*, poem no. 38) which contains a strong allusion to *Genji monogatari*.

### 4.3 Ex-Emperor Go-Toba

If Teika did often show a strong sensibility for olfactive elements, Go-Toba seems to be more skilful in handling visual elements in his verses, particularly the light.

Let’s take as an example the following *waka*, included in the book of mourning poems of *Shinkokinshū*:

<sup>16</sup> The poem is included in *Chisato shū* 千里集 (no. 71), Ōe no Chisato’s personal collection also known as *Kudai waka* 句題和歌. In *Genji monogatari*, the last two lines are recited by lady Oborozukiyo herself even though with a slight variation: *niru mono zo naki* instead of *shiku mono zo naki*. See Abe et al. 1970-76, 1: 426.

<p>803 なき人のかたみの雲やしほるらんゆうべの雨に色はみえねど  <i>naki hito no</i>  <i>katami no kumo ya</i>  <i>shioruran</i>  <i>yūbe no ame ni</i>  <i>iro wa mienedo</i></p>	<p>Will the cloud made of smoke,  last keepsake of the one who is no more,  be faded out by now?  In the sunset rain  you cannot see its colour.</p>
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This poem is based on the same *honka* of *Genji monogatari* we have already quoted (*mishi hito no*). Here Go-Toba uses once again a technique he is familiar with: he takes from the *honka* some elements but, at the same time, he introduces semantic deviations, creating a sort of short-circuit in the reader's mind. In the *honka* what the poet can't see is the image of the person he once loved, but in Go-Toba's *waka* it is the smoke itself that becomes invisible. In the *honka* this smoke is quite visible because it is silhouetted against the burning sunset sky, but in Go-Toba's poem the background is given by the rainy clouds that make the rising smoke almost indistinguishable. Terashima (2015, 615) points out in passing that Go-Toba wrote this poem in 1206, just one year later the official presentation at court of *Shinkokinshū*, and that was one of the last he wrote taking inspiration from *Genji monogatari*. And this makes us wonder if the reason is to be found in the breaking of the relationship of collaboration with Teika, who was so fond of Murasaki's masterpiece.

Another similar example of Go-Toba technique is the following poem, always contained in *Shinkokinshū*:

<p>433 秋の露やたもとにいたく結ぶらんながき夜あかず宿る月かな  <i>aki no tsuyu ya</i>  <i>tamoto ni itaku</i>  <i>musuburan</i>  <i>nagaki yo akazu</i>  <i>yadoru tsuki kana</i></p>	<p>Maybe my sleeves  will abundantly moisten  with autumn dew,  and tirelessly in there  the moon will dwell all night long.</p>
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Needless to say, the dew on the sleeve is, once again, nothing more than the metaphoric image for the tears shed because of the autumnal melancholy. In most cases it was the poet who spent the night admiring the moon without ever getting bored of her, but Go-Toba inverts the elements and imagines it is the moon that does not get tired to reflect herself in dewdrops. Once again, the *honka* is a poem contained in *Genji monogatari*:

鈴虫の声のかぎりを尽くしても長き夜あかずふる涙かな  
*suzumushi no* Even if, on crying,  
*koe no kagiri o* I had to consume my voice  
*tsukushitemo* like these crickets do,  
*nagaki yo akazu* the long autumn night would not  
*furu namida kana* belong enough for all my tears.<sup>17</sup>

This poem is recited by a *nyōbō* 女房 (court lady), which the Emperor Kiritsubo had sent to Genji's grandmother, when weeping she takes leave from the old woman. For this reason, the tears mentioned in the *honka* are related to a tangible and deep sorrow felt in a concrete situation. On the contrary, in Go-Toba's poem, the tears in which the moon shines are just the tears shed, as in the previous example, because of the autumnal melancholy. In spite of that, thanks to the use of allusive variation, the pain of the *nyōbō* echoes through his verses. Moreover, it is useful to note that in *Shinkokinshū* this poem is in between two poems (no. 432 by Princess Shokushi and no. 434 by Minamoto no Michiteru) that contain an allusion to the love dimension, since they make use of the *topos* of the abandoned woman spending the autumn night in solitude.

We can find a different kind of inversion in the following *Shinkokinshū waka*:

471 野原より露のゆかりをたづねきてわが衣手に秋風ぞ吹く  
*nohara yori* The autumn wind,  
*tsuyu no yukari o* searching for tears  
*tazunete kite* so intimate with dewdrops,  
*wa ga koromode ni* comes from the fields  
*akikaze zo fuku* and blows on my sleeves.

In these lines we can find an allusion to a poem Fujitsubo sends to Prince Genji, in which she is actually talking of their illegitimate child:

袖ぬるる露のゆかりと思ふにもなほうとまれぬやまとなでしこ  
*sode nururu* Even though it is  
*tsuyu no yukari to* for that Yamato dianthus  
*omou ni mo* my sleeves get wet with dew,  
*nao utomarenu* I do not have the heart  
*yamato nadeshiko* to scorn it.<sup>18</sup>

In Go-Toba's *waka*, maternal love becomes a melancholic feeling of frustration depending on the cooling of a lover's passion, the latter being represented, as usual, by the autumn wind. Once again here

<sup>17</sup> Abe et al. 1970-76, 1: 108.

<sup>18</sup> Abe et al. 1970-76, 1: 402.

dew drops are nothing but the lady's tears. The reason being that in the natural scenery a metaphor hides: the autumn wind is nothing but a man and the dewdrops (or tears) represent a woman.

## 5 Conclusions

The love and respect often shown by the Japanese scholars to the works of the past reached, at the beginning of the Kamakura period, an undoubtedly remarkable level. The poets, feeling the pressing need to breathe new life into their art, looked at the masterpieces of the Heian period. But they did not limit their attention to the first *chokusenshū* 勅撰集 (imperial anthologies), in particular the first three ones, the *sandaishū*, or to the private poetic collections or *utaawase*. Under the vigorous thrust of the thought of Fujiwara no Shunzei, in the poetic circles of the era they began to turn with increasing determination to *Genji monogatari* in order to draw inspiration for their new compositions. This attitude is reflected quite clearly not only in the poetic contests of the time, but also in the eighth *chokusenshū*, the *Shinkokinshū*, considered a faithful mirror of the court poetics of that period.

There were many poets who, tempted by an easy job, turned to *Genji* to create new material. However, just few of them succeeded in managing this material in a truly original way, giving life to deep but enjoyable verses, classic in shape but fresh and original in spirit. In this respect, Fujiwara no Teika, Shunzei's daughter and the Ex-Emperor Go-Toba proved to have extraordinary abilities and incredible literary sensitivity.

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