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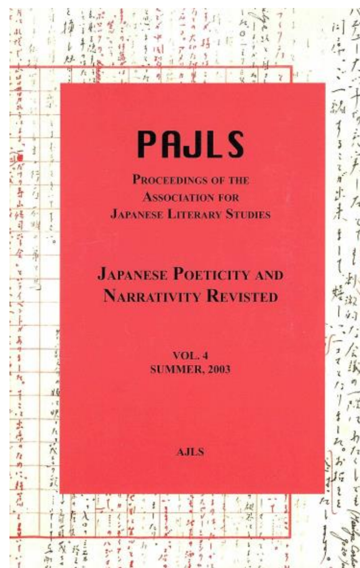


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# POETRY FIT TO SING: TACHIBANA MORIBE AND THE CHŌKA REVIVAL

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> ... a long poem is a test of Invention which I take
> to be the Polar Star of Poetry, as Fancy is the
> Sails, and Imagination the Rudder.[1]
> John Keats

> I hold that a long poem does not exist,
> I maintain that the phrase, a long poem,
> is simple a contradiction in terms.[2]
> Edgar Allan Poe

The question of the optimal length of a poem has occasioned debates and commentary on both sides of the globe, but in Tokugawa, Japan this discussion often assumed a pronounced ideological cast. In eighteenth-century Japan, the revival of chōka was largely a byproduct of *kokugaku*, whose scholarly methods enabled the interpretation of this ancient verse form and whose world view prompted a reorientation of aesthetic—and specifically poetic—scale. The revival of this long poetic form was one of various manifestations of a quest for expanded narrative possibilities in poetry, a development that was in part a reaction against progressive compression of form. The chōka poetics of Tachibana Moribe (1781–1849) advances beyond a preoccupation with the optimal length of a poem to address its optimal sound. In order to appreciate the significance of Moribe's poetics, it is necessary first to consider some developments that preceded him, particularly regarding narrativity and aesthetic scale in waka.

Narrativity has been defined variously, but for the present purposes, it may be described as a tendency for the characters and actions to move away from close domination of the subject's immediate world.[3] In terms of Japanese poetry, one may say that any development in the direction of

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[1] Letter to Benjamin Bailey, 8 October, 1817, in *Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 170.
[2] From his "The Poetic Principle," in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1971), p. 564.
[3] This definition owes in part to Earl Miner. See his *Japanese Linked Poetry: An Account with Translations of Renga and Haikai Sequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 153.

narrativity has been accompanied by a tendency away from the interiority that is generally associated with lyricism. Given the brevity of commonly practiced poetic forms during the Tokugawa period, developments in narrativity were also often marked by formal features that augmented length, either in the poem itself or by association with other verses or prose.

The chōka revival took place within the context of a broader quest for expanded narrative possibilities in Japanese poetry. Other manifestations of this quest, which I have examined in an earlier study,[4] included at least three phenomena. First was a tendency to employ headnotes—some of prodigious length—rather than the classically sanctioned *daiei* to provide the context of the poem. This differed from the familiar use of waka in, say, travel diaries and the like, because rather than using a verse to provide a moment of heightened lyricism to the prose, the headnote often works in the opposite direction: to fill in narrative gaps left by the insufficiency of the thirty-one syllables. Second was the use of *rensaku*, or sequences of verses. These differ from either renga or the thematic sequences of the medieval period (e.g., *hyakushu*) in that they often describe a process or an event through an arrangement of verses of tanka. Third is the practice of *eishi*, or composition on historical themes. These evoke a specific, well-known historical event, thus drawing the reader's mind to a broader narrative context. Like the chōka revival, these other manifestations of a quest for expanded narrativity are, significantly, seen chiefly among poets from a *kokugaku* background.

A systematic poetics devoted specifically to chōka arose only in the nineteenth century, but this was preceded by important pronouncements from representatives of various schools. These serve to highlight some of the critical issues that would prove perennial in the revival, and are indispensable to our overview.

Kamo no Mabuchi (1697–1769), a far more prolific writer of chōka than any of his Tokugawa predecessors, boasted several dozen examples in his various collections and diaries.[5] In his *Niimanabi* (1765), a tract

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[4] See my "Macroscopic vs. Microscopic: Spatial Sensibilities in Waka of the Bakumatsu Period," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 58:2 (Dec. 1998), pp. 513–42.

[5] For a treatment of the evolution of Mabuchi's chōka, see Ikeda Junpei, "Tokugawa jidai chōka ron," in *Tokugawa jidai waka no kenkyū*, ed. Kubota Utsubo and Matsumura Eiichi (Tokyo: Ritsumeikan Shuppanbu, 1932), pp. 175–82. In stating that "Whether in ancient or modern times, there are no chōka that rival the ingenuity of the *Man'yōshū* and [especially] Hitomaro," Mabuchi's brief tract *Kofū shōgen* indicates that as late as 1770, he continued to idealize

aimed at beginning students, he encouraged the study of chōka, arguing that "tanka values only an elevated spirit and a rich tone, necessitating careful selection of words," but notes that "some words that sound unpolished in tanka may rather produce a pleasing, antiquated effect when used in chōka." The difference was not merely one of diction; the two forms are respectively suited for expressing unlike states of mind. "In ancient times, when one's thought were many, one expressed them by composing a chōka—or several tanka. People of later ages, it seems, put many things into a single verse of tanka, which is like stuffing many objects into a small lunch bag. This produces a vulgar sense and a tone that is unsuitable for waka."[6] Though not an inherently superior form, chōka is nevertheless seen as optimal when "one's thoughts are many," a state of mind that had for centuries not been recognized as conducive to poetry. By acknowledging such mental and emotional complexity as a legitimate matrix for poetic expression, Mabuchi was essentially reversing a centuries-long tendency toward compression of form and focus in Japanese poetry, as may be seen in his claim that "In Yamato, too, from ancient times it was in chōka that one could turn all thoughts outward."[7]

Mabuchi was not the first to attempt to revive the chōka form, but his articulation of its merits is without precedent. Moreover, he realized his ideals in numerous compositions which, in spite of their often seemingly self-conscious archaisms, represent a decided stylistic advance over the efforts of his predecessors. In many respects, however, it can be argued that it was Mabuchi's literary progeny who really excelled at the chōka form. In the Suzunoya-ha, for example, Motoori Ōhira (1756–1833) greatly expanded the subject range of the genre, and Ōhira's disciple, Kanō Morohira (1806–1847), brought the archaic form to high literary standards. Yet Mabuchi's position as the initiator of the revival is secure; even the debate on chōka in the early years of Meiji can trace its roots back to him.[8]

Of the various schools that grew out of Mabuchi's stylistic evolution, it is surprising in some respects that the Suzunoya-ha—the literary progeny of Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801)—would make such important contributions to the chōka revival. Norinaga's theory and practice of waka poetry lay somewhere between the emphasis on the "Way" in his

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chōka of the Nara period. *Nihon kagaku taikei* [hereafter *NKT*], ed. Sasaki Nobutsuna, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1956–63), p. 234.

[6] *Niimanabi*, in *NKT* VII:227.

[7] From *Kokkaron okusetsu* (1744), in *NKT* VII:130.

[8] Yamamoto Kashō, *Kamo Mabuchi ron* (Kyoto: Hatsune Shobō, 1963), pp. 254–5.

philological research and the purely literary approach to such works as *The Tale of Genji*, but nowhere do his works devote much attention to chōka, and the age of the *Shin Kokinshū* which he idealized for poetic expression was lacking in significant examples of that form. Though he did recommend to beginning students that "One should also recite chōka,"[9] yet he not only did not accord the form any special status, but denied that it had any special characteristics. In his *Isonokami sasamegoto* (after 1763), he wrote:

> Chōka, tanka, konpon, sedōka are all categories that were assigned later. In the Age of the Gods, no such divisions existed; the "Yakumo" verse was the beginning of all waka, short or long. Anciently, they simply regulated the tone (*shirabe*) with five or seven syllables, with no regard for the number of lines. Within moderation, they recited verses expressing the full range of what was in their thoughts, without saying "This is a chōka," or "This is a tanka."[10]

Although Mabuchi's name is now almost synonymous with the Nativist movement to recover Japan's primeval past, the ideological and stylistic evolution that took place over the course of his career spawned schools representing a broad spectrum of thought. It is of interest in the present discussion to note that positive assessment of chōka is common to all of these factions, though they agree on little else. Illustrative of this is what came to be known as the Edo School, one of whose founding figures was Murata Harumi (1746–1811). In many respects, Harumi's theory and practice of waka—which emphasized urbane refinement, accorded high esteem to Chinese literary precedent, and generally eschewed Japan's earliest poetry as too crude to serve as models[11]—would seem to be furthest removed of all these schools from the ideals with which his

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[9] From *Uiyamabumi*, in *Uiyamabumi, Suzunoya tōmonroku*, ed. Muraoka Tsunetsugu (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1934), p. 20.

[10] *NKT* VII:323. The elusive genre *konpon* is mentioned in the *mana* preface of the *Kokinshū*, along with tanka, chōka, and sedōka, as a type of waka, but it is unclear what type of verse this was. It is now believed to have been an earlier, alternate name for sedōka.

[11] Harumi's relative disregard for the *Man'yōshū* is evident where he claimed that many of its verses "begin with a good configuration (*sugata*), but end with a broken tone (*shirabe kudakeru*)." From *Utagatari*, in *NKT* VIII:153–4. At the same time, he claimed that "the tone of which the Master (i.e., Mabuchi) spoke may be learned from reading the *Kokinshū*." From *Inagaki Ōhira ni okuru fumi*, in *NKT* VIII:122. His high regard for Chinese poetry appears throughout his writing.

teacher came to be associated. But Harumi's views on chōka are the exception to all of this, according closely with the views of Mabuchi.

Harumi viewed waka as cramped compared to the breadth afforded by kanshi. In his collection of essays, *Nishigorinoya zuihitsu*, he wrote: "Whether in China or Japan, poetry is exactly the same sort of thing ... [but] Chinese poetry arranges things broadly (*koto hiroku totonōrite*) ... [while] in Japanese poetry things are narrow and, in comparison with the Chinese, there are many passages that feel insufficient." The one form of waka that Harumi seems to consider a welcome exception is chōka. He continues: "It is only chōka of the *Man'yōshū* that resemble the ballads (*ke-hsing*) of the T'ang period." [12] Harumi attempted to rectify this narrowness in two ways: by incorporating themes and images from the Chinese tradition of poetry; and, through the revival of chōka.[13]

Though Harumi's interest in chōka may have been initiated by his envy of the narrative scope of Chinese ballads—a comparison to which his teacher would no doubt have objected vehemently—his assessment of the genre itself accords more nearly with Mabuchi's ideas than any other aspect of Harumi's poetics. This is evident in his essay *Utagatari* (before 1800), in which he wrote that "superior chōka are to be found only in the *Man'yōshū*," and that "those since the *Kokinshū* are extremely inept." A welcome exception to the generally poor quality of post-*Kokinshū* chōka included those of Mabuchi, "many of which use diction of later ages in an ancient style. This is a configuration (*sugata*) that began with him, but in order to compose chōka in the present age, it is difficult not to follow this style." Otherwise, in composing chōka, "one must not fail to study the *Man'yōshū*," there being no other models worthy of imitation.[14] Nowhere else does Harumi recommend the *Man'yōshū* as an exclusive model for

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[12] Murata Harumi, *Nishigorinoya zuihitsu*, in *Nihon zuihitsu taisei. Dai 1-ki*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), pp. 327–8. This comparison is echoed in Kasai Inze's (1763–1823) preface to Harumi's major collection, *Kotojirishū*: "Waka are *shi*: tanka are the four-line stanzas (*chüeh-chü*), and Chōka are like ballads (*ke-hsing*)." *Kotojirishū*, in *Wabun wakashū, jō*, Nihon meicho zenshū, Edo bungei no bu 24 (Tokyo: Nihon Meicho Zenshū Kankōkai, 1927), p. 219.

[13] Ibi Takashi, "Murata Harumi: waka to kanshi no kōsaku," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 61:3 (March 1996), pp. 114–5.

[14] *Utagatari*, in *NKT* VIII:162. This same conciliatory attitude is seen in the debate in 1799, sparked by Ōhira's compilation of the chōka collection *Yasoura no tama* (compilation begun in 1785, completed in 1836), in which disagreement was heated over what constituted Mabuchi's ideal style. There is a notable degree of accord, however, on the style of chōka. See *Inagake Ōhira ni okuru fumi* (*NKT* VIII:112–24), *Murata Harumi ni kotouru fumi* (*NKT* VIII:125–34), and *Futatabi Inagake Ōhira ni okuru fumi* (*NKT* VIII:135–50).

style, and he even has measured praise here for his teacher's chōka, recommending his style, though he is loath otherwise to endorse post-*Man'yōshū* chōka.[15]

While various schools of Nativism came increasingly to dominate waka theory and practice, they were not without opposition. Most of the opposing camp, which tended to idealize the *Kokinshū*, paid scant attention to the revival. There were, however, pronouncements in opposition to chōka as a genre, some of the most noteworthy by Kagawa Kageki (1768–1843). Kageki wrote that he had "never corrected [students'] chōka," not because he was unable to do so, "but rather because they are a thing one does not correct." He notes the difficulties of "composing chōka in the present age," arguing that while "for tanka it is sufficient to study the *Kokinshū*," there is no similar guide for chōka, that "since the *Man'yōshū* is of remote antiquity, without deliberate selection its tone and diction naturally are not suitable [models], and therefore one cannot rely on it the way one would study the *Kokinshū* for tanka." Beyond the lack of worthy models, Kageki questions the value of the form itself for contemporary poets, wondering if "it is not rather bothersome and unprofitable to write long [verses]." He regards his own chōka compositions as embarrassing reminders of his foolish youth, when he was enamored of the *Man'yōshū*, and laments the fact that "not a few of these, written in authentic *Man'yō* style, remain with old friends, and are the butt of jokes." The real problem with chōka, however, lies in their "shallow emotive content," which "is very clear when compared with tanka." Kageki enjoins his readers, "if [they] happen to have composed [some chōka] in response to people's wishes, that [they] should stop henceforth." He agrees with the opposition on only one point: "As Master Mabuchi said, chōka should actually have ended with Hitomaro."[16]

In another treatise, Kageki's views on chōka are even less sparing:

> Moreover, one should not impair the form for the sake of reason (rikutsu). The very length of such things as headnotes and chōka is so distracting that in some cases they even [manage to]

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[15] In *Utagatari*, for example, Harumi writes: "Ancient chōka are adroit in style, and their mode of expression is broad, using few words to produce depth of feeling. Later chōka are of an inept style, narrow in their range of expression, prolix and yet emotionally shallow, careless ..." *NKT* VIII:163.

[16] From *Zuisho shisetsu*, in *Kagawa Kageki-ō zenshū*, ed. Sasaki Nobutsuna, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1898), pp. 39–41. The source of Mabuchi's alleged statement is not clear.

> disguise their inferior tone (shirabe). But tanka is a truly legitimate form (seitō naru mono), because one does not have the leeway to repair ambiguities. Thus, many of those who often indulge in chōka or headnotes are inept at waka poetry.[17]

Paralleling a growing interest in scope and narrativity was an increasing concern with how a verse should sound. One concept appearing in waka poetics of all schools in the late Tokugawa period was *shirabe* ("tone," "tuning"), a concept whose precise meaning is often elusive but which always includes elements of the auditory effect of a verse. Whether with Mabuchi's famous dictum that "in ancient poems, tone (*shirabe*) was the main concern, because they were sung,"[18] or with Kageki's rejoinder that "poetry ... is an expression of the rhythm (*shirabe*) of the universe ... like the sound things make when struck by winds sweeping from the sky,"[19] their respective poetics proceeds, even if inconsistently, from acoustic imagery.

Waka poetics, already well developed by the end of the Heian period, had, until the eighteenth century, been devoted almost entirely to diction, subject, and treatment. Rules governing usage waxed ever more arcane, while the essence of the art was often veiled in the mystery of secret transmissions. One aspect that is conspicuously absent from most early poetics is the question of how a verse should *sound*. Although "alliteration, consonance, and assonance are found in the earliest Japanese songs and were used by poets of all periods," yet "such techniques never became obligatory in any poetic form, nor were any rules ever formulated governing their use."[20] Moreover, pitch stress, one of the salient features of the Japanese language, never played a role in traditional schemes of versification.

It is probably no accident that attention to auditory effects in waka should parallel the chōka revival, for the overall auditory effects of cadence and arrangement of line are more readily apparent in that form. Building on the somewhat elusive concept of *shirabe*, the more concrete idea of *kaku* began to appear, most commonly in treatments of chōka. The term *kaku* had been important in kanshi poetics, having appeared as early

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[17] From *Keien ibun*, in *Kagawa Kageki-ō zenshū*, vol. 1, p. 198. Also in *NKT* VIII:242.
[18] From *Niimanabi*, in *NKT* VII:218.
[19] From Niimanabi iken, in NKT VIII:216; also in Kagawa Kageki-ō zenshū I:157.
[20] Robert H. Brower, "Japanese," in *Versification, Major Language Types: Sixteen Essays*, ed. W. K. Wimsatt (New York: Modern Language Associate, New York University Press, 1972), p. 44.

as Kūkai's *Bunkyō hifuron* (820), but although other concepts from Chinese theory were adapted to teachings on native poetry, *kaku* did not appear in waka poetics until the late Tokugawa period.[21] Translating *kaku* is something of a challenge owing to the varying nuances with which it is used by different writers. In Chinese poetics, which was the ultimate source of both the term and the concept, *kaku* (Ch. *ko*) refers to established "types" or "poetic frameworks."[22] In the chōka poetics of late Tokugawa Japan, the study of "types" tended to focus on their auditory effects, and thus for the purposes of the present discussion, an optimal rendering might simply be "prosody." *Kaku* is further divided into *kukaku* and *kakaku*, referring to the prosody of the line and of the entire poem respectively.

A body of poetics devoted exclusively to chōka appeared in the nineteenth century, only after the practice of this type of waka had been fully reestablished. Several minor tracts could be cited, but the most important works and their authors include *Chōka kotoba no tamaginu* (1801) by Oguni Shigetoshi (1766–1819), *Chōka senkaku* (1839) by Tachibana Moribe, and *Chōka tamagoto* (1861) by Mutobe Yoshika (1806–1863). Of these three, Moribe demonstrates the greatest sophistication of method.

Moribe's views on chōka are developed systematically in his *Chōka senkaku*, a work composed midway in his career in Bunsei 2 (1819) and apparently circulated among his disciples before finally being printed in Meiji 6 (1873). Like significant works on chōka both before and after, Moribe's theory is built around the concept of *kaku*, but while matters of prosody had become a common concern in waka poetics in general and chōka poetics in particular, Moribe illustrates the auditory effects of native poetry with unprecedented clarity. Words, which he describes as "the sound of the heart,"[23] are to be valued for sonorousness as well as for sense.

Another important concept is *aya* (pattern, design), a term which in Moribe's poetics, as in Norinaga's, often tends to a meaning closer to

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[21] Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, "Kakaku gaisetsu," in *Tanka kōza*, ed. Yamamoto Mitsuo, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Kaizōsha, 1932), p. 50.
[22] John Timothy Wixted employs these terms in his translation of Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *Five Hundred Years of Chinese Poetry, 1150–1650: The Chin, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 70, 113.
[23] *Chōka senkaku* opens with the following lines: "Among all living creatures, there is none so noble as man, and there is nothing more noble about man than his heart (*kokoro*) ... the sound of which is words. Thus, there is nothing in this world more noble than words." *Shintei zōho Tachibana Moribe zenshū* [hereafter *TMZ*], vol. 11 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Bijutsu, 1967), p. 7; *Nihon kagaku taikei, bekkan* [hereafter *NKTB*], vol. 9 (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1992), p. 239.

"embellishment." Applied to poetry, it is akin to the kind of linguistic patterns Roman Jakobson would have described as "structured regression."[24] Citing the "Jindaiki" from the *Nihon shoki*, Moribe argues that "the gods love the ornamentation [*aya*, which is glossed with the characters *birei* 美麗] of words." Moreover, "in ancient times when the ornamentation of words (*kotoba no aya*) was valued, to speak of *uta* was primarily to speak of *chōka*."[25]

It is evident that, for Moribe, chōka constitutes more than just a fascinating antique; like many other poets of his age, he laments the narrowness to which waka had succumbed.[26] Implying that contemporary waka neglected large areas of reality, Moribe cites the various uses of chōka in the *Man'yōshū* and other early texts—descriptions of imperial visits and hunting expeditions, lamentations, warfare, various rites and ceremonies, and so forth—and queries: "How could such things be treated with tanka?" He continues by maintaining that even if "a person who eschews chōka contrives to make do with tanka by including lengthy headnotes, he will not express more than a fraction [of what he feels]. Now waka is a thing that is engendered by a surfeit of wonder at something (*mono ni tsukite kantan suru amari*), and that which never treats great events is marginal poetry (*mune taru uta ni wa arazu*)."[27] In other words, big things need big poetry, and consistently ignoring big things trivialized a poet and his work.

A strikingly unique aspect of Moribe's chōka poetics is his linking of chōka and music, in particular *gagaku*. While others had acknowledged the importance of the sound effects of chōka, only Moribe posited a link with music. In *Chōka senkaku*, he cites examples of poetry that was indisputably sung, namely *saibara* and *kagura*, and maintains that likewise, "ancient chōka generally followed the melodies of *gagaku* of the period, and were 'tuned' in order to be readily sung (*jiki ni utau beku shirabe nashitsureba*) ..." When tanka were used in songs, they had to be adapted by repeating or adding lines, but "the prosody (*kukaku*) of chōka

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[24] Reuven Tsur applied Jakobson's theories to analysis of poetic effects in his *What Makes Sound Patterns Expressive?: The Poetic Mode of Speech Perception* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992). See especially p. 56.
[25] *TMZ* XI:8; *NKTB* IX:240. For Norinaga's views on *aya*, see for example his *Ashiwake obune*, where he says: "Waka gives pattern (*aya*) to actual feelings ... it is not entirely without artifice." *NKT* VII:280.
[26] I document this concern in my "Macroscopic vs. Microscopic," especially pp. 528–9.
[27] *TMZ* XI:8–9; *NKTB* IX:240.

was directly [related to] the tunes of *gagaku*."[28] As proof of this, he argues that "all of the ancient waka in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* has been transmitted in song by the Bureau of Music (*gagakuryō*)."[29]

Moribe entertained the idea of a link between poetry and music well before writing *Chōka senkaku*, as is evident in his 1816 treatise on Shinto, *Shinpū mondō*. The question-and-answer format contains much fascinating discussion of waka, including an insistence on its inherent musicality:

> In ancient poetry, which was sung, there were necessarily types (*kaku*). If the poem did not accord well with its types, then it could not be called a true poem ... In attempting to be imbued [with the affection of the ancients], one first of all makes the ancient tuning (*shirabe*) his master, and composes according to the types (*kaku*) of a song piece (*utaimono*).[30]

Even the distinction between chōka and tanka was drawn in terms of musicality: "Tanka is merely something that expresses purport (*tada ishi o noburu made no mono*), and when it is sung, a tuning (*shirabe*) is added separately." As an illustration of this, Moribe compares the following anonymous verse from the *Man'yōshū*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ide aga koma | Giddyap, my steed, |
| hayaku yuki koso | hurry, and take me there: |
| Matsuchiyama | Mount Matsuchi— |
| matsuramu imo o | I wish to go soon and see |
| yukite haya mimu | my love, who must be waiting. |
| (MYS #3154) | |

with its *saibara* version

| | |
|---|---|
| Ide aga koma | Giddyap, my steed, |
| hayaku yuki kose | hurry and take me there: |
| Matsuchiyama | Mount Matsuchi— |
| aware | ah! |
| Matsuchiyama hare | Mount Matsuchi, oh, |
| Matsuchiyama | Mount Matsuchi— |
| matsuramu hito o | she who must be waiting— |

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[28] *TMZ* XI:9; *NKTB* IX:241.
[29] *TMZ* XI:11; *NKTB* IX:242.
[30] *TBZ* II:401, 402.

| | |
|---|---|
| yukite haya | I wish to go soon, |
| aware | ah! |
| yukite haya mimu | to go soon and see her. |

and concludes: "A thirty-one syllable poem has been turned into fifty-three syllables to accord with the beat."[31] Chōka differs in that the reduplications—unlike those of *saibara*—are there by design: "In chōka ... there is design (*aya*) in the reduplications, which sound indescribably elegant." Moreover, "this is a superior aspect of chōka, which were designed to be sung (*utau beku shitatetaru*)."[32] In the example of saibara—and of tanka used in song generally—the poetry preceded the music, but in ancient chōka, this order was reversed.

Moribe attempted to demonstrate these qualities through a complex system of scansion, another salient feature of his chōka poetics. While his predecessors had focused increasingly on matters of prosody, their paradigms for analyzing verses of chōka were rudimentary compared to Moribe's systematic approach. He identifies thirteen types of phrases (*ku*) as characteristic of chōka of the *Man'yōshū*, and assigns to each a peculiar symbol for use in scansion. Moreover, he insists that "these [thirteen] categories all play a part in what is called 'pattern' (*aya*),"[33] of which he identifies four types and likewise assigns a special character used in scansion. *Ku* are the means by which *aya* is achieved. Moribe's use of these scansion symbols is illustrated in the passage from Chōka senkaku (NKTB IX:254):

The chōka revival has been described here in the context of two major developments: a desire for expanded narrativity, and the emergence of a concern with auditory effects in waka poetics. Are the two related in any way? If the chōka revival was part of a quest for expanded narrative possibilities in waka poetry, did the preoccupation with how a verse

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[31] *TMZ* XI:11–12; *NKTB* IX:243–4. The *saibara* verse also appears in *Kagurauta, saibara, Ryōjin hishō, Kanginshū*, ed. Usuda Jingorō, Shinma Shin'ichi, Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 25 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1976), p. 123. Matsuchiyama, which is employed as a pivot word (*matsu*, "wait"), is located on the boundary between present-day Nara and Wakayama Prefectures.

[32] *TMZ* XI:14–5; *NKTB* IX:246. Far from seeing reduplication as tedious in effect, Moribe emphasized its artistic potential: "... there are always many [verses] that repeat the same thing, changing a few words each time. That sounds especially elegant ... it improves the tone (*shirabe*)." *TMZ* XI:16; *NKTB* IX:147–8.

[33] *TMZ* XI:19; *NKTB* IX:250. Here, Moribe uses the character *bun* 文.

萬葉巻二十八丁柿本朝臣人麻呂、從石見國別妻上來時歌、

石見のうみ　つぬの浦へ回を

浦なしと　人こそ見らめ

瀉なしと　人こそ見らめ

よしゑやし　浦はなけども

よしゑやし　瀉はなけども

いさなとり　海へびをさして　和多豆の　荒礒のへ上に

香青なる　たま藻

おきつ藻

朝羽ふる　風こそよせめ

Figure 1

sounds—and, in Moribe's case, with its inherent musicality—play a role within that broader cultural shift? One could argue, as Thomas Mann did, that although narrativity and music are not the same thing, they share a similar function:

> Can one tell—that is to say, narrate—time, time itself, as such, for its own sake? That would surely be an absurd undertaking. A

> story which read: "Time passed, it ran on, the time flowed onward" and so forth—no one in his senses could consider that a narrative. It would be as though one held a single note or chord for a whole hour, and called it music. For narration resembles music in this, that it *fills up* the time.[34]

At a time when *hokku* had gained nearly complete independence from linking and had brought that poetic form and vision as close to the "momentariness" of the plastic arts as the verbal arts could conceivably come, the re-emergence of chōka was part of a dramatic reaction to aesthetic compression. In Moribe's poetics, the narrative possibilities of chōka were wedded to another art—music—that likewise "fills up" time.

Moribe's insistence on the connection of poetry and music raises another persistent question: Tokugawa society had no shortage of sung poetry—*nagauta*, *shinnai*, *hauta*, song texts of *sōkyoku*, to name only a few—and many examples of these, in keeping with the expansion of aesthetic scale that characterized much literary art of the age, displayed considerable narrative scope. There are many that would seem to qualify as the "big" poetry that Moribe advocated. Why does he not even mention these?

His disregard for such forms may simply have been a matter of their conventional aesthetic register in terms of *ga* and *zoku*, which was the reason Norinaga put forth for dismissing them.[35] For Moribe, as for most Nativists, refinement was inextricably linked with antiquity, where the mythical, primal unity of poetry and music was also situated.

Moribe's quest for this primal unity—and his positing this unity in remote antiquity— paralleled a similar movement on the other side of the globe. Beginning with Rousseau's famous statement that "poetry, song, and word have a common origin,"[36] the idea that these two arts share the

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[34] From *The Magic Mountain*, tr. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage, 1969), p. 541.

[35] In *Ashiwake obune*, Norinaga writes: "... renga, haikai, utai, jōruri, kouta, children's songs, and things with melody are all a branch of waka. [But just] because they are structured by syllables, one need not discuss waka with regard to them. There exist elegance (*ga*) and vulgarity (*zoku*) in poetry. On the path to refinement, why reject elegance in favor of commonness? Why set the foundation (*moto*) aside and seek the fringes (*sue*)?" *NKT* VII:272. A similar statement appears in *Isonokami sasamegoto*. *NKT* VII:314–5.

[36] "... les vers, les chants, la parole, ont une origine commune." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (Paris: Bibliothèque du Graphe, 1970), p. 529.

same pedigree—and that recovery of this ancient unity was the business of poets—became an article of faith for Romanticism in many parts of Europe, but particularly in German-speaking lands, where Romanticism tended more than elsewhere to be conscious of itself as a movement. Thus, from Novalis (1772–1801) to Wagner (1813–1883), the putative primal harmony of language and music was, like Novalis's "blue flower" (*blaue Blume*), as alluring as it was elusive.[37]

This East-West comparison suggests that efforts to recover some aspect of an idealized past may be bedeviled by some of the same limitations in different cultures, and that an undertaking to resolve an aporia that arises from articulating lofty prototypes by appealing to antiquity may rather exacerbate the impasse between rhetoric and thought. The originality and sophistication of Moribe's methodology notwithstanding, he cannot claim to have steered clear of this danger. While attention to auditory effects was long overdue in Japanese poetics and may be regarded as a salutary development, Moribe's somewhat strained link between chōka and *gagaku* would seem open to H. T. Kirby-Smith's criticism: "Poetry that aspires to the condition of music is different from poetry that emerges from music. Even to admit to such an aspiration may be to betray anxiousness about the distance by which poetry has separated itself ..."[38] The significance of Moribe's poetry-music link becomes apparent rather when one sees it as an idiosyncratic manifestation of a quest for expanded narrativity in waka poetry.

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[37] For an excellent discussion of this, see Giovanni di Stefano, "Der ferne Klang: Musik als poetisches Ideal in der deutschen Romantik," *Euphorion: Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* 89 (1995), pp. 54–70.

[38] H. T. Kirby-Smith, *The Celestial Twins: Poetry and Music through the Ages* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), p. 4.