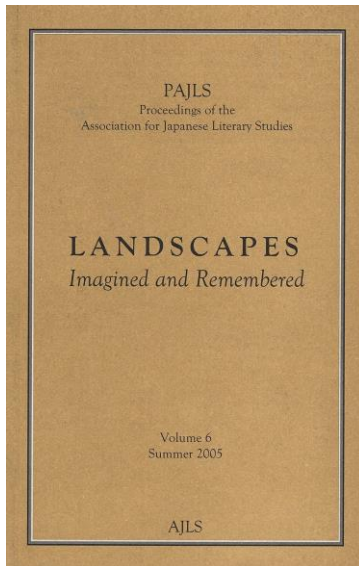


“Poetic Landscapes and Landscape Poetry in Heian Japan”

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Poetic Landscapes and Landscape Poetry in Heian Japan

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In May 2004, *The New York Times Magazine* devoted an issue to “Un-Natural Beauty: The Making of a 21st Century Landscape.” The magazine included several articles on how modern landscape architects, who design garden spaces, address the same conceptual issues as traditional architects, who design buildings. The man-made nature of “landscape” is apparent through the landscape architects’ careful consideration of the function of each element in their designs. Like the urban parks described in these articles, the sculpted central garden of many a Heian mansion was a carefully constructed space of domesticated wilderness. The Heian “landscape architect” reconfigured wilderness according to culturally and historically infused notions of “landscape.” Such gardens were a fertile ground, in several ways, for the composition of waka poetry and, as such, they were intimately connected to the formation of *dai* 題 (poetic topics), which themselves were replete with cultural and historical memory. My purpose in this paper is to point out how man-made visions of landscape played an important role in the way poetic topics were conceived or, in other words, how landscape helped shape how *dai* were cast.

One of the earliest uses of the term *dai* in conjunction with Japanese verse is contained in the late-Heian historical source *Fusō ryakki* 扶桑略記 (ca. 1105). On the twenty-fifth day of the Tenth Month of Shōtai 1 (898), Emperor Uda 宇多天皇 (867-931, r. 887-897) led a procession to Miyadaki 宮滝, a site north of the capital famous for the rapidly flowing Yoshino river 吉野川. The account states, “‘Seeing Miyadaki’ was taken to form the topic, and each person in attendance offered a poem (*‘Miyadaki o miru’ o motte dai to nashi, ono ono waka o tatematsuriki*).¹ Here, the topic is defined by the direct perception of the subject matter: the poets are at the site as they compose poems on “Seeing Miyadaki.”

But poets were not always “on location.” In such cases, an artistic representation of landscape functioned as the visual reality of the topic. Elements of landscape – mountains, rivers, hills, streams, and waterfalls – could find representation in miniature in the sculpted gardens of the imperial palace or of estates owned by upper aristocrats. Tiny models of various flora,

¹ Noted in Ozawa Masao 小沢正夫, *Kokinshū no sekai* 古今集の世界 (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1976), 234.

fauna, and even human beings found their way into these miniature landscapes. The Heian gardening manual *Sakuteiki* 作庭記 (mid-eleventh century) includes sections on how, for example, to arrange streams and rocks to look like rivers and islands.² Some gardens were designed to look like specific geographic places. Minamoto no Tōru 源融 (822-895) was famous for having constructed the garden at his estate along the Kamo river, the Kawara-no-in 河原院, to look like Shiogama 塩竈 along the Michinoku 陸奥 coastline. The re-creation included the salt-fires that locals burned to extract salt from seaweed. When Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (ca. 868-945) visited the garden in 895, shortly after Tōru's death, he composed a poem preserved in the *Kokinshū* 古今集 (the first imperial anthology of Japanese verse, ca. 905), under *aishō no uta* 哀傷歌 (Laments):

Kokinshū 852 (Book 16: Laments)

*Kawara no hidari no ōimōchigimi no, mi makarite nochi, kano ie ni
makarite arikeru ni, Shiogama to iu tokoro no sama o tsukurerikeru
o mite, yomeru*

Composed on going to the residence of the Riverside Minister of the Left after his death, and seeing the recreation of the place called Shiogama:

*kimi masade / keburī taenishi
shiogama no / urasabishiku mo / miawataru ka na*

With you now gone,
the smoke no longer rises
from the Shiogama shores—
how lonely it is
as I look out across the bay!³

Tsurayuki

² See Mori Osamu 森蘊, *Heian jidai teien no kenkyū* 平安時代庭園の研究 (Kyoto: Kuwana Bunseidō, 1946) and *Sakuteiki no sekai: Heian chō no teien bi* 「作庭記」の世界—平安朝の庭園美 (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1986). *Sakuteiki* has been attributed to Tachibana no Toshitsuna 橘俊綱 (1028-1094). An edited text can be found in *Kodai chūsei geijutsuron* 古代中世芸術論, ed. Hayashiya Tatsusaburō et al., *Nihon shisō taikēi*, vol. 23 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 223-48.

³ There is a pivot on *ura*, which is both the “bay” of Shiogama (*Shiogama no ura* 塩釜の浦) and the first part of *urasabishi* 心淋し (somehow sad). My translation is based on *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集, ed. Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之 and Arai Eizō 新井榮藏, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikēi*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989), 256. In the *Kokinshū* there is also a headnote (no. 248, book 4: Autumn 1) that states that the mother of the poet-priest Henjō 遍昭 (816-90) reconfigured her garden to suggest autumn fields (*aki no ta* 秋の田), a prevalent image in autumn poetry. Gardens with seasonal motifs were common, but the extent to which they included specific poetic topics varied greatly. See Kojima and Arai, *Kokin wakashū*, 86.

Gazing out over the garden, Tsurayuki invokes the poetic associations of Shiogama in his expression of regret over the death of Tōru, and in an act of poetic homage, treats the landscape as if it really were Shiogama. This is but one of many examples of a poet using a sculpted garden to help visualize himself at certain famous locales for the purpose of composing poetry.

The invocation of such artifice is taken one step further in the composition of poetry based on painted screens. In his *Shūishō chū* 拾遺抄注, Fujiwara no Kenshō 藤原顯昭 (ca. 1130 - ca. 1210) describes what was more or less common practice in screen poetry composition when he states, “When you compose a poem for a picture on a folding or sliding screen, you compose precisely by adopting the feelings of the person drawn in the picture (*Byōbu, shōji nado no e o uta ni yomu wa, yagate e ni kakeru hito no kokoro ni narite yomu nari*).”⁴ Poets would thus enter a painting in much the same way as they entered a sculpted garden for the purpose of composing from the point of view of someone in the landscape. A screen composition by Ōshikōchi no Mitsune 凡河内躬恒 (fl. early tenth century) exemplifies this poetic stance:

Shūishū 129 (Book 2: Summer)

Onna Shinomiko no uchi no byōbu ni

For the folding screen at the residence of the Fourth Princess

yuku sue wa / mada tōkeredo

natsuyama no / ko no shitakage zo / tachiukarikeru

Though I yet have far to go

to reach my destination,

how I regret leaving

these summer hills

and the shade beneath their trees!⁵

Mitsune

Rather than comment on the painting itself, as many Chinese painting-poems did, Mitsune composes in the guise of the traveler who is loath to leave the comfort of the shade. In other words, Mitsune is “adopting the feelings of the person drawn in the picture.” Though we have moved from three-dimensional sculpted gardens to two-dimensional painted screens as the motivation for composing waka, the two are similar in that they are both visually perceived artistic constructs of nature used to mediate poetic expression.

⁴ *Nihon kagaku taikai*, ed. Sasaki Nobutsuna 佐々木信綱 et al., suppl. vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1963), 387. *Shūishō chū* 拾遺抄注 is a commentary on *Shūishō*, an anthology of poems compiled by Fujiwara no Kintō 藤原公任 that formed the basis of the third imperial anthology of Japanese verse *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集 (ca. 1005).

⁵ My translation based on *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集, ed. Komachiya Teruhiko 小町谷照彦, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), 38. The Fourth Princess was Kinshi 勤子, the fourth daughter of Emperor Daigo 醍醐天皇 (885-930, r. 897-930).

Let me emphasize now the formative importance of painted landscapes in determining the development of certain poetic topics. During the early Heian period, a set of images or ideas only gradually coalesced into the collection of meanings that we come to recognize as a poetic topic. One can, however, frequently point to an early poem that captures the *hon'i* 本意 (poetic essence) of a topic. That poem, often one given maximum recognition and circulation by being included in an imperial anthology, will be cited in works on poetics, in judgments at poetry contests, in commentaries on poetry, and at other venues where the conventions of poetic topics are formed and refined. In a number of cases, the poem that serves as the recognized *locus classicus* for the meaning of a topic is, in fact, a poem originally composed for a painted screen.

In Engi 6 (906), less than a year after the compilation of the *Kokinshū* was finalized, Tsurayuki composed a group of poems for a set of multi-paneled screens in the imperial palace. The sequence of poems that has survived, known as *Engi roku-nen dairi tsukinami byōbu uta* 延喜六年内裏月次屏風歌, shows Tsurayuki tackling a series of seasonal topics based on the activities of the twelve months as depicted on the screens. While neither the commissioning nor the composing process is documented in any extant historical record, the topics are clearly listed in his personal collection *Tsurayuki shū*, and the implication is that his poems were inscribed onto the screens. What is immediately striking about the poems is the number of “new” topics introduced. Of the eighteen listed for the various months, thirteen are topics that are *not* present in *Kokinshū* from just the previous year (Figure 1).⁶

Based on an examination of themes depicted on painted screens, Takano Haruyo has identified a “pattern” by which a topic is introduced into the poetic vocabulary through a painted landscape, and then solidified through a process reference and example.⁷ Many of the topics that appear for the first time in the *Engi rokunen* screen poems, for instance, become catalogued in the influential typology *Kokin waka rokujō* (古今和歌六帖, late tenth century), a classified collection of poems divided in twenty-five categories and 517 topics. With the compilation of the *Shūishū* 拾遺集 (ca. 1005), most of these post-*Kokinshū* screen topics have been accepted into the realm of the imperial anthology, and they continue to be debated at poetry contests, with judgments and commentaries further defining their poetic associations. Many topics ultimately develop into abstract concepts far removed from any real or painted

⁶ Topics in Figure 1 and references to the poems for the Engi 6 screens are based on the text reproduced in *Tsurayuki shū*, *Mitsune shū*, *Tomonori shū*, *Tadamine shū* 貫之集・躬恒集・友則集・忠岑集, ed. Tanaka Kimiharu 田中喜美春, Hirasawa Ryūsuke 平澤竜介, and Kikuchi Yasuhiko 菊地靖彦, *Waka bungaku taikai*, vol. 19 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1997), 3-6.

⁷ Takano Haruyo 高野春代, “Yamato-e byōbu to kazai no kaitaku” 大和絵屏風と歌材の開拓, *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 40:10 (Oct. 1995), 78-84.

Figure 1. Topics in *Engi rokunen dairi tsukunami byōbu uta* (906)
Boldface indicates topics that do not appear in the *Kokinshū* (905)

1) <i>Ne no hi</i>	子日	Day of the Rat
2) <i>Inari mōde</i>	稻荷詣	Pilgrimage to Inari Shrine
3) <i>Yumi no kechi</i>	弓結	Archery Contests
4) <i>Tagaesu tokoro</i>	田かへす所	Tilling the Fields
5) <i>Wasuregusa</i>	忘草	Forgetting Grass
6) <i>Yayoi no tsugomori</i>	三月晦/三月尽	Last Day of Spring
7) <i>Tomoshi</i>	照射	Hunting Fires
8) <i>Ukai</i>	鶺鴒飼	Cormorant Fishing
9) <i>Minazuki harae</i>	六月祓	Sixth Month's Purifications
10) <i>Tanabata</i>	七夕	Weaver-Star Festival
11) <i>Koma mukae</i>	駒迎へ	Tribute Horses
12) <i>Kotakagari</i>	小鷹狩り	Hunting with Small Falcons
13) <i>Shiga no Yamagoe</i>	志賀山越	The Shiga Mountain Path
14) <i>Koromo utsu</i>	擣衣	Fulling Clothes
15) <i>Kagura</i>	神楽	Shinto Dance and Music
16) <i>Ōtaka-gari</i>	大鷹狩り	Hunting with Large Falcons
17) <i>Rinjisai</i>	臨時祭	Winter Kamo Festival
18) <i>Butsumyō</i>	仏名	Naming of the Buddhas

landscape, but the “pattern” Takano outlines occurs with enough frequency that we must rethink the visual origins of certain poetic topics.

To that end, I would like to provide two examples of how this process took place, first with the poetic appropriation of the *chidori* 千鳥 (plover), and then with the treatment of “The Shiga Mountain Path” as a topic.

Chidori appear again and again as a winter image in court poetry, and seasonal almanacs include the plover as a winter bird.⁸ Plovers today appear in all four seasons in Japan, and *chidori* can and do appear in any season in poems from the *Man'yōshū* (compiled ca. 759) as well. Of the twenty-two poems in the *Man'yōshū* that contain *chidori*, most are in fact connected with summer or autumn, as in the following two examples by anonymous poets:

⁸ Plovers of various kinds can be found throughout Japan in all four seasons, though it is possible that migration patterns near the capital were different in Heian times. See *A Field Guide to the Birds of Japan*, ed. Wild Bird Society of Japan (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1982), 132-37.

Man'yōshū 3872 (Book 16)

waga kado no / e no mi morihamu / momochidori
chidori wa kuredo / kimi so kimasanu

The many birds that come
 to pick at the hackberries
 at my gate –
 though the many plovers come,
 you, alas, do not.⁹

Man'yōshū 4477 (Book 20)

yūgiri ni / chidori no nakishi
saoji o ba / arashi ya shitemu / miru yoshi o nami

In the evening mist
 the plovers were crying.
 Could the road through Sao
 have fallen into ruin?
 – there is no trace of it.¹⁰

The *e no mi* in the first poem refers to the fruit of the Chinese nettle or hackberry, a tree related to the elm. In early summer, it yields yellow blossoms that soon give way to a red berry-like fruit, and is thus most often associated with the summer season. The image of *yūgiri* (evening mist) in the second poem suggests that the season described is autumn, but the Sao river, which runs through the northern part of present-day Nara, was, from early on, noted for its fireflies, predictably a summer image. The Sao river was also famous for its plovers due in part to the *Man'yōshū* poems that connect the bird (or at least the term *chidori*) with the site.

Before the Heian period, *chidori*, often written with the characters for “a thousand birds,” referred generically to a large flock of small birds. By the tenth century, it seems, *chidori* comes to specifically designate what we now know as a plover, though exactly when this transformation occurs is unclear. Even so, we can conclude from extant examples that *chidori*, at least through the ninth century, were not particularly associated with winter.

Similarly in the *Kokinshū*, the term *chidori* does not occur in any consistent season. Poets in the *Kokinshū* continue to make use of the *chi* 千, meaning “a thousand,” embedded in the word *chidori*, especially in

⁹ My translation is based on *Man'yōshū* 萬葉集, ed. Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之, Kinoshita Masatoshi 木下正俊, and Satake Akihiro 佐竹昭広, *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Shōgakusan, 1975), 146-47. “E no mi” 榎の実 refers to the fruit of the Chinese nettle or hackberry tree, *Celtis sinensis*, related to the elm. One variety bears a sweet berry-like fruit that is used both as a dye and as an herbal medicine. The tree and its blossoms appear as a summer image in later poetry.

¹⁰ My translation is based on Kojima, Kinoshita, and Satake, *Man'yōshū*, 436.

conjunction with congratulatory verses that pray for a “thousand long years” for the guest of honor:

Kokinshū 361 (Book 7: Felicitations)
chidori naku / sao no kawagiri / tachinurashi
yama no ko no ha mo / iro masariyuku
 Mists must be hovering
 above the Sao river
 where plovers call out,
 for now the mountain foliage
 takes on even deeper hues.¹¹

Mibu no Tadamine 壬生忠岑
 (late ninth century)

Once more, we have plovers associated with the Sao river and, as in *Man'yōshū* 4477 above, the season described is autumn. Tadamine's poem is, incidentally, based on a screen painted for the fortieth birthday celebrations of Fujiwara no Sadakuni 藤原貞國 (867-906). Tadamine's poem helps solidify the link for later poets between the Sao river and plovers. The seasonal connection, however, has not yet been established.

In fact, even when the place-name Sao is not involved, *chidori* are most frequently associated with autumn. The connection is explicit in this anonymous poem from a poetry contest that took place at the residence of Prince Koresada 是貞親王 in 893 (the event is also known as *Ninna Ninomiya uta-awase* 仁和二宮歌合):

Koresada Shinnō uta-awase 3
hama chidori / aki to shi nareba / asagiri ni
kata madowashite / nakanu hi zo naki
 When autumn arrives,
 the plovers lose their way
 in the morning mist –
 not a day goes by
 that they do not cry aloud.¹²

How, then, do plovers become a fixed winter image? We need look no further than a single screen poem by Tsurayuki, one of his most famous compositions, dated 936. The poem was commissioned for a screen belonging

¹¹ *'Kokin Wakashū': The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry*, trans. Helen C. McCullough (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 87; Kojima and Arai, *Kokin wakashū*, 118.

¹² My translation is based on Hagitani Boku 萩谷朴, *Heian chō uta-awase taisei* 平安朝歌合大成, revised and corrected edition, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1996), 24. Numbering is based on the Hagitani edition.

to Fujiwara no Saneyori 藤原実頼 (900-970), a screen that no doubt depicted plovers in winter. Here, the painted image gives rise to a verse that is formative in the poetic tradition. After the inclusion of Tsurayuki's poem in the third imperial anthology, *Shūishū*, plovers come to be connected, almost without exception, to winter.

Tsurayuki shū 340 / *Shūishū* 224 (Book 6: Winter)

omoikane / imogari yukeba / fuyu no yo no

kawakaze samumi / chidori naku nari

My longing unbearable,
I go out to where she lives –
In the cold river winds
of the winter's night
the plovers cry aloud.¹³

Robert Brower and Earl Miner note the elegant subtlety in the untranslatable effect of *naku nari* 鳴くなり (it seems that they cry), which usually expresses hearsay, doubt, or something that is not known first hand:

But this idiom clearly does not function in the poem to convey real doubt, since the point is that the birds accentuate the anguish felt by the speaker. In other words, Tsurayuki has employed a form of understatement that he appears, as much as anybody, to have made popular in poetry. Such understatement stresses the presence of the speaker in the poem and makes it clear that the cries of the plovers, the cold wind from the river, and the dark winter night are all tonal images and metaphors relating to the state of mind and feeling of the speaker of the poem. This subjective indirection in the treatment of the natural scene contrasts with the strong verbal quality of the first two lines (*omoi, kane, gari, yukeba*) and the vividness of *imogari*, “hunting my beloved.” The two parts of the poem differ considerably in poetic effect and yet are integrated completely by the subjective cast of the whole.¹⁴

I would suggest that part of the reason that the poem stresses the speaker is precisely because it is a screen poem that emphasizes the point of view of a figure within the painting, a common screen composition practice that I outlined earlier. Tsurayuki makes explicit aspects of the painting that could only have been implied: the coldness of the winter night, the blowing wind, and the cries of the plovers, not to mention the emotive content of a man in desperate search of his wife. Furthermore, the “subjective indirection” Brower

¹³ My translation is based on Komachiya, *Shūi wakashū*, 64.

¹⁴ Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 191.

and Miner note is a direct function of the poem having been based on a screen painting. While the oblique and understated quality of the last line (*chidori naku nari* 千鳥鳴くなり) does not necessarily point to a literal lack of first-hand knowledge, the means of expression Tsurayuki employs seems intimately linked with his position as a subject describing the scene, experiencing the scene, from outside the painted landscape. It is through this perceptive lens of screen composition that Tsurayuki shapes not only all subsequent poems about plovers, but also, through his often emulated “subjective indirection,” poetic composition as a whole.

The handling of the famous place-name “Shiga no Yamagoe” 志賀山越 as a poetic topic follows a similar trajectory. The “Shiga Mountain Path” appears in the *Kokinshū*, but not in conjunction with any particular season. As seen in the topics for the *Engi rokunen* screen (again see Figure 1), “Shiga no Yamagoe” was a topic for screen paintings as well. The term refers to a path from Shirakawa in Kyoto eastward toward the Shiga region near Lake Biwa, a path frequently used by people traveling between the capital and Sūfukuji 崇福寺 (Shigadera 滋賀寺) or Onjōji 園城寺 (Mūdera 三井寺). While many poems that refer to the mountain path do not specify a season, annual festivals at the two temples occur in the autumn, and it is not surprising that many of the early poems about “Shiga no Yamagoe” have autumnal associations. Tsurayuki’s poem for the *Engi rokunen* screen on topics for the twelve months has “Shiga no Yamagoe” as a topic for the Ninth Month, but no seasonal words appear in the poem to suggest an autumn scene:

Tsurayuki shū 17 / *Shūishū* 492 (Book 8: Miscellaneous I)
hito shirezu / koyu to omourashi
ashihiki no / yamashita mizu ni / kage wa mietsutsu
 Though I think to cross
 the mountain pass
 without anyone knowing,
 in the waters that flow below
 I see a shadow that follows.¹⁵

The shadow or reflection is his own, and the poem shows a similar “subjective indirection” in the phrase *omourashi* 思ふらし (it must be what I was thinking) that may be linked to Tsurayuki’s visual perception of the painted scene. Note that both this poem and the following, the more famous poem on the “Shiga Mountain Path” from the *Kokinshū*, do not contain any imagery that would specify a season:

¹⁵ My translation is based on Tanaka, et al., *Tsurayuki shū*, 10.

Kokinshū 404 (Book 8: Parting)

*Shiga no yamagoe nite, ishii no moto nite, mono iikeru hito no
wakarekeru ori ni, yomeru.*

Composed when he parted from a woman with whom he spoke
intimately at a rocky spring on the Shiga Mountain Path.

*musubu te no / shizuku ni nigoru / yama no i no
akade mo hito ni / wakarenuru ka na*

As when a traveler
seeks in vain to slake his thirst
at a hillside spring
soiled by drops from his cupped hands
so, unsatisfied, I part from you.¹⁶

Rose Bundy, following Kamijō Shōji, argues that Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114-1204) and other twelfth-century poets transformed “Shiga no Yamagoe” into a spring topic, due in large part to the following Tsurayuki poem in the *Kokinshū*:¹⁷

Kokinshū 115 (Book 2: Spring II)

*Shiga no yamagoe ni, omuna no ōku aerikeru ni, yomite,
tsukawashikeru.*

Composed and sent upon meeting a group of women on the Shiga
Mountain Path.

*azusa yumi / haru no yamabe o / koekureba
michi mo sariaezu / hana zo chirikeru*

I come to cross
the mountains in spring
(mindful of a drawn bow)
and find the blossoms scattered,
leaving no path to get by.¹⁸

The poem employs the *makurakotoba* 枕詞 (poetic epithet) *azusa yumi* 梓弓 (catalpa bow), a phrase that by convention precedes the word *haru* 春/張る, which can mean both the season “spring” and “to pull a bow.” Tsurayuki compares the women he meets to blossoms on the path, such that he hesitates to make his way through. Now the only connection between the springtime

¹⁶ Translation from McCullough, ‘*Kokin Wakashū*,’ 96. Original text from Kojima and Arai, *Kokin wakashū*, 132.

¹⁷ See Rose Bundy, “From Painting to Poetry: ‘Shiga no yamagoe’ Poems in the *Ropyyakuban uta awase*,” *Monumenta Serica* 45 (1995), 365-379 and Kamijō Shōji 上條彰次, “Shiga no yamagoe kō: Shunzei kakan e no hitotsu no apurōchi” 志賀山越考一俊成歌観へのひとつのアプローチ, *Kokugo kokubun* 37 (1968), 30-52.

¹⁸ My translation is based on Kojima and Arai, *Kokin wakashū*, 50.

content of the poem and the Shiga Mountain Path is through the headnote provided by Tsurayuki or another *Kokinshū* editor. Inclusion in the *Kokinshū* gave the verse elevated status, but what is peculiar about the composition is that it does not appear in this form in Tsurayuki's personal collection of his own poetry. Instead, we have a similar poem composed for the aforementioned *Engi roku-nen* screen:

Tsurayuki shū 5
azusa yumi / haru no hamabe ni / iru toki wa
kazashi ni nomi zo / hana wa chirikeru
 I enter into
 the mountains in the spring
 (mindful of a drawn bow),
 and find the blossoms scattering,
 providing adornments for the hair.¹⁹

This poem uses the same “catalpa bow” *makurakotoba* for “spring / pull a bow,” but also contains the additional *kakekotoba* 掛詞 (pivot-word) *iru*, which can mean both “enter (into the mountains)” and “shoot (an arrow from a bow).” Because of the editing process for both texts, one cannot know whether the rendition in the *Kokinshū* or in the *Tsurayuki shū* is the earlier, but the revealing fact remains that the version of the poem that connects “Shiga no Yamagoe” to spring was composed for a painted landscape. This connection does not become fixed simply because of the inclusion of the poem in the *Kokinshū*, but rather through a later reconfiguration of the topic. When twelfth-century poets refer to a source, a *locus classicus*, for the connection of the Shiga Mountain Path to spring in their commentaries and judgments, Tsurayuki's *Kokinshū* composition is by far the most frequently cited.

Kamijō Shōji has noted that though “Shiga no Yamagoe” is a tidy seven-syllable line, the place-name does not commonly appear in poems on the topic until the twelfth century, at which point poets reevaluated the topic, with the judgments of Fujiwara no Shunzei at various poetry contests playing a large role in how the topic was reconceived. Poets of Shunzei's time often mentioned the place-name in their poems, but gradually, as “Shiga no Yamagoe” became an established poetic topic, poets came to refrain from mentioning the place-name, feeling it was superfluous to include the topic of a poem within the poem itself.²⁰ Instead, poets included descriptions of travel, spring, and blossoms – the very associations that Tsurayuki helped establish through his compositions cited above.

There is a pattern of topic development here, intimately linked to painted landscapes on screens. First, an association between the Shiga Mountain Path

¹⁹ My translation is based on Tanaka et al., *Tsurayuki shū*, 4.

²⁰ See Kamijō, “Shiga no Yamagoe kō,” and Bundy, “From Painting to Poetry.”

and the spring season is tentatively established through poems that do not include the place-name within the poem. Then the association becomes fixed through poems that explicitly mention the place-name. Finally, the conventions come to be understood to the point where it would be redundant to mention the Shiga Mountain Path in a poem on the same topic.

Unlike *hototogisu* 時鳥/不如歸 (cuckoos), whose cries are heard almost exclusively in summer and have been consistently connected to that season in poetry since the *Man'yōshū*, plovers appear in all four seasons, and only after centuries of poetic convention became limited to winter. Similarly, despite the autumn festivals at destinations along the road, the Shiga Mountain Path eventually became, by poetic convention, a place visited only in spring. These kinds of associations, especially ones that reconfigure nature for aesthetic purposes, are very much dependent upon specific poems in the poetic tradition and their replication rather than any observed reality. More precisely, the interpretative process inherent in creating man-made representations of nature significantly delimits the range of meanings certain poetic topics can encompass. The painted and sculpted garden landscapes exist today only in the oblique descriptions provided by the poems they inspired. Yet there is no doubt that for subsequent poets, such poems were fundamental to the way landscapes were imagined and remembered.