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## Rhetorical Devices in Old Japanese Verse: Structural Analysis and Semantics

### Abstract

Some literary techniques constitute rhetorical devices that are considered to be unique to the history of Japanese verse. Nevertheless, some English translations of Japanese texts lose connotation such *techniques*, and few studies of this phenomenon have been written in languages other than Japanese. This study applies the insights of two approaches, i.e. morphological and semantic analysis and a hermeneutics interpretation. The result is twofold. It offers a detailed linguistic analysis, providing many insights into the interpretation of these expressions; and accommodates the hermeneutical explanation given by M. Heidegger, showing the very core of *makura-kotoba*. First of all, I will give a brief review of previous scholarship on the matter, followed by structural and semantic analyses. Finally, I will attempt to use definitions of hermeneutics to speak about rhetorical devices of Old Japanese verse. Translations of Old Japanese songs with glossing and morphemic analyses will be given in the Appendix.

**Key words:** *makura-kotoba* (pillow words), Old Japanese language, *Kojiki*, *Nihon Shoki*, *Man'yōshū*, hermeneutics, structural analysis.

### Introduction

Classical Japanese verse includes various poetic devices, some of which are considered uniquely Japanese. Among these are pillow words (枕詞 *makura-kotoba*), preface words (序詞 *jo-kotoba*) and pivot words (掛詞 *kakekotoba*). Discussing metaphor, metonymy and images in connection with these literary devices is common practice. “The *makura-kotoba* is also a matter of imagery, one of the most important constant elements of Japanese poetry. It may perhaps seem illogical to include imagery – a technique of all poets – among those constants which give Japanese poetry its unique quality, but of course by imagery

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we mean the characteristic and differing nature or use of imagery”.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, *makura-kotoba* (MK) are considered to be the most specific and complex phenomenon in Japanese poetics. They are commonly defined as constant epithets, but the definition does not encapsulate all of the characteristics of this difficult stylistic phenomenon. Moreover, certain constant epithets are not considered to be MK, as they exist outside the definitional bounds of the term. Since ancient times, these combinations have existed in Japanese language, under several names, including *kanji* (冠辞) and *makura-kotoba* (枕詞). The former can be translated as “a word crowning subsequent words”, the latter as “a word serving as a pillow for subsequent words”. In both definitions the key phrase is “subsequent words”. However, in modern language only *makura-kotoba* is used. Tsuchihashi Yutaka wrote that: “while thinking about the important role of MK in Old Japanese songs, one can hardly disagree that without studying MK’s essential nature, the study of Japanese classical literature loses one of its important points”.<sup>2</sup> MK act in various and complex forms. A common practice is to define them as constant epithets, but this does not encapsulate/encompass all of the characteristics of this stylistic device. Moreover, not all constant epithets constitute MK; some exist outside the bounds of the term. There are indeed some constant epithets among MK, such as 久堅乃 (*pisakata nō*, “sun radiant”) referring to the sky and 阿之比奇能 (*ashipiki nō*, “leg-cramping”) as well as phrases that play the role of constant beginnings, such as 神風乃 (*kamukaNse nō*, “of the divine wind” referring to Ise), or constant comparisons, such as 白浪之 (*shiranami nō*, “white waves (splash)”). MK reflect the interconnection with working tools, elements of rite culture and everyday life. In this way, 阿乎夜奈義 (*awoyanaNki*, “green willow”) constitutes a MK for wreaths, which were commonly made from willow trees.

Evidently, MK can provide a rather concise picture of nature and everyday life, thus functioning as a comparison or constant epithet. In written records from various ages, this technique has been utilized in different ways until it transformed into a stylistic device of sound reduplication without any meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Brower and Earl Miner, ‘Formative elements in the Japanese poetic tradition’, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 16 (14), p. 511.

<sup>2</sup> Yutaka Tsuchihashi, 古代歌謡全注釈古事記編 [Full Comments on Ancient Songs. Kojiki], Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1976, p. 377.

While our study takes a novel approach, generations of Japanese scholars have already studied this particular poetic device of waka. There are numerous studies of MK in Japan dating back several centuries, including that by Motoori Norinaga<sup>3</sup> (1730–1801) and Kamo no Mabuchi<sup>4</sup> (1697–1769). Also noteworthy is Kamochi Masazumi's (1791–1858) *Old Commentaries on the Man'yōshū*,<sup>5</sup> Fukui Kyūzō's (1867–1951) *Comments and Research on makura-kotoba*<sup>6</sup> and Satake Akihiro's (1927–2008) *Excerpts from the Manyōshū*<sup>7</sup> which provide insights into the study of color perception in Old Japanese language and also Old Japanese (OJ) MK. Other prominent twentieth century scholars of MK include Oriuchi Shinobu (1887–1953) and Tsuchihashi Yutaka (1909–1998). Literary journals have also dedicated entire issues to this topic, as MK have been the object of etymological, literary or mathematical analysis and have been regarded as a unique rhetorical device of ancient Japanese verse. The traditional approach to studying them has been to create categories of MK in different anthologies and then quantifying results to explain stylistic changes. A shortcoming of this quantitative approach is the lack of agreement among scholars as to what precisely MK constitute. This article examines the complexities of MK by treating OJ and MK as both a rhetorical device and an object for linguistic analysis.

In this context, OJ songs are understood to be the songs of *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* (collectively referred to as “KiKi”). The MK used in KiKi songs are enumerated in Table 1. Since there is a discrepancy in the number of songs in modern editions of these two works, here I employ the songs specified in the *Nihon koten bungaku zenshu* [A Complete Collection of Japanese Classical Literature] from the Shōgakukan

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<sup>3</sup> See: Motoori Norinaga, 宣長本居全集 [Full Collection of Motoori Norinaga], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> See: Kamo no Mabuchi, 賀茂真淵全集 [Full Collection of Kamo no Mabuchi], Vol. 5, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> See: Kamochi Masazumi, 万葉集古義 [Old Commentaries on the Man'yōshū], Kōchi: Kōchiken Bunkiyōkyōkai, 1982.

<sup>6</sup> See: Fukui Kyūzō, 枕詞の研究と釈義 [Research and Comments on Pillow-Words], Tokyo: Fuji Shōbō, 1927.

<sup>7</sup> See: Satake Akihiro, 萬葉集抜書 [The Extracts from Man'yōshū], Tokyo: Iwanami publ., 2000.

publishing company, with an attachment of Ogihara Asao's commentary on the *Kojiki* text.<sup>8</sup>

*Table 1. List of MK, Author's elaboration, based on research by Kondo Nobuyoshi «Makura-kotobaron».*<sup>9</sup>

Source	Song number	MK	Base word
NSK	62, 63	akyiNtu sima	yamatō
NSK	24	asa simwo-nō	myi-key
KJK	3	asa pyi-nō	wem-yi-sakaye
KJK/NSK	78/69	asi pyikiy-nō	Yama
NSK	43	aNtusa yumyi	ma-yumyi
KJK/NSK	83, 84/71	ama Ntam-u	Karu
KJK	28	ara tama-nō	tōsi, tukiy
KJK	100	ari kyinu-nō	myi-pye-
KJK	3, 5	awa yukyi-nō	waka ya-ru mune
KJK/NSK	58/54, 95	awo ni yō-si	Nara
NSK	68	isana tōri	Umyi
KJK	2	i-sitap-u ya	ama-pas-e Ntukap-yi
KJK/NSK	9/7	isukupasi	kuNtira
NSK	94	isu nō kamyi	pur-u
NSK	83	ina musirwo	Kappa
NSK	45	ipa kuNtasu	kasikwo-ku
NSK	16, 17	uma sakey	Myiwa
KJK/NSK	4, 8/5	okyi-tu tōri	muna-myi-ru
KJK/NSK	53/48	ositer-u	Nanipa
KJK	110	op[o] uwo yō-si	Maguro
KJK/NSK	43/35	ka-Nkupasi	Pana-tatiNpana
KJK	75	kaNkyirwo-piy-nō	Paru
KJK/NSK	13/8, 76	kamu kaNse-nō	Ise
KJK	60	kyimwo mukap-u	Kōkōrō

<sup>8</sup> Ogihara Asao and Konosu Hayao (eds.), 古事記上代歌謡-日本古典文学全集 [Kojiki. Old Japanese Songs. A Complete Collection of the Japanese Classical Literature], Vol. 1, Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1973.

<sup>9</sup> Kondo Nobuyoshi, 枕詞論 [An Issue on Pillow-Words], Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1990, p. 31.

KJK	52	kurwo-N-saya-nö	masaNtu-kwo
NSK	92	kötö Nkamyi-ni	kyiwir-u
NSK	94	kömo makura	Takapasi
KJK/NSK	89, 90/77, 97	kömör-i-ku-nö	patuse-nö yama
NSK	65	sasaNkane-nö	Kumo
NSK	104	sasutakey-nö	Kyimyí
KJK	24	sanesasi	saNkamu
KJK	2	sanwo-tu töri	kyiNkyisi
NSK	96	sisikusirwo	Umai
NSK	104	sinater-u	Katawoka yama
KJK/NSK	14/12	sima-tu töri	u-kap-yi
KJK	71,97	swora-myi-t-u	Yamatö
KJK	28, 72,102	taka pyikar-u	pyi-nö myi-kwo
KJK	67, 68	taka-yuk-u ya	paya-Npusa
KJK	3, 5	taku-N-tunwo-nö	sirwo-kyi
KJK/NSK	14, 12	tata namey-te	Inasa
KJK	30	tata naNtuk-u	awo-kakí
KJK/NSK	31, 91/23	tatamyi-kömö	peyNkuri
KJK/NSK	71/28, 29, 62	tamakyipar-u	Uti
KJK/NSK	41/34	ti-pa-nö	kaNtu-nwo-wo
KJK/NSK	51/42, 43	tipaya pyitö	uNti
KJK	50	tipa yaNp-uru	uNti
KJK/NSK	61, 63 / 53, 54, 57, 58	tuNkyinepuya	Yamasirö
NSK	56, 97	tunwo sapa p-u	Ípa
NSK	94	tuma Nkómor-u	Wosapo
KJK	87	natu-kusa-nö	apyine-nö pama
KJK/NSK	2/96	nipa-tu töri	Kakye
KJK/NSK	38/29	nipwo-N-töri-nö	Apumy
KJK	3	nuye-kusa-nö	Mye
NSK	96	nu-tu töri	kyiNkyisi

KJK/NSK	3,4/81	nuNpa-tama-nö	yö/kurwo
KJK/NSK	69, 70/61	pasi-tate-nö	kurapasi-yama
NSK	67	panaNkupasi	Sakura
NSK	94, 96	parupyi	kasuNka
KJK/NSK	27/59	pyisakata-nö	Amey
KJK/NSK	86/70	puna-amar-i	kapyer-i
KJK/NSK	100/96	ma-kiy sak-u	Pyi
NSK	103	ma swoNka yö -nö	swoNka
NSK	126	myiyessinwo nö	Yesinwo
NSK	45	myikasipo	Parima
KJK/NSK	42, 43/35	myi-tu-N-kuri-nö	Naka
KJK/NSK	44/36	myiNtu-tamaru	Ikey
KJK/NSK	10, 11, 12/ 9, 13, 14	myitu-myitu-si	Kumey
NSK	44	myina sököpu	Omyi
KJK/NSK	103/95	myi-na sösök-u	Omyi
KJK	42	myipwo-N-töri-nö	kaNduk-yi
NSK	94	monö sapa ni	Opoyakey
KJK	102	mwomwo-sikiy-nö	opö-myiya
NSK	53	momotaraNsu	yaswoNpa
KJK/NSK	42, 111/85	mwomwo-Ntutap- u	tunuNka
KJK/NSK	1, 23 /1, 20	ya kumwo tat-u	iNtumwo
KJK/NSK	28, 97, 98, 104/ 63, 76, 97, 102	yasumyis-isi	wa-Nka opö-kyimyi
KJK	88	yama-taNtu-nö	mukapey
KJK	4, 5	waka-kusa nö	Tuma
KJK/NSK	58/54	wo Ntate	Yamatö

MK expressions in this study are to be analyzed in linguistic or philological contexts. Such analysis will show why certain phrases are problematic, striking or unusual. Linguistics examines ordinary language, while literature is written in extraordinary language, however the examination of this extraordinary language, by means of a systematic approach to linguistics, can lead to new insights into MK in poetry that cannot be achieved by other means. The purpose of this study is not to compare different definitions, nor present a new universal

definition of OJ MK. It aims to present material for understanding the meaning and logic behind the usage of MK, so that it may then be applied to the study of unique Japanese literary devices. The main point, is that OJ MK should be studied from both sides, literarily and linguistically, in order to make clear the structure, meaning and pragmatic aspects of MK.

### **Structural analysis, translation and semantics**

Modern Japanese language is not phonologically the same as the Old Japanese in which the poems we discuss were written. Following Alexander Vovin's study of OJ grammar, I utilize the Yale romanization system to represent the orthography of OJ texts. Though there are several exceptions, for example usage of *ō* instead of underlined *o* or rendering prenasalized voiced stops and fricatives not as *b*, *d*, *g* and *z*, but as *Np*, *Nt*, *Nk* and *Ns* what is specified by Vovin.<sup>10</sup> The romanization of KJK and NSK specified in this article, has not been published elsewhere. This is a collective work, done by students at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa under the supervision of Alexander Vovin (the author of this approach). I received romanization materials in 2008 from the author and used them in my own research. Since there were several misreadings and mistakes, it was necessary to improve the list. This publication is the first one for the KJK and NSK, which uses this system of romanization. I would like to thank Prof. Alexander Vovin for materials and advice granted to my research. Though this particular study does not deal with phonetical issues, in many cases such a detailed approach is important for morphemic analysis, which helps to avoid misreadings and misinterpretations of OJ lexemes as for example, in *nuNpatama*, where the aforementioned approach helps to avoid the misreading of *nuNpa* as *numa* – swamp. I will not delve into the intricacies of comprehensive studies on OJ grammar and OJ phonetic reconstruction, as these have been conducted by Alexander Vovin<sup>11</sup> and Bjarke Frellesvig<sup>12</sup> (2010) as well as Mark H. Miyake.<sup>13</sup> All translations

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<sup>10</sup> Alexander Vovin, *A Descriptive and Comparative Grammar of Western Old Japanese: Part 1. Phonology, Script, Lexicon and Nominals*, UK: Global Oriental, 2007, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> See: *ibidem*; Alexander Vovin, *Man'yōshū. Book 15. A New English Translation Containing the Original Text, Kana Transliteration, Romanization, Glossing and Commentary*, UK: Global Oriental, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Bjarke Frellesvig, *A History of Japanese Language*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

within this study were carried out by the author-unless otherwise indicated. This was not due to a lack of excellent existing translations, but in attempt to show the functioning of each word in the poem. Occasionally this resulted in unusual English syntax, however the order of the images required for structural analysis have been maintained. The classical commentary of Tsuchihashi Yutaka in his authoritative work *Kodai kayô zenchûshaku* (1976) will be used as final authority in the interpretation<sup>14</sup> Neither this study's structural analysis, nor analysis of OJ MK interpretation, were made previously. Someone may argue that a word-to-word translation sounds different than what one can expect from ancient verse. I answer that such a translation is necessary for linguistic analyses, which in turn, is vital for understanding the nuances of interpretation.

According to Anna Gluskina, who wrote about possible phonetical connections KJK 77 阿志比紀能 *Asipyikiy-nö*, serves as a MK for “mountain”, a place named Yamato and – in later sources – for the noun *yamai* (illness).<sup>15</sup> Omodaka in JDB speaks about the theory of vowel comparison, which shows that the original meaning of the expression was forgotten by the time of the MYS compilation.<sup>16</sup> In total, *Asipyikiy-nö* figures in the MYS only 111 times. The classical interpretation gives us the meaning of “как” – a stretched mountain root, but recent linguistic research shows that in this case, we do not have the usage of kana signs, but the use of logograms or quasi-semantemes, which could be very incorrect phonetically. Thus the classical interpretation of cramping legs during mountain climbing, used for example by Pierson, is incorrect. The only etymologically possible one can found here – WOJ *piku* – “low”. Of course, this variant is also not ideal, but it seems to be the most common.

### KJK 3

<sup>13</sup> Mark H. Miyake, *Old Japanese: A Phonetic Reconstruction*, London: Routledge/Curzon, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> See: Yutaka Tsuchihashi 古代歌謡全注釈古事記編 [Full Comments on Ancient Songs. Kojiki], Tokyo: Kadogawa Shoten, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> Anna E. Gluskina, *K izucheniyu drevnego stilya yaponskoy poezii. Zametki o makura-kotoba* [About Ancient Style of Japanese Verse. Notes of Makura-Kotoba], Moskva: Narody Azii I Afriki, 1967, p 101.

<sup>16</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.), *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen*. [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese], Tokyo: Sansaidô, 1967, p. 22.

奴婆多麻能 *nuNpa-tama-nö* like gem-black

Table 2. Frequency of usage of specific MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author's Elaboration

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Night/night moon/night fog/night dream	KJK 3 MYS 2-169; 2-194; 2-199; 3-302; 3-392; 4-525; 4-619; 4-639; 4-702; 4-723; 4-781; 5-807; 6-925; 6-982; 7-1077; 7-1081; 7-1101; 8-1646; 9-1706; 9-1712; 10-2008; 10-2035; 10-2076; 11-2389; 11-2569; 11-2589; 11-2673; 12-2849; 12-2931; 12-2956; 12-2962; 12-3007; 12-3108; 13-3269; 13-3270; 13-3297; 13-3280; 13-3281; 13-3313; 13-3312; 15-3598; 15-3647; 15-3651; 15-3671; 15-3721; 15-3732; 15-3769; 15-3738; 17-3955; 17-3980; 17-3988; 18-4072; 18-4101; 19-4166; 20-4455; 20-4489;	57
Hair	MYS 2-89; 4-573; 7-1116; 7-1241; 9-1800; 11-2456; 11-2532; 11-2610; 11-2631; 12-2890; 13-3274; 13-3329; 16-3805; 17-3962; 19-4160; 20-4331;	16

Beloved	MYS 11-2564; 15-3712;	2
Other	KJK 5 NSK 81 MYS 9-1798; 10-2139, 12-2878; 13-3303; 16- 3844; 17-3938;	8

Overall *nuNpa-tama-nö*, appears 83 times in the texts of KJK, NSK and MYS accompanied by a restricted group of basic words.

In classical works, this expression meaning “jade-gem night” is considered a metaphorical expression of the KiKi songs. Some studies interpret the expression as *ubatama* or even *numatama*, the latter being connected etymologically with *numa*, a noun meaning “swamp”. Taking that aspect into account, (the word consideration appears two times in one paragraph) researchers found connections with an Ainu word of the same meaning (*mena*) or the Korean *nop*. EDAL also affirms this point of view, but these theories are difficult to prove through linguistic analysis. If we read this combination taking the romanization of OJ in linguistics literature into consideration and later use Yale romanization, we get the following reading: *nuNpa-tama-nö ywo*.

OJ *nuNpa-tama* is applied to pitch-black phenomena and objects such as night and hair. Joining color meaning to nouns that do not have such is a traditional metaphoric device in Japanese literature. For example, Akihiro Satake describes connections between words, color images and perceptions of color in OJ in his *Man'yōshū nukigaki*,<sup>17</sup> contending that the wide usage of this device in OJ literature can be explained by the limited number of color-naming nouns as well as the desire to express particular color shades. Returning to the expression in question, when referring to words serving as a base in this collocation (hair, night, dream, etc.), scholars came to the conclusion that *nuNpa* is the equivalent of “black”. Since this word is exclusively used in combination with the noun *tama* (gem), the combination is considered to be a general name for all dark black gems – a plausible explanation. If we examine the gems of the Kofun, Asuka, and Nara periods found in the Yamato area, we notice that there are various kinds used for necklaces, earrings, and clothing embellishments. One of the most common gems of the time was jade otherwise known as jadeite.

<sup>17</sup> Satake Akihiro, 萬葉集抜書 [Excerptions from Man'yōshū], p. 118.

Pic. 1 Nihon no bijutsu, № 371, 1997, p. 4



Regarding the meaning of *nuNpa-tama*, there are two common explanations for this expression, somewhat opaque since the original meaning of *nuNpa* is unknown. It resembles a *tatpurusha* compound or dependent determinative compound, i.e., a compound XY meaning a type of Y which is related to X in a way corresponding to one of the grammatical cases of X. However if it does not bear any resemblance, the resulting outcome would be *nuNpa-Ntama*, yet, this is not the case. This rules out such terms as “black lily” or “black”, but leaves open the possibility for an interpretation of *nuNpa* as some specific form of jadeite.

KJK 50

知波夜 *ti paya-(N-puru)* crushing a thousand rocks

Table 3. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author's Elaboration<sup>18</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
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<sup>18</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Bjarke Frellesvig, Stephen Wright Horn, Kerri L. Russell and Peter Sells, *The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese*: <http://vsarpj.orinst.ox.ac.uk/corpus/ojcorpus.html#Kojiki> (accessed 28.10.2013).

Udji	KJK 51 NSK-42, 43 MYS 13-3236, 3240	5
Deity	2-0101 3-0404, 4-0558, 0619 11-2416, 2660, 2662, 2663 16-3811 17-4011 20-4465	11
Human	2-0199	1
Cane cape	7-1230	1

The above mentioned expression is a permanent epithet for the divine. We may comment it in two ways: *ti-[i]pa yaNpur-u*, which means here “crushing a thousand rocks” and *ti paya-N-puru*, “strength, fast-DV (INF), swing-ATTR, swinging with a fast strength”.<sup>19</sup> Out of sixteen examples of *tipayaNpuru* in the *Man’yōshū*, eight according to semantographic rules are spelled as “crushing thousand rocks” (千磐破).<sup>20</sup>

### KJK 30

多多那豆久 *tata-naNtuk-u* very high

*Table 4. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author’s Elaboration*<sup>21</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
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<sup>19</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.), *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen*. [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 455.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Vovin, *Man’yōshū. Book 20. A New English Translation Containing the Original Text, Kana Transliteration, Romanization, Glossing and Commentary*. UK: Global Oriental, 2013, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> The author’s elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

Blue fence	KJK 30 MYS 6-0923;	2
Me	MYS 12-3187;	1
Soft	MYS 2-0194	1

In total, this expression is used in the first sources around four times.

The analyzed MK was used for various descriptions, where *tata-na* meant high and *Ntuk-u* to do — the whole phrase meaning very high when referring to fences or mountains. The sense combined with other basic words is opaque and probably can be considered as just a marker of superlative degree.

KJK 57

都芸泥布夜 *tuNkyinepuya*

Table 5. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author's Elaboration<sup>22</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Yamasirō/Ya masirō road	KJK 57 MYS 13-3314	2

The preliminary expression is considered to be a MK for a place named Yamashiro, but the etymology and meaning are not transparent. Classic interpretations allow us to presuppose that the expression meaning is connected to mountain peaks, but Omodaka also shares an opinion that *tuNkyinepuya* is a plant named *chloranthus serratus*.<sup>23</sup> According to Martin, it is possible to interpret the expression as *tuNkyi* “be the next”, “be successful”. The additional phrase *ne* can mean “mountain”, *puya* (?) and since it is quite enigmatic, should be subjected to further research.

<sup>22</sup> The author's elaboration is based on: ibidem.

<sup>23</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.) *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen* [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 463.

KJK 75

迦芸漏肥能 *kaNkyirwo-piy-nö* like shimmering sun

Table 6. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author's Elaboration<sup>24</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Spring	KJK 75 MYS 6-1047; 10-1835;	3
Wasteland	MYS 2-0210;	1
Heart	MYS 9-1804;	1
Return	MYS 1-0048	1

*KaNkyirwo-piy-nö* translates into the permanent epithet like the shimmering sun. Omodaka in JDB says that this MK is a derivative verb *kaNkyirwopiy*, which could be understood as: “to wobble” especially when one is speaking about air blasts in a damp atmosphere.<sup>25</sup> As an MK the image includes a cloudy, wobble of air from under that which is damp – this serves as an attributive for spring in many cases.

KJK1 夜久毛多都 *ya kumwo tat-u* Many clouds arise

Table 7. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author's elaboration<sup>26</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
iNtumwo	KJ-1, 23 NS-1, 20 MYS-0430	5

<sup>24</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

<sup>25</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.) *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen* [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 179.

<sup>26</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

The *ya kumwo tat-u* collocation is used in songs No.1 and 23 of KJK, 1 and 20 of NSK, and 0430 of MYS and means “many clouds arise”. This word expression I suppose that in this particular case collocation or word expression is more appropriate. is used as an MK for the name of Izumo, featured in a famous song dedicated to the deity Susanoo after his descent to the human world, his subjugation of the dragon, and his marriage to Kushipina Ntapime, daughter of an earthly deity. Both *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* present the poem in context of Susanoo’s settling down with his new bride in the newly constructed palace in Suga province, Izumo. The standard translation of this poem refers to the contextualized meanings of mythical accounts:

Oh, the many-fenced palace  
 In Izumo of the rising clouds!  
 To live therein with my spouse,  
 I build a many-fenced palace.  
 Oh, that many-fenced palace!<sup>27</sup>

Following the explanation by Keichû in the *Kokin yozai shô*, Motoori Norinaga noticed that this expression, which literally means eight clouds, does not mean a numerical layer of clouds – *not eightfold* – but rather describes a large number of layers.<sup>28</sup> Motoori Norinaga also wrote about the etymological meaning of the lexeme “eight” (*yatsu*), which is considered to derive from *iya* 弥 meaning “many, numberless”.<sup>29</sup> Little if any is written in published translations or commentaries about the fact that this song is a bridal one. Moreover, traditionally it is considered that *ya* (eight) may just mean many, as mentioned earlier, however most linguists miss the important fact that the number eight is the sum of Chinese character numbers three (female number) and five (male number), which should provoke to socio-cultural exploration.<sup>30</sup> M. Marra and most translators interpret in such a way that stresses the point on the beauty of Izumo, which cannot

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<sup>27</sup> *Kojiki*, Donald L. Philippi (transl. with an introduction and notes), Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968, 7<sup>th</sup> paperback reprint, 1995, p. 83.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Marra, *Essays on Japan: Between Aesthetics and Literature*, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010, p. 382.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 385.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Vovin, *A Descriptive and Comparative Grammar of Western Old Japanese: Part 1. Phonology, Script, Lexicon and Nominals*, UK: Global Oriental, 2007, p. 360.

be linguistically reconstructed. The analysis of the MK gives meaning to the whole song.

KJK 82

阿麻陀牟 *ama-Ntam-u* the sky flying

*Table 8. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>31</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Karu	KJK 82	1
Ama-töb-u ya for Karu	MYS 2-0207; 4-0543; 5-0876; 8-1520; 10- 2238; 11-2656; 15- 3676.	7

To summarize, this expression is used eight times with an alternative reading of *ama-töb-u ya* and is a MK, used to attribute summer birds. It is also used as a homophone for the land of Karu. As for the meaning of this particular MK it is considered to be “the sky”, “flying”, where *ama* represents the sky (N – genitive marker), and *tam-u* /*tama-u* supposedly corresponds with the word “give”. The phrase was not found in the MYS, but there, one with similar meaning – albeit different spelling – already figures: *ama-töb-u ya* whose motive of sky and flight is quite apparent.

KJK 29

阿良多麻能登斯 *ara-tama-nö tösi* the year of new gems

*Table 9. Frequency of usage of these MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's elaboration*<sup>32</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Year	KJK 29 MYS 3-443, 3-460, 4- 587, 4-590, 5-881, 10- 2089, 10-2140, 11-2385,	26

<sup>31</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

<sup>32</sup> The author's elaboration is based on: Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

	11-2410, 11-2534, 12-2891, 12-2935, 12-2956, 12-3207, 13-3258, 15-3775, 17-3978, 17-3979, 18-4113, 18-4116, 19-4156, 19-4244, 19-4248, 20-4408, 20-4490.	
Month	4-638, 8-1620, 10-2092, 10-2205, 13-3324, 13-3329, 15-3683, 15-3691, 20-4331	9
Other	11-2530, 14-3353	2

*Ara-tama-nō tösi* is considered to be a permanent epithet for the words *tösi* (year) and *tuki* (moon). Its composition is quite simple and translates to the year of new gems.

Thus far, unfortunately scholars have not reached a consensus about the grammatical structure of the compound *aratama*. For example, Tsuchihashi Yutaka and JDB analyze *aratama* as *ara-tama*, while Alexander Vovin reads it as *arata-ma- arata* meaning “new” and *ma* “interval”.<sup>33</sup> Here I use the classical version given in JDB, which interprets *ara* as “new, uncut” and *tama* as “gem”.<sup>34</sup> Regardless of the grammatical structure we can see homophones, which become the condition of figurative meaning as a year of new gems conveys the coming of new, better times.

NSK 68

異舎儺等利 *Isana tor-i* the whale?

Table 10. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author's Elaboration<sup>35</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
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<sup>33</sup> Vovin, *Man'yōshū*..., p. 133.

<sup>34</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.), *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen* [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 55.

<sup>35</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus*....

Sea	NSK 68 MYS 2-0131, 0138, 0153; 0220; 3-0366; 6- 1062; 13-3335, 3336, 3339; 16-3852;	11
Seashore	MYS 6-0931;	1

The above mentioned MK for lexemes is connected with marine terminology, where *isana* is a noun that means “whale”, *tör-* a verb infinitive meaning “take” and “i” – according to some researchers, being connected to Old Ryukyuan nouns. In WOJ however this prefix is used only with verbs. Additionally, there exists a constant word alluding to the term “sacred”, “taboo”,<sup>36</sup> as well as defective pronouns (Sa) meaning “be that way”, “be very”, words like *Na* meaning food: “fish” or “vegetables”, that in turn could be associated with the phrase “whale”.

## NSK 83

伊儼武斯盧 *ina-musirwo* rice straw mat

*Table 11. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>37</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
River	NSK 83 MYS 8-1520;	2
Me	MYS 11-2643	1

*Ina-musirwo* is a MK for the noun *kappa* (river), where *ina* means rice field and *musirwo* – straw mat. Classical and non-canonical interpretations treat this collocation as words constructing a „rice straw mat”, as seen in ex. the MYS, scroll No. 8 and 11.

## NSK 104

斯那堤流 *sinater-u* (something) very high

*Table 12. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Vovin, *A Descriptive...*, p. 569.

<sup>37</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Mountain	NSK 104	1
River	MYS 9-1742	1

*Sinater-u* represents the names of rivers and mountains. From a classical view point, which is expressed also in JDB, this expression is an attributive of the noun signaling “side” – the side most probably lightened up by the sun. As it is however, scholars have not given clear and transparent semantics of this combination. In the MK dictionary it is stated that this particular MK means something very high.<sup>39</sup>

## KJK51

阿豆佐由美麻由美 *aNtusa yumyi mayumyi catalpa bow, true bow*

*Table 13. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's elaboration*<sup>40</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Sound	2-0098, 7-1279,	2
Pull	2-0207, 2-0217, 10-1930,	3
Arrowhead	9-1738, 11-2638, 11-2640, 12-2985, 12-2988, 12-3149	6
Approach	14-3489, 3490	1

In the “List of the Nation’s Rare Treasures” an entry about bows refers to the existence of “one hundred bows” (御弓壹佰張, *oyumiippakucho*) and “bows of different colors” (別色御弓參張,

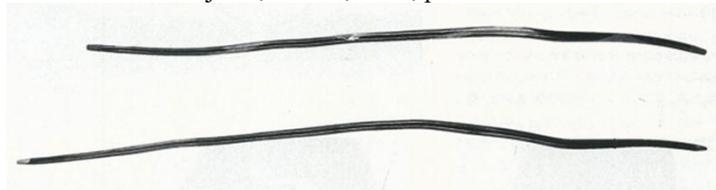
<sup>38</sup> The author’s elaboration is based on: *ibidem*.

<sup>39</sup> Pak B., *Dictionary of Man'yōshū makura-kotoba* 萬葉集枕詞辞典, Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1990, p. 187.

<sup>40</sup> The author’s elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

*betsuirooyumisancho*), 84 of which are made of catalpa,<sup>41</sup> 3 of which to this very day remain in the Shōsōin Treasure House (see Picture 2).

Pic. 2. *Nihon no bijutsu*, № 523, 2009, p. 25



The collocation is used with such basic words as “to be; string; sound; draw near, etc”, furthermore another word, *azusa* refers to the large catalpa tree of the *Bignoniaceae* family.<sup>42</sup> As we can see from the table, the most frequent base word is “arrowhead” and in JDB’s opinion, the basic word, the verb *haru* (to pull is treated as a homophone of the noun *haru* – spring, *aNtusa yumyi* additionally being connected in some cases with the verb *yoru* (be caused by),<sup>43</sup> which according to Japanese literary history, was connected with the pulling of a string or with making a sound with an arrow. Extensive research on catalpa bows can be found in a book that goes by the same name, written by Carmen Blacker.<sup>44</sup> Hyakutome Yumiko in her article on MK featuring the word *yumi* also analyzed the usage of these expressions in KiKi songs and MYS, simultaneously enumerating the functions and possible semantics of the expressions in OJ.<sup>45</sup>

#### KJK 58

阿衰迹余志 *awo-ni-yosi* (the land) of the blue/green clay

Table 14. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

<sup>41</sup> *Nihon no bijutsu*, No. 523, 2009, Tokyo: Gyosei, p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.), *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen* [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

<sup>44</sup> See: Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow. A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*, UK: Unwin Hyman Limited, 1989.

<sup>45</sup> Hyakutome Emiko, 「弓」における枕詞のレトリック// 文化東北大学大学院文学研究科 [Rhetorics of Makura-Kotoba with “Bow” Images], *Proceedings of Faculty of Letters University of Tohoku*, Vol. 68, No. 3/4, 2005, pp. 281–295.

Source: Author's elaboration<sup>46</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Nara	1-0017; 0029; 0079; 0080 3-0328; 5-0806; 0808 6-0992; 1046 7-1215; 8-1638; 10-1906; 13-3236; 3237 15-3602; 3612; 3728 17-3957; 3973; 3978; 3919; 4008 18-4107; 19-4223; 4245; 4266	26

*Awo-ni yō-si Nara* means Nara of the blue (green) clay.

Akihiro Satake in his study *Man'yōshū nukigaki*, describes the connections between words, color images and colors perception within the old Japanese language. He contends that wide application of this device in OJ literature can be explained by the limited number of color-naming nouns and a desire to express particular color shades.<sup>47</sup> More importantly, the collocation *awo-ni yoshi* functions as a permanent epithet referring to the old capital – Nara. *Awo* normally refers to the color “blue” or “azure” and in limited cases, can also be understood as “green”. In the aforementioned case, it is difficult to ascertain whether it refers to green or blue soil and the same can be applied to *awoyama* from the first Kojiki songs, which denotes green or blue mountains.

### Conclusions to part I

As indicated by the above data, structural analysis is vital for proper morphemic division, which in turn can give us relevant semantics of certain lexemes. In regards to the MK expressions previously analyzed, the meaning of these epithets often is not derived from the meaning of

<sup>46</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

<sup>47</sup> Satake Akihiro, 萬葉集抜書 [The Extracts from Man'yōshū], p. 116.

the lexemes comprised within the collocations, as exemplified in 阿之比奇能 (*ashipiki nö*, “leg-cramping”) for mountains. As stated earlier, the classical interpretation is incorrect. The only possible etymology, differs from what is declared in the interpretations, in some instances, even the semantics cannot offer a full understanding of why certain phrases were used in the texts of the songs – for instance in the analysis of the *tuNkyinepuya* collocation. We may only hypothesize and make guesses, while researchers cannot say for sure what one expression or the other means. For these reasons – the ambiguity and, as a result, misreading of MK functions, has resulted in translators avoiding the interpretation of those rhetorical devices, which seem to be meaningless, unconnected to song context and thus considered difficult to interpret. Due to the recent trend in linguistics connecting semantics with hermeneutics, I shall now attempt to explain the core of the MK in question from a hermeneutical approach. It is hermeneutics that explain aspects of interpretation, their differentiation from original text semantics and explain the reasons behind them. For that reason, I will try to analyze MK functions in terms of philological hermeneutics in the second part of this study. Abbreviations, sources and bibliographical notes will also follow.