

THE AWARE EMOTION AND *EN* BEAUTY IN THE KOKINSHŪ PREFACES AS THE BASIS FOR A TRADITION IN JAPANESE POETICS*

Ivan R.V. RUMÁNEK

Institute of Oriental and African Studies Slovak Academy of Sciences,
Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovakia

A comparison of the Japanese and the Chinese Preface to the Kokinshū unveils a connection between the two central notions of Japanese poetics – *aware* and *en*, delving into the history of the original term YAN in the Chinese poetics too. The study also brings more light to further two dimensions of Heian literature – to the Chinese-Japanese dichotomy, the male-female points of view and offers an outline of the further development of these two aesthetic terms.

THE TWO PREFACES TO THE KOKINSHŪ

The first Japanese poetic established itself against the background of strong influence of the Chinese culture, the reception of which was in full swing in the first half of the Heian period (794-1192) and continued even after the interruption of the official diplomatic ties with the Tang Court at the end of the 9th century. Inseparably connected with this reception was the arising of the awareness of the Japanese national identity which took the form of literature written in the vernacular, including the poetry collection of Kokin Waka Shū 古今和歌集 or Kokinshū 古今集 (Anthology of Poems, Ancient and Modern, 905) as well as the first works of prose, including texts of scholarly literature represented by the two introductions to the Kokinshū, 真名序 (Manajo) the Chinese Preface and 仮名序 (Kanajo) the Japanese Preface.

The promoter, indeed founder, of this vernacular literature was Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (868?-945?), who, as a poet, was not only the main compiler of the Kokinshū but the probable author of its Japanese Preface (Kanajo). The

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Japanese Preface has a lot in common with the Chinese Preface, the authorship of which is traditionally ascribed to Ki no Yoshimochi 紀淑望 (?-919), a senior relative of Tsurayuki's.

The similarity of the two texts has been a challenge for generations of scholars, both Japanese and foreign. Indeed it would seem that the Japanese Preface was built upon a *Japanese translation* of the latter, a supposition supported also by the fact that the Japanese Preface was dated three days *after* the Chinese (the latter – 15th day, 4th moon, 5th year of Engi, the former – 18th day of the same) (Kokinwakashū, p. 60, p. 420). If one speaks of a translation, one should bear in mind that there existed no such thing as a faithful translation, the idea of transmitting messages from one language to another being conceived of far more vaguely and freely than what we consider translation nowadays. The translators found no difficulty in inserting their own ideas into the original texts, abridging here, complementing there. The term “creative adaptation” would describe this kind of activity better.

The Japanese Preface copies the parallel style of its Chinese matrix, trying to convey in Japanese the rythmical effect parallelism has in Chinese. Apparently the translator, Ki no Tsurayuki most probably, did not care for the number of syllables within the members of parallelism, which is a decisive element in perceiving Chinese texts, forming a sense of rythm in the reader's mind. Yet he was no doubt sure that any of his contemporary or future colleagues who would ever read the Japanese Preface, would do so by automatically perceiving it against the background of the parallelism of Chinese texts that must have been familiar and ever resounding in the literary awareness of these literati as they dealt with them incessantly. So he was convinced that the parallels would be visible (“perceptible”, rather) enough even in Japanese, despite the discrepancy in the number of syllables. This also proves that it was the parallelism of concepts, of images, rather than that of the acoustic effect, that was decisive. For the crushing majority of Japanese literati, Chinese was not a living language designated, above all, for the spoken living communication; for them it was little more than just a graphic code how to record thoughts, similar to the mathematical formulas of ours. Quite early, the Japanese had elaborated the *kundoku* 訓読 system representing a certain method of simultaneous translation of Chinese texts into Japanese, still in use in Japan today. They hardly ever read Chinese classics “in Chinese”, translating them instead simultaneously into their *kundoku* Japanese. Taking this fact into account, the deed of Tsurayuki of translating a Chinese-written text into Japanese may seem not all that innovatory. What was new, however, was that he put this Japanese translation down *in writing*. It can easily be imagined that while doing this he started off with the *kundoku* of the Chinese Preface. The Chinese text, read in Japanese according to the *kundoku* rules, could produce the basic framework of what he

then subjected to alteration, complementation and abridgement. Such process of transferring of a text in one language into a slightly new text in another must have been highly esteemed as mastery, especially if enriched by ingenious quotations and allusions.

(A similar innovatorship can be discerned in Tsurayuki's enterprise, thirty years later, to produce another genre in Japanese – a diary, in his *Tosa nikki* 土佐日記.)

Numerous equivalent passages in the two Prefaces allow one to see the same idea from two sides, expressed by means of a different linguistic medium and sometimes from a different point of view. This fact lays in the foundation of this study. Ki no Tsurayuki used the term *aware* あはれ、哀れ in one such equivalent passage, so all one has to do is look at how this idea is rendered in the Chinese Preface to see what Chinese expression was chosen to correspond to the Japanese notion of *aware*.

Actually, there was apparently no “notion of *aware*” at all in Ki no Tsurayuki's days. The word only became characteristic of the period retrospectively, descriptive of an atmosphere contained in the poetic production of the mid-Heian period. But, as will be seen, there was a perceptible development as to the value attributed to the *aware*-quality of literary works.

DEVELOPMENT OF AWARE

The word *aware*, spelled after its original pre-Heian pronunciation as *afare* in the Heian kana, seems to have previously been an interjection compounded of the words “a” + “fare” with a meaning close to the English “oh”.

In Japanese, the boundary between the interjection and the full-meaning word is not so firm as is the case in, say, European languages; a present-day Japanese often uses a sheer statement of a situation at which a European would use an interjection, e.g. *kusai* for pooh, *oishii* for yum-yum, *itai* for ouch.

This way of expressing immediate feelings was used in old Japanese as well, and, etymologically, the word *aware* could have come from a full-meaning word (*fare*) prefixed by the purely interjectional “a”. This word, along with its interjectional use, could have retained a portion of its original full-meaning character (similarly to the duality in the above-mentioned modern expressions *kusai*, *oishii*, *itai*), which is apparent in the development of its usage in literature and in poetics.

The analysis by A. Tollini showed these uses in poetry:

1. In the poems of the chronicles *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*:
here it can be taken as a pure interjection “oh!” relating to memories, deep emotion or compassion.

2. The poetry of the Manyōshū includes the full-meaning usage close to the function of predicate (No. 761: *waga ko fa mo afare* = and my child, oh the poor one), as well as – which is the most important for its development – as a noun expressing a certain state of emotions:

No. 3197 *afare to kimi wo ifanu fi fa nasi* = there is not a day in which I would not tell of you “aware” (i.e. not sigh after you)

No. 4089 *afare no tori to ifanu toki nasi* = there is not one time when I would not say: oh, the “aware” bird (i.e. the bird which moves me with its singing)

3. In the poems of the Kokinshū:
here the word can often be translated as “emotion”, that is a noun, the meaning of which ranges broadly from a light touch of sadness and nostalgia (in contrast with “*usi*” which expressed a deep sadness and pain) to enjoying places of natural beauty to happiness. However, even in these cases it has a certain “half-syntactical” position, not being included in the structure of the sentence directly but connected with the rest of it via the quotational postposition *-to*, for example:

No. 873 *afare to omofamu* = I will feel “aware!”

No. 602 *afare to ya mimu?* = will she look at me through “aware” (i.e. with sympathy)?

The rest of the Kokinshū poems containing “*aware*” show the classical use as an out-of-syntax interjection.

Tollini’s analysis focused on the occurrence of the word *aware* in poetry. How it was used in prose, however, can be exemplified by the work written a century after the compilation of the Kokinshū – the Tale of Genji (Genji Monogatari 源氏物語 by Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部, cca 1010), where it was an already established notion expressive of the high aristocratic taste and the aesthetical ideal of keen sensitivity to delicate beauty and light sadness. For Genji, anything that moves him emotionally is *aware*: the sight of a mountain monastery (*tera no sama mo ito afare nari* = the monastery looked very “moving” / delightful), the glimpse of a lady with a fashionable hair cut (*imamekasiki mono kana, to afare ni mitamafu* = Oh how fashionable it is, looked he, moved), meeting an attractive girl (*afare naru fito wo mituru kana* = Oh what a “moving” / attractive woman have I seen!) (Murasaki Shikibu, pp. 274-283).

Thus, *aware* eventually became a designation for any kind of emotion that did not trespass the limits out into the spheres of hilarious joyfulness or, on the

other hand, desperate desolation. *Aware* came to mean an emotion controlled by elegant equilibrium, decorum and propriety.

AWARE “TRANSLATED” FOR YAN

Halfway between the two – between the Kokinshū poetry and the Genji prose – one finds *aware* used in the Japanese Preface to the Kokinshū, the first work of scholarly style ever written in Japanese.

It only occurs once in it and the passage in question has a direct counterpart in the Chinese Preface, as pointed out also by Hisamatsu Sen’ichi (Hisamatsu, p. 18). This fact enables us, by comparison of the two, to get one further dimension of the psychological perception of this notion in Tsurayuki’s times, indeed by Tsurayuki himself.

It occurs in the passage telling of six poets from the period several decades prior to the compilation of the Kokinshū and Tsurayuki assessed their poetry as that of “some of those who made their names in recent times”. Among them is the only female poet, Ono no Komachi, of whom he wrote:

Wono no Komati fa, inisife no Sotofori-fime no riu nari. *Afare naru yau nite*, tuyokarazu. (Kokinshū, p. 59) = Ono no Komachi belongs to the stream (line, tradition) of Sotoori-hime of antiquity. <Her poetry> is, as it were, *aware* and lacks in strength.

In the Chinese Preface, the following passage corresponds to Tsurayuki’s assessment:

小野小町之歌。古衣通姫之流也。然艶而無氣力（Kokinshū, p. 417）
= The poetry of Ono no Komachi belongs to the stream of Sotoori-hime of antiquity. It is, however, YAN and lacks in strength.

Tsurayuki used the word *aware* to characterize the effect he thought was felt in Komachi’s poetry and the word YAN (see below) is used in the Chinese version. Tsurayuki apparently appreciated the emotional depth by which Ono no Komachi’s poems have fascinated readers throughout the world until this day, but the peculiarity of his assessment is the concrete wording “*afare NARU YAU NITE*”. Firstly, the word *aware* occurs with the suffixation – *naru*, a usage we have seen in the examples from the Genji above. And secondly, he did not say simply “*afare narite... (... tuyokarazu)*” (it is full of emotion / it is moving ...[... and has not much strength]), what he said is “*afare NARU YAU NITE...*”, which is an important stylistic nuance.

To try to grasp the hidden hue of meaning in this statement, let us have a look at the use of this *-yau ni (aru)* construction in another prose by Tsurayuki himself, his Tosa Diary.

Yobarete itarite, fi fito-fi, yo fito-yo, tokaku, *asobu yau nite*, akenikeri. = He accordingly went to call; and, what with one thing and another, all day and all night passed away pleasantly, till at last the day broke. (Ki no Tsurayuki, p. 16, 17)

Fito mina e-arade *warafu yau nari*. = The others could not help laughing. (Ki no Tsurayuki, p. 66, 67)

Kono fito no ife *yorokoberu yau nite*... = This friend's house seemed indeed a delightful change... (Ki no Tsurayuki, p. 122-123)

Apparently this construction was used to render an emotional situation in an indirect, roundabout way, not as a firm fact but rather as a "seeming". In this way the speaker expressed the awareness that other people's emotions cannot be stated directly because he himself does not feel them, thus he cannot confirm them – all he can say is that someone else "seemed to, looked like" having the emotion or mood. This deeply subjective way of expression must have stood behind the words of assessment of Ono no Komachi's poetry as well. So what Tsurayuki was probably trying to say is "she seems moved, she makes an impression of being moved / full of emotion", meaning, in the Western way of expression, that "she IS moved / full of emotion", or, should the subject be poetry, "it seems to be moving / evoking emotions". What exactly he meant, however, remains doubtful to a certain extent, as indeed do his assessments of the rest of his Six Immortals of Poetry.

So the Japanese *aware* has here the Chinese counterpart "yan" (Sino-Japanese "en"). This word with the basic meaning "beauty" also belongs to Japanese aesthetic terms and its concrete perception shifted along with changes of the taste in the course of time. There are, however, two points which are of importance:

1. The term YAN occurs in Chinese poetics as well, so from the point of view of poetics it is not a notion autochthonously Japanese but borrowed.
2. The term YAN is present in three further places of the Chinese Preface, which helps to understand better its meaning and use in the period, indeed Tsurayuki used it once himself in his Preface to the Shinsen Waka, a selection of poems he worked on three decades after writing his Japanese Preface to the Kokinshū.

In the Chinese poetics Shipin (詩品, by Zhong Hong, fl. 483-513), in its “First Preface”, for example, the term YAN characterizes the poetry of one of the poets:

元嘉中有謝靈運。才高詞盛。富艷難踪。

(Führer: p. 448 lines 24-25)

“Then, in the Yuanjia period there was Xie Lingyun whose high talent and lavish vocabulary are only too hard to reach in their richness and captivating beauty. (Während der Ära Yuanjia war dann Xie Lingyun, dessen hohes Talent und üppige Worte in Reichtum und (hinreißender) Schönheit nur schwerlich erreichbar sind.)” (Führer, p. 449)

Führer expounds this term as “[hinreißende oder betörende] Schönheit” – (captivating or bewildering) beauty. In China, in Zhong Hong, this is rather a positive assessment (as Dr. Führer told me himself: “it is positive, but only just... it is on the verge”).

M. Gálik in his study on the Sino-Japanese interliterary process (see Literature) holds the view that the Japanese probably adopted the term YAN from the preface to the anthology New Songs from the Jade Terrace (Yutai Xinyong by Xu Ling 507-583). Xu Ling used it to characterize the poems of the anthology. Its meaning went through a considerable change within the Chinese literary thinking itself. “While Xu Ling might have used this word proudly and positively, it later became one of the most frequently used terms to criticize the frivolously ornate nature of late Southern Dynasties poetry (...). Originally yan was used to describe a woman’s physical beauty. But later it was adopted by critics to describe a literary style marked by fastidious ornateness and mild eroticism.” (Wu, p.45, 46)

Over in Japan, Tsurayuki and his co-editors seem to have held the critical part. Just as in China, where the old ideal of spontaneous poetry reflecting real, on-the-spot and even social topics was challenged by the playful “palace style” poetry of the Southern Dynasties, this again being criticized in later periods, so also did Tsurayuki’s group apparently advocate the nearly celestial ideal of antiquity, repudiating the more recent stream of poetry influenced by the ornate and sensual poetry of China of the Six Dynasties (a period including the Southern Dynasties). For them, YAN also had a negative connotation. These are the further occurrences of YAN in the Chinese Preface to the Kokinshū.

(For a better understanding of the context of the quotations, passages immediately preceding or following are given in brackets in the English translation, when deemed necessary.)

Chinese Preface:

CP 1 艶流泉湧□

(And when, later on, the times tended towards decadence and people favoured eccentricities, empty words flew [plenty like] clouds,) *streams of splendour flowed {abundant like} fountains.*

(The fruits of such poetry fell down easily, only their vain blossom flourished well...) (Kokinshū, p. 416)

The corresponding passage in the Japanese Preface:

JP 1 Ima no yo no naka, iro ni tuki, fito no kokoro, fana ni narinikeru yori atanaru uta, fakanaki koto nomi ide kureba, (...)

Today the times are preoccupied with [sensual] colourfulness and the minds of people are only concerned with blossom, and so the songs, too, are empty and the verses are without any lasting value. (...) (Kokinshū, p. 54)

Chinese Preface:

CP 2 其大皆以艶為基

(It is impossible to count in full the names of the others who, besides these, also became well-known.)

They, for the most part, see the foundation in splendour (and do not understand the message of the Japanese poetry.) (Kokinshū, p. 418)

The corresponding passage in the Japanese Preface:

JP 2 Kono foka no fitobito, sono na kikoyuru, nobe ni ofuru kadura no fafi-firogori, mori ni sigeki konofa no gotoku ni ofokaredo, uta to nomi omofite, sono sama siranu narubesi.

The others, whose names are heard, are numerous like vines stretching about the meadow, like foliage growing thick in the forest. But they only think [they understand] what poetry is, without, indeed, knowing its [true] style. (Kokinshū, p. 59)

Chinese Preface:

CP 3 詞少春花之艶

Our verse lacks the splendour of the spring blossom, (our fame steals (i.e. falsely assumes) the length of the autumn night) (Kokinshū, p. 420)

The corresponding passage in the Japanese Preface:

JP 3 (...) kotoba, faru no fana nifofi sukunaku site, munasiki na nomi, aki no yo no nagaki wo (...) (...) our verse has little fragrance of the spring blossom, only a vain fame will be long as the autumn night, (...) (Kokinshū, p. 61)

As appears from the comparison of the corresponding passages in the Chinese and the Japanese Prefaces, in two cases (CP 1 and 2) the Chinese YAN is not expressed directly, it is felt “between the lines”, from the context and the tone of the sentence, whereas in the third case (CP 3) its Japanese counterpart is *fragrance*. So in the floral metaphors, the Chinese YAN would render as “nifofi” (nioi in Modern Japanese) – *fragrance*, from which it can be supposed that in the poetic of the Kokinshū Prefaces, the YAN beauty was taken similarly to the scent of the flower, being the most beautiful, the most captivating, yet the most fleeting as well. Not only is the “decadent poetry” assessed as the flower that falls down without producing a fruit, but its beauty – YAN – is interpreted as the *fragrance* of such an easy-to-fall flower. So this was how the Chinese word was taken by the literati working on the compilation of the Kokinshū – meaning a splendour too ostentatious to be tasteful. Much in the way Chinese literary critics condemned the poetry of the Southern Dynasties.

If, then, the author of the Chinese Preface attributes this quality to Ono no Komachi's poetry, it means he does not assess it positively. The corresponding Tsurayuki's wording “afare naru yau nite” is rather negative also – “she seems too moved/sentimental”, which, along with the following “and lacks in strength”, is clearly a statement of reproach.

Tsurayuki reproaches Ono no Komachi for her sensitivity, delicacy, maybe even sentimentality, and goes on pointing out vehemently that the poetry in question is female, one in the line of the imperial concubine Sotoori-hime, whose well-known song tells of the joy of expecting the arrival of her lover. But can a woman's poetry not be female?

Entitled as Tsurayuki might have certainly been to express this view of his, one tends to feel that he was apparently wrong; the transitory fragrance of the deciduous flower of Komachi's poetry lasted much longer than most of other poems that might have seemed, against the criterion of his poetic, better quality to him. Mark Morris speaks of “the enduring Komachi-effect” (p. 580). Now the question is whether, consenting on its being *aware*, Ono no Komachi's poetry is really YAN too.

Her poems, full of keenly experienced emotions, abound in puns and conceits ingeniously used to purpose. “The poems behind the effect are cool, calculated poetic artifacts” (Morris, p. 580). In one of her most famous poems (Kokinshū 113) she characteristically combines the floral metaphor with a word

play on homophony and a grammatical inversion to produce an astounding effect:

fana no iro fa uturinikeri na itadura ni
waga mi yo ni *furu nagamesesi* ma ni

The color of these flowers
No longer has allure, and I am left
To ponder unavailingly
The desire that my beauty once aroused
Before it fell in this long rain of time.
(Translation from: Brower and Miner, p. 217)

A literal translation in the first plan would be:
The color of these flowers, lo! has faded away, unavailingly while it made
me ponder over how I've passed through life

In the second plan, there is this conceit of homophonic overlap-deletion (*kakekotoba*) where "*furu nagamesesi*" (it made me ponder over how I've passed) also says "*furu naga(a)me*" (falling long rain). This pun is not only interesting but fascinating in how it combines two expressions identical not only phonetically but having a deep semantic congeniality, metaphorically enriching each other. The word "*itadura ni*" (vainly) can function both ways – regularly for the "pondering", and irregularly – by virtue of inversion – for the "fading away". The fading away of the flower's colour is an obvious metaphor forming a topical introduction to the main idea expressed in the latter half of the poem. And the final "*ma ni*" used after the causative form "*nagamesesi*" biases the apparently logical order of events, as at the first sight it would seem that it was the flower that faded away, thus having the poet think of her own vanity. Yet with the "*ma ni*" placed at the very end of the poem, it turns the whole course the other way round, as it says "WHILE I (was made to) ponder, the flowers faded away", so the whole statement is put into a never ending time loop without any certainty which preceded and which ensued. Moreover, "*fana no iro fa*" (the colour of blossoms) was a motif with a deep connotations in the realm of corporal beauty, love and erotics, as can be seen in another of Komachi's poems (*Kokinshū* 797):

iro miyede uturofu mono fa yo no naka no
fito no kokoro no fana ni zo arikeru

A thing which fades without its color visible is the flower of the heart of a man of the middle of the world (Translation from: Brower and Miner, p. 204)

Komachi sang of flowers, love, sleep, dreams, loneliness and sadness, used ingenious puns to load her poems with lots of hidden meanings and delicate shades. The intensity of emotions felt while reading her poems might be much stronger than what the poetess really felt, if we consent to M. Morris's words stated above. He even challenges her identity and argues that there might have been no single Komachi at all, "[S]he may be the creation of several shes or several hes or any combination thereof." (Morris, p. 561) For the purpose of this study, however, this issue is immaterial since it does not matter whether Ki no Tsurayuki in his statement meant a singular poetess or a symbol for a group of womanly delicate poems vaguely attributed to a vague name conspicuously plain in its graphic form of characters. The poems are certainly full of emotion as well as causing the effect of internal, rather than external, beauty. So there is no doubt about them being *aware*, but – are they really YAN? Do they possess the ostentatious splendour, judged so critically in the Chinese Preface in connection with the poetry of recent times?

It is hard to say. Although the word YAN is used critically in the Chinese Preface, we find it in a neutral sense of beauty as such, in Tsurayuki himself, when he wrote, three decades later, his preface in Chinese to an anthology *Shinsen Waka* 新撰和歌 (935). It says:

絶艶之草

(If [I -] Tsurayuki died, songs would get scattered.)

They would, alas, become grass without beauty, (they would, further, be mixed with rural verse.) (Nihon Kagaku Taikē Dai-ikkan 1963)

From this we can see that the word YAN was understood differently by the author of the Chinese Preface, and differently thirty years later in Ki no Tsurayuki. It might be due to the broad range of meanings of the word, but it can also testify to the pace of the development of literary thinking, when views changed and, accordingly, the words, used to express them, shifted their meanings.

In his explaining the difference between *aware* and *en* (the Sino-Japanese version of the Chinese *yan*), Hisamatsu says (Hisamatsu, p. 18): "Though *en* is a harmonious beauty resembling *aware*,(...), it has a gay, positive quality which is closer to *okashi* (...) than to *aware*."

Back in China, in the period of Six Dynasties, YAN referred to the decadent palace style poetry whose aim it was to evoke emotions instead of sticking to the ancient ideal of a socially engaged poetry. By concentrating on the formal perfection, it turned "poetry into clever verbal play" (Wu, p. 4). Tsurayuki might have had this in mind too. Professing "makoto", truthfulness, he probably felt that the richness of skilful puns is a bit too much for Komachi's poems to be judged sincere.

According to the Kogo Jiten dictionary, *en* means, still in Genji monogatari and in the poetic Mumyōshō (1211-1216), “enchanting, glorious, flowery beauty”, in Genji also “exciting, seductive beauty”.

A century and a half after Genji, and immediately before the time of the Mumyōshō, Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114-1204) distinguishes “en” from “aware” in the following way: *en* is enchanting beauty with a certain depth, close to expressions like *okashi* (charming, interesting), while *aware* expresses profound and sharp emotional realization. (Kogo Jiten, p. 207)

The entry in the Princeton Companion reads:

“EN – Charm, beauty. This may designate a style more lovely than profound or a central principle of aesthetic beauty. See *yōembi* and *sama*.” This already comprises the meaning it assumed in the Japanese Middle Ages when *en* had become the central notion for the emerging aesthetics of the Noh drama; the scale of its meaning thus shifted further.

Most probably, *yan/en* became a Sino-Japanese word covering a whole range of nuances and hues contained in various native Japanese words, an umbrella term for expressions like *uruwashi* (beautiful), *yoshi* (fair), *niou* (fragrant), *yasashi* (graceful) (Hisamatsu, p. 18), also close to *okashi* (charming, gay). And, for the authors of both Kokinshū Prefaces, *aware* was felt to belong to its scope as well.

A profound, sharp emotional realization is significant for the verb “*afarebu*”, which also appears in the Japanese Preface. This verb, pronounced more and more in the refined version [*awaremu*] in the cultivated Heian speech, was probably a secondary derivation from the word “*afare*”, its meaning encompassing the whole scale of emotional depth from the common “be moved” to “pity” to “be fascinated”. It occurs in the first part of the Japanese Preface, in the sentence “*kasumi wo afarebi..*” – “being moved by <seeing> the mist”.

The difference between *YAN* and *aware*, as used in the Prefaces, can also be stylistic, the former being objective and the latter subjective. Whereas the Chinese “*yan*” has the character of a matter-of-fact definition relating to the presence of a certain kind of ostentatious beauty, the Japanese wording “*aware*” appears more of an expression of emotional effect, of psychological impression. Something like “it is beautiful” versus “its beauty moves me”. (A difference probably also existing within another couple of terms of aesthetic appreciation, between “*okashi*” and “*omoshiroshi*”, the former being objective, “it is charming”, the latter subjective, “it appeals to one”.)

MONO NO AWARE

This term, established mainly thanks to the works of Motoori Norinaga in the 17th century as a retrospective descriptive of the old classical ideals, was not

a special expression in Heian times. It was merely a syntactical variation of *aware*. “Mono” (a thing, a person) had auxiliary functions as well. As a prefix it served (and still serves) to enhance the meaning of expressive adjectives and other emotional words. And in its genitive form “mono no” could have a general, purely pronominal meaning similar to the way the words “things, people, places” are used in English (I walked about seeing things, meeting people, going places). Thus *mono no aware* 物の哀れ literally means “the emotion felt out of it/out of (the) things”.

In Tsurayuki’s Tosa Diary, an emotional scene of parting between the locals in the port and the departing travellers is ended by this sentence:

To ifu afida ni, kaditori, *mono no aware mo sirade*, onore si sake wo kurafitureba, fayaku inamu tote, sifo mitinu.

The steersman, who had himself been freely eating and drinking sake while all this was going on, now *remorselessly* said they must get away at once; for the tide was full... (Ki no Tsurayuki, pp. 24-25)

Here, *mono no aware* means regret or sympathy. This is the oldest extant record of this phrase (Kogo Jiten, p. 1164), later to be found abundantly in the Tale of Genji as well. It came to be a noun representing “all the things that move one”, “all the emotion felt by things”, “all the feelings [of all that]”.

Motoori Norinaga regarded *aware* and *mono no aware* as the essence of Japanese soul as expressed in the classical literature, characterized by a deep emotional immersion. “... *mono no aware* involves knowing the heart of things and knowing the heart of events. To discover their hearts and to be moved in accordance with their different qualities is to know *mono no aware*.” (Norinaga: The Essence of the Tale of Genji, in: Shirane, p. 620)

As opposed to the principles of good and evil, which he regards as foreign, he evaluated the *mono no aware*, the Japanese good. Prince Genji’s extra-marital relationships with various women could be, “from the Buddhist and Confucian points of view, the most sinful and immoral acts imaginable... /yet/ Genji is depicted as the very model of the “good person”, possessing every good quality imaginable”. (Norinaga: The Tale of Genji, a Small Jeweled Comb, in: Shirane, p. 624)

To Norinaga, poetry was the true expression of the Japanese soul in the dark periods when Chinese influences prevailed: “without poetry it is difficult to express the indescribable emotions of *aware*”. Further on he wrote: “Now I will speak about the benefits for people who are sensitive to *aware*. First, those who govern the people and the country must have a detailed knowledge of the condition of the hearts of the ordinary people and know *mono no aware*...”. (Norinaga: My Personal View of Poetry, in: Shirane, pp. 617, 618) These statements of his, much in the line of the diction of the old Chinese poetics as well as that of the Kokinshū Prefaces, codified the (*mono no*) *aware* of the

classical literature as one of the aesthetic ideals of the true Japanese sensitivity to beauty.

CONCLUSION

The Prefaces to the Kokinshū give a critical comment to the development of poetry in the previous period. The 8th and 9th centuries saw a climax of cultural influx from the Continent and influenced the domestic culture to a large extent. However, the adaptation of this influence was a selective one. Among the general tendencies, marking the difference between “what is Chinese” and “what is Japanese”, lays the Chinese sense of pragmatism and social engagement for the good of the State against the Japanese tendency towards aesthetics, individualism and stressing the dynastic mythology. “Welfare” on the Chinese side, “fascination” on the Japanese side. For example, the Japanese did not get much out of Bo Juyi’s social poems, while being absolutely entranced with the lyrical tragedies of his Song of Everlasting Sorrow. And this had been seen before too – the ostentatious and seductive beauty marking the poetry of the Six Dynasties exerted such a strong influence upon the Japanese way of poetic expression that it can be felt and traced in the Kokinshū poems as well, so this trend, though criticized by Tsurayuki, unavoidably penetrated into the Kokinshū poetry. “Quest for beauty was much more typical for the Japanese than for Chinese culture. (...) There is no explicitly didactic or explicitly moral vision.” (Gálik).

Tsurayuki disapproved of the *aware* touch of Komachi’s poems yet he did not exclude them – a sign of his tolerance. After all, she had been a Japanese poet and Japanese poetry was what Tsurayuki intended to elevate and extol. Writing a preface to his anthology in *Japanese* was an innovative step and a courageous one, for that matter.

He went on promoting Japanese literature in later years too, when after his return from the governor post in Tosa, Shikoku, he wrote a diary of this voyage, the opening sentence of which is the famous pretension of the diary’s author being a woman, thus trying to apologize (or account) for using Japanese in this noble kind of literature.

So, as a matter of fact, Tsurayuki, by writing both the Japanese Preface and the Tosa Diary, cautiously apologized for, but at the same time resolutely promoted the use of *Japanese* in literature – both in poetry and in the diary genre. But as can be seen from the fact that he wrote his Preface to the Shinsen Waka in Chinese at the time of his return from Tosa, he meant no rejection of writing in Chinese; after all, *kanbun* (漢文 Chinese texts) were considered an integral part of the Japanese culture without which the then “Japanese literature” would be but a torso. He took an active part in the endeavour to elevate

vernacular literature to a higher status. And this current proved powerful, having such a tremendously upward tendency that as early as seven decades after the Tosa Diary and the Preface to the Shinsen Waka, the *opus magnum* of Japanese prose emerged, for which Chinese literature had to wait several centuries yet. The Tale of Genji exceeded everything ever written before, and is still fascinating today.

However, there is not only the temporal gap of one century between the Kokinshū era and the Genji era, there is a much more fundamental difference in the literary and aesthetic thinking. While, in the Kokinshū, Ki no Tsurayuki reproaches Ono no Komachi for her being too sentimental (*aware*), the Genji and its contemporaries are full of *aware* without any reproach. The authors of the Kokinshū Prefaces did not regard the excessive degree of the *aware* emotion and the *en* beauty as the mark of good literature, yet to the authors of the high Heian period they were something inseparably connected with the literary interpretation of the outer reality and of one's inner life. The reason to this shift can be boiled down to the well-known and ever reconfirmed fact that the authors of the high Heian period were – just like Ono no Komachi – women. The Kokinshū men represented the Chinese conception of literature, in which women are only exceptions. Tsurayuki might stylize himself into the pose of the Tosa Diary being written by a woman, yet he would never be too *aware*; this would be too female for him. Authors like Murasaki Shikibu or Izumi Shikibu were *aware* without stylizing themselves. “In Japan the women poets wrote about themselves and this kind of objectification /as in China/ was simply meaningless. Even if the poets forged the women's voice, the tone of their poetry was very natural and sincere, the expression of their hearts and minds.” (Gálik)

The prose of the high Heian period gave the female view of the world, the delicate view of the world, the way of perception for which the feeling of *aware* is ubiquitous and decisive. *Aware* became the expression of the aesthetic taste of the courtiers, the expression of the artistic view, the atmosphere of literature. While in the Kokinshū, Tsurayuki looks upon too much *aware* with criticism, a hundred years later many a male looks upon the world with *aware*. And when the over-delicate, effeminate days of the high Heian period were brought to an end by war and by the advent of the samurai power at Kamakura, *aware* was assumed as the fine court-like attitude towards the world even by representatives of the new ruling class of warriors. For centuries to come, this feature became a prevailing mood felt as characteristic of the classical literature. In the form of “*mono no aware*”, it became a label.

Tsurayuki's ashes must have stirred in his grave.

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azia.lingua@stonline.sk