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Power and Poetry : the Poems for the Sliding Doors of the Saishô shitennô-in (1207)

Michel Vieillard-Baron

In the year 1207, Retired Emperor Gotoba ordered the building of the Residence of the four Most Victorious Kings, Saishô shitennô-in, an architectural complex located in the north-east of the capital (Heian-kyô / Kyôto) made up of two Buddhist chapels and a residential palace. The aim of my talk today is to make clear the aesthetic, symbolic and political issues of this exceptional undertaking which combines architecture, religion, painting and poetry. First, I will recount in detail the genesis of the project, using mainly the *Meigetsuki* (The Journal of the Harvest Moon), the diary of Fujiwara no Teika who was the main coordinator of the enterprise. Then, I will analyse the poems which were actually written on the sliding doors of the Palace (*gosho*) — the most official part of the residence — and in the private rooms of the retired emperor (*tsune no gosho*), where he lived.

In his *Meigetsuki* entry for the ninth day of the ninth month of the year Kennin 3 (1203), Teika writes :

Kennin 3 (1203), IX, 9 : Fine weather. [...] I am told that famous places (*meisho*) are to be painted on the sliding doors of a Buddhist temple founded by imperial order (*gogan-ji*).

This quotation proves that in the year 1203 Gotoba was already planning to order the building of a *gogan-ji*, a Buddhist temple founded in order to pray for the realization of the sovereign's wishes, as well as for the prosperity of the country. Besides, he had already decided one of the main characteristics of his undertaking: to have famous places of Japan (*meisho*) painted on the sliding doors.

In spite of the fact that Jien, Gotoba's personal chaplain (*gojisô*), had offered to the sovereign in 1205 a plot of land to build his residence, almost two years elapsed before the construction began, in 1207. The architectural ensemble conceived by Gotoba was finally named Saishôshi Tennô-in, or Residence of the four Most Victorious Kings. We can see in this name, which combines the Four Deva Kings (Shitennô) and the *Konkômyô-saishôôkyô*, or "Sutra of the Golden Light of the Most Victorious Kings," a reference to the decision taken by emperor Shômu, in 741, to have provincial temples placed under the protection of these Four Deva Kings built in every province. There, as Bernard Frank wrote: "people would pray for the protection and the well-being of the country according to the indications of a canonical text then highly estimated, the *Konkômyô-saishôôkyô*, or 'Sutra of the Golden Light of the Most Victorious Kings.'" We can also see in this

name a reference to the Shitennô-ji temple of Ôsaka. This monastery, one of the oldest in Japan, is placed under the protection of the Four Deva Kings and has its origin in a vow of Prince Shôtoku (574-622), a strong supporter of Buddhism, who fought against clans hostile to his religion.

Neither parts of the residence, nor ancient plans remains. In order to gain a sense of the general structure of such a residence, we can refer to the plan of the residence built for the monk Jigen (1220-1255), Jien's grandnephew, constructed on the same ground of Gotoba's residence, after its dismantling. The plan I show here was drawn by the architectural historian Fukuyama Toshio.

We can see on this plan that the main entrance (A) of the residence was created in the middle of the western outer wall. The religious buildings (two chapels, B and C) occupy the western half of the ground while the palace (gosho, D) and the other residential buildings are situated in the eastern portion. The palace, where official activities took place, directed southward, faces the courtyard and the garden (E), in accordance with the conventions of palace architecture of this time. It is interesting to note that, according to what we shall read in Teika's diary, the rooms where the everyday life of the sovereign took place (*tsune no gosho*) are integrated into the palace, and occupy the northwest portion (F). In addition, there are two detached pavilions to the North of the palace, one containing a kitchen (G), and the other, a large room.

The realisation of the project

Let us recall, firstly, that in 1201 Retired Emperor Gotoba had ordered the compilation of his imperial anthology, a symbol in the Japanese tradition representing the quality of the reign of a sovereign. To conduct this project he had, the same year, resuscitated a long-abandoned office, the Bureau of Poetry (*Wakadokoro*). The anthology, entitled *Shinkokin wakashû* (*New Collection of Ancient and Modern Times*), was officialy finished in 1205. In reality, corrections of the collection continued after this date and the definitive text of the anthology was finally copied in 1209 or 1210. So, when the construction of the residence began, the poets of the Bureau of Poetry were busy with the exhausting final corrections of the prestigious collection.

We have seen that, from the beginning of the project, Gotoba determined that the sliding doors of his palace would be decorated with paintings representing famous places of Japan. These sliding doors (*shôji*),

which correspond to the *fusuma* of contemporary Japan, are constituted by two panels which can slide one in front of the other to open up – or to reduce – the space. Several units could be fixed side by side in order to delineate a room. In addition, Gotoba decided, according to a well-established tradition, that every sliding door, consisting of two panels, would be decorated with a Japanese poem (*waka*) written in cursive script. The painting of *meisho* on sliding doors – or folding screens – decorated with poems is a practice dating to the IXth century. It reached its apex towards the Xth century, and though its practice thereafter declined, it did not disappear.

The five compilers of the imperial anthology – all of them leading poets – were naturally associated with the project. Fujiwara no Teika was in charge of coordinating the enterprise. Born into a family which had specialized in poetry for generations, with its own poetic school, he was considered an accomplished connoisseur of *waka* and its tradition.

Teika writes in his diary :

> Jôgen 1 (1207), IV, 19 : Fine weather [...] A letter of the Chief Imperial Secretary-controller [Fujiwara no Mitsuchika] informs me that I must hasten to the Palace since the day after tomorrow we must decide in the Bureau of Poetry which famous places will be painted on the sliding doors of the new imperial palace. I go there after dark [...].

The poets met two days later in order to choose from a list produced by Gotoba the *meisho* which would be painted on the sliding-doors. The term *meisho* or "place with a name" generally indicates a famous place and, more specifically, a place recited in poetry, as is the case here. More than one thousand *meisho* are listed in premodern poetic treatises. In the case of Gotoba's residence, the poets had to retain 46 *meisho*, we will later see why. In addition, they had to define the elements of the landscape (*keiki*) and the precise season (*jisetsu*) associated with each of these places, information that the painters and the poets would use as a basis for their own compositions.
Finally, they had to determine, plan in hand, where, in the Palace, each sliding door would be located.

Teika writes :

> Jôgen 1 (1207), IV, 21 : Fine weather. Dressed in a simple hemp robe, I go to the Bureau of Poetry. I find there Sirs Arie and Ietaka. After a few

> moments the Middle Counselor Minamoto [no Michitomo] arrives. The Chief Imperial Secretary-controller tells us : "You must discuss the famous places whose names are recorded below the plan of the residence, note those which you retain and submit the list to the Retired Emperor." We discuss each of them. We ask Ienaga to write the draft list of the places we have retained. Then we ask the monk reponsible to draw us again the plan [of the residence]. Then, Kiyonori takes his brush and writes each place name on exactly where [the sliding door representing it] will be placed in the residence. Besides, we tell him to write in detail the characteristics (*keiki*) and the moment of the year (*jisetsu*) [associated with each famous place]. I give the main characteristics but I have to wait for us to discuss them collectively [...].

Teika stresses here the central role he played in the choice and the definition of the characteristics of each famous place. He continues his report by indicating the location
assigned to each *meisho* :

> In the Southeast, facing the South, is the official section [of the palace]. It is a place where the blinds will be folded from time to time. On three sliding doors ([in fact] three from east to west and one from south to north) will be painted famous places of Yamato province (the fields of Kasuga, the Yoshino mountains, Mount Miwa and the river Tatsuta). West of these, on the southern part, will be painted famous places of Settsu Province (Naniwa, and so on). In the easternmost part [of the residence] is located the resting room (this room is vast and contains many sliding doors); there will be painted Mutsu (this province being particularely rich in famous places of a mysterious and deep (*yûgen*) [nature], it is difficult to choose. These places will be painted at a good distance from the palace so that "disorders do not disturb the harmony." For these places we have chosen a room out of sight.)

Let's stop one moment to consider the text we have just read. We notice that for the most official part of the Palace, which will be visible from the outside when celebrations are taking place in the courtyard, the blinds will be folded, and places of Yamato province have been chosen. As Kubota Jun notes, this province represents the "the birthplace of the History of Japan." It is indeed in this region that, for instance, the capital of Nara (then called Heijô-kyô) was founded in 710, where the first Japanese state appeared. In the easternmost part of the residence was located the resting room (*kanjo*). Built as a detached pavilion, as far as possible from the main

building, this room allowed people to rest discretely during official celebrations, or to carry out quiet discussions. The choice of the region of Mutsu for this space is not without significance. Mutsu, paradoxically one of the regions richest in *meisho*, represented the north-easternmost part of the empire, a region where very few people of the capital had the opportunity to go. This region inspired fear and fascination. It is for this reason that Teika suggests that the place embodies *yûgen* (mystery and depth). If Teika and his companions decided to allocate this region to the resting room, it was because these famous places would so be out of sight and distanced from the palace that they would not provoke any potential misdeeds. The expression "disorders do not disturb the harmony" is an allusion to a verse of the Chinese poet Bai Juyi (772-846). In his poem, Bai Juyi regrets the corruption of the traditional Chinese music by the introduction of barbaric rhythms. Placed in the context of Gotoba's residence, this expression means that the peace of the kingdom, represented by the famous places painted on the sliding doors, should not be disturbed by adding *meisho* of "wild" regions. This last point is important beacause it shows that people attributed a potentially malicious power not only to certain particular places, but also to their pictorial representation or their poetic evocation. By reversal, we can deduce that a merits, whether political or material, were anticipated from the selected *meisho*.

Let's again refer to Teika's *Meigetsuki*:

> In the daily rooms of the Emperor (*tsune no gosho*), will be painted Yamashiro Province. Next to his majesty's bedroom (*go-shinjo*), will be painted Toba and Fushimi; [in the space corresponding to] the canopy (*chôdai*), we will paint Minase and Katano; in front of these, Harima Province [or, more exactly, the Bay of Suma (in Settsu Province) and the Bay of Akashi (in Harima); next to the shelf ([on the partition] which separates the daily rooms from the Office of the Trays (*daibandokoro*), will be painted the market of Shikama. Once all this was shown, no one made any objection. It is due to the fact that it was late, we were all tired and it would have been futile [to protest). Besides, [we are told] that on each sliding door, two famous places must be painted. I say that the surface of a sliding door panel is too narrow to paint the characteristics of a site. Wouldn't it be better if only one famous place was painted on both panels of a sliding door? We ask the Chief Imperial Secretary-controller to submit this point to the emperor. [His majesty] answers: "Only one famous place will be painted on [both panels of] each sliding door". [...] I ask Kiyonori to

record the adopted decisions; the emperor sends someone to tell us that it is perfect.

Besides the location for each of the famous places in the daily rooms of the emperor, this passage teaches us that both panels of a sliding door will represent only one place. We also know, although Teika does not mention it, that a single poem will evoke each of the famous places.

Two days later, the emperor called Teika to remark on the choice of a *meisho*:

> Jôgen 1 (1207), IV, 23: Fine weather. Having been summoned, I go to the palace at the hour of the Ram (1-3 pm). The emperor has someone ask me the reason why the Bay of Waka has not been included among the sites chosen the other day. I answer that the choice was made collectively. I speak with Kiyonori. We remove Settsu Province, Koya and Nagara Bridge, substituting the bays of Waka and Fukiage of Kii Province. [...]

The Bay of Waka (Waka no ura), recited in poetry since the eighth century, is situated in the Kii Peninsula (in present-day Wakayama Prefecture). This is where the goddess of poetry, Sotoorihime, is worshipped within Tamatsushima Shrine. The place name Waka, meaning "Japanese poetry," was at that time often used to evoke the world of poetry (including its production, authors, styles and patrons). As shown by Watanabe Yumiko, Gotoba's wish to have this famous place included in the list is certainly due to the fact that it was a kind of sacred site for poetry. Let us note, finally, that in order to include Waka no ura, Teika deleted two places previously selected. The second was replaced by the Bay of Fukiage, located not far from the Bay of Waka, towards the north; thus, to him, these two *meisho* formed a pair.
Once the final list of famous places was officially adopted, the emperor decided which poet would be assigned to each famous place.

Gotoba made a list of ten persons. Five poets were related to the five compilers of the imperial anthology : Jien, Minamoto no Michiteru, Shunzei's Daughter (Shunzei-kyô no musume), Minamoto no Tomochika and Fujiwara no Hideyoshi. These ten poets (including Gotoba) constitute the poetic elite of the time. As a rule, sovereigns and court nobles (*kuge*) did not compose poetry for sliding doors (or folding screens). The fact that Gotoba, Jien (considered a court noble) and Michiteru did compose poems for this occasion demonstrates the exceptional nature of the project and its

prestige. For an unknown reason, Michitomo, compiler of the imperial anthology, did not compose for the residence. Thus, nine poets and the retired emperor Gotoba, that is to say ten persons were to compose the poems for the sliding doors.

A few days later the four painters were assigned their respective *meisho*. The painters included two monks and two laymen. The first painter, Sonchi, a monk, was founder of the Bureau of Painting (*edokoro*) of the Ichijô-in, the Buddhist temple associated with the famous Kôfuku-ji (in Nara). Although he specialized primarily in religious themes, Sonchi was also excellent at producing secular paintings on Japanese themes (*yamato-e*): the sliding doors of the residence are the first known works for this artist. The second painter, Kaneyasu, a layman, was a court artist. The *Meigetsuki* tells us that he is a « fifth rank official » (*taifu*) and that he belongs to the Koremune clan. Of the third, Kôshun, Teika writes that he is a « monk of Shinano ». He was probably, like Sonchi, a painter based in Nara. Of the last one, Mitsutoki, we know only what can be deduced from Teika's diary: this secular painter likely lived within the Iwashimizu Hachimangû shrine, in the south of the Capital.

Such was the team that Teika was to coordinate. He writes:

> Jôgen 1 (1207), V, 14 : Fine weather. An imperial order received last night summons me to convene the painters and to have them decorate the sliding doors of the imperial residence. I reply that, being by nature stupid, I have not seen anything else but the Capital. Besides, I have no particular gift for painting. Although I made clear, with due respect that I am not the best person, the Chief Imperial Secretary-controller tells me that the Emperor said to him: "If he has ideas on the subject, he should bring them forward." That is the reason why I spent the whole day consulting people on the matter.
> After their return from the Shinsen Garden, I summon to the Bureau of Poetry the Minor Captain Fujiwara [no Masatsune] and Hideyoshi, among others, and we make the decisions together. The Minor Captain knows the eastern provinces, which is the reason why, by imperial order, he is associated with the project. Regarding the four painters, three came today. In addition, the emperor orders that the paintings of the official sections [of the palace] must be painted by Sonchi (a fifth rank official) and Kaneyasu (a Palace attendant); Kôshun (a monk from Shinano) and Mitsutoki (a man of the Hachiman shrine) will be in charge of the private sections. As it is difficult to make a clear distinction between official (*hare*) and private (*ke*) parts [of the palace],

> we ask for more information from the emperor through a female attendant. The emperor has someone report to us that discussing this point [among ourselves] should be sufficient.

Paintings for the official parts were thus entrusted to the most experienced artists. The fact that the emperor asked Hideyoshi to contribute his knowledge of the eastern provinces reveals the importance that the emperor attached to the accuracy of the representation. This accuracy was doubtless considered an element necessary for the efficiency of the project (we shall see further evidence of this). Before reading about the assignment of *meisho* to each artist, we should note that there were three kinds of sliding doors within the palace: 1- the sliding doors of standard size (two panels of a *shôji* occupying the space between two columns), 2- extra large sliding doors (*hiroma*), occupying a space twice as wide as the standard sliding doors, and 3- lateral sliding-doors (*waki no shôji*) on which no famous place was painted. These were simply decorated with motifs intended to complement the sliding doors on which *meisho* were painted. It is important to note that certain sliding doors, and the *meisho* painted on them, were conceived as diptyches or triptyches.

> Today, we finished entrusting the famous places to the four painters. The three painters [here today] receive the list [of the places they are in charge of]. We agree that they will have to submit in advance sketches [to the emperor] and I withdraw. Sonchi (the monk, fifth rank official) was assigned twelve sliding doors: the fields of Kasuga, the Yoshino mountains, and Mount Miwa [and so on]. Kaneyasu of the Koremune [clan, was assigned] twelve sliding doors, plus three lateral sliding doors: Naniwa Bay (extra large), Sumiyoshi, Ashiya [and so on]. Mitsutoki (of the Taira clan, [and living in the] Hachiman Shrine [was assigned] eleven sliding doors, plus three lateral sliding doors: Abukuma River, the fields of Miyagi, Asaka swamp [and so on].

A quick calculation reveals that fifty-three sliding doors in total were entrusted to the painters. Forty-six of these were to have a *meisho* painted on them. The others were simple lateral sliding doors. We can see that whenever a modification was required, Teika ensured that the number of *meisho* would still remain forty-six. This number thus had symbolic significance. It could be, as Watanabe Yumiko suggests, an allusion to the forty-six chapels built by Prince Shôtoku. If this assumption is correct, the reference to this princely defender of the Buddhist religion would be double: firstly, in the name of the residence and, secondly, in the number of *meisho* represented on the sliding doors of the palace.

The *meisho* thus having been allocated, the painters started working. Painters and poets conducted their work simultaneously, following early-Heian custom. This time, however, the painters were required to follow instructions given by the poets (including the elements of the landscape (*keiki*) and the moment of the season *(jisetsu*) associated with each place). This collaboration was an innovation that took place in producing these particular sliding doors. The document supplied by Teika and his colleagues to the contributors is unfortunately now lost but the poems produced allow us, as we shall see, to partially reconstruct it.

The list of the forty-six *meisho* suggests three main selection criteria. First and foremost was the renown of the *meisho* (notably, 21 out of the 23 *meisho* most frequently cited in poems have been chosen). Second was the site's link to the Retired Emperor Gotoba (for instance, Minase was included because Gotoba had a detached palace there). Third was the symbolic value of the place (for instance Shikama market, which evoked abundance). Terashima Tsuneyo and Watanabe Yumiko have demonstrated how the *meisho* were arranged carefully to constitute a route or a journey. They are grouped by region, avoiding jumps and breaks as much as possible. The forty-six meisho are also arranged into eight sub-categories: I- from 1 to 5, *meisho* of Yamato Province (mainly depicting mountains); II- from 6 to 12, *meisho* of Settsu and Kii provinces (mainly depicting seaside landscapes); III- from 13 to 17, famous places related to pilgrimage and travel of Kawachi, Settsu and Harima provinces; IV- from 18 to 22, *meisho* of the western provinces (Hizen, Inaba, Harima, Tango); V-from 23 to 29, *meisho* of Yamashiro Province; VI- from 30 to 33, *meisho* on the Ise road (Ômi and Ise provinces); VII from 34 to 41, *meisho* of the eastern provinces (Owari, Tôtômi, Suruga, Musashi and, by way of border, Shirakawa Barrier, located in Mutsu); VIII- from 42 to 46, *meisho* of Mutsu Province.

The temporal progression is also very subtle. Thus, the "journey" begins logically in spring and proceeds according to the natural order of the seasons to reach, after two complete cycles (sub-categories I to III) Matsura in Hizen (in the South-westernmost part of the country), and winter. We notice that places 13 to 17, located in the Emperor's private rooms, are, with one exception, recited in autumn, which confers to this place an overall autumnal tone. From that point (sub-category IV), the order of the seasons is reversed (winter, autumn, summer, spring). Besides, we notice that from the sub-category VI *meisho* are arranged in order that the journey takes the traveler away of the capital. When the natural order of the seasons is restored, the journey returns the traveler to the capital. This distribution has, naturally, a symbolic value: it expresses on the one hand the Emperor's

power over the progress of time, and, on the other hand, the importance of the imperial palace, and the sovereign, as the center of the empire.

Let's return now to the work of the painters. They were required to submit to the emperor, through Teika, sketches for each of the *meisho* which had been entrusted to them. That is why from the end of the fifth month to the beginning of the sixth, Teika records various visits to the palace to request the emperor's opinion. While the painters were working, the poets had to compose their *waka*. The *Meigetsuki* informs us that the poems had to be presented on the 10th: the poets were expected to provide their poems in time.
Thus Gotoba had a collection of 460 *waka* among which he chose the forty-six poems which were to be be written on the sliding doors (the 460 *waka* produced for the occasion remain extant).

The poems for the sliding doors

In order to grasp the parameters of this poetic project, let's read some poems which were actually written in a decorative hand on the sliding doors of the palace. To provide a sense of progression, I will preserve the original order.

Before reading the poems, let us briefly recall the characteristics of such compositions. A poem intended to decorate a sliding door (or a folding screen) had to complement the image represented: it had to add something, to evoke, for instance, a scent or sound which the painting alone could not express, or something not pictured in the painting. As a rule, the poet adopted in his/her *waka* the perspective of a character appearing on the painting or that of a person contemplating the scene. Since the poems were intended for the Emperor, the topic had to be represented in an auspiciousmanner.

We are presently : « In the Southeast, facing the South, in the official part [of the palace]. It is a place where blinds will be folded from time to time. » The journey begins in the fields of Kasuga.

1- Fields of Kasuga (Kasuga-no), Spring

Mada kienu	Are they snow
Yuki ka to mo min	Not melted yet
Furusato no	These first plum flowers
Kasuga no nobe no	Of the ancient Capital
Mume no hatsu hana	In the fields of Kasuga ?

Michiteru

The « fields of Kasuga » situated east of the ancient capital of Heijô-kyô (Nara) covered the present district of Kasugano and the nature preserve located east of Nara city, in Nara Prefecture. This *meisho* appears frequently in poetry from antiquity onward (it appears in 50 *Man'yô-shû* poems). It is associated here with the beginning of spring. Michiteru handles the topic in a conventional way. He introduces in his *waka* plum trees and snow, two elements traditionally associated with the beginning of spring.

The journey continues southward, the next *meisho* being the Yoshino mountains:

2- Yoshino mountains (Yoshino-yama), Spring

Miyoshino no	In beautiful Yoshino
Takane no sakura	The cherry blossoms of the summit
Chirinikeri	Are now scattered
Arashi mo shiroki	Even the tempest is white
Haru no akebono	In this spring daybreak

Retired Emperor Gotoba

The *meisho* "mountains of Yoshino" designates the various summits located in present-day Yoshino district (Nara Prefecture), south of the ancient capital. Yoshino appears in poetry from antiquity onward (we find 54 occurrences in the *Man'yôshû*). However, it is at the time of the *Shinkokin wakashû*, thus at the time of production of the poems for the imperial residence, that cherry blossoms were associated with this site. Since all of the poets introduced cherry trees within their poems, we can assume, as Wananabe Yumiko notes, that it was an element required by Teika and his colleagues. With regard to the previous poem, Gotoba's *waka* takes place later in spring. The author plays with the notion of white superimposed (for example, the whiteness of the storm, which transports the flower petals, and the whiteness of dawn). This *waka* is representative well the aesthetics of *Shinkokin wakashû*. It would thus have been considered modern at the time of its composition.
The journey continues northward, the next stop being Mount Miwa :

3- Mount Miwa, Summer :

Hototogisu	The cuckoo
Miwa no kami sugi	Doesn't pass in front of the
Sugi yarade	Miwa sacred cedar
Tohubeki mono to	He is probably waiting for
Tare wo matsuran	The person supposed to pay a visit

Michiteru

Mount Miwa, a site included in poetry from antiquity onward, is located halfway between Yoshino and Kasuga, east of present-day Sakurai (in Nara Prefecture). The famous Ômiwa shrine, home to the cedar evoked in the poem, was located at Mount Miwa. Michiteru's poem hints at a famous anonymous poem collected in *Kokin wakashû* (Miscellaneous 2, n°982) : "I live in a hut / at the foot of Mount Miwa / if you should miss me, / please come and pay a visit -/ the gate where the cedar stands."[1] In Michiteru's poem it is the cuckoo (a bird associated with summer) who waits to sing for the man supposed to pay a visit to the person living in the hut. All of the poets composing for the imperial residence included the cuckoo in their *waka*, thus this bird was no doubt a compulsory element.

The journey continues in the northwest direction where it reaches the next site, Mount Tatsuta:

4- Mount Tatsuta, Autumn:

Momiji chiru	Red leaves fall,
Aki mo tatsuta no	And Autumn reaches its end / From Mount Tatsuta
Yama oroshi yo	Blows a stormy wind
Nakite mo oshime	Oh ! Stag, to lament that
Sawoshika no koe	Let us hear your bell !

Retired Emperor Gotoba

[1] Translation Helen Craig Mc Cullough, Kokin wakashû, p. 214-215.

Mount Tatsuta, which marked the border between the two ancient provinces of Yamato and Kawachi, is situated in present-day Nara prefecture. This site, recited in poems from antiquity onward and represented in various seasons (we find examples in the *Man'yôshû*) was, from the Heian period, exclusively associated with autumn. On this mountain, situated to the west of the capital (a direction associated with autumn), was located a shrine where the goddess of autumn was said to reside. Gotoba introduces in his poem on the end of autumn two elements traditionally associated with the season: the stag and crimson leaves. Watanabe Yumiko notes that the combination of the *meisho* Tatsuta and the stag is unusual. The originality of this poem rests, in particular, on the word play on the *meisho* Tatsuta, which contains the verb "tatsu," meaning "to leave" or "to end" (rendered in my translation as "reaches its end"), as well as on the request made to the deer.

The journey leads us next to Mount Hatsuse, located east of Mount Miwa, about 20 km southeast of Nara.

5- Mount Hatsuse, Winter (painted on a « extra-large » sliding door)

Yukigumoru	How moving is
Hatsuse no hibara	The cypress wood of Hatsuse
Ahare nari	Veiled by snow flakes —
Kane yori hoka ni	The bell rings, and furthermore
Yufugure no sora	This twilight sky

Jien

Mount Hatsuse, appearing in poems from antiquity onward, was not on the initial list of *meisho* established by Teika and his colleagues. As noted by Watanabe Yumiko, it was douptless added afterward to include in this sub-category a *meisho* related to winter. All poets used the word "snow" in their *waka*. We can thus assume this was a compulsory element. The sound of the bell evoked by Jien is that of the famous Hase temple which is located at the same site.

With this poem the first sub-category and a first cycle of four seasons constituted by poems evoking mountains ends. In ancient Japan, mountains were considered the dwelling of gods. The selection

of these sites for placement in the most official section of the palacewas not arbitrary. It was doubtless intented to attract the god's benevolence towards Gotoba's project.

We leave now the ceremonial rooms to enter into the emperor's private quarters. Five sites (13 to 17) are placed in the daily rooms of the emperor. The first two (13 and 14) were painted "in the emperor's bedroom, [in the space behind] the canopy (*mi-chôdai*), on extra-large sliding-doors."

13- Katano, Winter :

Chiru yuki ni	While snow falls,
Fuyu mo katano no	In winter, I go to Katano
Sakuragari	To view cherry blossoms :
Hana naranaku ni	No flower petals but snowflakes
Nurenure zo yuku	Wet me while I walk !

Jien

Katano, located in the ancient province of Kawachi, was a field which covered the present-day cities of Katano and Hirakata (in Ôsaka Prefecture). It was a place for imperial excursions and hunting. A famous episode of *The Ise Stories* (story n°82) describes a hunt in Katano ending with a session of poetic composition under cherry trees at their height. No doubt, this episode played a major role in the association of Katano with cherry blossoms. It is interesting to note that in Gotoba's palace, this *meisho* was related to winter, requiring the poets to create poems counter to tradition. Jien's poem is a variation on two other *waka.* The first one is a poem by Minamoto no Michinari on the topic "Hawking in the snow" and collected in *Kin'yô wakashû* (winter, n°281): "I get wet but nevertheless / Shall pursue my hunting / Sweeping off/ The snow which settles / On the wings of my hawk." The second one is a poem by Fujiwara no Shunzei collected in *Shinkokin wakashû* (Spring, n°114) : "Shall I see it again ? / in his majesty's Katano hunting fields / gone to see cherry blossoms/ I saw petals falling, snow flakes / in this spring dawn." The originality of Jien's poem lies in bringing together two elements a priori irreconciliable: the quest for cherry blossoms and winter.

The journey leads next to the Minase River, located in the ancient province of Settsu (in today Ôsaka prefecture). This site appears in the

same episode of *The Ise Stories* as the previous *meisho*. Thus, their matching here is an allusion to this text. Gotoba possessed a detached palace near the Minase River and went there frequently. The placement of Minase River in the most intimate space of the emperor's rooms reflects the sovereign's attachment to this site. Naturally, it is Gotoba's poem which was chosen for this sliding door. The poem was to be temporally located in autumn, which reveals, with regards to the previous *meisho*, a progression that reverses the natural progression of time.

14- Minase River, Autumn :

Minase yama	Leaves fall
Ko no ha araha ni	And Mount Minase appears
Naru mama ni	In its bareness:
Wonohe no kane no	The sound of the summit bell
Koe zo chikadzuku	Can be heard closer now

Retired Emperor Gotoba

Although the topic was "Minase River," Gotoba focuses his poem on another element of the landscape, "Mount Minase." This detail suggests that, the river was painted on the sliding door. Gotoba also enriches the landscape by introducing an auditory dimension: the sound of the bell, which can be heard clearly since the leaves have fallen. The other nine poets evoke chrysanthemums in their poems, a required element. This flower is a symbol used to convey wishes for the emperor's longevity. As the sovereign, Gotoba avoided this flower in reference to himself.

The journey continues via the sea. The next two sites, Suma Bay and Akashi Bay (numbers 15 and 16), are situated in the neighbouring provinces of Settsu and Akashi, respectively. These were both painted in the emperor's bedroom, facing the previous two *meisho*. These latter two sites evoke *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu's masterpiece written at the beginning of the XIth century.

15- Suma Bay, Autumn :

Asanagi ni	Morning calm of the sea -
Narawanu nami ni	Because of [yesterday's] unexpected waves
Yume mo mizu	I could not dream:
Narenaba ikani	Oh Suma barrier keeper
Suma no seki mori	Once one gets used [to these waves], how is it?

Jien

Suma Bay, which skirts present-day Kôbe, was included in poems from antiquity onward, which often referenced the work of salt makers. Jien, neglecting this aspect, chose to hint at the Suma chapter of the *Tale of Genji*, which described the hero's exile. The character in the poem is thus the hero who, relegated to a foreign place, cannot fall asleep due to the sound of the waves. Suma barrier was established on the border between Settsu and Harima provinces.

The next site, Akashi Bay, which skirts present-day Akashi city in Hyôgo prefecture is also associated with the exile and the return to grace of the hero of *The Tale of Genji*.

16- Akashi Bay, Autumn :

Akashi gata	Does the moon reflects itself
Uraminu sode mo	Also on the sleeve of the woman salt maker
Tsuki ya yadoru	Of Akashi Bay
Nenamashi ama no	Who feels no resentment ?
Moshiho kumitsutsu	I, would have liked to sleep

Ietaka

Akashi is a meisho that has been included in poems since antiquity. As a place-name literally meaning "clear," it is often associated, as in this case, with the moon. All poets introduced the moon in their poems, indicating that this was requred. Ietaka, who evokes indirectly the resentment which makes him drench his sleeve with tears and prevents him from sleeping, uses in his poem the verb *uraminu* "who feels no resentment," which can also be read as *ura mi*, meaning both "to see the bay" and "to see the inside [of the sleeve]." This poem makes no direct reference to *Genji monogatari*.

The emperor's bedroom was thus decorated with sites associated with the two most important masterpieces of Japanese classical literature: *The Ise Stories* and *The Tale of Genji*. These constituted a fictional space of which the emperor, who slept there, became, in one sense, the hero. Thus he appeared also as the guarantor of the literary tradition of his country.

The next site, Shikama market, is the last one represented in the emperor's daily quarters. It was placed "next to the shelf ([on the partition] which separates the daily rooms from the Office of the Trays (*daibandokoro*))." Shikama market was located in former Harima Province (in present-day Shikama district, Hyôgo Prefecture).

17- Shikama market, Autumn :

Inishie no	That your reign
Ai yori mo koki	Has a deeper hue than the indigo
Miyo nareya	Mentioned in the past
Shikama no kachi no	We can see even in the color
Iro o miru ni mo	Of the blue of Shikama

Jien

Although Shikama was included in poems from antiquity onward, it is only from the end of the Heian period that its market appeared in poetry. At the market one could purchase the local specialty of fabric dyed a deep blue (*kachi*). Markets were symbols of abundance, particularly related to food, thus such a place was particularly well suited for the sliding door separating the emperor's private quarters from the room where those bringing his meals awaited. Autumn was also the grain harvest season. No other site selected for the sliding doors aroused so many poems praising Gotoba's reign. For the poets — and for the courtiers in general— abundance was inextricably related to the sovereign and his reign. Jien hints in his poem at the famous sentence of the Chinese thinker Xunzi (First half of 3rd century BC) : « Blue comes from the indigo plant, yet it is bluer than indigo [...] The noble person who studies widely and examines himself each day will become clear in his knowing and faultless in his conduct.»[2] Jien thus indicates in a superlative way the quality of Gotoba's reign, unsurpassable.

We have individually examined the poems of our corpus, allow me to now provide some general remarks. First of all, one can confidently state that the poems produced for Gotoba's residence are, generally speaking, very good ones. I said before that Gotoba had summoned for his project the

[2] Translation quoted from :
http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/xunzi_encouraging_learning.pdf

best poets of his circle. They produced *waka* characteristic of the aesthetics of this time, embodied in the imperial collection *Shinkokin wakashû*, which was compiled simultaneously. The compilation of the imperial anthology and the construction of the residence are in fact two faces of the same venture intended to assert the luminosity and legitimacy of Gotoba's reign. The poets were expected to surpass themselves in poetic skill.
Thirteen poems produced for the residence were included in the *Shinkokinshū*. The poems for the residence were thus the main source of poems produced after 1205 to be included in the imperial anthology. Another striking point is the influence of Gotoba on the poems for the official parts of the palace and his quarters (the first twenty nine poems). Seven poems out of eight chosen by Gotoba among his own *waka* were placed (by Gotoba himself) in these parts of the Palace, which means that his poems accounts for a quarter of the total number of poems written on the sliding doors of these important parts of the palace.

Fortune of the residence

The 27 of the eleventh month, Gotoba moved with his wife, Empress Shûmeimon-in, into the residence. The official inauguration, which comprised a religious celebration, was postponed various times due to construction delays. It took place two days after Gotoba entered the residence, on the 29. Gotoba's residence, inaugurated at the end of the year 1207, was dismantled on the 10 of the fourth month of the year Jôkyû 2 (1220). Thus the residence was in use for only thirteen years, a period during which various important religious ceremonies took place there.

In 1221 Gotoba tried to overthrow the military government (*bakufu*). He failed and was exile on the remote Oki Island where he died in 1239.

Conclusion

To conclude this talk, I would like to answer the question which motivated this resarch: why did Gototoba order the construction of this residence and why did he decorate it with sliding doors representing forty-six *meisho* ?

The *Jôkyûki* (*Historical Record of the Jôkyû War*), written circa 1240, includes the following sentence :

At the end of the Sanjô-Shirakawa [district] was built a chapel (*dô*), called the Residence of the four Most Victorious Kings, to anathematize (*chôbuku*) the Kantô [military government]. Shortly after, [Shôgun Sanetomo] was murdered […] so the residence was promptly dismantled.

This often quoted sentence suggests that the chapel (in fact the whole residence) was built in order to obtain from gods the neutralization of the military government based in the region of Kantô, in the east of the country (south of present-day Tokyo). This goverment, headed by a shogun, formed the warrior's central political system. It controled vassalage, ensured the maintainance of order and security throughout the entire country, and was also in charge of receiving taxes from private and public domains located in the east of the country. The *bakufu* retained actual power in the eastern provinces, depriving the Emperor and the court of a large share of their authority and income.

Due to power rivalries within the *bakufu*, Minamoto no Sanetomo, third shôgun of Kamakura, was murdered by his nephew on the 29 day of the first month of the year 1219. A few months later (the 19th of the seventh month), Gotoba decided to move his residence to the grounds of the Itsutsuji-dono, another of his palaces. The residence was effectively dismantled on the 4th of the tenth month of the year Jôkyû 2 (1220) and reassembled on the 18th of the tenth month of the same year. The correlation between the shôgun's murder and the dismantling of the residence, as stated in the *Jôkyûki,* was, in reality, a combination of circumstances. Indeed various elements contradict this assertion. First of all, we know that shôgun Minamoto no Sanetomo, received a copy of the poems produced for Gotoba's residence, no doubt sent by his poetry teacher Fujiwara no Teika. Certain *waka* composed by Sanetomo, a famous poet himself, provide evidence of direct influence from the *waka* produced for Gotoba's residence. Teika would never send to his disciple poems intended to underminethe government he headed (even more so his murder). On the other hand, we saw the central role played by Jien in the realization of the residence (he supplied the land, composed poems, officiated during the important religious celebrations, and so on.) Yet, Jien who was a member of the powerful Kujô family, advocated a collaboration between the imperial power and the military government. He would not have collaborated in this venture were its purpose to annihilate the *bakufu*. Finally, Minamoto no Ienaga, who describes in his memoirs the construction of the residence and its inauguration, would certainly have noted this intent if it had existed. Yet, he makes no mention of it. Thus Gotoba's intention lies elsewhere.

The first point that one should keep in mind is that in Heian Japan, or more broadly, in Xth to XIIIth century Japan, folding screens or sliding doors sets, as well as the poems and the paintings to decorate them, were commissioned by those holding political power (such as emperors, ministers) and other people of influence. Thus, the commission of such items was connected to the expressing representations of power. Gotoba's decision to revive this practice must be understood as the reaffirmation of imperial power in a time when it was eroded by the *bakufu*. The painting on the sliding doors of *meisho* arranged according to the seasons, was inspired by what Fujiwara no Michikane (961-995), a minister, had made for his famous Awata Villa (east of Kyoto). However, while Michikane's villa was decorated with fourteen *meisho* representing six provinces, Gotoba had his residence decorated with forty-six *meisho* of seventeen provinces: this set was of an unprecendent scale. Mapping the *meisho* distribution reveals Gotoba's will to represent symbolically the entire territory, from north to south, and from east to west (with, as we have seen, a particular emphasis on the eastern provinces). As pointed out by Kubota Jun, these forty-six *meisho* are "the representation in reduction of the whole Japanese territory governed by Retired Emperor Gotoba, master of the empire." Edward Kammens adds that « poetry, painting, architecture, and religious symbolism were all called into play here in an effort to reassert Imperial claims to supremacy in a time of uncertainty and change »[3]. By ordering the painting of these famous places, and by choosing the best poets of the time to produce poems and by composing himself, Gotoba wanted to create an ideal representation of the empire, with himself at its center and its main actor. This representation seemed all the more justifiable in that it followed a long tradition, revivified by Gotoba and shaped according to his intentions: to offer the image of a kingdom governed harmoniously by the emperor. By arranging the sites like a route, Gotoba's passage from room to room, was represented as the illusion of travelling through his kingdom. In doing so, he revivified the old practice of *kunimi*, in which a sovereign travelled through his realm in order to confirm his power over it. The effect of progression, the suspension or regression of time inferred by the seasonal association of each site to a season, or the precise moment within a season, expressed the emperor's power over time. Finally, by placing his residence under the protection of the four conquering Deva Kings and the *Sutra of the Golden Light of the Most Victorious Kings*, Gotoba sought the god's intercession in order to recover and ensure imperial power over the whole country. His wish, however, was not fulfilled.

[3] *Utamakura,* Allusion and Intertextuality in Traditional Japananese Poetry, p. 169.

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