

SOUND AND IMAGERY
IN COLERIDGE'S "KUBLA KHAN"

Terufumi Kido

The primary purpose of the present paper is to illustrate the effects of the sound and rhythm of words that convey deep implications to "Kubla Khan" by S.T. Coleridge. Since the meter establishes verse rhythm in poetry, analysis of the rhythm is absolutely necessary for determining the metrical pattern which distinguishes stressed from unstressed syllables in the line. The stressed words are generally considered to impart the important meanings to the poem. Some of the stressed words may function as those rhyming words which are the repetition of identical or similar vowel or consonant sounds. Hence, the rhyming words lead to such rhymed sounds as end-rhyme, alliteration (head rhyme), assonance, and consonance which can be "repeated sounds." Usually the rhymed sounds are heard within the line with the exception of end-rhyme, but sometimes within a few successive lines. The rhymed sounds and other sound-echoes are likely to play an important role in the creation of imagery in the poem. To put it another way, the poet makes the best use of rhythm and sounds to reinforce literal or latent meanings of words.

Let us first discuss the opening part of "Kubla Khan." At the very beginning the emperor Kubla Khan ordered his people to build a magnificent palace. The "sacred river" flowed through the building site of the palace:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

(lines 1-5)

In these lines the prevailing meter is *iambic tetrameter*, rhyming *a b a b b*, all of which consist of admirable *masculine rhyme*.¹ But the fifth line breaks the monotonous effect of the established meter, taking an abrupt turn of the metrical pattern, changing into *trochaic trimeter*: "Dówn to a súnless s'éa." Strictly speaking, this line scans a *trochee* (first foot), and two *iambuses* (second and third feet). The metrical turn places the strongest stress on "Down," which is the right word in the right place in the context of this passage. Its sound is composed of plosive consonant /d/, ascending diphthong /au/ with a deep sense of expanses, and nasal sound /n/ with a sense of leaps and bounds. The word is heard /daun/ with acoustic effects such as a severe shocking sound as if a cataract were running with its roar down a dark and fathomless sea. In short, this irregular *trochaic meter* exhibits a striking contrast to the next 6-11 lines established by the regular *iambic meter* in which an earthly paradise will appear in a pleasing rhythm.

Musical qualities of the words in this passage are worthy of special mention. First of all, "the rhyming word of every line is linked by alliteration";² /k/ in "Kubla" and "Khan"; /d/ in "dome" and "decree"; /r/ in "river" and "ran"; /m/ in "measureless" and "man"; /s/ in "sunless" and "sea." Secondly, end-rhyme echoes /æn/ in "Khan," "ran," and "man"; /i:/ in "decree" and "sea." Thirdly, there are four classes of assonance: /æ/ in "Xanadu" and "Khan" and /u:/ in "Xanadu" and "Kubla"; /ei/ in "stately" and "sacred"; /æ/ in "caverns" and "man"; /e/ in "pleasure" and "measure." Fourthly, two classes of consonance resound /n/ in "Khan," "ran," "caverns," "man," and "Down";³ /s/ in "measureless" and "sunless." Nevertheless, the rhyming words "measureless" and "sunless" echo a successive sound /lis/ and "pleasure" and "measure" do /e3ə/.

The point of the rhymed sounds is the important role which they play in conveying latent meanings to this poem. Analysis of the alliteration leads us to examine the acoustic effects of these consonant

sounds in this passage. For example, the plosives /k/ and /d/ may be associated with the emperor's loud voice of command and his people's loud talk among the metallic sounds of constructing the palace. The liquids /r/ and /m/ enhance the sound effects of the "sacred river" flowing mildly and mellowly. The sound /s/ may echo so silent and still as to fall into the ominous silence.

In this passage there are several words that have symbolic connotation. For example, the emperor's imperial order to construct a splendid palace symbolizes his own supreme powers as the absolute monarch. "The sacred river" is a symbol of a mysterious life force since this river carries an implication of the origin of life on earth. The terms "caverns to measureless to man" mean that large caves are too deep to be measured. And at the same time they suggest the untrodden regions—uncanny and inaccessible from time immemorial. Since "sunless" in "a sunless sea" literally means "underground," the sea is far beyond the light and heat of the sun. Hence, the sea creates an image of a large, dark, cold, and weird body of water—the dead world. Thus, "a sunless sea" has a death image in the perfectly opposite connotation to "the sacred river." That is, the river is a symbol of life and the sea a symbol of death. In the long run, the opening part symbolizes a sudden change from life to death in the universe.

In the second half of the opening part there is a description of a beautiful landscape that surrounds the palace:

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery. (lines 6-11)

This passage describes a natural setting of the "stately pleasure-

dome." To put it concretely, the palace was set on ten miles of "fertile ground" surrounded by the "walls and towers" of immense size which are associated with the Great Wall of China. In this area there were bright gardens through which winding streams were flowing. In the gardens many trees were in full blossom bearing incense. The phrase "forests ancient as the hills" is an emphatic as well as a descriptive simile for "forests as old as the hills."⁴ This simile is on the premise that the hills were as old as the creation of the universe. There were forests as old as the hills which surround the fields of verdant green in the bright sunshine. In fact, this location is something like an earthly paradise in a visionary painting from nature. This poem is "not set down just anywhere in nature but has been very carefully accommodated to its natural setting. It crowns nature."⁵

The prevailing meter in these lines is *iambic tetrameter* and *pentameter*, rhyming (a b a a b) c c d e d e, all of which consist of *masculine rhyme*. The rhyme has strong echoes which enhance pleasurable anticipations.⁶ Thus, the end-rhyme resounds several successive sounds: /raund/ in "ground" and "round"; /lz/ in "rills" and "hills"; /ri:/ in "free" and "greenery." These contain liquid, smooth-flowing sounds such as /l/ and /r/ creating soft effects. Then, there are three classes of consonance within a few successive lines: /lz/ in "walls" and "rills"; /ts/ in "forests" and "spots"; /ni/ in "many" and "sunny."

Various classes of alliteration resound /f/ in "five" and "fertile"; /b/ in "blossomed" and "bearing"; /s/ in "sunny" and "spots"; /t/ in "twice" and "towers"; /g/ in "ground," "girdled," and "gardens." The consonants /f/, /b/, /t/, and /g/ are fricative and plosive sounds which produce sudden or abrupt effects. They may enhance the effects of the swift flow of winding streams and of the full blossom among many trees. In line 11 the rhymed consonant /s/ is associated with the serene weather, suggesting the pleasant quietness among green grass and leaves. Compare the rhyming words "sunny spots" with "a sunless sea." They contain not only the same consonant

sound/s/as alliteration but also the two polar opposites—land and sea, bright and dark, heat and cold, and life and death. In this way, the same sound sometimes accentuates image patterns opposite to each other.

There are several classes of assonance: /ai/ in “twice,” “five,” and “miles”; /au/ in “towers” and “round”; /i/ in “sinous” and “rills”; /i:/ in “greenery” and the two classes of ascending diphthong /ai/ and /au/. The metrical word “greenery” echoes a successive sound /ri:/ as in /grí:nəri:/, which emphasizes the green fields covered in fresh grass and leaves that are full of life. The diphthongs /ai/ and /au/ are encompassed by the neighboring sounds: /au/ in “ground” and “round,” long central vowel /ə:/ in “fertile” and “girdled,” and long back vowel /ɔ:/ in “walls.” These rhymed vowels make “twice five miles” resound a much longer distance than ten miles.⁷ In other words, we sense that the hidden meaning appeals to our auditory sense more than to the literal meaning. The poet makes the best use of sound effects on ascending diphthong /ai/ and the building site of the “pleasure-dome” is heard a much wider region than the numeral distance.

As noticed earlier, both “the sacred river” and “a sunless sea” are the two phrases which convey the basic imagery to “Kubla Khan.” In addition, “fertile” is another word worth noticing in this poem. It can be called a sort of rhyming word because it can alliterate with “five” in the same line. In general, as we have seen, the rhyming word embodies and reinforces the meaning of the word. Thus, the phrase “fertile ground” means that the land produced good crops—the soil grew a large amount of agricultural product such as grain, fruit, and vegetables. Besides, this ground implies that there were rich pastures where a number of domestic animals such as cows, horses, and sheep were grazing in the bright sunshine and that various kinds of birds and animals were enjoying their happy lives. Ultimately, numerous rhyming words in the opening part suggest that there were

many trees covered in full blossom and that the air all over the gardens smelled fragrant with blossom bearing incense among fresh grass and leaves throughout the "fertile ground." The word "incense" in "incense-bearing" literally means "pleasant smell" and the smell connotes fragrant fumes as if we were in religious services. In short, the building site of the palace is full of vivid images which appeal to our visual, auditory, and olfactory senses.

Now, let us proceed to the second part which consists of nineteen lines. The following are the first five lines:

But, oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover! (lines 12-16)

In this passage the very first exclamation "But, oh!" indicates that this part takes a new development in the poem. "At any rate, the 'But, oh!' signals a shift in mood, from sunlight to shadow, or from sunlight to moonlight: 'As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted....'"⁸ Also, the other three exclamations indicate natural wonder of marvellous sights. These five lines establish *iambic pentameter*, rhyming *a b a c b*, which is varied in line 13 by the substituted foot—*trochaic pentameter*: "Dówn the greén hill athwárt a cédarn cóver." To be exact, the second foot is regarded as a *dactyl*. "Down" demands the strongest stress in accordance with the abrupt turn of the poetic rhythm, just as the word produces much the same acoustic effects in the fifth line of the opening part, as we have already discussed. The word stress adds a striking effect to the measurelessness of "that deep romantic chasm," which is full of fathomless mystery. "The description of the chasm completes the picture of a palace which we should today call numinous.... in short, the numinous

as primitive man apprehends it.”⁹

According to the rhyme scheme, end-rhyme resounds /æntid/ in “slanted” and “enchanted”; /ʌvə/ in “cover” and “lover.” Nevertheless, “haunted” rhymes with “slanted” and “enchanted” as /tid/. Next, consonance echoes /n/ in “green” and “cedarn”; /n/ in “moon,” “woman,” and “demon”; /ɪŋ/ in “waning” and “wailing.” These rhymed consonants may heighten the effects of the continuous activities of a “woman wailing” and “a waning moon.” Then, two classes of alliteration echo /w/ in “waning,” “woman,” and “wailing”; /h/ in “hill,” “holy,” and “haunted.” These consonants can produce a striking effect to emphasize the strange figure of a frenzied woman who kept on “wailing” when the moon was waning. “Wailing” is a proper word for expressing the continuity of prolonged, plaintive, and high-pitched cry of a woman who was influenced by magic.

Finally, there are several classes of assonance: /æ/ in “romantic” and “slanted”; /i:/ in “deep,” “green,” and “cedarn”; /æ/ in “savage” and “enchanted”; /ei/ in “chasm,” “place,” “waning,” and “wailing.” Most of these rhyming words may be linked within successive lines in this passage. Of these vowel sounds long front vowel /i:/ involves a deep sense of expanses and ascending diphthong /ei/ a sense of trailing note. These sounds may emphasize the deep crack “which slanted / Down the green hill.”

The expression “as holy and enchanted / As” is a kind of figurative phrase, implying that the chasm was a place which was under the influence of magical powers. Indeed, the chasm was a natural wonder that some mysterious powers created deep in the earth. There was a grotesque atmosphere hanging all over the crack which was too dreadful to be accessible to ordinary human beings. This was a desolate place where only a woman who was possessed by the demon would often visit “beneath a waning moon.” What an uncanny sight it is that an insane woman who loved the demon haunted in the dead of night!

This chasm might be called a strange revelation of supernatural

energy. This energy also created a forceful fountain as follows:

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river. (lines 17-24)

The phrases "this chasm" and "A mighty fountain" deserve special mention. This passage suggests that the chasm was the source of the fountain and that the fountain was the origin of "the sacred river." In a word, both the chasm and the fountain are symbolic of the very source of the life force. This fantastic scene implies that the earth is active in work in three figures of speech. First, the deep crack is perpetually wavering inside as though the earth were living with a short quick breath. Indeed, this grotesque chasm is a symbol of magical powers in external nature. It might also reveal the dynamic motion inside the deep chasm in the ground. Secondly, the powerful fountain burst intermittently out of the chasm, flinging numerous rocks up in the air "like rebounding hail." The strange sight displays the activity of supernatural kinetic energy in the application of the similes of natural phenomenon. Thirdly, the scene that the rocks were jumping up and down in the air is compared with the farmer's hard work in his daily routine in the former day. This simile presents an image of the farmer who was enjoying a rich harvest. In short, this passage implies that some mysterious powers were eternally active in the universe far beyond our imagination.

These eight lines establish *iambic pentameter*, rhyming (*a b a c b*) *d d e f g g h h*. Accordingly, end-rhyme echoes /i:θin/ in

“seething” and “breathing”; /eɪl/ in “hail” and “flail”; /evə/ or /ivə/ in “ever” and “river” as *imperfect rhyme*. Then, simple alliteration echoes /s/ in “ceaseless” and “seething”; double alliteration does /m/ in “mighty” and “momently” and /f/ in “fountain” and “forced.” These rhymed sounds are likely to enhance the effects of violent, continuous motion of the fountain. Next, two classes of consonance are /t/ in “swift” and “burst”; /ɪn/ in “rebounding” and “dancing.” These two sounds may emphasize the swift burst of the water spring and the quick action of dancing rocks on the rebound in the air. In the long run, all of these sound effects seem to reveal the magical powers in the universe.

There are several classes of assonance: /i:/ in “ceaseless” and “seething”; /i/ in “Amid,” “swift,” and “intermitted”; /eɪ/ in “grain” and “frail.” All of these rhymed vowels may serve to heighten the effects of the deep and fathomless chasm and the green color of needle-leaves trees. The words “ceaseless” and “seething” echo a successive sound /si:/ rather than a simple long front vowel /i:/. Especially, “ceaseless” is a rhyming word within one word as consonance /s/ in /si:sles/ which carries the meaning of continuous dynamic activity inside the chasm. Thus, they lead to lay more stress on the violent, continuous spring of the fountain. Short front vowel /i/ may emphasize the swift intermittent spring of the fountain. On the surface, ascending diphthong /eɪ/ reinforces the meanings of “grain” and “frail.” But, since the word “grain” is a figure of speech for “rock,” this rhymed sound is likely to emphasize that a number of rocks were dancing easily and lightly as if they were “chaffy grain beneath the thresher’s flail.”

As we have already discussed, an imaginative description of supernatural phenomenon in this passage symbolizes a gigantic physical energy, creating a violent kinetic image as if it were one of volcanic activities. But, the *iambic pentameter* is established in these thirteen lines—lines 12-24—in an orderly style of rhythm, that is, in the

standard rhythm in English poetry. Judging from this metrical pattern, the established rhythm implies that this spectacular sight is created by what we might call the Province, or the established Order in the universe, although those poetic words which we have discussed suggest the revelation of a gigantic, violent energy working on and under the earth.

Let us discuss the second section in which there is some different imagery from the first section. This section consists of six lines:

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war! (lines 25-30)

These lines completely establish *iambic pentameter*, rhyming *a b b a c c*. Thus, end-rhyme echoes /ouʃən/ in "motion" and "ocean"; /æn/ in "ran" and "man"; /a:/ and /ɔ:/ in "far" and "war" as *eye rhyme*. Then, alliteration resounds /m/ in "miles," "meandering," "mazy," and "motion"; /r/ in "river," "ran," and "reached"; /m/ in "measureless" and "man." There are few classes of assonance: /ei/ in "mazy," "dale," and "sacred"; /æ/ in "caverns" and "man"; /u:/ in "tumult" and "Kubla." Finally, consonance echoes /d/ in "wood" and "sacred"; /id/ in "sacred" and "reached"; /lis/ in "measureless" and "lifeless"; /lt/ in "tumult" and "tumult"; /d/ in "mid" and "heard."

In these consonant sounds the liquids outnumber the plosives—that is, a plosive /d/ and three liquids /m/, /r/, and /n/.¹⁰ Especially, in line 25 alliteration /m/ heightens the auditory effect of mild and mellow flow of the river. In line 26 alliteration /r/ enchances the smooth flowing effect of liquid sounds. Thus, "the slow-moving, soft, smooth effect of liquid is heard in lines 25-26."¹¹ The repetition

of the liquids /r/ and /m/ suggests that "the sacred river" echoes an eternal vast flow, symbolizing the movement of the finite into the infinite. After all, the rhymed consonants produce the smooth flowing sounds of the river, which ran five miles turning here and there through the woods and valleys until the river reached the fathomless caves, where was an ocean of death.

This short passage focuses on the "sacred river," which is "associated with both past and future. In its tempestuous descent Kubla can hear the voices of the past ('ancestral voices') predicting the future ('prophesing war')." ¹² The river ran through "the caverns" to "a lifeless ocean," which is identical with the "sunless sea" because there is no existence of sea life in the water. Thus, the first half of this passage is regarded as the main outline of the opening part. The word "tumult" connects the first half with the second half of this passage. To put it concretely, the associations the word recalls are the water roar of running down in torrents, the emperor's state of violent and disturbed emotion, and the excited and confused voices in future war.

Next, we will turn our attention to imagery in lines 29-30, which contains an ominous implication of the shadow of death. These lines suggest that in the distant roar of the water the emperor heard the voices which were inherited from his distant ancestors who had predicted war. The phrase "from far" conveys a double meaning: a distant time and place. In other words, he heard the water roar from a great distance, but we cannot imagine where he was. "Ancestral voices" imply that he was in communion with the Invisible—his dead ancestors. The voices also imply that he had a mysterious auditory sense of hearing the loud groans of the death of war. Thus, Kubla Khan has an image of having foreknowledge—the powers of foreseeing and foretelling future events.

It is not certain, as we have seen, where the emperor heard the water roar. It is doubtful, therefore, whether the magnificent palace

had been brought to completion. On this point, the following is a very ambiguous passage:

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice! (lines 31-36)

In these lines there is a combination of *iambic* and *trochaic tetrameter* except for the last line—*iambic pentameter*—, rhyming *a b a b c c*. The *trochee* is worthy of our notice as the irregular meter in this poem. Note the following lines: “F‘loated m‘idway ‘on the w‘aves ; /Wh‘ere was h‘eard the m‘ingled m‘easure /Fr‘om the f‘ountain ‘and the c‘aves.” In regard to the metrical sounds, several rhymed sounds and other sound echoes are heard in this passage. For example, end-rhyme: /eʒə/ in “pleasure” and “measure”; /eivz/ in “waves” and “caves”; /ais/ in “device” and “ice.” Alliteration: /m/ in “mingles” and “measure”; /f/ in “From” and “fountain.” Consonance: /d/ in “floated” and “heard.” Those rhymed sounds and the irregular meter may reinforce the core meaning of the passage.

Superficially, this passage may imply that the emperor Kubla Khan completed the construction of the pleasant palace, which was standing on “the sacred river.” It also may imply that the emperor was able to hear the mingled roar of the fountain and the caves just like the musical sounds in his “pleasure-dome.” “The shadow of the dome of pleasure” was therefore reflected on the wave in the halfway point of the river between the fountain and the sea. This shadow appears to float on the surface an inverted image of the dark outline of the palace. But, the word “shadow” connotes an unsubstantial or unreal object. Besides, the foundation of the palace can be very unstable

in the conflict between life and death since the fountain and the sea symbolize the source of life and the darkness of death, as we have seen. Thus, this passage suggests that the completion of the palace is nothing but an illusion. After all, we can say that it does not make much difference to us whether or not the "pleasure-dome" had been completed in this poem.

The point of "Kubla Khan" is that the poem indicates the emperor's wish to create a "pleasure-dome," where he could enjoy hearing musical sounds in his palace. In the palace there are two polar opposites: "A sunny pleasure-dome" and "caves of ice." The latter creates a "cold and hard" image of barren nature whereas the former produces a "warm and soft" image of fruitful art. These perfect opposites coexist in the "pleasure-dome" — a truly artistic creation.

"The dome is a work of art imposed upon a particular nature; it dominates that nature; but it also incorporates some of the polarities of nature. The sunny dome imitates the heavens, but it imitates the earth as well with its ice caves. Its holding together in one artifact such extremes is referred to as miraculous."¹³ Similarly, the dark, inverted image of the palace on the water in the river is a polar opposite to the bright erect image of the grand edifice in the sunshine on land. In this way, the "pleasure-dome" symbolically reveals the two sides of objects in an interplay of light and shadow or life and death.

In the final section of the first half of "Kubla Khan" we can conclude that this half has described an earthly paradise in the natural setting where the emperor Kubla Khan ordered his people to build his palace. In a sense, this part begins with his imperial order to construct the "pleasure-dome" and ends with the association suggestive of its completion. This palace is regarded as a symbol of a permanent artistic creation rather than of a noble and lofty building.

Now, we come to deal with the second half of the poem which is composed of eighteen lines. This half begins with the following five lines:

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora. (lines 37-41)

There are very few rhymed sounds in these lines. For example, end-rhyme: /ɔ:/ in "saw" and "Abora"; /eid/ in "maid" and "played." Alliteration: /d/ in "damsel" and "dulcimer." Assonance: /i/ in "in" and "vision." Judging from the metrical pattern, there is a combination of *iambic* and *trochaic tetrameter*, rhyming *a b c c b*. In this poem, the *trochee* is the irregular meter, as we have seen, and lines 38 and 41 are regarded as *trochaic tetrameter* in which the stressed words "in a vision" and "singing" sound their important meanings.

Let us take "vision" for instance. On the surface, the word may be a synonym of "dream" as one dreams a dream in sleep. But, its original meaning is the power to see into the depths of objects with our mind's eye rather than our naked eye. In the context of this passage, "vision" implies the poet's own imaginative insight, or creative imagination—that is, his creative power of composing the poem "Kubla Khan."

This system of meters and sounds summarizes the primary sense of this short passage as follows: In my vision a damsel played on a dulcimer, singing of Mount Abora. Furthermore, this sense is expanded into the following: At one time a damsel with a dulcimer shows herself in my vision. She was a young unmarried Abyssinian woman, who was playing on the stinged instrument with light hummers held in her beautiful hands, singing of Mount Abora in a sweet voice. We can imagine that her graceful gesture was manifested in her way of playing and singing marvellous music.

The above passage contains several words which deserve special mention. For example, the word "damsel" is synonymous with "maid"

because both of them carry the same sense in this context. That is, the use of these words emphasizes that she was a "young unmarried woman." Probably "dulcimer" was a proper instrument for an unmarried woman of noble birth as music discipline in the middle ages. The terms "Abyssinian," "damsel," and "dulcimer" are very suggestive of some medieval atmosphere which is a meaningful motif for this poem.

At length, we come to the very last thirteen lines in the second half of "Kubla Khan." These lines are as follows:

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise. (lines 42-54)

A great variety of rhymed sounds echo in rich kinds in these lines. First, end-rhyme resounds /mi:/ in "me" and "me" ; /ɔ:ŋ/ in "song" and "long" ; /ɛə/ in "air" and "there," and "Beware" ; /ais/ in "ice," "thrice," and "Paradise" ; /ed/ in "dread" and "fed." Then, there are many classes of alliteration: /s/ in "symphony," "song," and "such" ; /d/ in "deep" and "delight" ; /w/ in "would" and "win" ; /l/ in "loud" and "long" ; /d/ in "dome" and "dome" ; /b/ in "Beware" and "Beware" ; /f/ in "flashing" and "floating" ; /d/ in "dew" and "drunk." Of these classes of alliteration the first consonant

sounds /s/, /d/, /w/, /l/, and /d/ may create the harmony of her instrumental sounds with her song in a mild flow of musical sounds in which the poet imagines that "pleasure-dome" in melody. The last three plosive and flicative sounds /b/, /f/, and /d/ may enhance some mysterious atmosphere in which the poet have eaten such food and drunk such beverage as the elixir of life.

Next, many classes of consonance echo /d/ in "loud," "would," and "build"; /m/ in "dome" and "dome"; /l/ in "all" and "all"; /d/ in "should" and "should"; /ɪn/ in "flashing" and "floating"; /k/ in "drunk" and "milk." Finally, there are several classes of assonance: /ai/ in "I" and "revive" and /i/ in "within" and "me"; /i/ in "in" and "vision"; /ai/ in "I" and "ice"; /ou/ in "dome" and "dome"; /ɔ:/ in "all" and "all"; /ai/ in "cry," "eyes," "eyes," and "Paradise"; /ɛə/ in "Beware," "Beware," and "hair." The repetition of the same words functions as rhymed words. That is, such words as "dome," "all," "should," and "Beware" have rhymed sounds of /d/, /b/, /l/, and /m/. These sounds, combining the plosives with the liquids, may produce such sound effects as the soft smoothing flow of music and people's complicated sense of reverent awe and admiring wonder at the poet.

These thirteen lines establish *iambic tetrameter*, rhyming (a b c c b) d e d e f g f f f g h h g. But, three lines break the monotonous effect of the established meter into *trochaic tetrameter*: "Thát with lóud and lóng /Í would búild that dóme in áir," and "Weáve a círcle róund him thríce." These stressed words have something to do with the basic imagery of the poem. For instance, "that dome" is read to mean the "pleasure-dome" as *synecdoche* naming the part for the whole. But the word bears a double meaning: the highest part of the palace as well as the palace itself. In other words, the dome is the core symbol of the palace. The word "air" in "that dome in air" carries both literal and hidden meanings: "sky" and "melody or tune." Thus, "That sunny dome" symbolizes the wonder of artistic creation

and "those caves of ice" the wonder of natural creation. After all, the "pleasure-dome" is symbolic of the harmony between artistic beauty and natural beauty in this music. The harmony is the ultimate aim of artistic creation in Coleridge's theory of imagination.

The first half of this passage may be paraphrased as follows: I wish I could revive the harmony of her instrumental sounds and her marvellous song in my vision. It would induce me to find such a deep delight that I would build that dome in tune—that sunny dome! those caves of ice!—with long and loud music. The last four lines contain the symbolic expression of some magical powers. "The first line...suggests that a ritual ceremony conferring mysterious powers on the poet or saluting him for possessing these powers."¹⁴ "Weave" has an image of textile art, suggesting a repeated movement of the loom—moving forward and backward or from side to side. The word "circle" means a figure in magic and "thrice" also connotes a figure in magic because "three" is called a magic number. The phrase "holy dread" combines the meaning of "holiness" with that of "fear," carrying the idea of awe.¹⁵ The words "honey-dew" and "milk of Paradise" in the very last two lines convey mysterious images of evoking the idea of supernatural wonder and inspiration because these words mean supernatural food and beverage of eternal youth.

According to the metrical pattern, the forty-four lines of "Kubla Khan" establish *iambic tetrameter* and *pentameter* that are the most common in English poetry. But, the other ten lines turn this established meter into *trochaic trimeter* (1 line), *tetrameter* (8 lines), and *pentameter* (1 line). The abrupt turn of poetic rhythm directs our notice to the sense and sound of the lines in the irregular meter. Thus, we have attached great importance to the metrical rhythm and sound and the poetic images in each of these irregular ten lines. We understand that analysis of the musical qualities of this poem is essential to the comprehension of the implication of numerous rhyming words. We can say that this implication is often more important than the

direct statement in a visionary poem like "Kubla Khan." In short, this poem displays remarkable rhyming effects.

So far we have examined the versification of "Kubla Khan" as a whole, which impels us to consider whether this poem is a fragment or a complete work. It has been an accepted opinion that the poem is only a fragment of the poem that S. T. Coleridge created in his unconscious. This opinion is chiefly based upon the poet's own statement that he composed two or three hundred lines during three hours of profound sleep. On waking up he wrote down the existent fifty-four lines. "At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person."¹⁶ Subsequently, he was unable to recollect the rest of those lines. This is the reason why "Kubla Khan" is generally regarded as an incomplete poem.

But, there is a "critical reaction against both Coleridge's account of the poem's dream origin in the unconscious and Low's elaboration of it... the form and rhyme-scheme of the poem are too carefully wrought and elaborate to be a product of the unconscious."¹⁷ In other words, a close scrutiny of the structure of this poem leads us to reconsider whether or not "Kubla Khan" constitutes a coherent whole. From the viewpoint of its meter and rhyme scheme, it can be divided into four parts: the first is composed of the opening eleven lines; the second is made up of other nineteen; the next six are in the third; and the last eighteen lines are in the fourth or final part. Furthermore, the poem is separated into two divisions in substance: the first half is the story of the emperor Kubla Khan; the second is the entrance of the narrator "I" who is associated with the poet himself.

Let us consider the relation between the first and the second half of the poem. On the surface there seems to be no coherence in substance between the two parts. But, between these parts "there are continuities, of course. The damsel is out of the same vision of an earthly paradise. She is from a far-away land, playing a music of unutterable sweetness calculated to inspire one to recreate the Khan's

paradise.”¹⁸ Also, the continuities are pointed out as follows:

the poem presents the conjunction of pleasure and sacredness: that is the core of Part One. And in Part Two the poet who has been able to realize the function of pleasure and sacredness is himself regarded as a holy or sacred person, a seer acquainted with the undivided life.... The conditional form of Part Two does not annul the presentation of Paradise in Part One, though it may hold out the hope of a future fuller vision.¹⁹

As for the “function of pleasure and sacredness,” the role of music is significant in connecting the emperor Kubla Khan with the Abyssinian girl and the poet himself. As we have seen, Kubla Khan was an absolute monarch who ordered the construction of such a splendid palace. “No one is mentioned except the Khan spoke the fiat, and he is not the modern lonely and specialized artist but ruler and warrior and executive. The man of vision—the artist who projects the dome—is here also the man of power.”²⁰ On the other hand, the girl played on the musical instrument and sang a marvellous song. We can say that all these personages had the possibility of creating or appreciating a great work of art. In this sense, these two parts have a coherent whole in music beyond time and space.

The poem is filled with a sort of exoticism and medievalism in which some miraculous events took place. In other words, the use of proper nouns, real or fictitious, heightens the effect of creating an exotic atmosphere in the medieval ages. For instance, “Xanadu” and “Abyssinian” are considered to have been a flourishing city in China and a prosperous country in North Africa in those days. Thus, they are foreign-sounding names of places. “Alph” and “Mount Abora” are fictitious and unfamiliar names of places. Similarly, the very words

“Kubla Khan” are a foreign-sounding name of person. In this poem the fusion of exoticism and medievalism is of great importance in manifesting magical powers in the universe.

From another standpoint, this poem creates the poetic universe under the influence of magical powers which reveals the secrets of the universe shrouded in mystery. Coleridge has a belief that the miraculous events take place in the universe. In his visionary description with musical modulation and rhythm the poet expresses his own sense of awe and wonder at supernatural events in this poem. He attempts to create a poetic universe in which some magical powers influence all living things in the world. For him the ultimate reality is not apparent in the visible but rather exists in the invisible. The reality cannot be seen through the physical eye but rather through the spiritual eye. In short, he wishes to reveal such ultimate reality in this fantastic poem.

In conclusion, the verse technique of this poem is characteristic of the creation of a visionary atmosphere in various types of imagery. Judging from the imagery, one of the most salient features of “Kubla Khan” is the reconciliation between the ideas of the two polar opposites—that is, light and shadow, heat and cold, and life and death, as we have seen. In order to lend some mysterious atmosphere to the poem with a great variety of image patterns, the poet Coleridge was very careful about his choice of words and the arrangement of his words. In the long analysis, the poetic merit of this work is chiefly dependent upon his employment of the right word in the right place to create the musical effects of symbolic imagery.

NOTES

1. 石井白村著、『英詩韻律法概説』（東京：篠崎書林，1989），114頁。
2. Geoffrey N. Leech, *A linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 93.
3. *Ibid.*
4. 石井正之助著、『英詩の世界』（東京：大修館書店，1987），28頁。
5. C. Brooks & R.P. Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 414.
6. 石井白村著，同書114頁。
7. 同書，150頁。
8. *Understanding Poetry*, p. 414.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Stanley A. Clays & John Gerriets, *Ways to Poetry* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), p. 75.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Understanding Poetry*, p. 414.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 414-5.
14. Laurence D. Lerner, *English Literature: An Interpretation for Students Abroad* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954), p. 98.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Ernest Hartley Coleridge ed. *The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 296.
17. Partrica M. Adair, *The Waking Dream: A Study of Coleridge's Poetry* (London: Edward Arnold, 1967), p. 109.
18. *Understanding Poetry*, p. 416.
19. Humphry House, "Kubla Khan," "Christabel," and "Dejection," *British Romantic Poets: Recent Revaluation*, ed. Shin K. Kumar (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1966), p. 123.
20. *Understanding Poetry*, p. 415.