

ONE HUNDRED  
**FROGS**

FROM Renga TO  
Haiku TO ENGLISH  
**HIROAKI SATO**



No other Oriental poetic form has so intrigued and beguiled the English-speaking world as the Japanese haiku. Even before World War I such imagist poets as Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and John Gould Fletcher were experimenting with the form. At that time, Pound well described the haiku as "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." Indeed, it is the haiku's sense of immediacy and its precision that continue to appeal to poets and poetry lovers today.

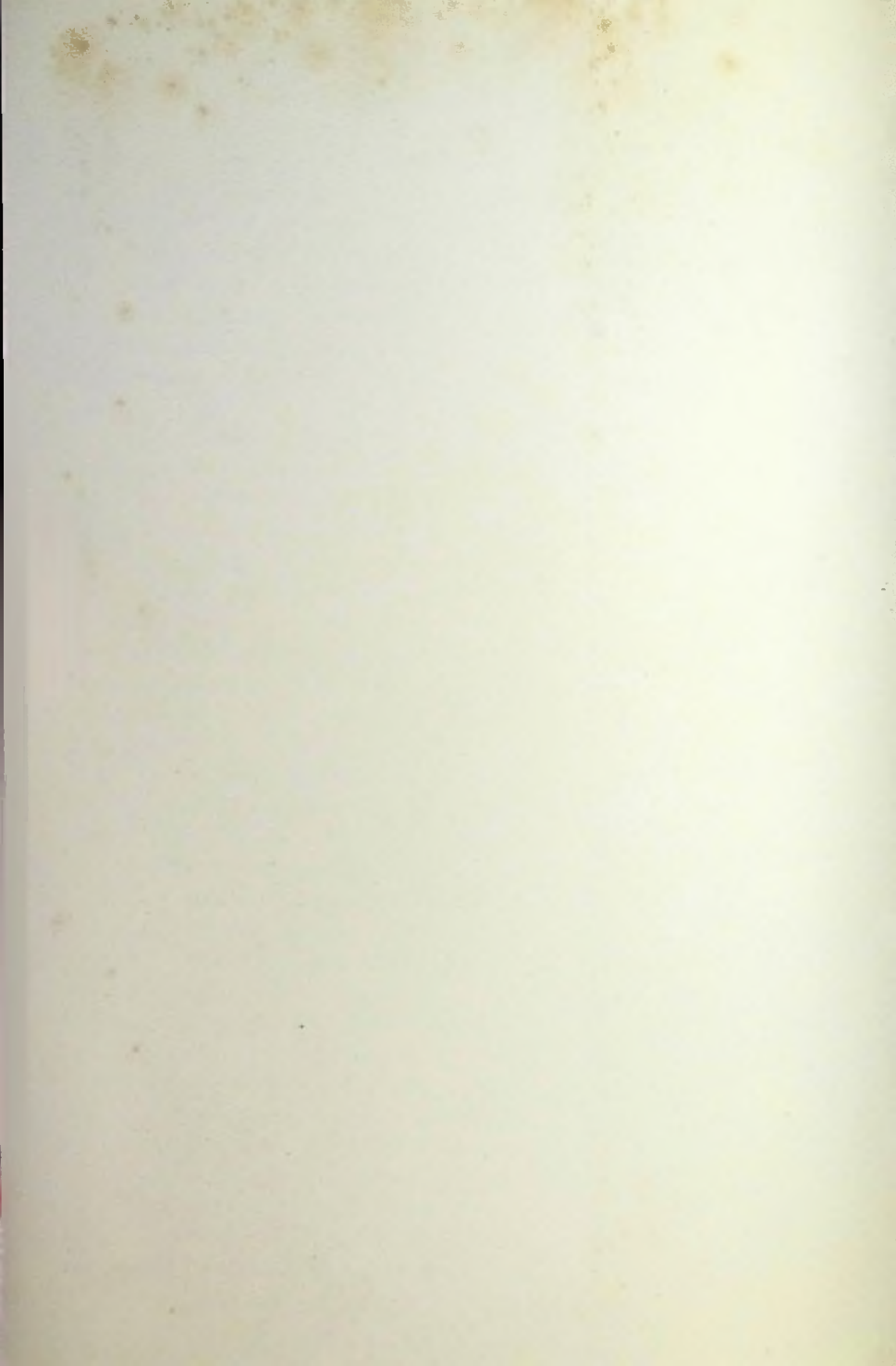
In recent decades there has been an upsurge of interest in the haiku, leading to a number of critical studies of the form, studies that have now culminated in the present book. This insightful work not only considers the haiku itself but also the extremely important yet often ignored *renga* or linked-verse form, out of which the haiku grew. No deep understanding of the haiku is possible without familiarity with the *renga*.

*One Hundred Frogs* begins with a detailed history and description of the *renga* and *haiku*. Many renowned Japanese poets, most notably Bashō, are represented in the book by a selection of translated poetry that illustrates their style and technique. To bring this history up to date, a discussion of modern Japanese and Western haiku is included.

Next, the author discusses the craft of creating *renga* and *haiku* and explores recent developments in the two forms, including a representative selection of modern examples. To reveal the myriad choices open to translators of *renga* and *haiku*, the author provides an in-depth analysis of one of Japan's most famous haiku, Bashō's poem about a frog in a pond, and presents a com-

(continued on back flap)











## One Hundred Frogs



TRANSLATIONS BY HIROAKI SATO

*Poems of Princess Shikishi*

*Ten Japanese Poets*

*Spring & Asura: Poems of Kenji Miyazawa*

*Mutsuo Takahashi: Poems of a Penisist*

*Lilac Garden: Poems of Minoru Yoshioka*

*Howling at the Moon: Poems of Hagiwara Sakutarō*

*See You Soon: Poems of Taeko Tomioka*

*Chieko and Other Poems of Takamura Kōtarō*

with Burton Watson

*From the Country of Eight Islands: An Anthology of Japanese Poetry*



# ONE HUNDRED FROGS

FROM Renga to  
Haiku to English

by Hiroaki Sato



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Some portions originally prepared for this book were first printed in the *Chanoyu Quarterly* and *Frogpond*.

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Some of the quoted translations first appeared in *Chieko and Other Poems of Takamura Kōtarō*, translated by Hiroaki Sato (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980); *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, translated by Burton Watson (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968); *From the Country of Eight Islands*, translated by Hiroaki Sato and Burton Watson (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981); *Japanese Linked Poetry*, Earl Miner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); and *Meng Ch'iu*, translated by Burton Watson (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1979). All quotations are made with permission.

Credits for the monochrome photographs are due Idemitsu Art Gallery, Kadokawa Library, Kakie Library, Shōgakukan Publishing Co., and Shūeisha.

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## Preface

The principal forms of Japanese poetry developed in a remarkably genealogical way. First, the *tanka*, a poem of 31 syllables arranged in units of 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables, became dominant in the eighth century and went on to be adopted as the standard form of court poetry. Then came the *renga*; consisting of alternating 5-7-5- and 7-7-syllable parts, it grew out of the tendency of the *tanka* to break up into this same pattern. Popular as early as the tenth century, the *renga* acquired literary importance in the fourteenth century and remained supreme for the next several hundred years. Finally came the 5-7-5-syllable *hokku*. Originally the opening part of a *renga* sequence, the *hokku* in time became independent. Around the year 1900 the term *hokku* was displaced by the term *haiku*. Today, anywhere from three hundred thousand to one million people in Japan write poems in this 5-7-5-syllable form.

If genealogical development is one outstanding feature of Japanese poetry, group orientation in its composition is another. *Tanka* were often composed in or for a group of people—most notably in *uta-awase*, *tanka* matches, where *tanka* by different poets were judged in pairs. The group orientation of this form is also manifest in any of the twenty-one imperial anthologies of Japanese poetry. In these, *tanka* are classified into categories such as spring, summer, autumn, winter, love, and miscellaneous, and the pieces selected for each category are so arranged as to indicate temporal progression. Here the appro-



priateness of a given piece for a given place is of primary importance. Individual poems, and therefore individual poets, are subordinated to the design of a larger whole.

Group orientation found its ultimate expression in the renga, which in principle required the participation of two or more persons. As a sophisticated game for literate people, the renga engendered some distinctive features, such as the set roles of host, guest of honor (or "master"), and scribe, and the rules of composition partly governed by their relations. Also characteristic were the stress on enjoyment, readiness to collaborate, effort to maintain a common literary milieu, and attention given to etiquette. Its deliberate avoidance of linear narrative development, or the technique of "disjunctive linking," as Earl Miner put it, shows renga's origin as a contest of wit in a group, with each poet called upon to cap a statement in verse, rather than one poet creating a whole story. As might be expected, hokku also tended to be written in group settings. In Japan today this predilection for making poetry writing a group activity remains particularly strong among writers of traditional haiku and tanka.

In Part One of this book I try mainly to describe the renga form, with the focus on Matsuo Bashō (1644–94). This I do because this book began as a collection of English translations of Bashō's most famous hokku, *Furuike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto*. When the opportunity arose to publish the collection in an expanded format, I felt it best to go back to the renga, of which the hokku form was born, to explain Bashō's poem. As recent books such as *Japanese Linked Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) and *The Monkey's Straw Raincoat and Other Poetry of the Bashō School* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) have shown, Bashō can be fully appreciated only as a renga poet, and his hokku, in the context of renga. Also, during my stint as president of the Haiku Society of America from 1979 to 1981, I was often asked, "What is a haiku?" This question apparently has a good deal to do with the Zen overtones ascribed to Bashō's hokku, the validity of which I have



doubted. I hope to offer the description of renga here as my response to the question.

In Part Two I explain why I translate the way I do. This is followed by the collection mentioned above. I do not discuss the merits or demerits of the many attempts I have assembled; judgment of this kind is a matter of preference to a great extent, and the question is largely answered, I think, within the collection. In Part Three I give small samplings of renga and haiku in English. English haiku can be read in many books now, but I believe this is the first time English renga have been presented as they are here.

Following the publisher's request to "keep the footnotes to an absolute minimum," I decided to give none. It is difficult to go halfway in giving notes. I hope I have largely made up for this by transliterating most of the original poems and, when that is not done, by citing references wherever possible. Further, most of the unnamed sources are identifiable with relative ease, because they are limited in number and length. The exception to the annotational rule in this book is the first group of translations in chapter 7 for which a complete listing of sources is part of the game.

Among the books and articles in English that I read to write this book but did not cite by author's name or by title are "The Japanese Comic Linked-Verse Tradition," Howard S. Hibbett, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 23 (1960-61); "The Comic Tradition in Renga," Donald Keene, *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, edited by John Whitney Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); *Landscapes and Portraits*, Donald Keene (London: Secker and Warburg, 1972); *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, James J. Y. Liu (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature*, Earl Miner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956; reprinted in 1976 by Greenwood Press); *Sengai*, Daisetz T. Suzuki (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1971); *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, Makoto Ueda (Cleveland: The Press of Western Reserve Uni-

versity, 1967); and *Chinese Lyricism*, Burton Watson (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1971).

In my essays all Japanese names are given in Japanese fashion: family name first, personal name second. This is not always so elsewhere, especially with Japanese authors who have published their books and articles in English. I follow those authors' practice and write my name in the Occidental way.

The pronunciation of Japanese is easy. There are five vowels, and each can be long or short; when long, it is indicated by a macron in transliteration, as in Bashō. The vowels are roughly pronounced as follows: *a*, as in father; *e*, as in set; *i*, as in machine; *o*, as in tort; and *u*, as in rhubarb. The consonants are more or less pronounced as in English, except that *ch* is always pronounced as in *church* and *g* is always hard.

My friend Kyoko Selden sowed the seed of this book one day several years ago when she listed twenty translations of Bashō's hokku and asked if I could tell their authors. A larger list I then made lay dormant until Donald Richie remembered it and passed it on to Meredith Weatherby, who reacted positively. I first thank these three persons for their elegant turn of mind. I also thank L. A. Davidson, Elizabeth Searle Lamb, Geraldine Little, Raymond Roseliep, Cor van den Heuvel, Marlene Wills, and Virginia Brady Young for contributing their haiku and renga and for giving information on the history of the two forms in the United States; Liza Dalby, Fujii Misako, Hirata Takako, Itoi Michihiro, Koyanagi Reiko, and Yano Sumiko for obtaining books and articles hard to come by in New York City; Jonathan Chaves for providing scholarly information on Chinese linked poetry, *lien-chū*, and translating an example, *Gladdened by the Rain on the River Huai* by Su Shun-ch'in and Su Shun-yūan; and Robert Fagan, Kusama Junko, Nancy Rossiter, Burton Watson, and Eleanor Wolff for helping me improve the manuscript. Mr. Watson also graciously translated the verses and phrases originally in Chinese that are quoted here but do not appear in any of his books.

## Some Poetic Terms Used in This Book

The following explanations are for quick reference. The definitions of the three most important terms—*renga*, *hokku*, and *haiku*—are brief because this book is primarily about them. In the essays the poetic terms are italicized, as a rule, only the first time they are used.

*ageku* (ending part): the last part, in 7-7 syllables, of a *renga* sequence.

*daisan* (the third): the third part, in 5-7-5 syllables, of a *renga* sequence.

*fushimono* (incorporated object): a word or image required to be incorporated in part or in the whole of a *renga* sequence.

*haibun* (*haikai* prose): prose written in a *haikai* spirit, often incorporating *hokku*.

*haikai* (humor): a term that originally meant “humor” but came to mean, in *renga*, the use of non-poetic diction and, still later, various conceits and transcendental attitudes.

*haiku* (*haikai* part): a modern term for *hokku*.

*hokku* (opening part): the initial part, in 5-7-5 syllables, of a *renga* sequence.

*kasen* (divine poet): a *renga* sequence consisting of thirty-six parts. The term derives from the old practice of designating thirty-six “divine poets.”

*kigo* (seasonal word): a word or phrase indicating one of the four seasons; for example, *zansetsu* (remaining snow) indicates

spring, and *momiji chiru* (maple leaves scatter), winter. The idea of having an object or a phenomenon represent a season was helped by the concept of *hon'i* (true import) that holds that any object or phenomenon essentially has a single attribute.

*maeku* (preceding part): part immediately preceding a link in a renga sequence.

*maeku-zuke* (linking to a preceding part): (1) composing a link or links to a *maeku*, and (2) the link or links so composed.

This type of composition was mostly done independent of renga and eventually spawned the *senryū*.

*renga* (linked poetry): a sequential form of poetry that consists of two to a hundred alternating 5-7-5- and 7-7-syllable parts.

*senryū* (eponymous with *Karai Senryū*): 5-7-5-syllable form of poetry free of some of the requirements of the *hokku*.

*tanka* (short song): 5-7-5-7-7-syllable form of poetry.

*tsukeai* (linking together): composing a link in a renga sequence.

*tsukeku* (linked part): part composed to be linked to another.

*waki*, *wakiku* (accompanying part): the second part, in 7-7 syllables, of a renga sequence.



## PART ONE FROM Renga to HAIKU

Many of the *kyōka* (1780-1800) are a satirical attack on the greater poets, a parodying of the *kyōka* genre. After the war, in 1800, the *kyōka* genre was revived by the poet, who was a member of a group, the *kyōka* group. The *kyōka* group was a group of poets, of which the *kyōka* was originally the main part. A group of poets of the *kyōka* group, the *kyōka* group, was a group of poets, of which the *kyōka* was originally the main part. A group of poets of the *kyōka* group, the *kyōka* group, was a group of poets, of which the *kyōka* was originally the main part. A group of poets of the *kyōka* group, the *kyōka* group, was a group of poets, of which the *kyōka* was originally the main part.

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"When I was a boy, I was a member of the *kyōka* group, the *kyōka* group, was a group of poets, of which the *kyōka* was originally the main part. A group of poets of the *kyōka* group, the *kyōka* group, was a group of poets, of which the *kyōka* was originally the main part. A group of poets of the *kyōka* group, the *kyōka* group, was a group of poets, of which the *kyōka* was originally the main part.





~·~ CHAPTER ONE ~·~

The Early History of Renga

Matsuo Bashō (1644–94) is universally known as the greatest writer in surely one of the shortest poetic forms in the world, 5-7-5-syllable haiku. But Bashō earned his living and reputation in a longer, far more complicated form called renga, linked poetry, of which the haiku was originally no more than the opening part. A renga consists of two to a hundred alternating parts of 5-7-5 and 7-7 syllables, usually written by two or more persons, with the linking made in such a way that any two consecutive parts must make an intelligible whole, but three may not. It is collaborative poetry with “disjunctive linking.” How this unique poetic form—for it is unique—evolved is the concern of this chapter.

First, let us look at two episodes showing how renga in its pristine form may have been composed. One is told by Minamoto no Toshiyori (1055–1129) in his treatise on poetry writing, *Zuinō* (Elemental Poetics):

“When Tamemasa was governor of Kawachi, one morning it snowed. Because he had nothing special to do, he closed the sliding paper doors on his side, gathered his servants, and was drinking sakè, when Minamoto no Shigeyuki [a noted poet] came by on his way elsewhere. Tamemasa was overjoyed and offered him sakè. When everyone was drunk, Shigeyuki pushed open the paper doors, looked out, and saw a snow-covered mountain, so he asked, ‘Which mountain is that?’

On hearing Tamemasa say, 'That's the famous Mount Stallion,'  
Shigeyuki said:

*Yuki fureba ashige ni miyuru lkoma yama*

[5-7-5]

Because it snows Mount Stallion looks piebald

"Tamemasa made several attempts to cap it, but however he tried, he could not. Seeing this, a lowly samurai in Tamemasa's bodyguard did. It happened like this. When Tamemasa seemed not to be succeeding, the man loudly coughed for attention and came forward out of his peers on his knees. His intention was so obvious that Shigeyuki said, 'Kōbunta appears to be able to cap it.' But Tamemasa said, 'It's ludicrous. This man's so rude,' pushed him back, and did not allow him to say what he wanted to. So Kōbunta withdrew to his seat, and that was that. Still, Tamemasa couldn't come up with a cap, and a while passed. So, disappointed, he said, 'Well, in that case, spit it out. How did you cap it?' Kōbunta for some time looked resentful and would not say anything, but at Shigeyuki's repeated urgings, he finally did:

*itsu natsukage ni naramu to suramu*

[7-7]

when will summer bring chestnuts?

"Tamemasa clucked his tongue, taken aback. But Shigeyuki, hearing it, stood up and danced. He was so overwhelmed he took off his clothes and gave them to Kōbunta as a reward. Truly, the way he gave his clothes and walked away in dignity was, I'm told, quite marvelous."

The other anecdote comes eight hundred years later, from Fukui Kyūzō (1867-1951), one of the first modern scholars to look into renga systematically. Most of the tales and poems his mother told him and recited for him when he was a child merely cast "vague shadows on the canvas of my mind," he says, but there is "one image that, though faint, still remains unerased":

"I was brought up in the countryside in San'in. Barely twenty-five miles to the east flows the Tade River where Minamoto no Raikō [died 1021, a military leader] is said to have composed renga with his wife, Sagami, in a boat. . . . My mother's story, as I remember, took place [farther east] on the road to Tango. An old and withered pilgrim in a black robe and wearing a sedge hat was trudging along the northern coast. The time was early summer, green leaves on the further coast looked almost wet in their freshness. When he reached a fork on the road, he stopped plying his stick, took down from his back his travel casket, its lacquer peeled off somewhat, and was resting, bathed in the clear wind. A chickadee flew by and perched near the casket; soon it began looking for a chance to get in it. A bright-looking young man who happened by was quick to notice it; he gave it a moment's thought, then looked quite pleased with himself. He said to himself, 'Isn't this fun!' and loudly to the pilgrim:

*Shijūkara wa oi no naka ni zo iri ni keru* [6-7-5]  
A chickadee has gone into the travel casket

"Repeating the phrase, the youth urged the pilgrim to cap it with a second half. The pilgrim turned a nonplussed look to the young man and said he was only a pilgrim visiting from province to province, with no learning at all, that he knew nothing about poetry or scholarship. He asked if he could reach his home town, Obama, faster by taking the left road at that point; he couldn't decide because he didn't know which was the shorter way. He begged the youth to tell him. But the youth, obviously a lover of renga, still kept repeating the first half and insisted that the pilgrim come up with something. The pilgrim, unconcerned about the request, just said:

*Wakasa ni kaeru michi ga shiritai* [7-7]  
I'd like to know the road to Wakasa

"At this, the young man clapped his hands and delightedly ex-

claimed, 'That's it! That's it! Now we have a wonderful renga!' Then he told the pilgrim the road to take and walked away."

Each story reveals three elements of renga and its composition: form based on the syllabic patterns of 5-7-5 and 7-7; joining of verse entities to make a larger whole; and verse writing that involves more than one person.

As for form, the two examples of renga here are both *tan-renga* (short renga), in the minimum combination of two parts, and those two parts are what make up the 5-7-5-7-7-syllable tanka form; in each case, the initial observation is made in 5-7-5 syllables (one is hypermetric), followed by a response in 7-7 syllables. Even though quite early in the development of renga two-part pieces in the reversed pattern of 7-7-5-7-5 syllables began to be composed, it is significant that the first recorded renga was in fact a tanka. An unidentified nun who meant to turn out a straightforward tanka became lost after composing the 5-8-5-syllable (hypermetric) "head part":

*Saho gawa no mizu o sekiagete ueshi ta o*

We dammed the water of Saho River and planted the paddies  
which Ōtomo no Yakamochi (716-85?) completed by providing  
an 8-7-syllable (hypermetric) "end part:"

*kareru hatsu-ii wa hitori naru beshi*

but I'll harvest and eat the first rice by myself

This collaboration appears as poem number 1635 in the *Man'yōshū* (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), compiled in the second half of the eighth century, and is the only one of its kind in that vast anthology containing more than forty-five hundred poems. The primacy of tanka as the prototype of renga continued in the longer combinations that were attempted later: all of them consisted of even numbers of parts when, as in *chōka* (long song), an extra part could have been added at the end of a sequence.



As to the joining of verse units, in each of the two examples cited the two parts are more or less separate, and they are "linked" primarily by form (to make a *tanka*). In content, what links the parts together in the exchange between Shigeyuki and Kōbunta is wordplay: *ashige* means both "piebald" and "terrible," and *natsukage*, "brown with dark spots" and "summer foliage." (My translation brings out only half of the original effect.) In the other exchange, it is association: the reader, like the young man, presumes that the sight of a chickadee going into a travel casket fuels the desire to go home. The relative independence of each part is vital because in linked poetry the sense of linking must be maintained and that is greatly enhanced by the element of unexpectedness in transition.

Concerning the involvement of at least two persons, in the episodes above, Kōbunta is considered too lowly for the occasion by the governor Tamemasa, and the pilgrim's response is accidental, but neither Shigeyuki nor the young man intends to supply the "link" himself. Though composing *renga* alone was fashionable in some periods later in the development of the form, the assumption of two or more participants in the writing of a single poem is the basis of *renga* in concept and execution. And since any such group effort requires a meeting of the participants, the place and the occasion are far more important in *renga* than in most other forms of poetry. Partly for that reason, some have said that reading a *renga* text is like reading a play.

How did *renga* come into being? There are, I think, three factors that contributed to its birth and sustained its development. One is the tendency of *tanka*—the major poetic form before *renga*—to break up into two parts, the first half (5-7-5 syllables) and the second (7-7 syllables). Possibly under the influence of Chinese poetry employing five- and seven-character lines, Japanese poets established five- and seven- syllable units as the basis of versification by the seventh century. As we can see in the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters), compiled in 712, and the *Man'yōshū*, there were in the beginning several poetic

forms, of which tanka and chōka were prominent. A chōka consists of three or more five- and seven-syllable patterns, usually ending with an extra seven-syllable part. Curiously, tanka was the form used for the envoy or envoys to a chōka, when *kata-uta* (half song) of 5-7-7 syllables might have been a more logical choice. At any rate, because of the early tendency for the five- and seven-syllable combination to achieve some basic coherence in meaning, and perhaps because of the repetition of the same combination in chōka, early tanka more often than not have a pause after the first 5-7 syllables, as in the one that the empress Yamato wrote for her husband, Tenji, in 671, when he was ill (*Man'yōshū*, no. 147):

*Ama no hara furisake mireba* [5-7]  
*ōkimi no mi-inochi wa nagaku ama tarashitari* [5-8-7]

When I turn to look at the Plain of Heaven,  
 Your Majesty's life is long, enough to fill out Heaven

But gradually a majority of tanka began to be written with a pause after the 5-7-5 syllables. One of the more famous pieces by Ōtomo no Yakamochi, written in 753, is a good example (*Man'yōshū*, no. 4292):

*Uraura ni tereru haru-hi ni hibari agari* [5-7-6]  
*kokoro ganashi mo hitori shi omoeba* [7-8]

On this languidly shining spring day, skylarks rise;  
 I am saddened at heart, thinking alone

This 5-7-5-break-7-7 pattern increased in importance in the ensuing centuries until, by the year 1200, it became a technique that characterized the tanka poetry of the period. And the technique, when combined with an attempt to present two images or ideas of considerable independence in a single tanka, produced many pieces that distinctly resemble renga. The following piece (*Shin Kokinshū* [New Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems], no. 36) by the retired emperor Gotoba (1180–



1239), is not only considered illustrative of the development, but it is also alluded to in the opening part of the most famous one-hundred-part renga, *Three Poets at Minase*, of which we will see excerpts later:

*Miwataseba yamamoto kasumu Minase-gawa* [5-7-5]  
*yūbe wa aki to nani omoiken* [7-7]

As I look out, the hill-base is hazy along Minase River—  
why did I think the evening was for autumn alone?

In the first part Gotoba gives a simple description of a landscape, although there are a few things here that were obvious to his contemporaries, but are not to us: “hazy” indicates spring; the word is appreciative, not depreciatory; and Minase was also a place where Gotoba had a palace built. In the second part the poet makes a subjective, abstract, even puzzling statement—a twist on the literary notion harking back to an observation made by Sei Shōnagon (active around 1000) that in autumn the best time of the day is the evening (*Pillow Book*, chapter 1). The two parts could have been written independently, or by different poets.

A second factor that provided a basis for renga is the Japanese poets’ strong inclination to make verse composition a group activity. More than 40 of the 112 poems in the *Kojiki* are exchanges between demigods, princes and princesses, and other characters. The *Man’yōshū*, in addition to many similar exchanges and poems composed at various gatherings, has groups of questions and replies in tanka form. Tanka are basically used to be exchanged in the ninth century *Tales of Ise*, a collection of episodes in which Ariwara no Narihira (825–80) plays the role of Don Juan. Toward the end of the same century, more formal *uta-awase* (tanka matches) began to be held, and even though the idea was a simple one of subjecting tanka to judgment in pairs, detailed rules and procedures were established for them before long. Some official tanka matches were evidently as elaborate and festal as other court contests, such as archery, wres-

ting, and horse-racing, with sumptuous prizes readied for the winners. Some others, especially in a later period, were of a more serious nature where poetic theories were tested, diction refined, and ideas explored. From both kinds, renga gained a good deal: from the festal kind, it strengthened the sense of fun and competitiveness; from the serious kind, it inherited concepts such as *yūgen*, which may be translated "subdued elegance," and ideas such as the one of making one hundred parts the standard unit of composition. Most important was the favorable attitude the poets took to writing poetry as and for a group.

In this, Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–88), who brought out the first important anthology of renga, was right in tracing the origin of the form to two-person utterances that have little to do with the form as we know it. Pointing to the assertion of Urabe Kanetaka, a Shintoist in the thirteenth century, Yoshimoto indicates he named his anthology, completed in 1356, *Tsukuba-shū* (Tsukuba Collection), because of the following passage in the *Nihon Shoki* (History of Japan), compiled in 720:

"Having already pacified Ezo, [Prince Yamato Takeru] returned from the province of Hitakami, passed through Hitachi to the southwest, and reached the province of Kai where he rested at the palace of Sakaori. Then he had torches lit and had his meal. That night in a song he asked his attendants:

*Niibari Tsukuba o sugite iku yo ka netsuru* [4–7–7]  
 Since passing Niibari and Tsukuba, how many nights have we slept?

"The many attendants were unable to reply. But there happened to be a man lighting the torches. Following the prince's song with a second half, he said with a song:

*Kaga nabete yo ni wa kokono yo hi ni wa tō ka o* [5–7–7]  
 Add up the days, and of nights there are nine nights, of days, ten days.

“Thereupon, the prince praised the torch-tender for his talent and rewarded him amply.”

The “songs” here are 5-7-7-syllable *katauta* (the first one hypometric), called “half songs” because two of them are needed to make a complete *sedōka* (repeat song). In *Tsukuba Mondō* (Questions and Answers on Tsukuba), a treatise on renga he wrote after completing the anthology, Yoshimoto pushed the date of the origin further back to the first words exchanged between Izanagi and Izanami, the first male and female deities in Japanese mythology. In ascribing such antiquity to renga, he was no doubt attempting to increase the prestige of the form; but he also must have felt that was justified because, in his view, a renga was “a song uttered by two persons.”

There is a third factor: likely Chinese influence. China had its counterpart of renga, known as *lien-chū*, with its first known example dating from the Chin Dynasty (265-420); also, Po Chū-yi (772-846), who was popular among Japanese poets to the point of deification, left eleven *lien-chū* he wrote with his friends. Although by the time Yoshimoto mentioned *lien-chū* in relation to renga, renga had developed into an art far more complex than anything contemplated for *lien-chū*, it is safe to assume that *lien-chū* gave renga at least a nudge in its formative period.

Minamoto no Toshiyori, who wrote the piebald/chestnuts episode, was the first to accord a prominent status to renga. And it was about time. In his treatise, *Zuinō*, he observed, “It is renga that appears as popular in this degraded world as in the past,” suggesting that not many examples from the past remained because people neglected to “put them on paper.” Even so, he manages to cite about forty renga, some with stories like the one on the snowy morning—the episode which, if the attribution is credible, describes an incident toward the end of the tenth century. Indeed, poets began to compose renga rather regularly during the same century, and collections from that and the next

century contain smatterings of renga. But it was Toshiyori who gave the form more than accidental attention. In addition to the inclusion of a large number of renga, the *Zuinō* is notable for the first technical observation made on the form: whether to begin a two-part renga with 5-7-5- or 7-7-syllable lines is "up to you," he says, but either way, you must "finish saying in your part what you have to say," for it is no good to oblige whoever follows you to feel forced. In the *Kin'yōshū* (Collection of Gold-leaved Poems), the imperial anthology of which he was the sole editor, Toshiyori not only selected nineteen two-part renga but also honored them with a separate category. About the same time he completed the anthology—a few years before his death—he collected his own poems in *Samboku Kikashū* (Collection of a Do-Nothing's Eccentric Poems), and included in it fifty-nine renga. Later commentators distinguished Toshiyori for his preference for what was contemporary over what was approved by tradition, partly because of his stress on renga.

If Toshiyori was the first to recognize the importance of linked poetry, the retired emperor Gotoba was the first to give the form the imperial stamp as something to be enjoyed officially. Gotoba is called "retired emperor," because he gave up the throne at the age of eighteen, in 1198, abdication at a young age being routine at the time. But he was not at all retiring; his fame rests mostly on what he did after retirement. He fully lived his age, the period when the power of the aristocracy finally declined and was replaced by the power of the military. He was made emperor at age four because the emperor Antoku (1178–85) was practically abducted by the then ruling military clan, the Taira, as they fled another clan, the Minamoto. In 1221 Gotoba raised an army against the military government established by the Minamoto; his forces were trounced in a month, and he was exiled to the remote island of Oki where he died. Gotoba's was also a period when court poetry, under his driving force, flourished for the last time. On his orders the *Wakadokoro* (Poetry Office) was revived in the seventh month of 1201, and the compilation of the eighth anthology of Japanese



poetry, *Shin Kokinshū*, began four months later. His chroniclers tell us that the retired emperor excelled both in military and literary ways, but we now remember him as a literary commander in chief. His military adventure was quashed as soon as it began, but the *Shin Kokinshū*, on which he worked hard as its real editor, has survived as a great anthology despite the ups and downs of its reputation since then.

A quick study in most things, Gotoba was also imperious. For renga gatherings, he would suddenly summon his courtiers at any time of the day, no matter what the weather. Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), from whose *Meigetsuki* (Diary of the Bright Moon) we learn many such things in great detail, reports that during the twelfth month of 1212 he had to dash to the palace at least twice—on one occasion, through the furious rain, and on another, just when he was about to go to bed. On the latter occasion, not a nameless messenger but Minamoto no Ienaga (died 1234?), the deputy chief of the Poetry Office, came as Gotoba's delegate, and Teika "galloped to the palace in consternation." When people were gathered, Gotoba's preferred method was to divide them into *ushin* ("mind-possessing," or professional) and *mushin* ("mind-lacking," or nonprofessional) groups and let them compete. According to Teika, the method came about because nonprofessional poets once banded together and tried to beat professional poets with "mad renga," or renga using non-poetic diction—a challenge that the professional poets accepted on their own terms, using "regular," or poetic, diction; when Gotoba heard about this, he adopted the grouping. During one such competition, held on the eleventh of the eighth month of 1206, Gotoba decreed that the group that first came up with six consecutive parts would be the winner. As soon as one side, which happened to be his, did, he ordered the opposing group out of the room into the garden where they were made to "sit directly," presumably on the pebbles, "with their foreheads lowered to the ground." "The weather was spectacular," Teika adds. He was on Gotoba's side, of course.

Such impetuosity and delight in wielding imperial power not-



withstanding, Gotoba wouldn't have been Gotoba had he not been generous with prizes. At first, paper, a valuable commodity at the time, was the main prize, but gradually prizes became extravagant. For example, at a gathering on the fourteenth of the fourth month, 1217, which covered renga as well as other forms of poetry, such a great quantity of brocaded silk fabric imported from China was put up as prizes that some winners presented unseemly sights at the end of the gathering, unable to leave the room graciously with the heaps of fabric they had won.

What kind of renga did Gotoba and his servants compose? As far as we can tell from Teika's diary, the length ranged from thirty to more than one hundred parts. Of the various lengths, the set of one hundred was the most frequently used, probably because by then the unit of that number was standard in formal tanka composition. However, the length was not something established, but was still subject to the exigencies of the occasion. At the gathering toward the end of the year 1212—for which Teika had to abandon his hope of having a good night's sleep after a full day and rush to the palace on horseback—the word from the retired emperor was that the parts "be limited to thirty because it was very late at night." At the 1217 gathering where the winners' manner of disposing of their prizes embarrassed Teika, the links were limited to fifty, probably because of the other contests to be taken care of.

The linking technique was primarily based on *fushimono*, incorporating in each part something belonging to a category of references or a set of items that suggest certain things. Such categories and sets Teika cites in his diary are: five colors; things that float or sink; birds and fish; black and white; trees and personal names (twenty-fifth of the twelfth month, 1212: Teika notes that the rule specifying the use of the personal names of contemporaries resulted in inclusion of the name of a minister and asks prissily, "Though this is just a game, should such a thing be tolerated?"); personal names and plants; fish and names of rivers; provinces and the names of the chapters of *The Tale of Genji*; and plants and trees. There is one more combina-

tion, the first part of which I do not understand, even though Teika gives an example. Its second part, *sanji chūryaku*, is clear, however; you choose a word consisting of three characters that will still make sense after the elimination of the middle character; in Teika's example, *a-ka-ki* (red) makes sense as *a-ki* (autumn)—an English example is *aim*, which makes sense as *am*. The participants on that day (twenty-eighth of the eighth month, 1214) were expected to incorporate the first fushimono in 5-7-5-syllable parts, and the second, in 7-7-syllable parts. Teika says that "both parts were difficult to accomplish"—so much so that, leaving the gathering, the participants "looked disgusted. But that was true of everyone, the higher lords down. So why should I alone be sober about it?"

To give an example of renga using the fushimono technique, here is a two-part set incorporating something white and something black. Someone said in 7-7 syllables:

*wata no kuzu nite hitai o zo yū*

that forehead pad is made of used cotton

*Hitai-wata* (here separated and used in different parts of speech) is a wad of raw cotton used by old women to keep their heads warm, so the description suggests an old woman. In response, Teika came up with a link of 5-7-5 syllables (*Tsukubashū*, no. 1987):

*ō-hige no o-kurumazoi no kita-omote*

a massively bearded ox-cart attendant, a north-front guard

"North-front" refers to the north side of the imperial palace where a squad of warriors was stationed. Linked to this, the "forehead pad" becomes part of the headgear worn by an imperial guard, who looks rather intimidating but is dressed somewhat shabbily. In this combination, "cotton" suggests white, and "beard," black. In another example touching on the same set of colors, someone said in 5-7-5 syllables:

*otomego ga Katsuragi yama o haru kakete*

a hint of spring like a maiden, over Mount Wig

Here, “wig” is thought to suggest black. To this, Fujiwara no Ietaka (1158–1237) responded in 7-7 syllables (*Tsukubashū*, no. 11):

*kasume do imada mine no shira-yuki*  
though it's hazy, white snow remains on its peak

Haze or haziness is, by literary convention, considered a manifestation of spring.

These two sets of two-part renga were possibly in the same group of a hundred parts. But how more than two parts were linked by any other technique than fushimono is not entirely clear for the simple reason that no complete groups remain from Gotoba's gatherings. Were such groups of varying lengths—for example, composed of clusters of two-part renga more or less independent of each other? Or were they like later renga in which any two consecutive parts are linked but three are not? Probably many, if not all, were composed in the latter fashion; the techniques of association and progression were highly polished by Gotoba himself in arranging tanka, and several sets of three and four consecutive parts from his time included in the *Tsukubashū* show the linking of AB, BC, and so forth. Here is a set of three, the last two of which were by the retired emperor (*Tsukubashū*, nos. 1302, 1755):

*Mimuro no yama wa iro masarikeri*  
Mount Mimuro has intensified its color

*kure kakaru mine ni hikage no sasu mama ni*  
darkness falling, the peak remains in the shining sun

*konata no sato o isogu tabibito*  
in a village this side a traveler hurries

Mount Mimuro is noted for its maple trees, so the anonymous first part belongs to the “autumn” category. (Following the court tanka tradition, every renga part was expected to fall into one of the categories such as spring, summer, autumn, winter,

Shintoism, Buddhism, love, miscellaneous, traveling, and felicitations.) Writing the second, Gotoba switches the category to non-specific "miscellaneous." He then comes up with his own link, changing the category to that of "traveling"; in doing so, he throws in a human figure, a definable one at that (the person "hurries"), to create the foreground against the background of a distant mountain. The sequence is in a mode typical of the *renga* as we know it: the focus and sentiment keep changing to make a series of "shifting pairs of tableaux." It is a brilliant execution.

This attribution of two consecutive parts to Gotoba and that of five to Teika—numbers 1785, 492, 770, 268, and 1007—suggest a possibility of solo *renga* composition. But they are likely to be the results of the competitive writing where anyone who could come up with the next acceptable link was to add to his glory. Whatever the linking technique, one thing is certain: Gotoba greatly helped make the unit of one hundred parts a standard length, so that his third son, the emperor Juntoku (1197–1242), could treat it as the norm in his treatise on poetry, *Yakumo Mishō* (Some Thoughts on Yakumo).

The next important figure came a century later: Nijō Yoshimoto, the compiler of the *Tsukubashū* anthology. Through his prestige as the highest ranking official at the court, he succeeded in acquiring the "semi-imperial" status for the anthology, thereby exalting the position of *renga* to close to that of formal *tanka*. He made other important contributions. He wrote several essays in an attempt to define an attitude toward *renga* and its composition; he also established a set of rules—"for my circle," he said characteristically, but "not for the future"—by sifting through the existing rules, devising new ones where necessary. In all this, Yoshimoto was helped and guided by the premier *renga* poet of the time, Monk Gusai (1282–1376), although Gusai, a non-court poet, had to remain in the background.



The renga rules, as written down by Yoshimoto and revised by later poets, including Bashō, may be grouped into three kinds: general, specific, and optional.

• General Rules •

**FORM** Alternating 5-7-5- and 7-7-syllable parts; begin with a 5-7-5-syllable part and end with a 7-7-syllable part. Any two consecutive parts must make an intelligible, independent whole, but three may not: AB, BC, CD, but not ABC, BCDE, DEF, and so on.

**LENGTH** One hundred parts, or an equivalent of fifty tanka, was standard before Bashō's time; thereafter, thirty-six parts. Sequences of seven hundred, one thousand, and ten thousand parts are all multiplications of the standard arrangement of one hundred parts. There are also sequences of forty-four, fifty, and so forth; in theory, any length is admissible.

**LINKING** The essence and backbone of renga. Renga linking presupposes what follows will be by a different hand, and that makes vital, even inevitable, the element of surprise, however mundane, tenuous, illogical, or far-fetched. Although renga following the court tradition became enmeshed in rules and restrictions, the element of surprise, the possibility that one can show one's wit among one's peers, remained and, let us hope, remains the attraction of the renga form. The form also presupposes that an infinite variety of reactions is possible to a given description or statement. As Yoshimoto said, "The linking is up to the writer's attitude, and there shouldn't be anything set about this." He felt most of the linking techniques might be categorized as follows:

*Hirazuke* (straight linking): linking based upon such word pairs as birds—trees, bees—honey, boy—girl, and so on. An example:



*tsuki ni mo miba ya ochi no yama no ha* [7-7]

I'd like to see those distant rims of mountains under the moon

*shigururu o iro naru mine no yomo no sora* [5-7-5]

though in shower the peaks all around are colorful against the sky

*Yotsude* (two for two): a combination of two items provoking a combination of two items, as in East/West—moon/sun.

*hidari mo migi mo saoshika no koe* [7-7]

left and right, stags call

*kariudo no yumi tori ya tori iru yama ni* [5-7-5]

as the hunter climbs the mountain with a bow, with arrows

In the original, "left and right" are supposed to be corresponsive to "with a bow, with arrows," or at least double-enumerative.

*Keiki* (landscape): a description of a landscape followed by another, without any ostentatious verbal display. The stress is on naturalness, and the technique is considered most important in court or orthodox renga. An example:

*ashibe ni shiroki sagi no hito-tsure* [7-7]

white along the reed edge, a pair of herons

*ame ochiru irie no nami ni yama kurete* [5-7-5]

as the rain falls into the inlet waves, the mountain grows dark

*Kokoro-zuke* (linking "by heart"): linking by association.

*muma wa are domo kachi nite zo yuku* [7-7]

I have a horse but I am going on foot

*asaborake yo no ma ni tsumoru yuki o mite* [5-7-5]

having seen at daybreak the snow that piled up during the night

A good many interpretations of the relation between the snow and not using the horse may be possible, but the relation is certainly not mechanical. The person who wrote about the snow tried to echo a sentiment perceived in the foregoing observation.

*Kotoba-zuke* (linking by word): verbal association and punning are the major means. Verbal association here is of a restrictive kind; as a result of the tendency in the rarefied world of Japanese court poetry to require “precedents” for words, phrases, and ideas, certain words and phrases were associated only with certain others, as in “pine tree” associated with “wisteria.” Some are easy to see, such as “splash” prompting the image of “waves,” but even then certain images are supposed to be connected only to certain others. Linking by verbal association of this kind is done by gathering as many associated words, phrases, and images as possible. Punning is easier—though only to explain; for the translator, it is a bane. A pun in Japanese can be as complex as one in English, with possibly one important difference: in Japanese court poetry and in “serious” renga influenced by it, a pun does not necessarily add a knowing, leery tone. An example:

*uramite mo nao nagusami ni keru* [7-7]

*matsubara no shiohi ni kakaru tabi no michi* [5-7-5]

The 7-7 syllables may be translated, “I am resentful but feel consoled,” at one level. But *uramite* (resentful) can also be *ura mite* (looking at the bay or the reverse side), and it is one of the meanings the latter suggests that the person who wrote the 5-7-5 syllables took: “Looking at the bay I still feel consoled.” His link may be translated: “the road I take, traveling, leads into the tideland near a grove of pines.” *Ura* (bay, cove) and *matsubara* (pine grove) are traditionally associated with each other.

*Uzumi-ku* (buried allusion): in Yoshimoto’s words, linking which “on the surface does not seem achieved,” but which “underneath has a profound sentiment” that justifies it. The technique is one of allusion that is not obvious but merely suggested, as in:

*naki yowaritaru higurashi no koe* [7-7]

clear-tone cicadas’ voices, now enfeebled

*uki aki ni tare yamazato o tazunuran* [5-7-5]  
in this depressing autumn who'd visit this mountain village?

In pointing to the "Yadorigi" chapter of *The Tale of Genji* as the source of the allusion "buried" in this pair, a commentator notes that only two words, *higurashi* (clear-toned cicadas) and *yamazato* (mountain village), are actually traceable to the alleged original episode.

*Yosei* (overtone): a suggestive description. An example:

*tōki kinuta no koe kikoyu nari* [7-7]

I hear the sound of a distant mallet

*tsuki no yo no fuke yuku mama ni shizumarite* [5-7-5]  
the moonlit night grows late, the air quiet

The mallet is one used for fulling cloth, and because of poems by Po Chū-yi and other Chinese poets, the utensil is thought of as being used at night and its sound is expected to provoke an acute sense of solitude. In this pair, the link, by describing a quiet moonlit night, suggests a woman fulling cloth and thinking of her husband sent far away as a soldier or for some other reason not home.

*Sōtai* (contrast): in Yoshimoto's words, "as in spring/autumn, morning/evening, mountain/field." An example (*Tsukubashū*, no. 137):

*towareneba nochi no ashita mo iza shirazu* [5-7-5]  
no one visits me, and I know of no "morning after"

*kyō miru hana no yuki no yūgure* [7-7]

the flowers seen today will be snow in the evening

*Hikichigae* (contrariness): like some other techniques, this is possible because of stock responses established and expected in court poetry. Cherry blossoms past their prime, for example, scatter like snow at the slightest provocation; so a court poet, in composing a piece on this plant, was expected to say he did not want the wind to blow. *Hikichigae* is a technique of going against that sentiment. Consider the following linking:

*matsu o tonari no yamazato no haru*

[7-7]

a pine tree adjacent in this mountain village, it's spring

*chiru o miru yoso no hana ni wa kaze machite*

[5-7-5]

seeing cherries scatter I wait for the wind—the tree's someone else's

The pine tree is an evergreen, an object that suggests eternity and therefore felicitousness. The poet of the first part is thus congratulating himself for the good fortune of having gone through the winter with a pine tree, which stands either in his neighbor's garden or, if it's in his, next to something else, possibly a cherry tree. Picking this up, the next poet notes that not only the pine tree but also the cherry tree is his neighbor's and hopes the wind will blow so that he may enjoy the scattering of the flowers. (The second remark contains, in addition to contrariness to an accepted attitude, a seemingly mean wish that a wind will blow because the cherry tree is someone else's. The wish is not exactly an expression of meanness, however. It is rather an expression of the state of mind variously described as *fūga*, *fūryū*, or *fūkyō*—unworldliness, quaintness, eccentricity, "poetic dementia." This particular brand of conceit, along with contrariness, will play an increasingly important role in renga.)

*Kakushi-dai* (hidden topic): essentially, puns (see *kotoba-zuke*). Puns in this category, often encompassing two or more words, tend to be independent of the surface meaning of a given statement (as in fishing out from the immediately preceding part of this sentence things like "dent of the surface" and "mean-spirited ace surfer"). An example (*Tsukubashū*, no. 1046):

*tsuki no wazuka ni kasumu yūgure*

[7-7]

the moon is slightly hazy this evening

*kuma no sumu utsuhogi nagara hana sakite*

[5-7-5]

though a hollow tree where a bear lives, it puts on blossoms



The introduction of *kuma* (bear) is possible because *tsuki-no-wa* (lunar ring) can refer to one of the two species of bear known in Japan, *tsukinowa-guma*, so-called for the white crescent patch it has under its neck. It may be seen, however, that unlike the resentful/bay/reverse-side pun in the example cited in the *kotoba-zuke* section, *tsuki-no-wa* is somewhat forced and without it the rest of the sentence does not make sense.

*Honka* (allusion to a *tanka*): imitative of a technique in court *tanka* writing. The degree and manner of allusion in *tanka* may be known from Teika's observation in *Eiga Taigai* (Outline for Composing *Tanka*), written in 1222: "To borrow as many as three units out of the five is quite excessive and results in a lack of novelty; to borrow two units plus three or four syllables is admissible." In other words, you may duplicate half or more of someone else's composition in your own. There are some injunctions for allusion in *renga*. One of them is that you may not allude to the same *tanka* in three consecutive parts. Another is that you may not allude to poets who wrote after the compilation of the *Shin Kokinshū* in 1205.

*Honzetsu* (allusion to a well-known story, anecdote, or Chinese poem): a technique similar to *honka*. The difference between this and *uzumi-ku* is that *honzetsu* is overt, *uzumi-ku* covert.

*Nadokoro* (famous places): incorporation of the names of famous places. The technique is the same as *kakushi-dai*, except that the category of words to be used is limited to place names. In Yoshimoto's examples, *kono yama no onore* (I, on this mountain) "hides" the name of a mountain, Ono, and *shitakusa no oi so no mori* (the forest where low grass grows), the name of a village, Oiso. Yoshimoto cautions against the frequent use of this technique, probably because place names tend to make the parts incorporating them too conspicuous.

Some later poets added to the description of linking techniques and some, like Bashō, devised new terms. But as Yoshimoto said, "Ordinarily, linking should be made through association 'by heart' or 'by word.'" In fact, all modes of linking



may be said to be based on association. The importance of linking can hardly be overstated. Renga anthologies, such as the *Tsukubashū*, often consist of two-part excerpts from longer sequences, rather than sequences themselves. Also, *maeku-zuke* or *tsukeai*, links in the minimum combination of two parts, were often composed independent of sequences.

The following is a selection of links by Yoshimoto and Monk Gusai, from the *Tsukubashū*: the number at the end of each pair is that in the anthology. As elsewhere in this book, the 7-7-syllable parts are indented, while the 5-7-5-syllable parts are not.

By Yoshimoto

on the mountain stags call, in the field insects chirp  
at each object I'm saddened in the autumn evening (299)

~

a screech—that must be a mountain flying squirrel  
at daybreak the moon has dropped behind a stand of trees (384)

~

just a hint, but this rubbed-on fragrance  
my sleeve, which I used for someone's pillow (829)

~

I don't know how you'll change after you do  
just this one night, for a memory, for a dream (838)

~

against my own thoughts I set out on a journey  
before dawn, confused by the moon, a rooster calls (1225)

~

the distant mountain appears to swallow the moon  
large Koshi boat for capturing whales, beware! (1902)

By Monk Gusai

asking for an inn at a place I didn't dream of  
led by the cherry blossoms I must have forgotten myself (97)

~

come to think of it, this must be the last moment  
to the cherry blossoms scattering in the evening rain, a gust  
down the hill (156)

~

fallen leaves surely, lying on the water  
they're the nesting birds unable to leave the summer river inlet  
(247)

~

the old mansion is not aware of the fall  
an ownerless boat abandoned on the bay carries the moon  
(389)

~

retributions for my crime—come what may  
the moon remains above the hunting ground as dawn breaks  
(561)

~

the moon is so cold I wish I had a friend to visit me  
the field temple bell is distant this autumn night (631)

~

to my dreaming pillow comes the faint moonlight  
as I trace how we made love before you died (764)

~

for climbing up the mountain there's only one trail  
his hut can't be seen but smoke rises through the valley trees  
(1243)

~

responding to the wind, the sound of bay waves  
in the village across the river lives a friend of mine (1366)

~  
the feeling of spring is in the evening bell  
all my expectations gone now—I'm that old (1504)

~  
now it's past, I forget what happened yesterday  
travelers change at the inn, it's evening (1758)

~  
they laugh but aren't belittling him  
the flock of crows at the forest treetops, a hawk above (1931)

DEVELOPMENT A hundred-part sequence was written on four sheets of paper, each folded once and holes made at one end to tie the four folded sheets together. One of the two outsides of each folded sheet was called the "front," and the other, the "back." The front of the first sheet had the first eight parts of the sequence; the back of the first sheet, the fronts and backs of the second and third sheets, and the front of the fourth sheet, each had fourteen parts; and the back of the fourth sheet, eight, making a total of one hundred parts. Nothing was written on the insides of the four folded sheets.

The sequential development of a renga so arranged is explained by using the musical terminology *jo-ha-kyū* (in one translation, introduction, elaboration, and finale; in another, preface, development, and fast finale). According to Yoshimoto, "Through the front of the first sheet, you should do graceful renga. Even with particles you shouldn't do anything of levity. Beginning with the second sheet, you should make exciting phrases, and make the third and fourth sheets particularly attractive. . . . The first sheet should be the *jo*, the second sheet *ha*, and the third and fourth sheets *kyū*." As Yoshimoto stressed, rules change. By the time of Tani Sōboku (1488?-

1545), the *jo* covered the section through the front of the second sheet or the first thirty-six parts, *ha* through the end of the third sheet or the next forty-two parts, and *kyū* the remainder or the last twenty-two parts. Later, the sections for the three designations changed further, so that the first eight parts became *jo*, the following eighty-four parts *ha*, and the last eight parts *kyū*.

During Bashō's time, the preferred length also changed, from one hundred to thirty-six parts, and the shorter sequence was set down on two sheets of paper, similarly folded, with its parts distributed 6, 12, 12, 6. Bashō appears not to have left definitive words on sequential development; he was content merely to say, "A sequence uniform from beginning to end would be ugly to look at." But his sense of it was evidently strong enough to prompt Mukai Kyorai (1651-1704), one of his disciples, to say: "In a sequence, you should compose the front uneventfully. From the back of the first sheet to the middle of the front of the second sheet, there should be eccentric turns and twists. From there into the back of the second sheet, you should purl along, composing unpainstakingly. As you approach the end, people begin to tire of one another, so that if you still try to turn out good pieces, you tend to end up, on the contrary, with difficult, unsuccessful ones. However, this does not mean that a renga gathering must be blocked from turning out good pieces when it is bouncing along to the very last piece. It means you should not strive for good pieces." Kyorai's observation hints at the possibility that he had in mind four, rather than three, stages of development for a sequence. But the important point is to lay some pattern; otherwise, a renga sequence may tend to disperse.

QUALITY OF EACH PART Implicit in Kyorai's words is the idea that one need not be consistently good in renga. Yoshimoto was explicit about it, saying that a renga sequence ought to consist of impressive and not-so-impressive pieces, and that a good poet should not contribute



more than two or three impressive pieces in one session. The words he used for impressive and not-so-impressive are textile terms, *umon* (prints or design) and *mumon* (solids or ground). The practice of deliberately blending *umon* and *mumon* pieces in a sequence appears to go back to the time of the retired emperor Gotoba and before, when a hundred tanka were composed as a unit; for such a sequence not more than ten impressive pieces at the most were written, and they were placed throughout the sequence in such a way as to make them stand out among routine pieces. The practice derives in part from aesthetic considerations; for example, a sequence of one hundred tanka, each a shining example of poetry, may have the danger of looking like, as a friend of mine put it, "a series of firecrackers." But it is also based on a realistic assessment of the situation; for, as Yoshimoto said, "How is it possible to show excellence in every piece?" To excel in every piece and at every turn may not be always impossible, but an attempt to do so would put an undue strain on the poet. It is good to remember that Iio Sōgi (1421–1502), considered the paragon of renga writers, was noted for his ability to be retiring, contributing *mumon* pieces more often than most.

**INTENSITY OF LINKAGE** The concept of linkage intensity was developed after Yoshimoto and was particularly stressed by Monk Shinkei (1406–75). Following the observations attributed to Teika, Shinkei said that in renga there ought to be closely connected links and remotely connected links, and that outstanding verses were to be found among the latter. In his opinion a remote connection occurred when the linkage was made "by heart," rather than in response to the "style" or "phrasing" of the preceding part. An example he cited as showing a remote linkage:

*hajime mo hate mo shiranu yo no naka*

in this world one knows neither the beginning nor the end



*wada no hara yosete wa kaeru okitsu nami*

the waves of the ocean come from offshore and go away

Here the linkage is remote because an abstract observation is followed by a concrete one. In contrast, in the next pair cited to show a close linkage, an almost fantastic description is graphically explained by the link:

*kōri no ue ni nami zo tachinuru*

waves rise all over the ice

*sayuru yo no tsuki no kage no no hana-susuki*

clear night: in the moonlit field, flowering pampas grass

**DICTION** For Yoshimoto, poetic diction was defined by the court poets; this largely meant the diction found in *Tales of Ise*, *The Tale of Genji*, and the first three imperial anthologies of Japanese poetry: *Kokinshū* (Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems), *Gosenshū* (Later Collection of Poems), and *Shūishū* (Collection of Gleaned Poems); for Bashō, it was daily language.

### • Specific Rules •

**HOKKU, OPENING PART** The 5-7-5-syllable part that opens a sequence is called the hokku, and in Yoshimoto's judgment it is "the most important thing." In a short story (or even in a novel), the opening sentence is sometimes said to determine the value of what follows. The idea is the same here. "When the hokku is poorly made," Yoshimoto said, "the entire sequence becomes spoiled and looks bad." It is even possible to divide a sequence into two groups, the hokku and the rest, and to call the hokku a general, the remaining parts his soldiers, as Bashō's disciples did. Naturally, the honor of composing the hokku tended to be

given to the best poet in the group. And because renga was primarily for a group of people gathered to have fun, the opening statement tended to be uplifting and strong. It was also recognized early that the hokku must be more or less self-contained and, as occasional poetry of sorts, incorporate some realistic elements, such as an object quintessential of the time of composition and a phenomenon actually observed at the place of gathering. For these reasons, before long hokku became independent, although independent hokku has been known as haiku only since around 1900 when Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) gave the term currency.

One outstanding feature of hokku has been to this day the inclusion of *kigo*, seasonal words. The number of *kigo* was not overwhelming at the outset, with Yoshimoto giving in one list no more than one hundred twenty as especially appropriate for hokku. As might be expected, however, the number quickly increased. A manual of around the year 1800 is said to have listed nearly five thousand. The number has increased further since then, though some poets in this century have advocated rejection of *kigo*.

The following hokku by Monk Gusai (*Tsukubashū*, no. 2143) is a typical example. It was composed during the Bumpō era (1317-19) at an annual renga meeting at the Kitano Shrine in Kyoto where ten hundred-part sequences were written and dedicated to the shrine deity, Sugawara no Michizane (845-903). Michizane, a scholar-courtier, was regarded as, among other things, the protector and promoter of renga. This hokku topped the first hundred-part sequence:

*Sayuru yo wa kaze to tsuki to ni fukenikeri*

The lucid night has deepened with wind and with moon

As the wind and the moon were prized for their poetry, Gusai was expressing through this simple description his wish to improve himself as a renga poet. The season of the hokku is assumed to be winter (by the lunar calendar) by its reference to the "lucid night."

WAKIKU OR WAKI, Continuing the analogy of the hokku  
SECOND PART with the general of an army, one may  
say the 7-7-syllable second part, called  
*wakiku* or *waki*, is the chief of staff. Supplementing the general's  
opening statement on the coming maneuver, the chief of staff  
must throw a different light on the same subject but may not  
present himself as a dissident. Quoting "a commentator of the  
past," Yoshimoto tells us that the *wakiku* should say "something  
different in a manner not detached" from the hokku. In form,  
too, this subtle relation holds: the *wakiku*, in effect, completes  
what was originally a *tanka*, but as part of a *renga* it must try to  
cut away from the preceding part. The custom of having the  
guest of honor compose the hokku and the host the *wakiku* was  
well established as early as the time of Yoshimoto and Gusai.

Two other parts of a *renga* sequence may be mentioned:  
*daisan*, the third part, and *ageku*, the ending part. (All the other  
parts are usually called *hiraku*, regular parts.) Though Yoshimoto  
seems to have left not many words on the *daisan* and *ageku*, by  
Bashō's time it was said that their relations to the preceding  
parts could be quite tenuous. This is because the chief role of  
the third part is to "turn away" or change the subject, and that  
of the ending part simply to finish the sequence, almost at any  
cost. The sentiment against slowing down toward the end was  
strong indeed; it was said that "a good last link does not really  
connect" to the preceding one, and the person to write the last  
part was even expected to prepare a couple in advance.

MOON AND FLOWER As we saw earlier, the hundred-part  
sequence was set down on the eight  
"outsides" of four folded sheets of paper. In that arrangement  
the moon was to be mentioned once on every side (except,  
sometimes, the last), and a flower, once on every sheet. In  
Yoshimoto's time that was the extent of the requirement. Later,  
the exact parts mentioning the moon and flowers were specified,  
though even then there was some flexibility. The thirty-six-part  
sequence was to have two or three parts describing the moon,

two, a flower. As in the hundred-part sequence, the parts to mention them were specified, but there seems to have been much flexibility with Bashō. The moon and flowers—usually cherry flower—are two prime topics in court poetry, and that was probably the initial reason for their inclusion in renga. At the same time, they were used to provide points to return to, preventing the participants from veering too far off. Also, preparing in advance a couple of candidates for the ageku, or ending part, was possible, one assumes, because the penultimate part was to mention a flower. The positions of the moon and flowers after they were fixed, for a hundred-part sequence, are:

first sheet

front, 8 parts: part 7 to mention the moon

back, 14 parts: part 10, moon; part 13, flower

second sheet

front, 14 parts: part 13, moon

back, 14 parts: part 10, moon; part 13, flower

third sheet

front, 14 parts: part 13, moon

back, 14 parts: part 10, moon; part 13, flower

fourth sheet

front, 14 parts: part 13, moon

back, 8 parts: part 7, flower

And those for a thirty-six-part sequence:

first sheet

front, 6 parts: part 5 to mention the moon

back, 12 parts: part 8, moon; part 11, flower

second sheet

front, 12 parts: part 11, moon

back, 6 parts: part 5, flower

SHIKIMOKU *Shikimoku* may be translated rules or restrictions, depending on one's emphasis. Either way, shikimoku are usually what are meant when "rules" of renga are



spoken of, and they are the most complicated aspect of this poetic form. Some of them are you-mays; most are do-nots. You-mays are intended to give some sense of continuity to the discontinuous form: for example, you may continue to describe spring, autumn, and love in up to five consecutive parts; summer, winter, Shintoism in up to three consecutive parts; and so forth. The do-nots are intended primarily to avoid repetitions and, secondarily, to make certain images stand out. They may be divided into four groups as follows:

(1) Words and images that may not be used in the first ten parts (in the hundred-part sequence). Examples from the "animal" category such as cricket, hawk, duck, sparrow, heron, dove, grebe, fox, monkey, and flying squirrel and those from the "miscellaneous" category such as heavenly maiden, seed sowing, awaking, lonely, and pleased fall into this group. The rationale for banning such words from the opening section is that they are too strong for the introductory section, which ought to be "uneventful."

(2) Words and phrases that may be used only a certain number of times in a sequence. Some that are to be used only once are kerria rose, azalea, warbler, deer, cicada, past, yesterday, morning sun, and woman; twice: pine wind, spring moon, "to miss someone," "to resent someone," and man; three times: cherry, plum, willow, capital (not money, but city), and salt; four times: snow, daybreak, and ice; and several times: moon, haze, mist, tears, wind, smoke, mountain, sky, bay, and garden.

(3) Words and images that may recur only with a certain number of parts in between. For example, if someone has described a house in the seventeenth part, then you cannot talk about "hermitage" at least until the twentieth part. (Placement of at least two parts also applies to certain grammatical endings. For example, if someone has ended his description with the equivalent of a gerund, you must wait for a minimum of two more links to be written before coming up with a sentence ending with -ing.) A group of words—mainly meteorological

phenomena, such as sun, moon, rain, hail, haze—requires a three-part space before any words of this type can recur. Some of the same words, such as tree/tree and love/love, require a five-part space, and others, such as summer/summer and tears/tears, a seven-part space.

(4) *Rinne* (samsara or recurrence). There are two types of rinne to be avoided: near and distant. A “near” rinne occurs when your description gives a picture more or less similar to the one given by the description preceding the one before you. If “smoke rises” in the eleventh part, you cannot “burn the dead leaves” in the thirteenth part. A “distant” rinne is committed when a combination of similar images in two consecutive parts is repeated elsewhere, even if the pairs occur far apart. So, suppose the eighteenth part describes the moon and the nineteenth, the face of a lover; then you cannot follow someone’s description of the moon with one of a lover’s face, even if you are twenty, fifty, or seventy parts away from the first combination.

#### • Optional Rules •

The following rules are optional in that it is up to the participants to adopt them.

**FUSHIMONO** The incorporation of a prescribed word or image, called fushimono, in each part of a sequence is a technique I have described earlier (see pages 14–16). The manner of incorporation became complex after Teika; a given item now had to be woven into a part indirectly, rather than directly, so that, if “boat” was a required topic, you had to use a word that would make a word with “boat”—“life,” for example—rather than the word “boat” itself or a picture suggestive of one. But by Yoshimoto’s time a century later, the technique was being abandoned. In his first treatise on

renga, completed in 1345, Yoshimoto said, "Recently, [fushimono] is seldom incorporated through a hundred-part sequence." More important, though he listed the technique as one of the rules in that treatise, he dropped it in the definitive version that he completed in 1349. The application of the technique was first reduced to the first eight parts (the "front" of the first sheet), then to the first three, then only to the hokku. It appears that as the incorporation of a word or image became the requirement only of the hokku, it also became an afterthought: a word or image was picked after, not before, the hokku was composed. At the same time, the word or image so picked came to substitute for the title of the sequence.

The decline of the fushimono technique coincided with a growing stress on the content as typified by the ever greater concern with the recurrence of certain words and images within a sequence. Fushimono touched on individual parts and was doomed to be replaced by rules governing the look of the entire sequence. The technique survived long after the fourteenth century, but only as a decoration.

ACROSTIC Acrostic tanka were fashionable during the Heian period (794–1185). For example, Lady Izumi (born sometime around 976) wrote at least two sequences of thirty-two tanka incorporating lines from a Chinese poem (as read in Japanese translation). The earliest known acrostic in renga form dates from 1165; it incorporates each character of the forty-seven *i-ro-ha* syllabary at the head of each part. The earliest acrostic renga incorporating *i-ro-ha* that remains in its entirety was composed in 1451 by Ichijō Kanera (1402–81), Takayama Sōzei (died 1455), and others. Because it was the fifteenth of the eighth month, when the moon was thought to look the most beautiful in the year, Kanera began:

*Io nenu ya mizu no monaka no tsuki no aki*

In the midwater, the moon, the autumn—have the fish gone to sleep?

This was followed by someone whose abbreviated name I cannot identify:

*ro o osu fune no hatsu-kari no koe*  
rowing a boat I hear the calls of first geese

Monk Sōzei followed with:

*harukanaru kiri-ma no yama wa shima ni nite*  
harbored in mists a distant mountain looks like an island

and so on. Other than the *i-ro-ha* syllabary, Buddhist prayers seem to have been favored in acrostics.

**PALINDROME** As in tanka, palindromes were attempted in renga. The following links are said to appear toward the end of a set of ten hundred-part sequences composed by Shōtetsu (1381–1459):

*na-ka-ba sa-ku ha-gi no so-no ki wa ku-sa-ba ka-na*

*ki-ku no e-mo na wa ha-na mo-e no ku-ki*

Just as the first known palindrome in English (“Lewd I did live, & evil did I dwell”) depends on the writing system of the time, so does this set, for *ha/wa* and *ki/gi* are written the same way in the original. And just as in English, palindromes in Japanese tend to be inelegant compositions, their meanings somewhat obscure. In the citation above, the 5-7-5-syllable part is ludicrous, if I understand it correctly, and the 7-7-syllable part does not make sense to me.

I’d like to conclude this chapter by looking at excerpts from a hundred-part renga composed in 1355. In the fourth and fifth months of that year, Gusai and his monk friends visited Yoshimoto, then chancellor, at his mansion and composed ten hundred-part sequences with him and his aides. Of the ten sequences, the first five remain, and the following excerpts are



from the very first. Monk Gusai, who was Yoshimoto's teacher and therefore the guest of honor, naturally wrote the hokku:

- 1 *Na wa takaku koe wa ue nashi hototogisu* Gusai  
Highly renowned, the cuckoo's voice cannot be topped

Category: Summer. Because of its notorious habit of laying eggs in the nests of other birds, the cuckoo has been considered disreputable in the West, meaning "cuckold" in the old days, "insane person" or "simpleton" in more recent American usage. Also, its actual call is described as "fast," "rapid," "busy." Nevertheless, in Japanese poetry the cuckoo has been prized from the beginning as a bird representative of the summer, and its call, especially its "first call," as something eagerly awaited. In renga, the bird is one of the items that may be mentioned only once. Gusai's intention in this hokku is obvious; it is to praise the distinguished host to the skies. The fushimono here is *hito* (person), and when the character for *hito* combined with the one for *na*, it forms a word meaning expert or master, while when combined with the character for *ue*, it forms a word meaning aristocrat. In that too, the hokku exalts Yoshimoto.

- 2 *shigeru ki nagara mina matsu no kaze* Yoshimoto  
lush trees—all of them are pines in a wind

Summer. Yoshimoto, the host, responds by returning the compliment. All of you, he says, are not only trees with fine foliage, but pine trees at that—the felicitous species that remains green throughout the year. The season is indicated by "lush trees." *Matsu*, here translated pine trees, is a frequently used pun word, also meaning "to wait"; so this part, when taken independently, has the superposed meaning of "all those lush trees wait for a wind," and when linked to the hokku, suggests that "the lush pine trees, as a wind soug hrough them, wait for a cuckoo's first call."

- 3 *yamakage wa suzushiki mizu no nagare nite*  
by the mountain there's a cool water flow

Eiun

Summer. Summer is indicated by "cool." The third link is expected to be a strong turning point, but probably because this was the very beginning of ten hundred-part sequences, the poet was cautious enough to choose an approved combination of "pine tree" and "cool," thereby making the break less than abrupt. Still, the descriptive focus has moved from midair to trees, to ground.

- 4 *tsuki wa mine koso hajime narikere*  
the moon is best when at the ridge

Shūa

Autumn. The moon, unless modified to mean some other season, indicates autumn. The seasonal switch is needed because the maximum three consecutive parts allowed for summer have been written. The moon here is the one on the fifteenth of the eighth month, or the "mid-autumn moon," which, as noted earlier, was thought to present that spherical body in its most admirable light. The image in the preceding part that makes this link plausible is the "water flow" that is there to reflect the moon. The position for the first mention of the moon was later fixed at the seventh part, but the poet follows the earlier, more flexible rule that the first moon is to appear somewhere on the "front" of the first sheet.

- 5 *aki no hi no ideshi kumoma to mietsuru ni*  
the autumn sun was just out of the clouds

Soa

Autumn. The weather on an autumn day was thought to change unpredictably, and the darkness to fall before you knew it. On its own, this part implies that the sun is again hidden behind the clouds; but when linked to the preceding part, it adds that the short autumn day is over and now the moon is rising.

6    *shigure no sora mo nokoru asa-giri*                      Gyōa  
after a shower morning mists remain in the sky

Autumn. Mists were considered most appropriate for the autumn and so indicate that season in court poetry. The connecting elements are an approved combination of “sunlight often interrupted by the clouds” and “shower,” and the contrasting images are “out of the clouds” and “[hidden in the] mists.”

7    *kure goto no tsuyu wa sode ni mo sadamarade*                      Mokuchin  
the dew at evening does not settle on my sleeves

Autumn. This link is technically more elaborate than the preceding one. It has three words meant to contrast with three in Gyōa's link: “dew,” which is supposed to *fall*, as opposed to “mists,” which are supposed to *rise*; “evening,” as opposed to “morning”; and narrow “sleeves,” as opposed to the large “sky.” In addition, the phrase “not to settle” is related to the “shower,” which was thought to be highly restive. The idea of the link is equally complicated. Because the dew is born of the restless shower, it does not settle on its prescribed locus, the sleeves, but instead turns into mists. The word “dew” indicates that the season is still autumn.

8    *sato koso kaware koromo utsu koe*                      Shigekazu  
in any village there's that sound of beating cloth

Autumn. Ōe Shigekazu, who wrote this part, was probably the scribe for this round. Responding to the poetic convention that the dew on the sleeves is synonymous with tears, he describes someone on the road, listening to a fulling mallet (see page 21). The word “any” (the original *kaware* has a more active verb meaning change) is related to “not settle.” “Sound of beating cloth” specifies the season as autumn. But with this, the maximum number of five consecutive parts allowed for autumn has been reached, so the next person must

switch to a different category. Also, with this link ends the formal, "uneventful" front of the first sheet, the *jo* section.

Let us now look at the middle of the sequence where the *ha* section comes to a close and the *kyū* section begins.

45 *ochikochi ni tachi hanaretaru asa-gasumi* Soa  
far and near, rising separately, the morning hazes

46 *ta ga ie-ie mo haru ya kinu ran* Eiun  
to all those houses, spring must have come

The patches of haze described in the preceding part are now seen as enveloping separate houses. Spring by the lunar calendar began in the first month of the year.

47 *oiraku no mi ni aratamaru toshi wa nashi* Gusai  
to me, an aging man, there's no such thing as New Year

48 *kienu bakari no yuki mo itsu made* Yoshimoto  
the snow just doesn't fade, but until when

49 *tomoshibi no kage o nokoshite fukuru yo ni* Shūa  
the lamp holds on to its light as night deepens

The category here is "miscellaneous." It is changed to "love" in the next link.

50 *wakaruru hito zo ware o somukuru* Shigekazu  
parting, she forced me to turn away

But "parting," which makes the link suggestive of love, may also occur to someone who takes to the road. So Gusai describes a traveler.

51 *yuku mama ni ushiro no yama no hedatarite* Gusai  
I walk ahead, and the mountain behind me goes on receding

52 *tsuki ni mukaeba nokoru hi mo nashi* Yoshimoto  
I face the moon; nothing remains of the sun

This series of eight parts ending with a description of autumn



("moon"), though picked randomly, may be as lively as any portion of any renga sequence. In the final eight parts, the poets again become formal.

- 93 *ima komu no aki o wasuruna kaeru kari* Soa  
autumn will come soon—don't forget it, geese, going away

Geese migrate to Japan from Siberia in the fall—in the old days they did so in much more impressive flocks than they do now—and fly away in spring. The season of the description is, therefore, spring.

- 94 *tsuratsura omoe tsuyu no mi zo kashi* Shūa  
flocks of thoughts—my life is like a dewdrop

The description belongs to the category known as *jukkai*, reflections. Then Shigekazu depicts the leaves falling from a type of vine called *trachelospermum jasminoides*, an evergreen, thereby introducing a winter scene.

- 95 *kure goto ni chiru ya masaki no tama kazura* Shigekazu  
every evening the vines on spindle trees scatter their leaves

- 96 *fuyu kakete koso kaze wa samukere* Eiun  
because we're in winter the wind is cold

Though this statement looks innocuous, it too is based on an approved combination of images: "vines in spindle trees" and "wind." Gusai gives it a sharp detail.

- 97 *o-guruma no waga ato miyuru asa-gōri* Gusai  
I see the ruts of my small cart on the morning ice

- 98 *futatsu no kawa zo meguri ainuru* Ietada  
the two rivers have come together

Fujiwara no Ietada, Yoshimoto's aide, associates Gusai's two grooves with the two Buddhist rivers—the River of Fire, which symbolizes human resentment, and the River of Water, which symbolizes human greed, in the Buddhist Hell. Between the

two is a "white road" that leads to the Pure Land, or Paradise. Yoshimoto, however, interprets the two rivers to mean ones in this world.

- 99 *Saho-yama no kage yori fukashi Iwa Shimizu* Yoshimoto  
deeper than the Mount Saho foliage is the Clear-Water-  
through-the-Rocks

The description belongs to the category of *shukugen*, congratulations. The dominant power at court at that time was the Fujiwaras, whose patron deity was enshrined in Nara where Mount Saho is, while the military and de facto ruler of Japan was the Ashikaga clan, whose patron deity was at the Iwa Shimizu (Clear-Water-through-the-Rocks) Hachiman Shrine outside Kyoto. Yoshimoto, as chancellor, was the leader of the Fujiwara family. In concluding the sequence, Monk Gusai extends his congratulations by saying that the trees making up the foliage are two felicitous evergreens: *sakaki* (*clevera japonica*), whose leafy twigs are used to decorate the shrine, and *tachibana* (*citrus tachibana*), the fragrance of whose flowers is so familiar to court poets:

- 100 *tokiwa naru ki wa sakaki tachibana.* Gusai  
the everlasting trees are *sakaki*, *tachibana*.

~·~ CHAPTER TWO ~·~

Courtly Elegance, Earthy Humor, and Poetry

Essentially a series of contests of wit, *renga* from the outset tended to move away from elegance, the ideal of court poetry. At the same time, as an outgrowth of the *tanka* form that in time became the standard vehicle of court poetry, *renga* tended to be drawn back to the same ideal. As a result, the history of *renga* is schizophrenic. Wit and its blood relation, humor, existed as strong undercurrents but only occasionally rose to mix with the main stream of elegance as long as court poets remained in top form. When the poets at the court lost vitality and those outside it gained strength, elegance submerged. Still, toward the end of his life as a *haikai* or "humorous" poet, Bashō expressed his mindfulness of the old court ideal by saying that one purpose of his kind of poetry was to "rectify daily language."

Court poetry stultified because the poets made little effort to break away from the rules and restrictions that had accumulated over the centuries. A large part of their inaction was necessitated by the professionalization of poetry writing, and there was therefore little incentive for the poets to seek change. Fujiwara no Tameyo (1251-1338), Teika's great-grandson, said that by his time there were "no sentiments left unsung in the imperial anthologies under various reigns and by the famous poets of various generations," and that one *tanka* could be different from another only as one face is different from

another—each with “two eyes attached to it horizontally, and one nose vertically,” but different. Such a defeatist observation came about because, in Tameyo’s examples, when you spoke of the cherry blossoms as they came into bloom for the first time in spring, you were required to mistake them for patches of cloud, and when you described the sound of leaves falling, you were supposed to misidentify it as that of a passing shower. Tameyo knew what the problem was, but did nothing except feebly justify living with it.

More or less the same thing happened to renga written by court poets or those who adhered to their poetics. The stultification process as seen in the change from Yoshimoto of the fourteenth century to Monk Shinkei a hundred years later is dramatic. Yoshimoto, the highest court official and the most important preserver of the court’s poetic tradition, stressed flexibility and enjoyment, while Shinkei, a non-court poet who regarded renga writing as a means of spiritual and religious discipline, was inflexible and scornful of any notion of enjoyment. (In relation to their social positions their views were the reverse of what might have been expected.) Yoshimoto said that a beginner should learn as much as possible from his teacher but must aim to establish his own style in the end. In contrast, Shinkei argued for absolute servility to one’s master, rejecting as unfit to be taught someone who had practiced the art on his own before seeking the guidance of a superior person. Shinkei reasoned that anyone who tainted himself at the outset could not hope to be rectified by the wisest. Yoshimoto thought popularity was the solid ground on which to judge the value of a given style. Fashion has changed four or five times in the past fifty years, he said, and it would be presumptuous for any person, even one considered to be in the know, to challenge the rest of the world in the matter of taste. Shinkei, on the other hand, believed that renga, or any other art for that matter, was beyond the ken of the ordinary mortal. Popularity, in his view, was an aggregate of shallow minds, and to be popular was



no honor at all. There have been many men of wisdom who were ignored by their contemporaries and remain unknown, he said.

Would renga composition lead to Buddhist enlightenment? Yoshimoto said yes, that was possible, because "in renga preceding and following thoughts are not connected. Also, the way that the rises and falls, depressing and delightful things, go on shifting from one side to the next, is no different from the way this world is. While you're thinking it was yesterday, today also passes; while you're thinking it's spring, autumn comes; while you're thinking they're [cherry] blossoms, they shift to scarlet leaves—doesn't all this give you the idea that 'blossoms scatter, leaves fall'?" For Yoshimoto renga was first, religion second. For Shinkei it was the other way around. "To learn this way [i.e., renga] and enlighten oneself on the depths of sorrow," he said, "would not be even remotely possible for those who count on living till tomorrow, indulge in various sensuous matters, prize their treasures and, being proud, do not think."

Such observations were based on the two men's opposing views of renga. Laying down comprehensive rules on paper for the first time, Yoshimoto, at age twenty-five, made a point of noting that renga is "a game," and that "easy linking makes good renga." His attitude remained consistent. Toward the end of his life, when he was sixty-three, he said: "No true art is worth anything unless people enjoy it. It's like, for example, folk theater (*dengaku*) or comic theater (*sarugaku*). Renga, too, should be considered well-done while the session maintains fun, only if the session is interesting. No matter how subtle you say [your verse] is, it would be useless if you were clumsy during the session." And, "If it's enjoyable you should even dance." Dancing was unthinkable for Shinkei. Studying renga was to him comparable to "taking Buddhist vows," and once you took up renga, you were expected to meditate on the fact that "both the exalted and the base, the wise and the dumb,

will not be breathing by dusk, all being as tenuous as a strand of hair." Naturally he concurred with the dictum of Bontō (1349–1420?): "Renga is renga when done while you are not in a session." Yoshimoto believed that no amount of learning would make a good renga poet but an "utterly ignorant person" could often be good in this game. Shinkei was persistent in condemning those not in the know and relentless in attaching elitist aesthetic import to renga. And while Yoshimoto said tanka and renga were different, Shinkei said they were the same, and his ideals were those of the tanka poets he revered, Teika and his father, Shunzei (1114–1204). Inevitably, renga as practiced by Shinkei and those who held similar views became, like tanka, "a literature for a special class of people," as Fukui Kyūzō put it, and just as court tanka had turned insipid, so in time did court renga.

To illustrate this trend with a sequence that has been admired as "the model" in the genre may be sacrilegious, but the famous *Three Poets at Minase*, written in 1488, has something all too familiar about it and is in the end "monotonous." Let us look at the first eight parts.

- |   |  |      |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | <i>Yuki nagara yamamoto kasumu yūbe kana</i>         | Sōgi |
|   | Despite some snow the hill-base is hazy this evening |      |

Category: Spring. The hokku is by Sōgi because the other two participants, Botange Shōhaku (1443–1527) and Saiokuken Sōchō (1448–1532), were his students. The sequence was composed to be dedicated to the shrine built in memory of the retired emperor Gotoba and his palace at Minase, and in his opening verse Sōgi appropriately alludes to Gotoba's famous tanka commending the view of the area: "As I look out, the hill-base is hazy along Minase River—why did I think the evening was for autumn alone?" (see page 9). The allusion fulfills two requirements of a hokku: place and circumstance of composition. A third requirement, season, is met by the word "hazy." By the lunar calendar the first month, when the three poets sat down and wrote the sequence, marked the beginning of spring.

*Kana* is a *kireji* (cutting word), which is expected to help the *hokku* stand on its own by giving the statement a sense of finality. The *fushimono* here, which substitutes for the title of the sequence, is *hito* (person); combined with a word in the *hokku*, *yama* (mountain), it forms a word meaning someone who lives on the mountain, such as a woodcutter. (To a degree like the idea of the "noble savage," woodcutters and certain other kinds of people in the wild were considered poetic by Japanese court poets.)

2 *yuku mizu tōku ume niou sato* Shōhaku  
the water flows distant from a plum-scented village

Spring. Mindful of Sōgi's allusion, Shōhaku adds a river and, for further detail, a nearer, tangible picture of a village. He himself echoes a *tanka* by an anonymous poet in the *Kokinshū* (no. 793), which reads:

Minase-gawa arite yuku mizu nakuba koso  
tsui ni wagami o taenu to omowame

If Minase River had no water that's there and flows,  
I might end up thinking she's abandoned me

The allusion is made to give authority to the use of the phrase, *yuku mizu* (water flows), rather than to enhance the meaning as Sōgi's reference did. The subject of the tanka is love: using the literal sense of *minase-gawa* (dry river), the poet says he would think his lover, who rarely sees him, has abandoned him if water did not occasionally flow in the dry river.

3 *kawakaze ni hito mura yanagi haru miete* Sōchō  
a river wind, and a stand of willows shows it's spring

Spring. In contrast to the rather static pictures given by Sōgi and Shōhaku, Sōchō describes a scene with movement. The three images he combines here—wind, willow, spring—are

common in tanka on willows, as in Impumon-in no Taifu's (twelfth century) in the *Shin Kokinshū* (no. 73):

*Harukaze no kasumi fukitoku taema yori*  
*midarete nabiku aoyagi no ito*

In a rift of the haze blown, untangled, by spring winds,  
turbulent, bending, the strands of green willows

- 4 *fune sasu oto mo shiruki akegata* Sōgi  
the sound of a boat being poled, distinct at dawn

Miscellaneous. Sōgi has been praised for the skill he shows in this link. There is, for one thing, the outstanding description itself. Also, Sōgi suggests that the willows "show" it's spring, because the morning sun makes their green visible. Finally, following the predominantly visual images in the preceding three parts, he brings in an auditory one. Still, the description is solidly based on the following tanka by Fujiwara no Yukiie (dates uncertain) in the *Kin'yōshū* (no. 256):

*Kawagiri no tachikometsureba*  
*Takase-bune wakeyuku sao no oto nomi zo suru*

Because the river mists rise, filling the air,  
only the sound is heard of a Takase boat, its pole being  
plied

- 5 *tsuki ya nao kiri wataru yo ni nokoruramu* Shōhaku  
the moon may still linger in the misted-over night

Autumn. "Mists" is a kigo for autumn, so as if on cue, as it were, Shōhaku begins a description of autumn by using two words that indicate the season, "moon" and "mist." The combination of the two words also has precedent, as in the following tanka by Fujiwara no Kiyosuke (1104-77) in the *Senzaishū* (Collection of Poems for a Thousand Generations, no. 284):



*Shiogama no ura fuku kaze ni kiri harete  
yasoshima kakete sumeru tsukikage*

At the wind blowing over Shiogama Bay the mist clears,  
and across the eighty isles the limpid moonlight

The mention of the moon here in the fifth part, rather than in the seventh, shows that its position was not yet fixed.

6 *shimo oku nohara aki wa kurekeri* Sōchō  
over the fields where frost has formed, autumn ends

Autumn. If not qualified as it is here, "frost" indicates winter. A desolate field and autumn are often paired in court poetry, as in the following tanka by Prince Tomohira (964–1009) in the *Shin Kokinshū* (no. 510):

*Akikaze ni shioruru nobe no hana yori mo  
mushi no ne itaku kare ni keru kana*

At autumn winds wilt the flowers out in the field, but far  
worse—  
the chirpings of insects have painfully withered

This makes the following part by Sōgi almost predictable:

7 *naku mushi no kokoro tomo naku kusa karete* Sōgi  
against the chirping insects' hopes the grasses wither

Autumn. Although the wording of this description is judged to be excellent, two phrases, "chirping insects" and "grasses wither," are fixed seasonal indicators, leaving only the middle section (in the original) to maneuver. The conception itself is strictly conventional. The eighth part, by Shōhaku, is not much different:

8 *kakine o toeba arawanaru michi* Shōhaku  
I come to the fence to visit, the path is exposed

Miscellaneous. This belongs to the category of "miscellaneous" because it has no word or phrase indicating a definite topic. Still, a late autumn scene with insects (crickets, most likely) chirping feebly in the withering grass, as depicted by Sōgi, is expected to provoke in court poetry thoughts of loneliness and yearnings for visits by friends. Witness the following tanka by Fujiwara no Mototoshi (died 1142) in the *Senzaishū* (no. 1090):

*Aki hatsuru kareno no mushi no koe taeba  
ari ya nashi ya to hito no toekashi*

If with autumn ending the insects cease chirping in the  
withered fields,  
I would like someone to visit me to see how I am

These eight parts follow the rule that the opening section of a hundred-part sequence ought to be "uneventful." Six of the eight parts are depictions of landscapes, three of them those of soft-colored spring, three others those of ink-drawn autumn. A human figure appears only in two parts, but in neither too strongly: in the fourth, merely as a suggestion, and in the eighth, more or less as a shadow. The section is executed with finesse and eminently succeeds in creating a world of elegant poetry. But that is precisely the problem. The impression one gets from reading this passage, and the entire sequence, is no different from the impression one gets from reading here and there in an imperial anthology of court poetry.

In addition to his leader's role in this "model" sequence, Sōgi is known as the prime mover in compiling in 1495 the second of the two anthologies of orthodox renga: *Shinsen Tsukubashū* (New Tsukuba Collection). The first, as we have seen, was Yoshimoto's *Tsukubashū* in 1356. But, while Yoshimoto had set aside a section for haikai or "humorous" renga in his anthology, Sōgi did not in his. The reason for Sōgi's decision may have been the great discrepancy that by then existed between orthodox renga and unorthodox *haikai no renga* that

probably made him feel it unwise to include both kinds in one selection.

Even so, Sōgi, like Sōchō and Shōhaku, did write the unorthodox kind of renga, and various accounts remain to attest to his quick wit. Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537), an aristocratic friend of the three poets, gives an example in his diary. At one gathering in 1499, Sōchō said:

*fuji wa sagarite yūgure no sora* [7–7]  
the wisteria droops against the evening sky

Sōgi promptly followed with:

*yoru sariba tare ni kakarite nagusaman* [5–7–5]  
when night comes, whom will it lie over for consolation?

At this, says Sanetaka, everyone burst out laughing. The diction was that of standard court poetry, but Sōgi's response was risqué.

In the same year an unidentified monk compiled the first known anthology of haikai no renga under the title of *Chikuba Kyōginshū* (Collection of Mad Songs Made on Bamboo Stilts). That was followed a few decades afterward by a far more famous anthology in the same vein, *Inu Tsukubashū* (Dog's Tsukuba Collection). The latter anthology is attributed to the legendary Yamazaki Sōkan, who probably died before 1550. Its initial version is thought to have been put together by the year 1540, when Arakida Moritake (1473–1549) completed his ten hundred-part sequences in the haikai mode, known as *Tobiume Senku* (Flying Plum: Thousand Pieces). Sōkan and Moritake are regarded as the founders of haikai. Unlike the *Chikuba Kyōginshū*, which has been uncovered only recently, Sōkan's *Inu Tsukubashū* was known to the poets of the ensuing centuries, as was Moritake's *Tobiume*. Also, the two works differ from each other. For one thing, Sōkan's anthology, like the three preceding ones, is largely made up of links in the minimum combination of two, which may or may not have been

excerpts from longer sequences, whereas Moritake's was planned to be what it is: ten sequences of a hundred parts (plus a celebratory addition half that long and an afterword). For another, the *Inu Tsukubashū* presents haikai in a readily recognizable, earthy manner, whereas *Tobiume* is less hilarious, its haikai chiefly deriving from its rejection of poetic diction.

Let us look at some examples. The first three pairs are for contrast: two elegant tsukeai followed by a humorous one—all dealing with the spring haze. In the *Tsukubashū* is this (no. 10):

*taga sode kakete kaze kayōran*

whose sleeve has this breeze wafted through?

*Sao-hime no kasumi no koromo tachi kasane*

Tameuji

Princess Sao's robe of haze rises in many layers

What the 7-7-syllable part suggests, by convention, is a fragrance from someone's scented sleeve. In response, Fujiwara no Tameuji (1222-86), Teika's grandson, says the sleeve does not belong to an ordinary mortal, but to the goddess of spring, Princess Sao. In his link *tachi* is a punning word, meaning "to rise" when referring to the haze, and "to cut" when referring to dressmaking; and so is *kasane*, which means "layers" as well as a type of undergarment.

In the *Shinsen Tsukubashū*, Monk Sōzei has the following:

*ura ka omote ka koromo tomonashi*

inside or outside, I cannot tell of that robe

*shinonome no ashita no yama no usu-gasumi*

Sōzei

against the eastern clouds the morning hills are veiled with haze

As is shown in the preceding pair, spring hazes used to be compared to robes for mountains. Sōzei here says he cannot tell whether he's looking at the inside or the outside of the robe because the day has not fully broken. In the *Inu Tsukubashū*, such elegant affectations are given a rude jolt:



*kasumi no koromo suso wa nurekeri*  
the robe of haze is wet at its hem

*Sao-hime no haru tachi nagara shito o shite*  
Princess Sao of spring pissed as she started

The *maeku* (initial part) is innocuous enough; but, instead of explaining conventionally why the robe is wet, the respondent—it could have been *Sōkan*—says it is because the goddess of spring inopportunately succumbed to the call of nature.

The additional examples from the *Inu Tsukubashū* that follow may show one way that haikai no renga was different from orthodox renga in the court tradition.

his gentle thoughts—no, I can't say that  
a brush-maker admires a wild cherry, as he passes by it

The bark of a wild cherry called *kabazakura* was good material for brushes, so a brush-maker stopping to admire it is, when you think about it, suspect.

~  
though in a dream it must hurt  
asleep on a flower the butterfly was struck by raindrops

This *tsukeai* is understandable as it is, but may become more interesting when one is reminded of the well-known passage in *Chuang Tzu*: "Once Chuang Chou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Chuang Chou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Chuang Chou. But he didn't know if he was Chuang Chou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Chuang Chou." There is also a pun: the original word for "asleep" also means "wet."

A hokku:

It's all gone! this indeed is a snow Buddha

The reference is to the Buddhist teaching that life is transient. The original word for "snow Buddha," *yuki-botoke*, contains a near homophonic pun, suggesting a meaning, "the snow too has melted."

~

pain in the ass gets worse, so does hunger  
a pity—the baby monkey can't get the bur off the chestnut!

The Japanese monkey, a macaque, has a red face and red posterior. Here, the redness of the posterior is thought to have resulted from its owner's sitting on a tree too long.

~

she spreads her net everywhere  
Queen Anne I adore has captured my garden with her lace

In case the reader is puzzled by the sudden appearance of Queen Anne, the original goes: *doko to mo iwazu chigiri koso sure / hizō suru niwa no kusahana kohimegoze*.

~

a house built, but it's so fragile  
a spider has spanned its web across plantain leaves

The leaves of the plantain, *bashō*, tear easily. (Most likely it was this attribute of the plant that Bashō had in mind when he saw the plant given him grow so well and adopted its name as his pen name.)

~

A hokku:

Monkey's ass: immune to the tree-searing wind, maple-crimson

The macaque is one of the few monkeys that live above the snow line.

~

I get only nuts for my drinks  
and all these young men have ugly faces

Homosexuality and male prostitution were common topics  
in popular literature.

~  
arm for a pillow he keeps listening  
quite late on his wedding night a cuckoo calls

Someone lying with his arm for a pillow suggests a listless  
person. The respondent confounds that expectation by giving  
another meaning of "arm for a pillow," which is "to sleep  
with someone."

~  
loving someone out of reach—what a pity!  
hugging a young man far taller than himself

~  
all his tender thoughts must lie in one hole  
a rat carried off her love letter this evening

~  
An example with two *tsukeku* (linked parts):  
holding the paper to wipe it with and crying, crying  
the sword handed down by his father, now all rusty  
time for the novice to take vows, and this is the blade

In the second link the blade is for shaving the head of the  
novice, signaling his decision to enter priesthood.

~  
And here's the most famous piece from the *Inu Tsukubashū*:  
upsetting, but funny too  
even when my parent lay dying, I kept farting

The haikai as exemplified by these samples represents what the word originally meant: humor. But Moritake gave a broader meaning to the term by questioning humor as its sole property. "Should haikai be thoughtless, intended only to make people laugh?" he asked, and suggested that his renga were haikai because of their inclusion of "locally used daily language" and "sentiments and expressions that have become personal." A century later, when attempts were made to distinguish haikai no renga from orthodox renga, this inclusion of "daily language" (*zokugo*, *zokugen*), diction not allowed in court poetry, was repeatedly singled out as the principal feature of haikai. Typical may be the observation in the *Haikai Shogaku Shō* (Haikai Primer), published in 1641 by Saitō Tokugen (1559–1647), that haikai is "renga with daily language added," and that the first of the "five superior pleasures" of haikai is its "use of daily language."

The opening section of the first sequence in Moritake's *Tobi-ume* reads:

- 1 *Tobiume ya karogaroshiku mo kami no haru*  
The Flying Plum is feather-light in this Deity's spring
- 2 *ware mo ware mo no karasu uguisu*  
"Me too, me too," follow crows, warblers
- 3 *nodokanaru kaze fukurō ni yama miete*  
when a peaceful wind 'owls over the hills I see

*Tobiume* (Flying Plum) refers to a legend about Sugawara no Michizane, who was exiled at the pinnacle of his court career. According to the legend, when leaving his mansion in Kyoto, he composed a farewell poem for his favorite plum tree; thereupon, the tree flew to the place where its "master" was condemned to spend the rest of his life. The poem was:

*Kochi fukaba nioi okose yo ume no hana*  
*aruji nashi tote haru o wasuru na*



When the eastwind blows, send over your fragrance, plum  
blossoms;  
even without your master, do not forget spring

Moritake made this reference because the twenty-fifth of the first month of 1536, when he began work on the ten hundred-part sequences, was the anniversary of the death of Michizane, the patron deity of renga.

The words and phrases not considered "poetic" in this section are *karogaroshiku* (feather-light), *ware mo ware mo* (me too, me too), *karasu* (crow), and *fukurō* (owl). The haikai of the section also derives from the nimble use of wordplay. In the hokku, *tobi* means "flying" and "kite" (the bird), the latter triggering the mention of crows and warblers in the wakiku; *kami* (deity) also means "paper," which makes it a natural word to follow "feather-light"; and *kami no haru* (deity's spring) comes close to meaning "pasting up paper," which makes "me too, me too" natural and funny. The daisan uses the kind of pun not often used in English: *fuku* of the word *fukurō* (owl) also means "to blow," enabling the word to function as a verb and a noun.

The third sequence begins:

1 *Hana yori mo hana ni arikeru nioi kana*

Fragrance is not so much in the blossoms as in the nose

2 *tsuki wa oboro ni fukuru inoshishi*

moon opaque, it grows late over the wild boar

3 *haru no yo no yume ya sanagara ushi naran*

this spring night his dreams must be all bull

The haikai of this section comes from the generally earthy tone of its descriptions, in addition to the use of patently unpoetic words, such as "nose." Its humor lies in the juxtaposition of elegant and inelegant images: "blossoms," "fragrance," "moon opaque (hazy)" and "spring night dreams," set along-

side "nose," "wild boar," and "bull." Puns also play a role. The hokku has two words that are homophonic: *hana*, the first time, means "blossom," and the second time, "nose"—the latter prompting the association of a wild boar rooting with its singular snout. The wild boar, in turn, is related to the pun in the *daisan*, *ushi*, which means "bull," as well as "depressing."

Moritake could be coarse rather in the manner of the *Inu Tsukubashū*. In the fifth sequence the following links occur:

8 *Shigehira kai o fukare nuru nari*

9 *furo ni iru Senju no mae no kayuku shite*

Shigehira (1156–84) was a general of the Taira clan captured alive in a crucial battle with the Minamoto clan. Though he was eventually executed, the head of the Minamoto, Yoritomo (1147–99), treated him politely, at one time sending Senju (1165–88), one of his maids, to console him. The meeting between the general and the maid occurs in a bathroom where she comes in to wash him. That night they play music to each other. Learning of his execution, Senju becomes a nun and soon afterward dies. The story, told in *The Tale of the Heike*, became the basis of *Senju*, an affecting Noh play attributed to Komparu Zenchiku (1405–68).

So, the eighth part, following the part suggesting someone "captured alive," means, "Shigehira has blown on his conch shell." But because the word *kai* (shellfish) sometimes refers to the female sexual organ, and the word *fuku* (to blow) also means "to wipe," the eighth part can mean, "Shigehira has wiped her shellfish." It is this second meaning that is used for the following line, which, at one level, means, "taking a bath, Senju had an itch on her front."

The sentiments and expressions used in this pair of links are totally alien to court poetry and therefore totally haikai, although Moritake did not frequently indulge in this mode of humor. In any event, if Sōkan reaffirmed the importance of the

sense of earthy playfulness in renga, Moritake recognized and enunciated the importance of the use of daily language and the world it describes. In this respect, what he did in *Tobiume* is comparable to what Wordsworth did in *Lyrical Ballads*.

For all their worth, Sōkan's *Inu Tsukubashū* and Moritake's *Tobiume* did not at once usher in a new age. Another hundred years had to pass before haikai was taken seriously and a large number of haikai collections and treatises on the genre started appearing. During that time renga poets of the traditional school remained productive and influential. For example, Satomura Jōha (1524–1602), a dominant figure in the sixteenth century, is believed to have taken part in at least five thousand renga sessions, and his descendants went on to hold the hereditary right to provide the Tokugawa shogunate with official instructors.

From the times of Sōkan and Moritake to the 1670s, when Bashō came on the scene, two men helped push haikai forward: Matsunaga Teitoku (1571–1653) and Nishiyama Sōin (1605–82). A tanka poet and classical scholar with encyclopedic knowledge, Teitoku set rules and standards for haikai, although what he mainly did was to relax the existing ones intended for orthodox renga. Through his prestige, his Confucian rectitude, and his own compositions, he also gave respectability to the genre. In doing so, however, he made haikai rule-bound and short on playfulness. It was against this tendency of his school, known as Teimon, that the people who gathered around Sōin rebelled. These people, later to be known as Danrin, demanded freedom in technique and spirit. Sōin was a professional renga poet of the old school and his sally into the genre was never wholehearted; he announced withdrawal from it in the end when he felt those claiming bondage under his leadership were going too far. Still, his casual approach and his imaginative linking technique brought back liveliness and fun to haikai. Bashō, who took part in a renga session with Sōin in 1675, when Sōin's fame was at its peak, later described him as the "restorer/

founder" (*chūkō kaizan*) of the kind of haikai he and his friends wrote.

Teitoku's moralistic approach is well reflected in his condemnation of the best-known piece in the *Inu Tsukubashū*. It appears in the "Yodo-gawa" section of his *Shinzō Inu Tsukubashū* (New and Enlarged Dog's Tsukuba Collection, 1643), where he adds third links to the *tsukeku* of Sōkan's anthology, with comments, mostly on his own compositions:

upsetting, but funny too

even when my parent lay dying, I kept farting

"Even for haikai it is not proper to shame one's father or mother. Not to mention Confucianism, Buddhism also forbids unfilial behavior. In addition, even disregarding the five syllables [i.e., *he o kokite*, 'I kept farting'], is there anything that is not upsetting at someone's death? Why did not the editor revise it before putting it in? If you do not regard renga, haikai, and all, to say nothing of tanka, as means of teaching people, it will do no good to you, no matter how much honor you may gain. If this link said at least 'someone else's parent,' its effect might be superior. If it is one's own parent, how could it possibly be funny? Anyone who could think it funny would not be born of a human; he would be inferior to a beast. Unless you carefully consider this sort of thing, you will be derided by later people and deemed inferior to those who do not dabble in haikai."

Then Teitoku goes on to add his third link:

*nochinochi neko no toru wa ko-itachi*

later on the cat will get the baby weasel

(In writing this link, Teitoku takes the word *waga*, a focal point of his denunciation, to mean "its" or "his," rather than "my." With his link, he suggests that it was a baby weasel that farted while its parent was being devoured by a cat. In his judgment morality evidently did not extend to weasels.)



What Teitoku found upsetting in the tsukeku is disrespect for filial piety, the foundation of Confucian philosophy. He did not feel as strongly about indecencies. For example, in the "Aburakasu" section of the same book, where he writes his tsukeku to the maeiku of Sōkan's anthology, he has the following among his eleven tsukeku to "upsetting, but funny too":

*hitonaka de korobu onago no mae dashite*

a woman fell among the people, baring her front

Mostly, though, he was genteel, as may be seen in one of the three tsukeku he added to "the robe of haze is wet at its hem":

*tennin ya amakudarurashi haru no umi*

a heavenly being must have descended from the sky to the spring  
sea

Teitoku may have formed his genial approach partly from the company he kept, which to a large extent consisted of scholars, poets, generals, and noblemen. "Even for haikai," he said in his *Tensui Shō* (Heavenly Water, 1644?), "you should not do anything base." Although a good poet can make something attractive from something base, a bad one tends to make something attractive base. So, "young beginners," especially, must avoid, "in front of noblemen and court ladies, dealing with talk of the lower part of the body, names of base food items, rice, money, and business gains and losses."

Teitoku's main linking technique was kotoba-zuke, linking through demonstrably related words and phrases. The following is the opening section of a hundred-part renga, known as *Uta Izure* (Which Sings Better), which he wrote around 1624 and later annotated for the benefit of his students.

1 *Uta izure Komachi Odori ya Ise Odori*

Which sings better? Komachi Dance or Ise Dance?

Category: Autumn. The Komachi Dance became popular in and around Kyoto at the beginning of the Edo Period (1603–1868). Ono no Komachi, a poet of the mid-ninth century, was

reputed to have been such a beauty that her name became synonymous with a beautiful young woman. The dance was danced by the prettiest girls of the town on the seventh of the seventh month, the day the Princess Weaver (the star Vega) and the Oxherd (the star Altair), the ill-fated lovers of Chinese legend, have a once-a-year meeting in the River of Heaven (the Milky Way). The girls sang as they danced through the streets. The Ise Dance, originating in the province of Ise, was for the fifteenth of the seventh month, the day marking the Bon Festival intended for the appeasement of the souls of the dead. This dance, too, became popular about the same time. It happens that Ise is the name of another early woman poet, who died in 939. Teitoku explains that he intended this hokku, by way of indirect reference to the two poets, to express his admiration for them, "both so good that one can't tell who is the better."

2 *doko no Bon ni ka oryaru Tsurayuki*  
whose Bon has that Tsurayuki?

Autumn. Ki no Tsurayuki, a well-known male poet of about the same time (c.868–c.946), is invoked to decide who is the better poet of the two. Because the three poets are all dead, what is implied is: At whose house is Tsurayuki staying when Komachi and Ise are dancing right here? The linking is based on strict word association: Komachi—Ise—Tsurayuki, and [Bon] Dance—Bon. "Tsurayuki" may also be a pun meaning, "Where's that face?"

3 *sora ni shirarenu yuki furu wa tsukiyo nite*  
In the sky falls unfamiliar snow: a moonlit night

Autumn. This alludes to Tsurayuki's tanka in the *Shūishū* (no. 64):

*Sakura chiru ki no shitakaze wa samukarade*  
*sora ni shirarenu yuki zo furikeru*

The wind under cherry trees as petals scatter is not cold,  
but in the sky unfamiliar snow is falling

The poem is based on the literary affectation of confusing falling cherry blossoms with untimely snowflakes. The season it describes is spring, but Teitoku switches it to autumn by suggesting that the confusing element was not cherry blossoms falling en masse, but the bright light of the full moon of the seventh month. The scene of the hokku also changes—from daytime to night. Teitoku says part of the haikai of this link lies in its unusual syllabic breakup: normally it should be 5-7-5, but here it is 7-5-5. A modern reader may be reminded of Bashō's hokku noted for its equally unusual syllabic pattern of 5-5-7:

*Umi kurete kamo no koe honokani shiroshi*

The sea darkens, and the voices of ducks faintly white

Here again Teitoku's linking is through straight word association: introducing Tsurayuki's poem after mentioning the poet.

4 *itsu mo nezama ni dasu kome no ii*

a meal of rice always served when he's ready for bed

Miscellaneous. Teitoku notes there was a saying among novices that rice served on moonlit nights was one thing one never tired of. White rice is set aside another white object, snow.

5 *nage hōru sushi no hara mo ya akinuran*

thrown out—the belly of the *sushi* must have split open

Miscellaneous. The *sushi* here is the kind made by filling gutted fish with rice. One meaning—or the meaning the translation is meant to suggest—is that a rich kid described in the preceding link (a novice's dream come true) is so spoiled with good food he carelessly tosses aside a delicacy offered him. The puns are somewhat complex. *Akinuran*, here translated "must have split open," also means "must be tired of," enabling the tsukeku to suggest something like "he threw off

the *sushi*, he must be tired of it.” Then too, Teitoku says *nezama*, here translated “when he’s ready for bed,” is closely related to *nage hōru*, here translated “thrown out,” in that the word also means the posture of something thrown out and lying flat on its side. Associating “a meal of rice” with “*sushi*” is logical.

- 6    *oke mochinagara korobu ōnoke*  
     carrying a tub, he fell flat on his back

Miscellaneous. According to Teitoku, “thrown out,” which in the preceding part refers to the *sushi*, now describes the tub containing it. *Sushi* and tub are yet another example of demonstrable association.

- 7    *suberurashi mizukumi-michi no nobori-zaka*  
     must be slippery—the uphill path for getting water

Miscellaneous. As Teitoku says, “fell flat on his back” prompts the image of an “uphill path.” The connection of “tub” and “getting water” is again explicit.

- 8    *taki goranji ni izuru in-sama*  
     to see a cascade Mr. Retired Emperor has come out

Miscellaneous. Teitoku explains that *suberu* in the preceding part is taken here to mean “to slip from the throne” or “to abdicate,” thereby making possible the introduction of a “retired emperor.” The two links suggest a retired emperor who now has enough leisure and freedom to take an un-imperial path to go to see a natural spectacle. “Getting water” and “cascade” are obviously related as water images. The switch in imagery is from a commoner, who has to get water from its source whenever he needs it, to an exalted person who doesn’t have to worry about such humble matters.

In contrast to the linking technique of *kotoba-zuke* that Teitoku and his followers used, *Sōin* and those who regarded him as their leader favored *kokoro-zuke*, in which the response is not to any specific words but to the general sentiment of the preceding part. Because the two techniques, like all others, are



essentially based on association, the difference between them should not be overemphasized. Nevertheless, the stress on words and phrases in *kotoba-zuke* is evident from a string of manuals published by the more outspoken members of the Teimon school—books listing words and phrases with those that may be legitimately used in association with them. Both the lemmas and the words and phrases to be associated with them in these volumes quickly increased.

To illustrate the Danrin's move away from the Teimon in linking technique would be difficult, were it not for the vigorous charges and countercharges exchanged between the two schools (and often within each school). One such exchange occurred when, in early 1674, Sōin published a solo sequence of one hundred parts, called *Kabashira* (A Column of Mosquitos). In its afterword he modestly said that the sequence had as much worth as "the grass that soothes me as I sit alone in my grass hut," and that, now at age seventy, he no longer cared whether people would "forgive or disparage" him. At once, a monk, anonymous but evidently of the Teimon school, decided to disparage him; in a booklet entitled *Shibu Uchiwa* (A Conservative's Fan), he ridiculed the sequence part for part. Sōin was annoyed and wrote an indirect response, asserting in effect that he had the right to do whatever he pleased. But he did not make it public until six years later. Instead, it was Okanishi Ichū (1639–1711), a leading critic and poet of his school, who published in the following year a part-by-part rebuttal called *Shibu Uchiwa Hentō* (Response to A Conservative's Fan). Let us look at the criticism and the response to it in some detail.

1 *Kabashira wa ogakuzu sasō yūbe kana*

A column of mosquitos invites sawdust this evening

Summer. As the anonymous monk notes, *kabashira* is a swarm of mosquitos that often gather in summer evenings, and *ogakuzu* here refers to the sawdust that used to be burned to repel the insect. Unfortunately, the monk misquotes the

first five syllables as “Kabashira ni,” which changes the meaning of the hokku to “This evening invites sawdust to a column of mosquitos.” As a result, his complaint is invalid that he “can’t understand this hokku,” and that if it’s supposed to make sense, the description is “inadequate.” Ichū, in his rebuttal, repeats the misquote and compounds the problem, but he says one notable thing: referring to *Haikai Mōgyū* (Haikai Meng Ch’iu), a general introduction to haikai he published in the previous year, he asserts that in haikai anything goes, because “true haikai” means “unfettered freedom.” (In this same book, Ichū rejects Teitoku’s argument against “upsetting, but funny too / even when my parent lay dying, I kept farting” on the ground that Teitoku’s moral reasonings, though “honest and sincere,” belong to “tanka and renga of the old school,” not to haikai.)

- 2    *kawaki sunago no niwa no suzukaze*  
       over the dry sand in the garden, a cool wind

Summer. The monk complains that if there is a “cool wind,” no mosquitos will gather. In addition, he says, nothing in the hokku justifies the introduction of “dry sand.” Because of the story in *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in Idleness) by Yoshida Kenkō (1282–1350) where a true gentleman is said to prepare dry sand rather than sawdust for the wet ground (episode 177), “sawdust” may be intended to be the connecting element of “dry sand,” the monk says, but “here it is hard to make the connection.” In defense, Ichū says yes, the story in *Tsurezuregusa* is indeed meant to link the waki to the hokku. Furthermore, can anything top the “superb combination” of “dry sand” and “cool wind”? As for the argument that mosquitos don’t gather in the wind, that is nonsense. Why, there is a Chinese “poem on mosquitos” that says they gather “despite the wind.”

- 3    *sakè hitotsu nodo tōru ma ni tsuki idete*  
       while a shot of sakè passes the throat, the moon appears

Autumn. The monk expresses amazement at the “speedy advent of the moon.” Citing the idea of *hon’i*, which was developed and elaborated by court poets, that any poetic object must be described as if it had only one “true” attribute, he says the *hon’i* of the moon is that it is something one is supposed to wait for, as witness a *tanka* by the retired emperor Sanjō (976–1017) in the *Shin Kokinshū* (no. 382):

*Ashibiki no yama no anata ni sumu hito wa  
matade ya aki no tsuki o miruran*

Those who live beyond the foot-wearying mountain—  
do they see the autumn moon without waiting so?

This is the sort of attitude one ought to bring to the moon, the monk says; compared with this, the idea Sōin describes in his line is “upsetting.” In response, Ichū says the monk is addressing *haikai* from the viewpoint of *renga* of the old school; the *daisan* is perfectly linked to the *waki* through “dry” / “while a shot of sakè passes the throat,” and “cool wind” / “moon.” As for the overall cast of the link, the idea that “time flies” (although the sun and the moon may seem “loitering” to the monk) has been supported by Chinese “horoscopers, Confucianists, and Buddhists.”

The monk and Ichū go on in a similar vein. The monk complains that Sōin often fails to provide linking elements, and that those he does provide do not meet the established standards. Ichū, on the other hand, finds linking elements in most cases and, when he can’t, taunts the monk for his failure to understand what *haikai* is all about. For justification or for making a point, the monk most often turns to traditional *tanka*, whereas Ichū refers to Chinese sources.

Here is the middle section of *Kabashira*:

48    *nōte kanawanu tabi no suitō*  
you can’t do without a canteen when traveling

49 *hanazakari tabako ni kiseru uma ni kura*

flowers at their prime: tobacco and a pipe, on the horse a saddle

The forty-eighth part describes a traveler. When linked to the forty-ninth part, the description becomes that of someone who has come to see the cherry blossoms in full bloom. The forty-ninth part alludes to a *tanka* of Minamoto no Yorimasa (1104–80), as quoted in somewhat different form in the *Noh* play *Kurama Tengu* (Goblin of Kurama):

*Hana sakaba tsuge yo to iishi yamamori no  
kuru oto su nari uma ni kura oke*

I said to the hill-keeper, "Tell me when the flowers bloom";

now I hear the sound of him coming. Put the saddle on the horse!

The allusion here, intended to justify the combination of cherry flowers and a saddled horse, gives a twist to the elegant atmosphere of the original *tanka* by adding the alien objects of tobacco and a pipe. Referring to the forty-eighth part, the anonymous monk sneers that "can't do without" linked with "tobacco," "canteen" with "flowers at their prime," and "traveling" with "horse" must be too much of a "load" for a "feeble horse." Ichū retorts that this considerable load is "quite an accomplishment for recent times."

50 *yari-ume ippon sate zōri tori*

a single lance plum, and here's a sandal bearer

Spring. The monk finds a "lance plum" set aside a "sandal bearer" interesting, but wonders who is to have the "tobacco" and the "pipe," because it is unreasonable to expect the sandal bearer to have them. Ichū dismisses the monk's puzzlement, saying the picture is as vivid "as if actually seen."



51 *haru wa kinu rōnin naredo nandoki mo*  
spring has come; though masterless, at any time

Spring. This part, with the preceding one, alludes to the story told in the Noh play *Hachi no Ki* (Potted Trees). The story concerns a poor warrior living in adversity who warms a wayward traveler in heavy snow by burning his cherished potted trees, a plum among them. He tells the traveler—in fact the most powerful man of the land and the warrior's lord traveling incognito—that despite his sorry state he would respond to a call to arms at any time. Later he keeps his word and receives ample reward for his sacrifice and loyalty. The monk faults this part on several counts. His principal charge is that the phrase, "at any time," doesn't make sense without the preceding part, and that even then it doesn't have a linking element in it. In reply, Ichū manages to duck the charge by making an important point: a phrase does not necessarily have to have a connecting element if it can be justified by the overall sentiment of the preceding part.

52 *kami sakayaki o soru bakari nari*  
all he needs is barber's work

Miscellaneous. My translation here is relatively free because the original is ambiguous enough to suggest a variety of meanings. Read both alone and with the fifty-first part in mind, it seems to refer to the peculiar hairdo of the Japanese male during the Edo period and may mean something like "he is ready (or has only) to dress up his hair, shave his crown." The monk complains that it is not clear, and that, whatever its intended meaning, it cannot be linked to the preceding part. Ichū replies that the fifty-first and fifty-second parts, if read together with a stress on "at any time," readily make sense.

53 *kokoro yasuki hōkō naraba kono machi ni*  
"If it's easy employment, I'd like to stay in this town"

Miscellaneous. The monk suggests that if the fifty-second part is intended to mean, as it may, "I can only do barber's

work," then the two parts must describe a barber employed by a town, and the fifty-third part must be a request made by such a person. Still, he finds no connecting element, and points out that someone looking for a job can't be introduced in a sequence when an unemployed warrior is mentioned only two parts back. Ichū says the monk is right in saying this part is a request, a remark. As for the monk's complaint pointing to a violation of a rule, Ichū argues, with a citation from a Chinese poem, that a masterless warrior is someone in an adverse condition, not necessarily someone seeking employment.

54 *ginsu ika hodo nozomi naruran*

"I wonder how much he would want"

Miscellaneous. The monk says someone getting a new job "may depend on an advance," but a renga part shouldn't depend on the preceding part. His complaint is based on his interpretation of the line as meaning, "I wonder how much they'd pay me," in which case the two parts are too close. Ichū replies that the line is meant to be a remark by a third party, not by the person who made the preceding remark. He then scolds the monk for his inability to understand the grammar of the line.

The last two parts deal with the subject matter that Sōin and his followers excelled in describing: daily activities of ordinary people. The opening section of the hundred-part sequence Sōin wrote in response to the anonymous monk's criticism shows this plebeian aspect of Danrin haikai in an even more pronounced way.

The column of mosquitos—if to be planed, just one shave

away from orders, bottle gourd and an inn

I see lots of melons, eggplants bought by bidding

"Bargains! Bargains!" thin blades, vegetable knives

he pretends to strip and disembowel himself

cleverly disposing of all debts

The hokku is a wry response to the anonymous monk's elaborate criticism: a column of mosquitos, of course, can't be planed. The waki suggests a carpenter who, taking the hokku to be an order from his supervisor, realizes it's the end of the day and looks out from the construction site they are working on. The bottle gourd, or *yūgao*, puts on flowers that bloom in the evening and wilt in the morning. The *daisan* changes the scene to morning by describing a vegetable shop that has just brought in fresh produce from a predawn market. The fourth part continues the description of the same shop but changes the focus from produce to lively shop-hands. In the next part the scene changes from a vegetable shop to a cutlery store, though the focus remains on the people selling their wares; here, a man comically shows that the knife the customer is interested in is sharp enough for a ritual disembowelment. In the sixth part the man changes to someone deep in debt but clever enough to convince his creditor through his gesture that his pecuniary adversity does not allow payment of the monies owed.

From these examples it may be seen that Teitoku's lines are laborious compared with Sōin's, and that Sōin's technique is to move the sequence onward by the general sense conveyed in the preceding part. Bashō, who first studied with a follower of Teitoku, became an ardent student of Danrin haikai with its emphasis on "freedom" in linking and realism in description. He then tried some new approaches and in the end established his own style of linked poetry that went beyond both courtly elegance and earthy humor.

In 1677, when he was still under the strong influence of Danrin, Bashō composed a sequence of a hundred parts with Yamaguchi Sodō (also Shinshō, 1642–1716) and Itō Shintoku (1633–98). It begins:

- 1 *Ara nan tomo naya kinō wa sugite fukuto-shiru* Bashō  
 Look, nothing has happened! Yesterday passed after the  
 blowfish soup



- 2     *samusa shisatte ashi no saki made*     Sodō  
        the chill goes down to the tip of the toe
- 3     *ianuki arare no tama ya midasuran*     Shintoku  
        the sword, drawn, might disturb the hailstones
- 4     *sessha myōji wa Kaze no Shinohara*     Bashō  
        "My surname is Kaze no Shinohara"

Some species of blowfish are highly prized as food but carry lethal poison in their intestines. In the hokku, Bashō expresses relief in finding himself not poisoned by the blowfish soup he ate; to do so, he uses a stock exclamation in Noh plays, "*ara nan tomo naya*," which in its original use conveys a sense of disappointment. So the humor of the hokku lies in coupling a highbrow allusion to Noh drama with a lowbrow matter of food poisoning and in using a well-known phrase in an unusual sense. Sodō, in his waki, describes one of the good effects of taking a nonlethal dose of blowfish poison: improved blood circulation. This effect is then interpreted by Shintoku to be a description of a drug sold by a street-vendor, who does swordplay to attract a crowd. Such a swordplayer-vendor customarily introduced himself at the beginning of a session: hence, Bashō's fourth link. The element that connects the third part to the fourth is a famous tanka by Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192-1219) describing a warrior in hail. That, as well as the formality of Bashō's phrasing, enables the fourth part to suggest a warrior. (And that suggestion is indeed taken up in the fifth part.) The linking proceeds with ease, the interpretation differing at each turn.

Alluding to a passage or a theme of a Noh play in an ironic manner, as Bashō's hokku above does, was fashionable for quite a while among haikai poets, but allusion in general was a permanent tool for them. A dramatic example is the hokku on which Ezra Pound built imagism, especially his notion of "superposition":

The fallen blossom flies back to its branch:  
     A butterfly.



This translation, quoted by Pound in two lines, is given in three lines and in slightly different form by his imagist friend, F. S. Flint, so Pound may have made changes to suit his purpose. The original, attributed to Moritake, seems to have little to do with imagism or superposition:

*Rakka eda ni kaeru to mireba kochō kana*

A fallen blossom returned to its branch, I thought—it was a butterfly!

Aside from the conceit of mistaking a butterfly for a fallen blossom, the hokku relies for its humor on the saying, “A fallen blossom doesn’t return to its branch,” which, in turn, is a paraphrase of part of a couplet in Chinese in the *Zenrin Kushū* (A Zen Phrase Anthology, 1574):

The broken mirror will not shine again;  
the fallen blossom can hardly return to the branch.

(A twist of this type must be common in any literature. A good specimen in the English language is, I am told, the following: “And after many a summer dies the duck.” In Tennyson’s *Tithonus* the last word is “swan.”)

Some twists in allusion are subtler. Take the following hokku, which Bashō wrote in 1688:

*Hototogisu kieyuku kata ni shima hitotsu*

A cuckoo fades away, and in its direction, a single island

This alludes to a tanka by Fujiwara no Sanesada (1130–91) in the *Senzaishū* (no. 161):

*Hototogisu nakitsuru kata o nagamureba  
tada ariake no tsuki zo nokoreru*

A cuckoo called, and I looked in that direction;  
there only the daybreak moon was left

Here the allusion is intended, on the one hand, to enlarge the imagery of the hokku by recalling the world suggested by the

tanka and, on the other, to create a sort of humor by making short shrift of what has been described as "tanka-esque lyricism." The effect of such short shrift may be compared to that of a fussy stylist's rewrite of a long-winded official announcement.

About a year after composing the hokku that begins "Look, nothing has happened! . . ." that is cited earlier, Bashō became a *sōshō*, master. This designation referred to someone who presided over a renga session or to someone formally given permission by a particular school to collect fees as a renga teacher. In Bashō's case becoming a *sōshō* probably meant he began collecting money for his instructions. Evidently he did well, getting many poems published in notable collections of the period and promoting the writings of those who studied with him. But in a few years the Danrin mode of haikai reached its peak and began declining rapidly. In 1681 Bashō wrote to Takayama Biji (1649-1718): "Those supposed to be *sōshō* still indulge in the haikai of three or four years ago, most looking dated, so that those who study with them are worse still, lost as to haikai." In the preceding year he had become skeptical enough of what he was doing, professionally and philosophically, to move his living quarters from the middle of the city of Edo to a village on its periphery, Fukagawa. He expressed his feelings at that time in his earliest known piece of *haibun*, prose written in a haikai spirit.

#### BRUSHWOOD DOOR

*After living in destitution in the city for nine years, I moved to live near Fukagawa. "Ch'ang-an from times past's a place for fame and profit; / empty-handed, no money, it's hard for me to get along here." I now think the person who said this wise, probably because I am poor:*

A gust rakes tea, its leaves, to my brushwood door

The quoted poet is Po Chü-yi. The next haibun, probably written during the winter of 1681, shows that Bashō regarded himself as a hermit of sorts, while reading Chinese poets and trying to write like them as much as was possible in the short hokku form:

#### THE OLD MAN THE BEGGAR

*Framed in the window: the thousand-autumn snows of the west ranges;  
tied up by the gate: boats come ten thousand miles from the eastern sea.*

*I knew this verse, but did not see its heart; fathomed its desolation,  
but did not know its pleasure. The only thing in which I excel old Tu  
Fu is in the number of illnesses. Hiding behind the plantain of my  
quiet and simple thatched hut, I call myself the old man the beggar.*

Sound of paddles slapping the waves, my bowels freeze tonight,  
and the tears

At Poor Mountain the pot cries out at the frost, its voice cold

“Buying Water”

Ice bitter, I moisten my mole throat

“Year-end”

Darkening, darkening—with rice cakes my echoes, I lie alone

The two lines quoted at the beginning of the haibun are the last two from a quatrain by Tu Fu (712–70), the first half of which reads: “Two yellow warblers sing in the azure willow; / a file of white herons ascends the blue sky.” Of the four of Bashō’s hokku at the end, the first hypermetric one (twenty-one syllables) does not seem to allude to any particular Chinese source, but has an unmistakable Chinese flavor in its phrasing and imagery. The second hokku is a parody as it refers to a brief description of a temple called Rich Mountain that appears in an old Chinese text, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*: “When frost falls, the bells at Rich Mountain ring.” The third hokku is based on a

well-known observation in *Chuang Tzu*: "When the mole drinks at the river, he takes no more than a bellyful." The last hokku is not particularly Chinese in tone or allusion, but is, like the other three, a reflection on his isolated state; the condensed phrase, "with rice cakes my echoes," means that the festive sounds of pounding steamed rice to make cakes for the New Year are remote to the poet's eremitic existence. Discernible in these and other pieces of this period is a man no longer content to be verbally clever and playful.

Toward the end of 1682 a great fire struck Edo and Bashō's house was one of the thousands that burnt down. For the better part of the following year he had a hard time, until his patrons and students put up money and rebuilt his house. The distinctive feature of Bashō's haikai that emerged then—in place of a deliberate sense of self-mockery and angst—was a positive delight in unconventional behavior. The hokku he used to open his account of a journey he began in the eighth month of 1684, later to be known as *Nozarashi Kikō* (Skull-Exposed-in-a-Field Diary), shows the new phase well:

*Nozarashi o kokoro ni kaze no shimu mi kana*

Skull exposed in a field in my mind—the wind pierces my body

The sentiment of this hokku appears serious and pessimistic, until one notes that no one sets out on a journey thinking of dying and turning into a skeleton. In describing himself in such an exaggerated manner Bashō is, in a way, showing off. This posturing is most pronounced in his hokku in the first of several renga he composed with people in Nagoya. The heading and first four parts of the sequence read:

*Hat tattered by the rains during this long journey, and paper garment  
rumpled by the storms in each place, here is a solitary man who has  
known solitude—even I feel pity for him. As it occurs to me that once  
a man talented in mad tanka reached this province, may I say the  
following:*



Mad hokku: in a tree-searing wind do I resemble Chikusai!  
Bashō

who's that? off his hat a sasanqua has bounced      Yasui  
at dawn moon the water-steward playing a bar owner      Kakei  
the red horse shakes the dew off his head      Jūgo

Chikusai, the man referred to in the heading and hokku, is a fictitious quack who traveled about, spewing "mad" or humorous tanka. Bashō introduces this figure less for self-deprecation than for projecting himself as a man of *fūkyō* or *fūryū*, transcendental or poetic eccentricity. Cherishing such eccentricity is originally Taoist, and *Chuang Tzu*, a book that was frequently cited at the time to explain haikai, depicts men of spiritual attainment essentially as great eccentrics. For example: "the sage does not work at anything, does not pursue profit, does not dodge harm, does not enjoy being sought after, does not follow the Way, says nothing yet says something, says something yet says nothing, and wanders beyond the dust and grime. . . . The sage leans on the sun and moon, tucks the universe under his arm, merges himself with things, leaves the confusion and muddle as it is, and looks on slaves as exalted. Ordinary men strain and struggle; the sage is stupid and blockish." Or, as "Big Concealment," who is thought to represent the Taoist sage in the same book, observes, "Aimless wandering does not know what it seeks; demented drifting does not know where it goes. A wanderer, idle, unbound, I view the sights of Undeception. What more do I know?"

This Taoist-inspired attitude did not, in its overt form, stay long with Bashō; but, as an underlying motif it remained an important element of haikai throughout his career, and it has remained so to this day. He himself explained variations of this conceit on different occasions. For instance, Kyorai discusses some of the observations made on his hokku:

*Iwa-hana ya koko ni mo hitori tsuki no kyaku*

Nose of a boulder—here, too, is another guest of the moon

When Kyorai told Bashō of someone's suggestion that the last five should be *tsuki no saru*, "another monkey under the moon," Bashō asked him how he came to write the hokku. Told that he did it as he happened upon a poet while admiring the moon and strolling, Bashō said, "Only if you mean to introduce yourself by 'here, too, is another guest of the moon,' will the piece suggest some *fūryū*." He probably meant that such obtrusiveness or imposition, a behavior normally condemned, was thought admirable in a poet.

In a renga sequence Bashō wrote with Shita Yaba (1663–1740) in the year of his death occurs the following linking:

24 high above the paulownia tree the moon is clear Yaba

25 "I closed the gate and went to bed, wordless, for the fun  
of it" Bashō

According to Hattori Tohō (1657–1730), Bashō considered his line here the focal point in the *Sumidawara* (Charcoal Bag), the anthology that includes the renga. The *fūryū* of the person Bashō describes lies in his contrary decision not to stay up and admire the moon.

The following hokku by Yosa Buson (1716–83) may be cited as yet another example:

*Negi kōte kareki no naka o kaerikeri*

I buy scallions and go home through leafless trees

Buson, who was an accomplished painter as well and is often called an impressionist among haikai poets, is not projecting the contrast between the green of the scallions and the gray of the winter woods. Rather, he is saying that he, or whoever the speaker of the hokku is, has enough sense of *fūryū* to get out in the cold of the winter, buy lowly scallions, come home through a denuded forest, and still enjoy himself.

As noted, however, Bashō's obvious posturing as an eccentric receded after a while. Indeed, during the same journey the so-called Shōfū, or Bashō style, began to emerge, so that the *Fuyu no Hi* (Winter Day), the anthology consisting of the five sequences he wrote with the people in Nagoya, became the first of what were later to be set apart as "Bashō's Seven Anthologies." Shōfū may be defined as an attempt to describe reality perceptively and without forced sentiment. The sequence that opens with "mad hokku," though the first in the *Fuyu no Hi*, has, for example, this link by Bashō:

- |    |   |       |
|----|---|-------|
| 10 | by the unfaded tablet, crying, disheartened | Kakei |
| 11 | a shadow, daybreak cold, making a fire      | Bashō |

Kakei's line, following an image suggested by the preceding part, describes a mother whose baby died. Following it, Bashō gives an ambiguous, yet strong picture. The third sequence in the same anthology has the following:

- |    |  |        |
|----|--|--------|
| 18 | milk-vetches and violets in a field of six acres | Tokoku |
| 19 | happily warbling skylarks titi-ing titi-ing      | Bashō  |

And the last sequence opens:

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | <i>Shimotsuki ya kō no tsukutsuku narabiite</i> | Kakei |
|   | Frost Month: storks standing about absently     |       |
| 2 | <i>fuyu no asahi no aware narikeri</i>          | Bashō |
|   | the winter morning sun is truly affecting       |       |

Of his waki to Kakei's hokku, Bashō later explained that its haikai lay in the way he responded, making the pair read like a tanka. But from the viewpoint of Shōfū, its virtue lies in its unassuming simplicity. Kakei's hokku is unusual: against the traditional prescription, it does not end, with the Japanese equivalent of a present participle without the rest of the verb formation. Several months afterward Bashō himself wrote a hokku of a similar construction:

*Karasaki no matsu wa hana yori oboro nite*

The pines of Karasaki, more blurred than the blossoms

Like Kakei's hokku, this one, in the original, gives an unfinished feeling as if the sentence was cut prematurely in the middle. When some people questioned this apparent solecism in hokku construction and his students defended it, Bashō simply said that was the way he perceived the landscape he described.

During the same period Bashō wrote other hokku that exemplify his new approach. One morning in the tenth month, in Kuwana, he wrote the following:

*Yuki usushi shirauo shiroki koto issun*

Snow thin: a white fish is white, just an inch

Soon he revised the first five to read *akebono ya*, "daybreak," saying he "deeply regretted" the original version, presumably because the combination of snow and white fish was too much. Then, on the nineteenth of the twelfth month, at Atsuta:

*Umi kurete kamo no koe honokani shiroshi*

The sea darkens, and the voices of ducks faintly white

This previously quoted synesthetic piece began a completed *kasen* of thirty-six parts, with Hayashi Tōyō (died 1712), who was the host, writing the waki:

*kushi ni kujira o aburu sakazuki*

whale broiled on skewers, and this cup

In the following year, 1685, he offered the following hokku for a *kasen* session at Atsuta:

*Nani to wa nashi ni nani yara yukashi sumire-gusa*

I cannot say how, but elegant somehow, violets

Someone identified as Kōtan wrote the waki:

*amigasa shikite kawazu kiki oru*

sitting on his braided hat he listens to the frogs



As he returned to Edo, Bashō changed the hypermetric first seven syllables of his hokku to read *yamaji kite* (regular five syllables), “coming by a mountain path.” The change made the image more clear, and the hokku has been known since then by the revised version.

All this can be said to have prepared Bashō to write the next year the most famous hokku of his and of all hokku:

*Furuike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto*

An old pond: a frog jumps in—the sound of water

As may be expected, this hokku has some elements that make it haikai in the traditional sense. It echoes, among others, the following anonymous tanka in the *Kokinshū* (no. 125):

*Kawazu naku Ide no yamabuki chirinikeri*

*hana no sakari ni awamashi mono o*

The kerria roses at Ide where frogs croak have scattered;  
I wish I had seen those blossoms at their prime!

This, as well as the observation in the preface to the anthology that “the voice of the frogs that live in the water” is one of the things that stir poetic thoughts, set the rule that required the poet, in mentioning the frog, to bring in kerria roses for the background and exclusively to refer to the amphibian’s croaks. As Tohō pointed out, the haikai of this hokku is Bashō’s departure from this tradition—namely, his decision to describe the “echo of a frog getting out of a wild grass bush” into the water. But as Tohō went on to observe, in a larger sense, *haikai no makoto*, or “the essence of haikai,” was by Tohō’s time felt to lie in the poet’s unadorned description of whatever struck him as worthy of his response. It is in this larger sense that this hokku has been regarded as a landmark in Shōfū.

Of course, in the world of renga, constrained by tradition, rules, and the diverse temperaments of its participants, Bashō could not radically redirect what was being done, even if he

wanted to. In many of the pieces written after the 1684–86 period he frequently returned to traditional, if not old-fashioned, approaches and ideals. Also, beside the treatises on his poetics written by his students (which are all thought to cover his opinions in the last several years of his life), his first known words on the subject did not appear until late 1689, when in the course of a *kasen* session he advised the participants not to be “heavy.” (See *A Farewell Gift to Sora*, pages 93–106). In the meantime, as a professional poet he fine-tuned his techniques and, as a man who is said to have “grown thin” in his constant struggle to attain a “new fragrance,” he changed his style, some have argued, seven times between the *Fuyu no Hi* and his death. But the approach that crystallized in his description of an old pond and a frog jumping in it remained the backbone of his poetics for the rest of his life.

What follows is a selection of Bashō's links written from 1687 to 1694, the year he died. The selection, arranged in rough chronological order, has been made to reflect two of his statements: “Someone who doesn't even know the Tōkaidō Road [the nation's artery, connecting Edo and Kyoto] shouldn't be confident in haikai,” and “Haikai ought to be written by a child three feet tall.” Though contradictory, these statements together epitomize the spirit of Shōfū.

in the lantern a giant candle smoulders high	Kyorai
the flood pushes valley lumber downstream	Bashō
~	
for my small desolate field I'll make a scarecrow	Shifū
the horse at my grass hut, seized for my sakè debt	Bashō
~	
Asakusa rice goes out of the estuary	Jūshin
chins along the railing in the evening cool	Bashō
~	

reaping the wheat that grew naturally in an old field	Tōyō
someone's calling—must be corralling the horses	Bashō
~	
he leaves with watermelons on his horse	Kasshin
in this cold autumn, paid in pints of rice	Bashō
~	
a bonze visits—how sad!—a grave in the field	Ichiryū
chased, a deer runs off, abandoning its fawn	Bashō
~	
the lawsuit drags on that blocks the reaping of autumn paddies	Etsujin
again and again he comes to ask how to write	Bashō
~	
in the storm, clouds spit the moon out	Yūgiku
on the autumn mountain the voice of a praying wild	exorcist
	Bashō
~	
at dawn they make a bonfire on their raft	Kisen
a blue willow caressing their ruddy heads	Bashō
~	
with a cup lying nearby, hugging the foot-warmer	Sora
an old man alone serves out the day	Bashō
~	
a sled for firewood has left this long trail	Sora
each warrior's holing up for winter in his house	Bashō
~	
still young enough to care for dolls, and beautiful	Sukan
the koto she holds must be heavy on her lap	Bashō
~	

though the northern star doesn't move, the clouds block it      Seifū  
 today too for Zen meditation he climbs the rock      Bashō  
 ~  
 field mice have ravaged the rice under the clear moon      Hanzan  
 the wind grows chilly as he travels with calves      Bashō  
 ~  
 from a tenuous point her love has grown intense      Kyokusui  
 when lost in thought, she's prodded to eat      Bashō  
 ~  
 rustling, rustling, he makes sandals as the moon shines      Bonchō  
 she got up to shake off the fleas—it's early fall      Bashō  
 ~  
 for my evening meal I eat sand eels, and the wind's fragrant      Bonchō  
 scratching a leech bite-mark and feeling good      Bashō  
 ~  
 daybreak moon in the blue sky, as the morning comes      Kyorai  
 autumn over the lake water, first frost on Hira      Bashō  
 ~  
 at parting she warms his kimono that became cold      Sensen  
 both being young, their love is innocent      Bashō  
 ~  
 past midnight when the pine wind blows, gust after gust      Shikō  
 the gate keeper announces that there's a foundling      Bashō  
 ~  
 to make the bridegroom feel at home, they frequent the  
 pawnshop      Shadō  
 setting aside the best part for him at mealtime      Bashō



even eggplants and cowpeas know what they are      Roten  
 a hawk chick crumples its claws at a skylark      Bashō  
 ~  
 on the ferry boat I ask the name of a grass      Ii  
 a gallinules' nest has a pile of red heads      Bashō  
 ~  
 even while slicing dried vegetables for topping rice, she's ab-  
 sent-minded      Yaba  
 the days he doesn't take his horse out, they make love inside  
    Bashō  
 ~  
 outside the town, vacant shops mostly locked      Baken  
 carrying a samisen, a traveling beggar      Bashō  
 ~  
 sound of winds thunderously hitting the nettle-tree      Yaba  
 he unties the rope from the rice thief      Bashō  
 ~  
 (hokku)  
 The snow scatters and reaches the hood under his hat      Sampū  
 over his sword hilt, a frozen towel      Bashō  
 ~  
 today too they plot how to have fun      Taisui  
 their parents were popular—these young doctors      Bashō  
 ~  
 the path buried under bamboo grass—fascinating!      Tempo  
 "Watch your head," says the note on the gate      Bashō  
 ~  
 simply over the mid-plain the moon is clear      Santen  
 thunder remains tongue-tied, giving no news      Bashō  
 ~

light snow has made a round of the entire yard Shikō  
 in the lord's presence, hushed, the next folk dance Bashō  
 ~  
 saying he came to pay respect to the shrine, and forgiven for  
 his theft Rōka  
 with a grin, a layer of cloud welcomes the morning sun  
 Bashō  
 ~  
 the lady-in-waiting, returned to her village, is lachrymose Jōsō  
 putting things out of the lacquered box, putting them in  
 Bashō  
 ~  
 visibly colder than the river, the birds' voices Hōjīn  
 the rice of this village has no rice taste Bashō  
 ~  
 in the moonlight the cloud color suggests snow Shikō  
 finished, palanquin bearers divide the money Bashō  
 ~  
 she says foul things to the bride and her own daughter Shikō  
 all the guests are cold, freezing, in the room with a foot-  
 warmer Bashō  
 ~  
 the drugstore owner doesn't seem terribly busy Bōsui  
 three years now, but his bride has no child Bashō  
 ~  
 now at long last the silver exchange deal is closed Bōsui  
 without fuss he downs the prescribed drug Bashō  
 ~

red cockscombs, right at the center of the garden      Inen  
he's managed to calm down his daughter's unsettled heart  
Bashō

~

he was supposed to send a messenger but somehow forgot      Shikō  
he had switched his, but the doctor came to call      Bashō

~·~ CHAPTER THREE ~·~

Bashō and Poetry Writing as a Group Activity

• Renga at the Time of Bashō •

By Bashō's time, writing hokku independent of renga had become pervasive. Of the slightly less than one thousand hokku that Bashō is believed to have written, only one hundred thirty-five began renga sequences. To put it differently, he was using a hokku for the original purpose of beginning a renga only once every seven times. Still, the importance of renga for Bashō and his determination to live by it are beyond question. From the first known sequence with his participation in 1665, till the last in 1694, he took part in three hundred seventy-eight recorded sessions; in some he simply provided one link, while in others he presided over a whole sequence. This is an average of thirteen sessions a year. (The figure jumps to thirty a year if only the last ten years of his life are considered.) The importance of renga for Bashō can also be seen in several notable treatises on his poetics that were written by his disciples. These devote the majority of their texts to the technical discussions of renga, rather than hokku.

What was a renga session like in Bashō's time? The rules on the conduct of a session developed early and became more complex and rigid over the centuries. Although Bashō is known to have been wary and often scornful of strict rules, in a typical session the master (*sōshō*) and the scribe (*shūhitsu*) played the leading roles. The master was responsible for controlling the



progress of the session by weighing the skills of various participants and for maintaining a good atmosphere, a certain degree of poetic quality, and everyone's interest in the proceedings. The scribe, who was chosen from the participants other than the master in most cases, had to be above all a good calligrapher with orthographic knowledge. But his role was far from mechanical. He pointed out the violations of rules, prodded the slow versifiers, and assigned key parts to appropriate persons. Because he tended to know the participants intimately, he was expected to do all this without ruffling anyone's feelings. He also recited the parts—the hokku five times in all, the others twice each. In practice sessions the scribe doubled as a master.

The room for a renga session usually had an alcove decorated with a scroll painting of Sugawara no Michizane, the patron deity of renga, or a scroll with the characters indicating him. In front of the alcove were a low desk and a round cushion, both intended for the scribe. The master usually sat to the scribe's right. Ideally, the room was to be in a larger setting, such as the one described by Yoshimoto: "When you think of holding a session, first choose the time and look for sweeping scenery. During the snow or the moonlight, or when flowering trees are about to end, if you look at the way they change with the passage of time, your heart will stir, and the words will come out. If choose you must, choose a place not only with sweeping scenery but also with a [good] landscape. Mulling over poetic thoughts by facing the mountains and viewing the waters, you will have the best results." Yoshimoto, an aristocrat, spoke for elegant, orthodox renga, but it is doubtful that such classical settings were readily available even to him, the highest ranking court official. They certainly were not to the plebeian Bashō. However, Bashō, like Sōgi, sought such settings by traveling, and different though his brand of renga was from Yoshimoto's, he tried to incorporate in hokku this larger perception of nature.

The person responsible for the overall operation of a renga meeting was either its sponsor or the caretaker of the group

that wanted it. He picked the participants, selected the place, and played the host. He paid the master and, when the latter was traveling, provided him with lodgings and other accommodations. Most often the master, being the guest of honor, wrote the hokku, while the host wrote the wakiku. As we have seen, the arrangement of having the guest make a complimentary statement in the hokku and the host respond in kind in the wakiku existed from the outset. But the salutatory nature of the opening exchange was often of crucial importance to masters like Bashō, who earned their living from such sessions. Bashō's attitude toward this is vividly described in a story told by Kyorai. Once, the two men participated in a renga session hosted by another member of Bashō's school, Mizuta Masahide (1657-1723). After it was over and they reached the house where they were to stay that night, Bashō harshly reprimanded Kyorai: "Tonight you met at Masahide's house for the first time. Because you were the most welcome guest, you should have expected in advance that the hokku was to be yours. Moreover, when asked for the hokku, you should have promptly come up with one, forgetting about whether it was good or bad. How much time do we have in one night? If you had spent too much time on your hokku, the meeting this evening might have been ruined. That was utterly tasteless of you. It was so disheartening that I did the hokku. At once Masahide added the wakiku. His was a fierce description of the sky, but the *daisan* you followed it with was so slack. All that was regrettable."

For Bashō, Kyorai's sin was threefold. First, he failed to anticipate his position as guest of honor and prepare a hokku or two for the occasion. Second, even though that failure itself might have been overlooked, he compounded it by failing to respond readily when told what was expected of him. His lack of alacrity and tact was probably the result of his honest attempt to write a respectable hokku; but it was embarrassing to his host, as well as to Bashō, his teacher. Finally, when Bashō stood in for him and Masahide responded with the promptness ex-

pected of a host, Kyorai failed to catch the taut spirit of the host's wakiku. As Kyorai says at the beginning of his account, Bashō drastically rewrote his piece.

Some of Bashō's renga during his journey to the north in 1689 well illustrate the salutatory nature of the opening part. (Bashō later described the journey in his celebrated travel diary *Oku no Hosomichi* [The Narrow Road to the Interior].) He undertook the journey partly to expand his turf, so to speak, as a renga poet; and while renewing some acquaintanceships, he met many new people. His first important renga host was Kanokobata Suitō, a young samurai of twenty-seven he had known from Edo. The greetings between them went like this:

*Magusa ou hito o shiori no natsuno kana* Bashō  
Someone carrying hay my marker through this summer field

*aoki ichigo o kobosu shii no ha* Suitō  
green strawberries sprinkled on pasania leaves

This is a classical exchange. Though a man of considerable means, Suitō's house was in the middle of wild fields. Seizing on the notion, originally Chinese, that a true man of refinement lives a rustic life, Bashō compliments his host by saying that he found his residence only by following a peasant who appeared to know the area well. In response, Suitō deprecates himself: "All I could come up with to welcome you is unripe strawberries on the few leaves I managed to find in my garden." This is just a manner of speaking, to put it mildly; as the *Oku no Hosomichi* makes clear, Suitō entertained Bashō well for the two weeks he stayed with him. "Summer" and "strawberries" are mentioned because the fourth month when this session was held is the beginning of summer by the lunar calendar. This renga was a *kasen*, with seven participants.

The second host worth mentioning is Sagara Tōkyū (1638–1715), and his first exchange with Bashō reads:

*Fūryū no hajime ya Oku no taue-uta* Bashō  
Beginning of poetry: this rice-planting song of the Interior



*ichigo o otte waga mōke gusa*  
strawberries laid on the grass, I've waited

Tōkyū

Bashō again praises his host. Only a few days earlier he had passed through the Shirakawa Barrier, the gateway to the Interior. Said to have been built in the fifth century as the northernmost fort to fend off the Ainu, the barrier had probably ceased to exist by the tenth century. But precisely because of that legendary existence, it became one of the places any self-respecting poet had to mention in his poetry. Bashō's compliments are implied in his admiration for the host for living near such a poetic spot ("beginning of poetry") and in finding himself with him at the propitious rice-planting time that had just begun. Tōkyū responds by pointing out that he is too humble to deserve such words of praise, but that nonetheless he is pleased to meet him. The coincidence of a young host and then a middle-aged one mentioning strawberries may have amused Bashō. This *kasen* was written by Bashō, Tōkyū, and Bashō's companion for the journey, Kaai Sora (1649–1710). In the *Ōku no Hosomichi* Bashō says the three of them did two more sequences, but only the first three parts of each of the other two remain.

Toward the end of the fifth month, Bashō and Sora stayed at the "river official" Takano Ichi'ei's house that overlooked the Mogami River, renowned for its swift currents. The thirty-six-part sequence they did during their time together (with participation of a fourth person) naturally began with Bashō praising the host and the host deprecating himself:

*Samidare o atsumete suzushi Mogami-gawa* Bashō  
Gathering the May rains, and cool, the Mogami River

*kishi ni hotaru o tsunagu funagui* Ichi'ei  
the pole for boats moors fireflies to the bank

It is at the peak of the rainy season, and Bashō compliments Ichi'ei on the fullness of the river, of which the host is in charge if only locally, that makes the atmosphere feel cool. Ichi'ei



replies that he is just a humble pole for boats keeping the honorable guests ("fireflies") for a while. Bashō later changed *suzushi* (cool) to *hayashi* (swift) in order to make his hokku less salutatory but more effective as a poem.

If we assume the journey to the Interior ended where Bashō ends his account, in the early ninth month, it lasted just over five months. But he continued to visit places for two more years and did not return to Edo until the end of 1691. This five-month period was Bashō's most productive: he presided over poetry workshops, to use a modern term, thirty-six times, or once every four days. The intensity of his work on renga may partly account for the structure of the *Oku no Hosomichi*, which some say resembles that of the thirty-six-part sequence.

The journey also produced the only renga sequence retaining Bashō's revisions and comments. This *Sequence Revised by Bashō* (*Okina Naoshi no Maki*) is also known as *A Farewell Gift to Sora* (*Sora Sen*) because it was composed when Sora had to part company with Bashō due to an ailment that had been troubling him for some time. Sora's departure is accorded a passage in the *Oku no Hosomichi*:

*Sora had stomach trouble, and because he had relatives in a place called Nagashima in the province of Ise, went ahead, leaving me with:*

*Iki-ikite taore fufu tomo hagi no hara* Sora  
Going on and on I might collapse—in a bush-clover field

*The one going, saddened, the one left behind, despondent, we were like single ducks after parting, lost in clouds. I added:*

*Kyō yori ya kakitsuke kasan kasa no tsuyu*  
From today on, erase the inscript, dew on my hat

Bashō's reference to "ducks" alludes to the poem the Chinese official Su Wu is said to have written to bid farewell to Li Ling when they parted after Su Wu was released from detention by the Hsiung-nu in 81 B.C. The poem begins:

Two wild ducks flew north together;  
one alone now soars southward.  
You must remain here in your lodge,  
I must return to my old home.

The "inscript" in Bashō's hokku is the one pilgrims and other people used to make on the large hats they wore on long journeys. The wording of such an inscript usually went, "In heaven and earth, we two homeless companions," the two originally meaning the Lord Buddha and the traveler. If such was Bashō's inscript, by "two" he might have meant Sora and himself. "Dew," a kigo for autumn, is here used in its old metaphorical sense of tears as well.

*A Farewell Gift to Sora* was published two years later, in 1691, by Tachibana Hokushi (died 1718), the third participant in the thirty-six-part renga, although the version with Bashō's revisions and comments recorded by Hokushi was not published until 1839. Hokushi joined Bashō and Sora in Kanazawa in the middle of the seventh month, and by the time the three of them sat down in the early eighth month to write the sequence at a hot spring in Yamanaka, he had participated in five sessions with Bashō and others. In this respect, the sequence is unlike many others written during the journey in which Bashō hardly knew most of the participants.

#### A FAREWELL GIFT TO SORA

- 1 *Uma karite tsubame oiiku wakare kana* Hokushi  
Renting a horse you follow the swallows as we part

Category: Autumn. Kigo: swallows. The ailing Sora rented a horse and headed south, the direction in which swallows were now returning. This hokku is salutatory in expressing the sadness of parting in an open, natural way. There is no comment by Bashō.

- 2 *hanano midaruru yama no magarime* Sora  
fields of flowers disturbed where the mountain turns

Autumn. Kigo: fields of flowers. Sora returns the salutation. His original version was *hanano ni takaki iwa no magari me*, "fields of flowers where a tall boulder turns." Bashō made the change probably because Sora's phrasing was somewhat flat in sentiment and attracted too much attention to "a tall boulder." "Disturbed" is meant to reflect the departing person's state of mind.

3 *tsuki yoshi to sumō ni hakama fuminugite* Bashō  
saying, "The moon's good," they kick off their *hakama* for  
wrestling

Autumn. Kigo: moon. Bashō originally had *tsuki haruru*, "with the moon clear," for the first five syllables. He made the change to accommodate the change in the *wakiku*: to avoid a similar phrasing (*midaruru* and *haruru*) and to make the focus of the action sharper. *Hakama* are men's formal pantslike wear and suggest young samurai. A switch is skillfully made from day to night and from people bidding farewell to people preparing to wrestle.

4 *saya bashirishi o yagate tome keri* Hokushi  
sword running out of its scabbard stopped in a moment

Miscellaneous. Hokushi originally wrote *tomo no*, "by a friend," instead of *yagate* (in a moment). Bashō said it was "heavy." He is thought to have meant that the introduction of a definite human figure either cluttered the overall image or made the action too explanatory. (Several months later, in the fourth month of 1690, he wrote to Miyazaki Shikin [1673–1735] and his brother Sensen [died 1706] and urged them to "try not to be heavy-handed and roundabout in *haikai* and *hokku*." His emphasis on *karumi*, lightness, in his final years probably took shape during this period.) A sword, if tilted in the wrong way when not fastened with a ferrule, easily ran out of its scabbard and could be dangerous. The sword sliding out in that manner was also a metaphor for an impetuous, impudent man.

5 *aobuchi ni uso no tobikomu mizu no oto* Sora  
into the blue depths an otter jumps—the sound of water



Miscellaneous. Bashō mulled over this and suggested changing the first five syllables to read *nisan biki*, "two or three [otters]." But after a while he said, "'Into the blue depths' is just fine," and went back to Sora's original. If Sora and Bashō felt anything about this verse in relation to Bashō's famous hokku, that is not known.

6 *shiba kari kokasu mine no sasamichi* Bashō  
he fells brushwood along the hilltop bamboo grass path

Miscellaneous. In working this out, Bashō thought of using *tadoru*, "to follow," or *kayou*, "to frequent," instead of *kokasu* (fell). With the former word, the meaning becomes "a brushwood gatherer follows the hilltop bamboo grass path," and with the latter, "brushwood gatherers frequent the hilltop bamboo grass path." He decided against either, probably because neither has the immediacy of the original word.

7 *arare furu hidari no yama wa Suge no tera*                      Hokushi  
 "On that hail-falling mountain to the left is the Temple of  
 Suge"

Winter. Kigo: hail. Hokushi's initial version had *matsu fukaki*, "pine-deep," for the first five syllables. Bashō changed it probably to carry forward the sense of movement indicated by *kokasu* (fell).

8 *yūjo shigo nin inaka watarai* Sora  
four or five prostitutes making a round of the countryside

Miscellaneous. Sora had *yakusha*, "actors," instead of *yūjo* (prostitutes). Both are wretched people making a living traveling, but Bashō decided that prostitutes would evoke more pity in the cold weather suggested by "hail-falling."

9 *rakugaki ni koishiki kimi ga na mo arite* Bashō  
 "In these graffiti is the name of someone I love"

Love. Bashō initially had *koshibari ni* for the first five syllables; *koshibari* is the paper pasted on the lower part of a wall or a sliding door and suggests an inn where the prostitutes are





- 13 *ariake no matsuri no jōza katakunashi* Hokushi  
under the daybreak moon the ceremony's high chair is  
obstinate

Autumn. Kigo: daybreak moon. This part requires that the moon be mentioned. Hokushi first had *yoitsuki ni*, "under the evening moon," for the first five syllables. This cryptic part may mean that the man given the honor of supervising a traditional ceremony is stubborn. Bashō made the change probably because daybreak, suggesting a prolonged all-night ceremony, is more appropriate for such a person and occasion.

- 14 *tsuyu mazu harau kari no yumi-take* Sora  
dew first brushed aside for bamboo to make a hunting  
bow

Autumn. Kigo: dew. Linked to the thirteenth part, this suggests someone who is, early in the morning, looking for fine bamboo with which to make a ceremonial hunting bow. But the linking factor is tenuous, with only the similar feelings expressed making the connection possible. Tenuousness in linking was not altogether discouraged, but sometimes considered necessary.

- 15 *akikaze wa mono iwanu ko mo namida nite* Bashō  
in the autumn wind even the silent child is in tears

Autumn. Kigo: autumn wind. Hokushi reports that when he told Bashō this part was excellent, Bashō returned the compliment, saying both he and Sora wrote parts equally good. With the introduction of a child who doesn't say anything, the preceding part is made to suggest a poor hunter or a masterless samurai.

- 16 *shiroki tamoto no tsuzuku sōrei* Hokushi  
white sleeves continue at this funeral rite

Miscellaneous. A different reason is given for the child's tears. In those days white was the color for funerals.

- 17 *hana no ka wa furuki miyako no machi zukuri* Sora  
 fragrance of flowers and town construction in the ancient  
 capital

Spring. Kigo: flowers. Sora had *hana no ka ni Nara no miyako no machi zukuri*, "in the fragrance of flowers, town construction in the capital of Nara." Bashō's revision was probably intended to make the description less specific and more suggestive. This part requires a mention of cherry flowers. Sora, with or without Bashō's revision, is thought to have met that requirement very well, when it was awkward to do so after a description of a funeral.

- 18 *haru o nokoseru Genjō no hako* Bashō  
 Genjō's box retains spring

Spring. Kigo: spring. Genjō, the first son of Satomura Jōha, wrote orthodox renga. The Satomura family was from Nara and was by then providing the shogunate with official renga instructors. Genjō himself died quite young. By "Genjō's box" Bashō probably intended to suggest a traditional poetic atmosphere.

- 19 *nodokasa ya Shirara Naniwa no kai-zukushi* Hokushi  
 serenity: all the seashells of Shirara, Naniwa

Spring. Kigo: serenity (*nodokasa*). Hokushi initially had *kai ōshi*, "many seashells," for the last five syllables. Bashō's change shifts the focus from the two beaches mentioned to the box in the preceding part, for listing *all* of one category (*zukushi*) was common in books, illustrations, paintings. Here, "all the seashells" could be a reference to the design on Genjō's box, which is most likely to be lacquered.

- 20 *gin no konabe ni idasu seri-yaki* Sora  
 in a small silver pot he serves broiled parsley

Spring or Winter. Kigo: broiled parsley. This is a delight for annotators. The preceding part suggests what may be de-

scribed as a world of “un-urbane elegance” because of the reference to seashells. In response, Sora introduces a “small silver pot,” indicating a person of refined taste with a certain tilt in his attitude. He then fulfills the expectation by mentioning “broiled parsley,” a recipe thought to be especially *sabi*—the quality of being elegant in deprivation. Parsley was actually cooked in a pot, but here it is described as “broiled,” giving a poetic touch to the recipe. (Sora apparently left soon after writing this part, for this is the last time he appears in the sequence.)

Bashō then thought up two possible links and, deciding that the beginning phrase of both, *temakura ni*, “arm for a pillow,” would be a good connecting image, urged Hokushi to try himself. By Bashō:

*temakura ni omou koto naki mi narikeri*

arm for a pillow, he's someone with nothing to worry about

*temakura ni noki no tama-mizu nagame wabi*

arm for a pillow, watching the gemlike raindrops from the eaves, alone

Hokushi came up with two:

*temakura no yodare tsutōte mezamekeru*

arm for a pillow, drool dribbling, and waking

*temakura ni take fuki wataru yūmagure*

arm for a pillow: a wind blows through bamboos in the evening dark

Finally, Bashō decided to use the following, another of his own:

21 *temakura ni shitone no hokori uchi-harai*

Bashō

arm for a pillow, he brushes dust off his princely bed

Miscellaneous. Bashō rejected the four possibilities because they all had some problems. His first is too abstract. His second contains some technical problems. If “broiled parsley” were taken to represent the category of spring, this would continue



the same theme for five consecutive parts, or too long. If, on the other hand, "broiled parsley" were to belong to the category of winter, that would mean dropping the theme of spring after three consecutive parts and returning to it only after one link on a different season, which is awkward. Hoku-shi's first possibility suggests a low-class servant, making its connection to the preceding part difficult; and his second, though not bad, is not quite right, suggesting a lonely court lady because of *tanka* using the same image. The version Bashō decided to use, in contrast, suggests a man of Proustian languor, thereby putting the man of the preceding part in sharper focus.

- 22 *utsukushikare to nozoku fukumen* Hokushi  
hoping for a beauty he peers into the mask

Love. This suggests a prostitute summoned by the languid man of the preceding link. Women often wore masks when they went out.

- 23 *tsugi-kosode takimono-uri no kofū nari* Bashō  
in a patchwork kimono he's an incense vender of the old  
style

Love. *Tsugi-kosode*, here translated "patchwork kimono," are comparable to quilts; they started out as utilitarian objects, but went on to become fashionable items. By Bashō's time they had become something that reminded one of the good old days. The "incense vender" here is a male prostitute in disguise. After several more parts were written, Bashō came back to this part, and said that *kosode* here and *shitone* in the twenty-first part sounded too much alike to be so close to each other, but that he couldn't come up with any solution.

- 24 *hikuraudo naru hito no kiku-hata* Bashō  
once a junior chamberlain, now in his chrysanthemum  
garden

Autumn. *Kigo*: chrysanthemum. As is often the case when two persons write a sequence, Bashō writes two consecutive

parts from now on; and so does Hokushi. A *hikuraudo*, here translated “junior chamberlain,” worked at the court as an apprentice to a chamberlain. Usually a son of a good family, he was allowed to enter the court’s inner quarters but his low rank was fixed. Bashō’s description suggests such a junior chamberlain now retired and cultivating chrysanthemums for pleasure. With this, the “incense vender” in the preceding part becomes a true incense vender trying to sell his wares to a man of leisure.

- 25 *shigi futatsu dai ni no sete mo sabishisa yo* Hokushi  
even two snipes offered on a tray, wanting

Autumn. Kigo: snipes. The offering can be either to the retired junior chamberlain, or from him. Either way, the suggestion is that a normally respectable gift looks shabby in someone with an aristocratic air. Bashō praised Hokushi for his transition.

- 26 *aware ni tsukuru mikazuki no waki* Hokushi  
movingly he makes a waki on the crescent moon

Autumn. Kigo: crescent moon. Hokushi was reminded by the preceding part of a renga session, which usually had dining as part of its proceedings. (One notice for “haikai sessions” that Bashō is said to have had on his wall said, among other things, “Be content with whatever cheap food and cheap tea you may have” and “Don’t get drunk and rowdy.”) Hokushi notes that Bashō said, “There could also be a link like this,” but what that comment meant is not clear.

- 27 *sho-hosshin kusa no makura ni tabine shite* Bashō  
a brand-new priest sleeping on a grass pillow, traveling

Buddhism. Bashō, after writing this, said, “This sort of link may be found in any sequence.” He meant he didn’t think it very good. The redundant combination of *kusa no makura* (grass pillow), an old metaphor for going to sleep while travel-

ing, and *tabine*, which says exactly what the metaphor means, does make this a *yariku*, an easy or quick part chiefly meant to keep it going. When connected to the preceding part, it suggests a priest who has put up at an inn and joined a *renga* session.

- 28 *Obata mo chikashi Ise no kamikaze* Bashō  
Obata is close by, and Ise's divine wind

Shintoism. Obata is an area just across a river from the Grand Shrine of Ise. Coupled with the preceding part, this one suggests a man who has traveled to pay homage to the shrine and, now finding himself close to it, is touched by a waft of wind from that direction. The "divine wind" refers to stories in the *Kojiki* and *Man'yōshū* that tell of the special wind from the Grand Shrine that helps those on the side of justice.

- 29 *hōsō wa Kuwana Hinaga mo hayari sugi* Hokushi  
"The smallpox has already peaked in Kuwana, Hinaga"

Miscellaneous. Both Kuwana and Hinaga are near Ise. The suggestion is that the raging smallpox couldn't come too close to the Grand Shrine. Bashō praised Hokushi for his adroitness in employing the *yotsude* technique that brings up two items in response to two items in the preceding part—here, two place names set against two place names.

- 30 *ame hare kumoru biwa tsuwaru nari* Hokushi  
"Rain, sun, or cloud, the loquats mellow"

Summer. Kigo: loquats. Hokushi originally had *hito ame goto ni*, "with each rainfall," for the first seven syllables. The connection of this part to the preceding one is the changeable weather when smallpox tended to occur.

- 31 *hosonagaki sennyo no sugata taoyaka ni* Bashō  
the slender figure of a goddess, full of grace

Miscellaneous. Hokushi says Bashō smiled contentedly when praised for the excellence of this part. Nevertheless, and

even though “loquats” and a lissom “goddess” strongly suggest an allusion to Chinese literature, the linking of this part to the preceding one is thought to be unclear.

- 32 *akane o shiboru mizu no shiranami* Bashō  
wringing the madder, the water, the white waves

Miscellaneous. Standing alone, this suggests a woman washing madder-dyed cloths in the river, a common sight in those days. But when coupled with the preceding part, it turns a mortal female into a goddess. To use one annotator's image, Bashō painted an Utamaro picture of a Chinese goddess.

- 33 *Nakatsuna ga Uji no ajiro to uchi-nagame* Hokushi  
Nakatsuna viewing it all as the weir of Uji

Winter. Kigo: weir. Nakatsuna of the Minamoto clan was one of the generals who participated in the battle at the Uji River in 1180, the first important confrontation between the rebelling Minamoto clan and the ruling Taira clan. According to *The Tale of the Heike*, at one point during the battle a Taira general plunged all of his twenty-eight thousand warriors—a slight poetic exaggeration here—into the river, causing a great confusion. Among the many warriors pushed downstream by the strong currents, three in bright red armor got caught in the fishing weir. Mindful that the fishing weirs of the Uji River were a favorite topic of court poets, Nakatsuna, when he saw the men, composed a tanka:

*Ise musha wa mina hiodoshi no yoroi kite*  
*Uji no ajiro ni kakarinuru kana*

Ise warriors, all clad in fire-frightening armor,  
have been caught up in the weir of Uji!

Hokushi, in alluding to this episode in his part, gave a slight twist, lumping the warriors with the fishing gear. Bashō said, “This is another decoration in the sequence.” He probably



meant that the link was attractive, even though he no longer looked on this type of fancy turn favorably.

- 34     *tera ni tsukai o tateru kōjō*     Hokushi  
word for which a courier's dispatched to a temple

Miscellaneous. Hokushi, following his own description, came up with an easy response. For one thing, Uji has some well-known temples, so associating Uji with temples is logical. For another, because the leaders of Buddhist temples were heavily involved in the feud between the Minamoto and Taira clans, it is equally logical to imagine that a messenger or two were dispatched to temples to notify them of the consequences of such an important battle.

- 35     *kane tsuite asoban hana no chirikakaru*     Bashō  
I'll ring the bell for fun—flowers scatter on me

Spring. Kigo: flowers. When he came up with this part—the penultimate position that requires a mention of flowers—Bashō said he also thought of saying *chiraba chire* for the last five syllables but decided against it because it wasn't poetic enough. With *chiraba chire*, the line would mean: "I'll ring the bell for fun—flowers, scatter, if scatter you must!" Either way, the part recalls a famous tanka by Monk Nōin (born 988) in the *Shin Kokinshū* (no. 166):

*Yamazato no haru no yūgure kite mireba  
iriai no kane ni hana zo chirikeru*

Coming to a mountain village in the spring evening,  
at the bell at sundown, flowers scatter

The connection of this part to the preceding one is rather thin, except the association of a temple with a bell. One possibility is that the mock-serious tone of the thirty-fourth part prompted Bashō to think of a poetically minded person.

a zany and a March day in the growing dark

Spring. Kigo: March (*Yayoi*). As he wrote this, the *ageku*, Bashō said to *Hokushi* that he simply described the person in the preceding line. Such a zany or an eccentric, as we have seen, is a favorite topic of *haikai* poetry. He added, "But be careful with an *ageku*." He probably meant that despite the tone in which he ended this sequence, one shouldn't often be as lighthearted at the ending where a congratulatory tone is the norm.

• Renga Since the Time of Bashō •

Bashō's comments preserved for *A Farewell Gift to Sora*, though sketchy, show him as an astute, considerate, and flexible teacher of poetry. Most striking is the fact that he often rewrote his own compositions and openly brought up alternatives. He was concerned more about poetry than about his appearance as a "master" of the art. This attitude was behind his famous emphasis on constant change in style and approach. Using an image he apparently liked, Bashō once warned those who composed *renga* with him never to "lick the drool of a predecessor," and added: "Just as the four seasons push and move forward, things renew themselves. Everything is like that." It was an admirable proposition, and in stating it Bashō was doing what Yoshimoto had done three hundred years earlier. But the essential nature of *renga* writing as a group activity, the indigenous Japanese tendency to form teacher-student relations, and resultant professionalization worked against Bashō's ideal, as they had against Yoshimoto's. The popularity of *renga* was maintained or even increased, but the quality suffered.

To look at Yoshimoto's kind of orthodox *renga* first, it had lost its literary value by the time Bashō began writing. But it

continued to hold an official place in the Tokugawa shogunate. The most honorable day in the year for the family with the hereditary right to provide instructors was the day in the first month when a sequence was composed with the shogun participating. Renga composition at that annual ceremony was highly stylized. At the crack of dawn the grand *sōshō* (or the poet laureate of sorts) put on his formal attire and led a troop of ten or more professional renga poets (who in time also acquired hereditary rights) to the Renga Room of Edo Castle. At about seven composition began. The shogun's participation was nominal at best. He did not even enter the room where the renga poets were sitting, staying instead in an adjacent room, and the *wakiku*, which he was supposed to compose, was actually written by the second-ranking *sōshō*, who submitted two possibilities beforehand for the shogun to pick. After hearing the recitation of the *daisan*, the shogun withdrew. The composition became equally nominal. At first the poets simply practiced in advance, but soon they began preparing the entire sequence well before the ritualistic gathering. Then the sequence, originally the standard length of one hundred parts, was shortened to that of forty-four parts, acronymically called *yoyoshi*, "the world is good." Under such circumstances any surviving motivation for change was lost. Formality was all that counted, and such formality could last only as long as it had institutional support. When a new government in the second half of the nineteenth century withdrew support, orthodox renga collapsed. The same thing happened to renga composed under the sponsorship of daimyo and at the imperial court, although Yamada Yoshio (1873-1958), whose father was the instructor for a daimyo, continued to write and teach throughout his life, thereby considerably influencing some modern scholars of renga.

Haikai no renga went through a different decline. Because it was less ritualistic and had a greater appeal to common people, it became increasingly popular. By the early decades

of the nineteenth century, the smallest gathering of people, as at a barbershop, is said to have prompted renga composition. Concurrently more people vied to get *sōshō* positions, and did. (As late as 1882, one survey counted twenty *sōshō*.) More professionalization and more codification ensued; that meant less poetry. Professionalization here, however, resulted in at least one good thing; to justify their profession *sōshō* deified Bashō and scholarship on his poetic achievements improved.

The popularity of haikai was accompanied, as in the preceding centuries, by the popularity of *tsukeai* or *maeku-zuke*: composing a link to a proposed part. During the eighteenth century, this led to the shortening of the minimum combination of two parts to a single part consisting of 5-7-5 syllables. The independence of the 5-7-5-syllable form had happened long before with *hokku*, but the 5-7-5-syllable form that grew out of *maeku-zuke* was considered separately from the *hokku* because it was free from *kigo* and other requirements imposed on the latter. The new genre came to be known as *senryū* in recognition of Karai Senryū (1718-90), who took the final step in abandoning *maeku* and published enormously popular collections of independent *tsukeku*. The difference between the *tsukeku* that were now thought dissociable from *maeku* and those that were previously printed with *maeku* can be seen in the following examples. Among the *tsukeai* that I have cited earlier from the *Inu Tsukubashū*, is this pair:

all his tender thoughts must lie in one hole  
a rat carried off her love letter this evening

The *tsukeku* here does make sense on its own, but most of its effect depends on its *maeku*. For the following *tsukeku*, which Senryū picked among a set of ten thousand pieces for publication in 1761, the *maeku* is superfluous for the *tsukeku*:

*mottomo na koto mottomo na koto*  
that's understandable, that's understandable



*atsusō ni hotaru o tsukamu musume no ko*  
as if it were hot, a young girl holds a firefly

Since the attraction of *maeku-zuke* lay in the original ingredients of *renga*, wit and humor, the subject matter tended to be “human affairs”—after all, it’s difficult to be witty or funny about a landscape or weather—and some acute observations were made in *senryū*:

*kane miseru kyaku ni morōta tameshi nashi*  
I’ve never gotten anything from a customer who shows off his money

~  
*kakoware ni jigoku wa nai to jitsu o ii*  
to his mistress the monk tells the truth, that there’s no hell  
In the original the “monk” is implied; hell, of course, is for the monk who is violating the celibacy rule by keeping a mistress.

~  
*yukimi to wa amari rikō na sata de nashi*  
snow-viewing isn’t too clever a suggestion  
Snow-viewing may be as poetic as flower-viewing, but, darling, why go out in this cold weather?

~  
*ara setai nani o yatte mo ureshigari*  
newlyweds are happy with whatever you give them

~  
*Yoshinā no hikui wa sukoshi deikakari*  
“Stop that,” so low, something’s cooking between them

~  
*ryōrinin kyaku ni naru hi wa kuchi ga sugi*  
the day he’s a customer a cook gets too critical

~  
*hito ni mono tada yaru ni sae jōzu heta*  
just giving things away, some do it well, some don’t

Scholarship on Bashō's poetry and the addition of a new genre were two beneficial results of the popularity of haikai after Bashō; but the popularity may also have contributed to the enduring sense of familiarity with the 5-7-5-syllable pattern.

To backtrack somewhat, there was another spin-off from haikai no renga: haibun, prose written in a haikai spirit. Bashō was the first to set it aside as a distinct genre. A haibun may consist of a few sentences; or it may be as long as Bashō's travel diary *Oku no Hosomichi*. It often incorporates hokku. Asō Isoji, a modern scholar, has identified the following "attitudes" as characteristic of typical haibun: (1) an attempt to see "humor" in natural phenomena and human affairs because, as a Buddhist precept says, "All is void"; (2) a suave mind that sees sophisticated simplicity in things; (3) an attempt to delight serenely in "flowers, birds, the wind, and the moon"; (4) an attempt to transcend worldliness and savor an eremitic state of mind; (5) an attempt to immerse oneself in this "floating world" (*ukiyo*) and seek "elegance" (*ga*) in it; (6) an attempt to delight in eccentricity and "poetic dementia" (*fūkyō*); and (7) an attempt to see "supreme quietness" (*kanjaku*) in everything. These "attitudes" also explain much of the hokku written after Bashō.

Unfortunately, none of this made up for the debility of haikai poetry. One symptom of the malaise is an increasing practice known as *waki-okoshi*, in which a sequence was begun using a hokku of a famous poet of the past. All the renga sequences in *Asakarishū* (Hemp-Gathering Collection), for example, are *waki-okoshi* using Bashō's pieces. Even though the collection was intended to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the poet's death, Bashō himself did not leave a single such sequence.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902), in discussing Bashō and his hokku, observed as follows:

"Someone said: The point truly to be savored of haikai lies in haikai no renga; hokku is only a small part of it. Therefore, any discussion of Bashō should not focus on his hokku but on his renga. Is it not said that Bashō himself did not pride himself on his hokku but on his renga?

"In reply, I said: Hokku is literature; haikai no renga is not literature; therefore, I have not discussed [the latter]. Naturally, it is not that haikai no renga does not have any literary element, but that it has at the same time other elements than literary. Accordingly, in order to discuss only its literary elements, I hold that [to look at] his hokku suffices.

"Someone said further: What are the other elements than literary?

"In reply, I said: What is held to be distinctive in haikai no renga is change. Change, in my opinion, is the element other than literary. This is because this particular change is not what changes in an order and unity that remains consistent throughout, but is a change that does not skewer together what goes ahead and what comes behind but is as abrupt as moxa treatment."

These assertions by the leader of a strong reform movement at a time when new ideas and approaches from the West were seriously confronting every traditional facet of Japanese culture, proved a near death blow to the greatly attenuated form of renga, quickly reducing output to a trickle. (Interestingly enough, because of Shiki's pejorative use, the word *tsukinami*, which at that time simply meant "monthly meeting," has come to mean "commonplace, ordinary, flat." However, he did not downgrade or notice the group-orientation of literary composition. Instead, he held countless meetings, thereby perpetuating and legitimatizing the long-established tradition. Today haiku poets, like tanka poets, tend to form groups and meet regularly to write poems.)

Haikai no renga has never ceased to be composed since

Shiki's time, but attempts have been scattered. The most recent collection, called *Kasen* and published in 1981, contains three thirty-six-part sequences written in traditional style and archaic language by four prominent men of letters. Though one participant does try to introduce contemporary elements, such as Marilyn Monroe, the book is what one might expect it to be—an intellectual exercise.

An earlier publication called *Kai: Renshi*, published in 1979, is more significant. It prints linked poems in the language of today, written by members of a poetry group known as Kai (Oars). Nine of the thirteen sequences consist of thirty-six parts; the remaining four, of eighteen. The only other traditional rules followed are "disjunctive linking"—the essential rule—and incorporation of parts mentioning "flower" and "moon." In other respects the sequences are non-traditional and experimental. In the manner of most modern poetry, syllabic counts are not used. A fixed number of lines for each part, ranging from one to five, is tried in each sequence (except the first sequence where the length of each part wildly fluctuates from one to twenty-two lines). The sentiments expressed are mostly contemporary, although, in the way of renga, some allusion to classical literature is inevitable. These sequences, the first of which dates from 1972, were attempted in large part, I think, in reaction to the academic emphasis that began to be placed on renga in the 1960s. To some extent they are also attempts to see what can be done to get away from the self-absorption of the modern poet. More sequences must be written for the reader to be able to assess *Kai: Renshi* properly. But the book is surely a pioneering effort.



~·~ CHAPTER FOUR ~·~

From Hokku to Haiku

To decide when hokku, the opening part of a renga sequence, became haiku is, in a way, easy. Although the term haiku seems to date from 1663, it displaced the term hokku only when Shiki dissociated hokku from renga, dismissing the collaborative form as non-literature. The same point is made by the argument that hokku should not be thought to have become independent as long as its parent poetic form, renga, remained active—namely, until the second half of the nineteenth century.

The task of deciding the question becomes difficult when the transition is considered from the viewpoint of the evolution of the 5-7-5-syllable form. It was felt from early on that the hokku was to stand on its own; as early as 1221 it was asserted that the "hokku should make a complete statement." Reflecting that view, renga anthologies from the beginning set aside a section for hokku, and the relative importance of such sections grew. In the *Tsukubashū*, compiled in 1356, hokku took up less than six percent of the anthology; in the *Enokoshū* (Puppy's Collection), the Danrin school's 1663 anthology, the proportion was more than sixty percent; in the Bashō school's 1691 anthology *Sarumino* (Monkey's Raincoat), four hundred seventeen hokku were chosen for a selection of only four complete thirty-six-part sequences. True, nearly all of the one hundred nineteen hokku in the *Tsukubashū* were taken from those that actually opened renga sequences, but it is safe to

assume that the majority of hokku in the *Enokoshū* and *Sarumino* were not. Furthermore, there are indications that Bashō often regarded the hokku as an independent poetic form. The first book he edited, *Kai Ōi* (Shell Matches, 1672), consisted of thirty pairs of matched hokku. In the already quoted portion of his letter of 1690, the phrase *haikai hokku* (in the original) evidently means “haikai no renga and hokku” and suggests their separation. Likewise, Morikawa Kyoriku (1656–1715) and Kawano Riyū (1662–1705) report that when someone said, “Bashō is good at *hokku*; his *haikai* is dated,” Bashō responded by saying, “As for *hokku*, many among my disciples do pieces not inferior to mine. *Haikai* is where I toil [i.e., excel].” It is said that by the first decades of the eighteenth century poets had appeared who wrote hokku without any experience in renga. So, hokku began to be written more or less like haiku long before Shiki, but just when that happened is hard to pinpoint.

Is it possible to see any difference between hokku written for opening renga sequences and hokku written independently? Not, at least, in Bashō’s case. The hokku that begins a renga has three requirements: it must be a complete statement; it must incorporate a word indicating the season or the time of writing; and it must be salutatory. Of these, the salutatory element may be regarded as the only candidate for deletion in a hokku not intended for a renga sequence. But its presence or absence cannot easily be made the basis for distinguishing the two kinds of hokku, because at that stage little effort was made to make the distinction and because much of salutatory rhetoric is highly refracted. Consider the following two groups of hokku by Bashō:

I

*Taka hitotsu mitsukete ureshi Irago Saki*  
 Finding a hawk, I’m delighted at Irago Point

~



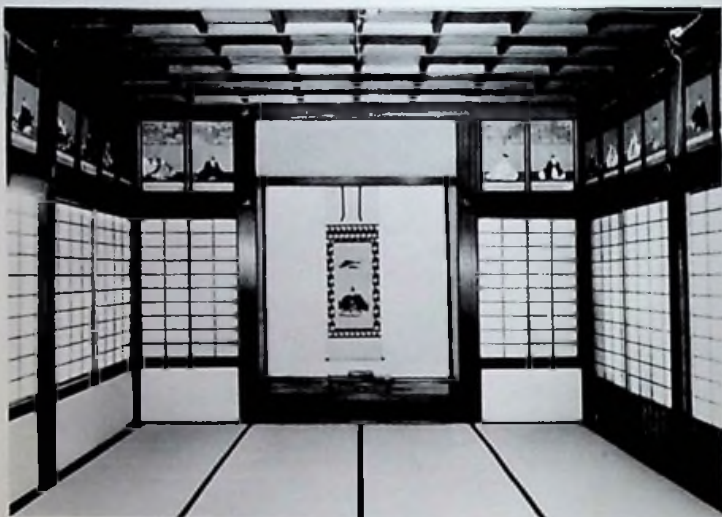
*Transcript of the renga known as Three Poets at Yuyama, which was composed on the twentieth day of the tenth month, 1491, by Shōhaku, Sochō, and Sōgi. This is believed to be one of the earliest copies showing the sequence in its original format. Collection of Kazehaya Kiemon, Kobe. (See page 26.)*







*A renga session during Bashō's journey to the interior in 1689, from Oku no Hosomichi transcribed and illustrated by Yosa Buson. Participants, from left: Bashō, Sora, Nagayama Jūkō, Kondō Rogan. The boy at the far right may be Jūkō's son. Itsuō Art Museum, Ikeda.*



*Renga room of Kumata Shrine. The scroll in the alcove shows Sugawara no Michizane, the patron deity of renga, and the paintings immediately below the ceiling depict the kasen, the thirty-six "divine poets." (See page 89.)*



*Sora bidding farewell to Bashō during their journey to the interior in 1689, from Oku no Hosomichi transcribed and illustrated by Yosa Buson. Itsuō Art Museum, Ikeda. (See pages 93–94.)*

*Ink drawings and hokku by Sengai (1751–1837) that allude to Bashō's hokku on a frog in a pond. Hokku in the drawings, from left, read: "If there was a pond, I'd like to leap for Bashō to hear"; "An old pond: Bashō jumps in—the sound of water"; and "An old pond: something has jumped in with a plop." Idemitsu Art Gallery, Tokyo.*





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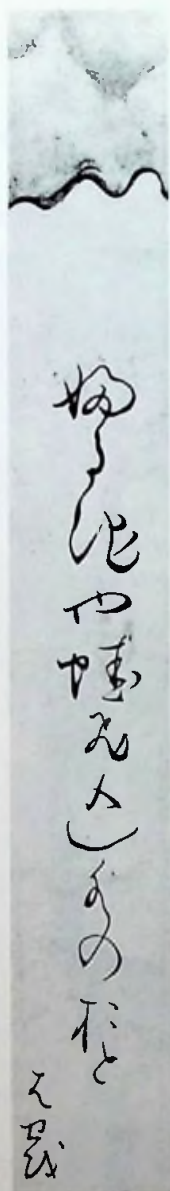
たれと

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*Bashō's hokku Furuike ya kawazu  
tobikomu mizu no oto written  
in the poet's own hand and signed.  
Kakie Library, Itami.*



*Kutabirete yado karu koro ya fuji no hana*

About the time I was tired out and reached an inn—wisteria  
in bloom

~

*Shihō yori hana fukiirete Nio no Umi*

From the four directions blossoms blow into the Lake of  
Grebes

~

*Yuku haru o Ōmi no hito to oshimikeru*

Departing spring—I mourn it along with people of Ōmi

~

*Meigetsu ya mon ni sashikuru shio-gashira*

Bright moon: up to my gate laps the tip of the tides

## II

*Hana ni asobu abu na kurai so tomo suzume*

Don't eat the gadfly playing in the flowers, sparrow, my friend

~

*Uguisu ya mochi ni fun suru en no saki*

A warbler sits on the rice cake at the end of the porch

~

*Kangiku ya konuka no kakaru usu no hata*

A winter chrysanthemum near a mortar's flour-sprinkled rim

~

*Natsu no yo ya kuzurete akeshi hiyashi mono*

The summer night has collapsed into daybreak and cold food

~

*Aki mo haya baratsuku ame ni tsuki no nari*

Autumn already—pattering rain and the shapes of the moon

Which group of hokku opened renga sequences? The answer is the second group, even though each hokku in the first group has a readily recognizable salutatory element, while apparently no hokku in the second does. The second piece in the second

group provides a good case for understanding the refractive nature of salutation in hokku. The effect of this hokku largely draws on a haikai twist. Since the preface to the *Kokinshū* listed the “warbler singing in the flowers” as something that stirs poetic thoughts, only the vocal aspect of this songbird had been admitted in court poetry; the mention of its bowel movement, therefore, was haikai. That is to say, the description is not at all meant to express disgust. What in it is salutatory? The warbler, a *kigo*, is the harbinger of spring, and like the rice cake made to celebrate the coming of the new year (which by the lunar calendar began in that season), was felicitous. The idea expressed in the hokku, then, is that the spring weather is so balmy even a warbler has flown out of his bush and dropped a compliment on a rice cake put out on the porch to sun. Bashō used this hokku to begin a *kasen* with Kagami Shikō (1665–1731), and Shikō’s *waki* was:

*hi mo massugu ni hiru no atataka*  
with sunlight straight, the day is warm

Still, as long as one keeps in mind that Tohō listed this warbler hokku, along with the one on a pond and a frog, as manifesting the true spirit of haikai, a salutatory element can serve as a yardstick in differentiating the two kinds of hokku. In his treatise on haikai, Kyorai quotes the following hokku by Sakagami Kōshun (1649–1707):

*Tsukidasu ya toi no tsumari no hikigaeru*  
Thrust out: what clogged the gutter was a toad

Kyorai then says, “I hear that [Kōshun] regards this as comparable to our dead teacher’s old-pond-frog. [Kōshun’s] subject is fresh, and no other piece deals with a similar idea. It must have impressed him, struck him as amusing. Nevertheless, this can hardly be made a hokku.” The crucial last statement is cryptic, but Kyorai probably meant the piece lacked a salutatory element and could not be used to open a *renga* sequence. (In



contrast, Bashō's hokku could easily be a compliment to a hermit.)

A few generations after Bashō, the hokku of a renga began to be called a *tateku*, "raising part," and an independent one, *ji-hokku*. (*Ji* here means "ground, solid," as when opposed to *mon*, "design.") Through this interval and thereafter, salutation was neglected in independent hokku (except those written for celebratory purposes) in favor of other effects. Yosa Buson, for example, was fond of creating novelistic atmospheres:

*Koi-wataru Kamakura bushi no ōgi kana*

In prolonged love, that Kamakura warrior with his fan

~

*Toba-dono e gorokki isogu nowaki kana*

Toward the Toba Palace several horsemen rush through the  
field-cleaver

In the first piece, a Kamakura warrior (long a thing of the past) is described as going about with effeminate counterments like a fan, in a vain attempt to look nice, now that he is hopelessly in love. This is funny because Kamakura warriors were reputed to be rough, tough, and rustic. In the second, the Toba Palace is a large palace complex built by the emperors Shirakawa (1053-1129) and Toba (1103-58) during a period that experienced many military disturbances. So, horsemen hurrying toward the palace in a stormy gust ("field-cleaver") suggest another upheaval. Both hokku, of course, give imagined pictures, rather than actually observed scenes.

Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827) was, among other things, fascinated by lively movements and tried to reproduce them:

*Ta ni hata ni tenten mai no kochō kana*

Over paddies and fields flurrying dots of butterflies

~

*Doka-doka to hana no ue naru bafun kana*

Thud-thud upon the flowers drops the horse turd

~

*Shiratsuyu ni zabu to fumikomu karasu kana*  
Splashing the white dew, a crow steps in

Issa's concern with descriptive accuracy brings us back to Shiki, who, impressed by Western drawing techniques, proposed to "sketch" natural phenomena objectively. By then haikai had degraded into *fūryū inji*, which may be translated "petty transcendentalism and worthless poetizing." Coming along with his assertion that the hokku had to be separated from renga, Shiki's proposal sounded a fresh note and became the credo of his school. After his death, his school split into two factions, and each of the two in time fragmented further. As I will describe in more detail in chapter 6, some poets began writing pieces disregarding syllabic patterns and counts, and others began breaking up the form that was traditionally printed in one line into several lines. But the predominant concern of the haiku poet since Shiki—and to some extent since Bashō—has remained more or less the same: to be faithful to one's perception.

What follows is a chronological selection of hokku and haiku, mainly on the frog, from the time of Bashō to the present. (The number of syllables is given at right when the piece is hypermetric or hypometric.)

Matsuo Bashō (1644–94)

*Furuike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto*  
An old pond: a frog jumps in—the sound of water

Takarai Kikaku (1661–1707)

*Amagaeru bashō ni norite soyogi keri*  
A tree frog rides a plantain leaf, wavering

Mukai Kyorai (1651–1704)

*Ta no aze ya niji o seoite naku kawazu*  
On the paddy-divider, a rainbow on his back, a frog croaks

Naitō Jōsō (1662–1704)

*Toritsukanu chikara de ukamu kawazu kana*

With the strength that does not cling, a frog floats

Sugiyama Sampū (1647–1732)

*Samidare ni kawazu no oyogu toguchi kana*

In these May rains frogs swim near my door

Ochi Etsujin (1656–1739)

*Akatsuki o mutsukashi sō ni naku kawazu*

At daybreak, as if with difficulty, frogs croak

Hattori Tohō (1657–1730)

*Mizukusa no kawazu karabiru hideri kana*

On the waterweeds frogs lie parched in this drought

Chiyojo (1703–75)

*Amagumo ni hara no fukururu kawazu kana*

At the rainclouds the frog's belly becomes full

Tan Taigi (1709–71)

*Kawazu ite naku ya ukimo no ue to shita*

Frogs must be there croaking, above and below the floating  
weeds

Yosa Buson (1716–83)

*Kaku ni zashite tōku kawazu o kiku yo kana*

[18]

Seated in his pavilion he listens to distant frogs during the night

Miyake Shōzan (1718–1801)

*Majimaji to shite wa kawazu no arukikeri*

Every now and then the frog stares and then walks

Takakuwa Rankō (1726–98)

*Kawazu naku ta no mizu ugoku tsukiyo kana*

Frogs croak, the paddy water moves, this moonlit night

Katō Kyōtai (1732–92)

*Mizuumi no mizu naki kobosu kawazu kana*

From the water of the lake the croaks spill of those frogs

Kaya Shirao (1738?–91)

*Okifushi ni toko no hiki ou yamome kana*

Getting up, a widow shoos away a toad from her bed

Natsume Seibi (1749–1816)

*Kawazu naku soba made asaru suzume kana*

Right up to the croaking frogs sparrows forage

Iida Atsuo (died 1826)

*Mioboe no kawazu tobu nari niwa no ame*

A frog I remember seeing leaps in the garden's rain

Tagawa Hōrō (1726–1845)

*Nakanu ma mo nodo no tada inu kawazu kana*

Even while not croaking the frog's throat doesn't stay idle

Kobayashi Issa (1763–1827)

*Mukimuki ni kawazu no itoko hatoko kana*

Every way he turns the frog has cousins, second cousins

Sakurai Baishitsu (1769–1852)

*Ko o motte shizuka na mono wa kawazu kana*

Have a child, and what's so quiet are those frogs



Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902)

*Mon shimeni dete kiite oru kawazu kana*

Coming out to close the gate I end up listening to frogs

Takahama Kyoshi (1874–1959)

*Kogi idete kawazu kikoezu narinikeri*

Having rowed out I have ceased to hear the frogs

Kawahigashi Hekigodō (1873–1937)

*Yadokari umi ni tsubushite modorikeri*

[16]

Hermit crab: I crushed it in the sea and came away

Nakatsukasa Ippekirō (1887–1946)

*Naru gotoku kawazu naku yo no suguki michi*

As if roaring, frogs croak along night's straight road

Ogiwara Seisensui (1884–1976)

*mushi naku naka ni mushi naku*

[11]

amid insects chirping insects chirp

Ozaki Hōsai (1885–1926)

*suzume no atatakasa nigiri hanashite yaru*

[18]

I grip the sparrow's warmth let it go

Murakami Kijō (1865–1938)

*Fuyu-bachi no shini dokoro naku arukikeri*

A winter wasp, without a place to die, walks

Iida Dakotsu (1885–1962)

*Fuyu no hiki kawa ni hanateba oyogikeri*

A winter toad, as I release it in the river, swims

Hara Sekitei (1886–1951)

*Kaeru no ko hitotsu koku dete asobikeri*

One tadpole detaches itself, dark, and is playing

Sugita Hisajo (1890–1946)

*Kami no ka no ikiruru yo kana naku kawazu*

Hair's fragrance stifling tonight, frogs croak

Mizuhara Shūōshi (born 1892)

*Kawazu ta no kururu ososa yo ame no ato*

How slowly the frog paddies darken after the rain

Yamaguchi Seishi (born 1901)

*Kage o dete hikari ni utaru agehachō*

Out of the shadow, struck by the light, a swallowtail

Yamaguchi Seison (born 1892)

*Hito o shinji kawazu no uta o kiki itari*

Trusting in people I am listening to the songs of frogs

[18]

Nakamura Kusatao (born 1901)

*Aki no hae hitotsu mamizu no ue ni shisu*

An autumn fly, just one, dies on the pure water

Katō Shūson (born 1905)

*Hiki aruku kuso ryō yo ni mo takumashiku*

A toad walks its shit volume out of this world powerful

Ishida Hakyō (born 1912)

*Ruirui to hiki tsurumi shujutsu nobite ori*

One upon the other toads mate, my operation's dragging on

[18]

Saitō Sanki (1900–1962)

*Yawarakaki semi umarekite iwa tsukamu* [18]  
A soft cicada, born and out, clutches the rock

Taneda Santōka (1882–1940)

*mizu no umasa o kaeru naku* [12]  
water's sweet the frogs croak

Mitsubishi Takajo (1899–1972)

*Enten ni kanashimi aeri tsuru to hito*  
Under burning heaven, pitying each other, crane and woman

Tomizawa Kakio (1902–62)

*Hebi yogiru ikusa ni areshi waga manako*  
A snake crosses my battle-ravaged eyes

Nomiyama Asuka (1917–70)

*Futo ware no shigai ni uji no takaru miyu*  
Suddenly I see my corpse infested with maggots

Hashimoto Takako (1899–1963)

*Tōchō mo kioku no chō mo hane o kaki*  
Both frozen butterfly and butterfly in my memory lack their  
wings

Shinohara Bon (born 1910)

*Ame mae no kuraki ni hikari kaeru iru*  
Gleaming in the dark before rain a frog sits

Akao Tōshi (born 1925)

*kaeru sakare penki ya no mado no kuragari* [18]  
frog torn the painter's shop window's darkness

Iida Ryūta (born 1920)

*Ō-goi no kabane mi ni yuku ite no naka*

I go to see the cadaver of a large carp in the freeze

Ishihara Yatsuka (born 1919)

*Yami nareba hitori waraeri hiki ga naki*

Because of the darkness alone I laugh, a toad croaks

Kadokawa Gen'yoshi (1917-75)

*Tennō no hi kaeru chiisaki koe tatsuru*

On Emperor's Day frogs raise tiny voices

[18]

Katsura Nobuko (born 1914)

*Hikigaeru yami no tsuzuki no yama ōte*

A toad carrying a mountain contiguous to the dark

Kaneko Tōta (born 1919)

*gyorai no marudō tokage hai mawarite sarinu*

torpedo's round belly a lizard crawled on it and left

[20]

Kishida Chigyo (born 1918)

*Kirigirisu yokujō shi mizu nomi ni yuku*

Katydid: lusting I go to drink water

Kusama Tokihiko (born 1920)

*Kuchi no naka yogore kittari iwashi kū*

The inside of my mouth utterly foul, I eat sardines

Satō Onifusa (born 1919)

*Chimamire no higashi e yuruku kan'a tobu*

Toward the bloody east slackly a cold crow flies



Sawaki Kin'ichi (born 1919)

*Te no hira no ayu o jotai no gotoku miru*

I look at the sweetfish on my palm as at a female body

Suzuki Murio (born 1919)

*Kūshū no chikazuku tsukiyo no tori o saku*

[18]

An air raid coming close this moonlit night I split a chicken

Tagawa Hiriyoshi (born 1914)

*chō wa hishō no genkei to shite mirai made*

[19]

butterfly, as the prototype of flight, into the future

Nozawa Setsuko (born 1920)

*Hebi o mite hikarishi manako mochi aruku*

I carry about eyes that glisten, having seen a snake

Fujita Shōshi (born 1926)

*Kurage yori nishi e ikamu to omoishi nomi*

[18]

Merely thought of going farther west than jellyfish do

Ameyama Minoru (born 1926)

*Kotori shini kareno yoku suku kago nokoru*

Bird dead, withered field transparent, cage remains

tend to write no other forms of poetry derives, as has been noted, from the national character, but there is the concomitant matter of terminology. The word *shi*, which directly comes from the Chinese word *shih*, denotes, in classical Japanese literature, poetry written in Chinese and, in modern literature, poetry that is neither haiku nor tanka. It is this word that is usually translated "poem" or "poetry." Accordingly, when a Japanese says, "A haiku is not a poem," he is in most cases being self-evident or misleading.

This said, I must stress that efforts to identify the attributes of haiku are made in Japan. Here, the predominant voice for the last few decades has been Yamamoto Kenkichi (born 1907), who professes to write no haiku himself. His critical stand can be termed orthodox; he asserts that "haiku has not once attained to the height that it reached as the hokku of haikai no renga during Bashō's age." As might be expected, his various theories are based mostly on Bashō's writings and words ascribed to him in general and, in particular, the following passage in Tohō's *Sanzōshi* (Three Booklets):

"As for hokku, it is, philosophically, the mind that goes off and returns. For example, it is like:

*Yamazato wa manzai ososhi ume no hana*

In this mountain village the comedians are late: plum blossoms

"Like the state of mind that simply says, 'In this mountain village the comedians are late,' and then says, 'The plums are in bloom,' the mind that goes off and returns is what makes a hokku."

The quoted hokku is Bashō's, and the observation is believed to be his, too. From this cryptic passage, Yamamoto has constructed a theory that a haiku is an antinomial poem. From it, too, he has argued that the two essences of a haiku are *kokkei*, humor or comicality, and *aisatsu*, salutoriness. In his analysis neither word is used in its traditional sense; *kokkei*, in his view, is generated when a reader reads a haiku, goes back to its

beginning, and then—only then—understanding what the piece is all about, smiles; and *aisatsu* occurs when that smile does, for such a smile is intended as salutatory for the person who composed the haiku. Yamamoto's ideas are also based on the socio-anthropological view that Bashō's poetry was possible only in the communal setting where it came into being. Not surprisingly for such a conservative scholar, Yamamoto takes an extremely dim view of haiku that deviate from the 5-7-5-syllable pattern. What is surprising is the absence of theoretical arguments that counter Yamamoto's. But this is partly made up for by haiku that negate his propositions.

How do the brevity of the haiku and its origin in Japan affect the attempt to define haiku? The question mainly concerns those outside Japan, and when only discussions written in English are considered, the principal response to it is found in the Zen interpretation of haiku. Chamberlain, who called the seventeen-syllable form an "epigram," said that to understand the "moral signification attributed to many of Bashō's epigrams . . . a thorough study of the influence of the mysticism of the Zen sect in Japan" would be indispensable. With this, Chamberlain set the trend; most of the notable books dealing with haiku since then have stressed Zen, with Harold G. Henderson's *Introduction to Haiku*, published in 1958, as probably the major exception. The largest splash was made by R. H. Blyth with his several volumes on haiku, which have the consistent theme that "haiku is Zen." Those who followed him largely echoed him. And so, Kenneth Yasuda, in his 1957 book *The Japanese Haiku*, says, "Bashō did not consider the haiku form too 'small' to express his realizations of not-so-simple an attitude as that of Zen." In *The Wordless Poem: A Study of Zen in Haiku*, published in 1969, Eric Amann says that a "haiku is . . . a manifestation of Zen." Joan Giroux, in her 1974 book *The Haiku Form*, says, "No complete discussion of haiku is possible without mentioning Zen." In *The Haiku Anthology*, published in the same year, its editor, Cor van den Heuvel, says that a haiku "is *now* in one of those timeless moments when



it flashes forth an unspoken message of the oneness of existence." In 1978 the Zen master Robert Aitken published a book called *A Zen Wave*, in which he sets forth Zen interpretations of Bashō's hokku. Interestingly enough, the definition of a haiku-like image that Ezra Pound offered in the 1920s to explain imagism strikes a startlingly similar note: "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."

To no small extent Japanese have contributed to this perception. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when they ended their self-imposed isolation that lasted two hundred and fifty years, they found themselves behind Western civilizations in various human endeavors. Their situation was rather like that of the proverbial frog in a well suddenly made aware of the vast ocean. But as the initial shock was overcome, they began upholding indigenous manifestations, and as Chamberlain noted with mild contempt and amused disbelief, they "set themselves to discover Japanese Shakespeares, Japanese Scotts, Japanese Victor Hugos, etc., etc., etc. . . . [Using imported Western terminologies, they] discover a criticism of life—the whole Zen philosophy in fact—in that single stanza of [Bashō's] on the old pond and the frog jumping into the water." Zen came in handy, because its secrets in principle remain unsaid and unwritten, thereby giving it any degree of profundity needed by its user. Japanese succeeded so well in selling Zen that by the 1920s Westerners' Zennish interpretation of haiku and other Japanese cultural phenomena reached a point where a Japanese poet, Takamura Kōtarō (1883–1956), was irritated enough to write a satirical poem intended for "European poets who amuse themselves with the Orient." It has the following lines: "With your wooly hands / you may tug at me / and try to seat me on the Great Road to cheap instant Enlightenment, / but I'll have to excuse myself." Still, the effort continued, as witness Daisetz Suzuki's treatise in the 1950s, "Zen and Haiku," with this typical observation: "a *haiku* does not express ideas but . . . puts forward images reflecting intuitions.



These images are not figurative representations made use of by the poetic mind, but . . . intuitions themselves."

In the face of such ardent desires to see Zen in haiku, any attempt to dissociate the two may be futile. But as I hope I have shown in the preceding chapters, actual hokku and haiku have little to do with Zen. Hokku and haiku have been written to congratulate, to praise, to describe, to express gratitude, wit, cleverness, disappointment, resentment, or what have you, but rarely to convey enlightenment. Indeed, any piece intended for this last purpose would be a contradiction in terms; as Satō Madoka (born 1909) says in his book on Bashō's relation to Zen, Zen exists in its rejection of verbal media, whereas literature, including poetry, cannot exist without them. Satō does say that Bashō's hokku on the old pond and a frog is "Zenlike" but strongly doubts that the poet was enlightened. Bashō himself, in his only hokku that directly bears on the subject of Zen, seems to express great wariness of enlightenment:

*A certain wise man said to me, "Undigested Zen and undigested Buddhism—they are hell":*

*Inazuma ni satoranu hito no tōtosa yo*

Someone not enlightened by lightning—how venerable!









~·~ CHAPTER SIX ~·~

Translating Hokku, Haiku, and Renga

In translating hokku, haiku, and renga I try, as with literature in any form, to remain as faithful to the original as I can. In content, this means I try not to add or change words. The temptation to add words is considerable. The nature and the brevity of these forms—a renga is basically a series of short poems—make many pieces allusive, cryptographic, and elliptic. The extent of the difficulty may be guessed from the fact that Buson already found “incomprehensible” most hokku by Kikaku, who was active only seventy years or so earlier. Also, much of the subject matter of this genre seems culturally too limited to be transferred to another language without explication, although, here, the problem may be less cross-cultural than literary: many seasonal and other references in classical hokku are lost to the modern Japanese reader. I think both the intrinsic and cultural difficulties are more imagined than real. When they exist, however, they should be explained in a note, not in the translation. Adding explanatory words in translation strikes me as a fallacy, even where the poet’s own explanation might seem to make it justifiable.

The temptation to change words is no less great. Even though haikai no renga revolutionized poetic diction, much of haikai diction was standardized, as is typically shown by kigo. Standardized diction is also common, if to a lesser degree, in modern haiku, especially those that follow orthodox approaches. Accordingly, someone who decides to work on a

substantial number of hokku or haiku, rather than a randomly picked few or a whole renga sequence, must also decide whether or not to translate the same word or phrase in the same way all the time. Bashō, for example, wrote at least ten hokku incorporating the word *meigetsu*, the moon that appears on the fifteenth of the eighth month and a popular kigo for autumn. To give another example, Bashō used the more or less abstract word *koe*, "voice," to describe the quacking of ducks (*Umi kurete kamo no koe honokani shiroshi*), the chirping of cicadas (*Shizukasa ya iwa ni shimiiru semi no koe*), and the guokking of a night heron (*Inazuma ya yami no kata yuku goi no koe*), among others. Should one stick to the English word one has chosen for the same word or phrase? I think I should, although I often fail to.

In form, faithfulness to the original means two things to me. First, on the average my translations must come to about seventy percent of the original poems in syllabic count, which is twelve syllables in the case of those written in the orthodox 5-7-5-syllable form. Second, I translate hokku and haiku into one line, except where lineation is specified by the poet. The former, the quantitative point, is something I found while translating for money and have since loosely used as a yardstick. My yardstick is indirectly supported by an observation made by the Haiku Society of America committee to define haiku terminology: that by 1970 more writers of English-language haiku were composing haiku of fewer than seventeen syllables. The observation suggests that writers of haiku in English came to feel what is perceived to be haiku-esque should be expressed in less than seventeen syllables in English. To put it differently, to impose in translation a 5-7-5-syllable pattern or a form that approximates it may dilute and render ineffectual what is haiku-esque.

The latter point, lineation, requires some historical explanation. Before the middle of the nineteenth century, when modern printing techniques began to be used in Japan, hokku and senryū, despite their syllabic patterns of 5-7-5, were printed

in one line, although they were broken up in various lines when they were written on fans, *tanzaku* (oblong poem cards), *shiki-shi* (more or less square poem cards), as part of a *haiga* (haikai painting), or for other aesthetic presentations. The practice of printing seventeen-syllable pieces in one line was continued when they began to be typeset. If that were still the sole practice, translating *hokku*, *senryū*, and *haiku* in three lines might be justified as a means of emphasizing their distinct syllabic patterns. But a few things have happened since the days of Shiki. They are the development of *jiyū-ritsu* or "free rhythm" *haiku* that ignore syllable counts; the related development of *tanshi*, short poems, and *tanshō*, short pieces, both of which may best be described as one-line poems; and the appearance of *haiku* poets who use punctuation, space, and lineation.

One way of understanding these phenomena is to describe the history of modern *haiku* in conventional fashion. Shiki, who gave currency to the term "haiku," is considered the first modern *haiku* poet because of his advocacy of faithfulness to what is observed, though he stuck to the 5-7-5-syllable form. Here are some of his *haiku*:

*Nanohana ya patto akaruki machi hazure*

Rape flowers flash to brightness the edge of the town

~

*Waka-ayu no futate ni narite agarikeri*

Young sweetfish turn into two groups and go upstream

~

*Kaki kueba kane ga narunari Hōryū-ji*

I eat a persimmon and the bell rings at the Hōryū-ji

~

*Yūkaze ya shiro bara no hana mina ugoku*

In the evening wind blooming white roses all stir

~

*Keitō no jūshigo hon mo arinu beshi*

Cockscombs—there's got to be fourteen or fifteen of them



Shiki regarded as outstanding two men among those who studied with him: Kawahigashi Hekigodō (1873–1937), who was, he said, “cool as water,” and Takahama Kyoshi (1874–1959), who was “as hot as fire.” Shiki was uncannily right in his estimates; the two men later became the heads of two opposing branches of haiku philosophy.

Hekigodō inherited from Shiki the editorship of the haiku column of the newspaper *Nippon* (Japan) and while vigorously stressing Shiki’s ideal of faithfulness to what is observed, restlessly pursued newness. He welcomed experiment, abandoned syllabic counts, began to call his pieces “poems,” and in the end “retired” from the haiku world. Here are some of his pieces written after he dropped the 5-7-5-syllable form (syllable counts follow in brackets):

*kumo no mine inaho no hashiri* [12]  
peaks of clouds the ears of rice stalks run

~

*Enoshima modori ga fukimakuru samusa ni natte shimaeri* [24]  
the returner from Enoshima has ended up becoming the swirling  
cold

~

*sutōbu ni yori mono iwane domo ware wa oya nari* [21]  
leaning to a stove and saying nothing but I am your parent

~

*Paris*  
*metoro ni agatta yoru no kaze no ha no oto ni naruru* [22]  
coming up the Metro the night wind the sound of leaves I’ve  
become used to

Among those who were sympathetic to Hekigodō’s causes, Ogiwara Seisensui (1884–1976) was a few years ahead of him in writing haiku that are not based on seventeen syllables and went a step further by discarding kigo. For the rest of his long life Seisensui did not swerve from these principles. It was through his efforts and the magazine he began in 1911, *Sōun* (Strati), that two names came to be known: Ozaki Hōsai



(1885–1926), in my opinion the best modern haiku poet, and Taneda Santōka (1882–1940), who has become immensely popular in Japan during the past decade. Seisensui was also the first to attempt lineation in print. In 1914 he included the following two-line haiku in the first selection from *Sōun*:

*chikara ippai ni naku ko to*  
*naku tori to no asa* [20]

with all their might a child cries  
and a rooster cries this morning

~

*wazuka no hana ga chirikereba*  
*ume wa sōmi ni meguminu* [23]

the few blossoms having scattered  
the plum has budded all over its body

~

*aozora ni tobitaki fūsen o*  
*shika to motsu sena no ko yo* [24]

into the blue sky the balloon wants to fly up,  
you hold it tight on my back, child

It is said that Seisensui began writing haiku in two lines under the influence of the couplets of Goethe and Schiller and in the belief that a haiku consists of two parts with a pause between them. But he did not lineate many haiku, or for long, and when he included the two-line haiku in his first collection in 1920, he put them into one line.

True haiku lineators, ironically, came out of the formalist wing of Shiki's tradition, led by his other protégé, Kyoshi. When Shiki died and Hekigodō became the haiku editor of *Nippon*, Kyoshi became the de facto proprietor of *Hototogisu* (Cuckoo), a haiku magazine begun in 1897. But for the next ten years he concentrated on prose, causing an alarming drop in the number of subscribers to the magazine and in its influ-

ence. In the 1910s he decided to go back to haiku. A remark he made in 1912 has become famous: "What I understand as haiku is a kind of classical literature. . . . Classical literature means a special literature that has been under certain restrictions from the days of old. . . . What are the restrictions of haiku? To mention a couple of major ones, they are preference for kigo, the limit on the syllabic number to seventeen, and poetic tone."

Kyoshi's remark was intended to counter the influence of Hekigodō and his sympathizers, but its timing coincided with the period when the latter group began to fragment. Kyoshi's grip on the haiku world thereafter is usually described as "dictatorial." Nevertheless, there were inevitable "actions and reactions" among his ranks. One important reaction occurred in 1931 when Mizuhara Shūōshi (born 1892), a prominent contributor to *Hototogisu*, broke away and began his own magazine. Shūōshi's move was in protest to Kyoshi's growing stress on objective faithfulness to nature, and it touched off a movement soon to be known as *shinkō haiku*, which may be freely translated "new-wave haiku." It was in that movement, eventually, that Tomizawa Kakio (1902–62) came to write haiku using space or a dash to indicate a pause in a line, such as:

*enrai ya yugami ni utsuru uo no kao* [17]  
far-off rumble mirrored in a distortion a fish's face

~  
*ama no kawa futo kyōon no tsumazukinu* [17]  
River of Heaven abruptly a footfall stumbles

~  
*ryūboku—keijijōteki na—kuroi kyori* [17]  
driftwood—metaphysical—black distance

And a man fascinated by Kakio, Takayanagi Shigenobu (born 1923), became the first important haiku lineator. The number of lines he uses ranges from one to fifteen, the number of

syllables often exceeding seventeen. As might be expected of a poet with such an approach, Shigenobu also uses an array of typographical devices: variegated indentation; alignment at the bottom, which is comparable to alignment at right in English; space between lines, which appears to be a stanzaic break at times; parentheses; dots. (Typeface variations may be the only device he has not used.) Here are some of his haiku:

*mi o sorasu niiji no*

*zetten*

*shokeidai*

[17]

body arched rainbow's  
pinnacle

the gallows

~

*fune yakisuteshi*

*senchō wa*

*oyogu kana*

[17]

having burned his ship  
the captain

is swimming

~

*tsui ni*

*tanima ni*

*miidasaretaru*

*momoiro hanabi*

[21]

finally

in the valley

it has been found

pink firework

~

*sanmyaku no*  
*hida ni*  
*ki*  
*ki*  
*su*  
*mi*  
  
*umo*  
*re*  
*ru*  
*mimi*  
*ra*

[19]

to the mountain range's  
folds  
listen-  
ing  
lim-  
pidly  
  
those  
bur-  
ied  
ear  
s

More recently Morimoto Norio (born 1917), another poet from the formalist wing of Shiki's tradition, has published a collection of what he chooses to call *saitanshi*, shortest poems. Though he says his "saitanshi are no longer haiku," they are, nevertheless, based on his belief that the haiku is "the shortest poem in the world."

*kami wa*  
*umi no*  
*nioi*

[9]



your hair  
smells of  
the sea

~

*tabetsukusarenai*  
*seiyoku*

[12]

I can't eat all this  
lust

~

*shiro wa*  
*yami no ue*

[8]

the castle  
is above the darkness

~

*noboritsumete*  
*tentōmushi wa*  
*mata*  
*hikikaesu*

[20]

climbing to the top  
the ladybug  
again  
turns back

As Shigenobu has pointed out, haiku lineators are a minority; there is a strong pull to one-line form. (The same is true of 5-7-5-7-7-syllable tanka. I have discussed tanka lineation in "Translating Tanka in One-Line Form," *Montemora*, no. 4, 1978, pp. 178-80.) Still, the existence of lineated pieces and the belief shared by the majority that one line is the standard seem to justify following the lineation of the original in print.

If the reasoning so far has some validity, lineation in renga

translation does not require an extensive comment. When classical renga sequences were printed each of the 5-7-5- and 7-7-syllable parts was apparently given as one line, and modern texts follow this practice. I translate 5-7-5-syllable hokku into one line, and so render 7-7-syllable parts into another line. Ideally I should be able to alternate long and short lines, although my emphasis on the literal sense of the original sometimes prevents me from achieving this pattern.

The problem renga poses for a translator is highly technical, and it directly arises from the form's basic structure. As we have seen, any set of three consecutive parts, A, B, and C, in a renga sequence requires the relation of part C to part B to differ radically from that of part B to part A. In other words, a renga is a sequence in which the narrative thread must be broken at every other turn. This requirement was no doubt fostered by a language with which one can make a seemingly conclusive statement that leaves unspecified the number, gender, sentence subject, and other particulars of its components. Consideration of this has persuaded some translators to give two different versions of each part in rendering a renga into English. But here again, I think the difficulty is more imagined than real.

Let us look at an example from *Tobi no Ha mo* (A Kite's Feathers, Too), a *kasen* that Bashō composed in 1690 with Kyorai, Nozawa Bonchō (died 1714), and Nakamura Fumikuni (dates uncertain):

- |    |   |          |
|----|---|----------|
| 25 | <i>uki hito o kikoku-gaki yori kugurasen</i>        | Bashō    |
| 26 | <i>ima ya wakare no katana sashidasu</i>            | Kyorai   |
| 27 | <i>sewashige ni kushi de kashira o kakichirashi</i> | Bonchō   |
| 28 | <i>omoikittaru shinigurui miyo</i>                  | Fumikuni |
| 29 | <i>seiten ni ariake-zuki no asaborake</i>           | Kyorai   |

A renga annotator enjoys as much leeway as a director of a play, or greater perhaps, and this passage, like any other, is subject to divergent interpretations. It is generally agreed,

however, that part 25 suggests a remark of a noblewoman thinking of letting her lover in through a hedge; that part 26 describes a mistress, possibly a courtesan, parting with her lover in the morning; that part 27 describes a harried wage earner at a brothel, or a warrior—in either case, an indoor scene; that part 28 is either a defiant statement of a warrior preparing for battle or an observation of someone looking at a warrior slaughtered in the frenzy of battle; and that part 29 describes a landscape at dawn. Taking these interpretative possibilities into account, Earl Miner, an American authority on renga, has translated this passage as follows:

- 25     His neglect was heartless  
       but he went again to visit her  
         through the mock-orange hedge  
26     now is the time of lovers' parting  
       and she helps him put on his sword

- At the time of lovers' parting  
       she helped him put on his sword  
27     left all restless  
       with her comb she worried her hair  
         messing its lines

- In a restless state  
       with his comb he worries his hair  
         messing its lines  
28     summoning determination  
       to hazard his life in battle

- He summoned determination  
       to hazard his life in battle  
29     in the chill blue sky  
       the yet remaining moon dissolves  
         in the light of dawn

Judging someone else's translation is difficult, especially when it involves an approach or theory, rather than a choice

of words or a difference in interpretation. Still, as I said to Mr. Miner in our discussion of his book *Japanese Linked Poetry* (*Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 14, no. 2, 1979, pp. 181-93), I doubt if translating the same verse twice, the second time differently, is necessary or appropriate. Evidently Mr. Miner's translations clarify each image and the way it changes its meaning as it relates to the foregoing and following parts. However, it seems to me, the arrangement Mr. Miner has devised slows down the reading, limits the scope of interpretation, and lessens the ambiguity of the original. I would prefer translations that are less explicatory and more concise. Here is my translation of the same passage:

25 "He's the one who saddens me—I'll let him through the  
syringa hedge"

26 now at parting she hands him his sword

27 hair hurriedly scratched with a comb

28 "Look at this determined death struggle!"

29 daybreak moon in the blue sky, as the morning comes

Mr. Miner's translation and mine are two extremes. Fortunately, this renga, *Tobi no Ha mo*, is among the most translated. Those interested can read the versions by R. H. Blyth in volume 1 of *Haiku* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1949-52; pp. 131-34), by the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai in *Haikai and Haiku* (Tokyo: Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, 1958; pp. 95-105), by Geoffrey Bownas and Anthony Thwaite in *The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse* (Harmondsworth and Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964; pp. 124-27), by Cana Maeda in *Monkey's Raincoat* (New York: Mushinsha/Grossman Publishers, 1973; pp. 35-43), and by Etsuko Terasaki in "Hatsushigure" (*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 36, 1976, pp.223-3 8). My translation is found in *From the Country of Eight Islands*, translated with Burton Watson (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981, pp. 300-303).



~..~ CHAPTER SEVEN ~..~

One Hundred Frogs

Some time ago, while exchanging elephant and other jokes with me, Kyoko Selden sent a list of about twenty English and French translations of Bashō's hokku *Furuike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto* and asked if I could identify the translators. I managed only a couple of guesses, all wrong. Then it occurred to me to see how many English translations there are of this famous set of seventeen syllables. Shiki once said, "Even among those under heaven who don't have the faintest idea what haikai is, there is no one who doesn't recite this piece on an old pond, and at the mention of 'hokku' they at once think of the old pond." As befits a literary piece so widely known, and so short, far more translations have been found than I had expected.

Word for word, *furuike* is a noun made up of the adjective *furushi* (old) and the noun *ike* (pond, pool, or mere) and means a pond that has existed for a time. About *ya*, a kireji, much has been said and written both in Japan and elsewhere. Commenting on this and two other well-known kireji, Harold J. Isaacson says in *Peonies Kana: Haiku by the Upasaka Shiki*, published in 1972, that "they have the meaning that lies in themselves as sounds, and in that way are as meaningful when set in the English translation as they are in the Japanese." But by Bashō's time eighteen kireji had been recognized, and Bashō himself simply said, "Every sound unit is a kireji."

*Kawazu* (frog) can be either singular or plural because, as here, the Japanese language rarely makes numeral distinctions.

Bashō's own picture illustrates the hokku with a single frog and, besides, the Zen overtones ascribed to the hokku may favor a one-frog interpretation. Also, the hokku is "matched" with one that suggests a single frog rather than many. In *Kawazu Awase* (Frog Matches), a collection of forty-one hokku judged in pairs (there was one extra one, yes) in the intercalary third month of 1686, it was paired with a hokku by Senka (seventeenth century):

*Itaike ni kawazu tsukubau ukiha kana*

Innocently a frog squats on a floating leaf

Then too, as seldom happens, some Japanese commentators have brought up the question of number and agreed on a single frog.

But all this does not annul the image of many frogs. The argument for more than one frog may be supported, first, by the actual existence of the pond to which Bashō may have referred. It is known that Sugiyama Sampū (1647–1732), a rich fish merchant, gave Bashō a house around which were ponds stocked with fish, and it is hard to imagine the pond Bashō may have had in mind as the exclusive residence of a hermit frog. In addition, some entries in *Kawazu Awase* are indisputably about more than one frog. For example, the hokku by Kyorai reads:

*Hito-aze wa shibashi nakiyamu kawazu kana*

One paddy ceases croaking for a while—the frogs

In the end, though, what makes the argument for two or more frogs possible is the ambiguity of the language.

Singular or plural, *kawazu* is the subject of the verb that follows, *tobikomu* (to jump or leap in), here, as happens in Japanese grammar, at once the conclusive and the noun-modifying form. The final five syllables, *mizu no oto* (water's sound) are not, as sometimes translated, onomatopoeic.





in the province of Mikawa. An obvious amplification of Shikō's story and a clumsy attempt to read Zen import into the hokku, the *Shinden* is now thought to be a hoax. It does, however, indicate how far the indigenous Zen interpretation of the hokku had gone by the end of the Edo period.

The compilation that follows is grouped into two sections. The first section is the result so far of what I initially set out to make: a collection of English translations of Bashō's hokku on an old pond. It is chronologically arranged and covers the period from the end of the nineteenth century to 1981. When the initial collection was ready, I sent it to my friends and asked for their own translations and variations. The second section is a corpus of their responses. Most of it was published in *Chanoyu Quarterly*, no. 19 (1978). The arrangement here is alphabetical, by author.

The greatest contributor to the first section is Kondō Tadashi, whose collection of fifty-one for his master's degree William J. Higginson passed on to me along with his own addition of several. Ross Figgins, a Californian haiku bibliographer, sent in thirty. Both Mr. Higginson and Mr. Figgins were impeccable gentlemen in providing bibliographies, thereby rectifying my sloppiness in that direction. To them, and to those who responded graciously to my request for their own tries, I can only be a grateful frog. For some who might be interested in the import of the "sound," Eleanor Wolff pointed to Arthur Avalon's *Serpent Power* (Madras: Ganesh and Co. Private Ltd., 1957) and Robin Hough to various paragraphs of the *Upanishads*. As Mr. Hough says, our frog actually puts in his appearance in the twenty-second paragraph, titled in Robert Hume's translation, "Reaching the higher, non-sound Brahma by meditation on the sound 'Om' " of the *Maitri Upanishad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). More recently, David Attenborough, in *Life on Earth* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981), has speculated that the first voice on this globe came from a frog—but that is another story.



# I

MASAOKA SHIKI

The old mere!  
A frog jumping in  
The sound of water

LAFCADIO HEARN

Old pond—frogs jumped in—sound of water.

W. G. ASTON

*An ancient pond!  
With a sound from the water  
Of the frog as it plunges in.*

BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

The old pond, aye! and the sound of a frog leaping into the  
water.

CLARA A. WALSH

An old-time pond, from off whose shadowed depth  
Is heard the splash where some lithe frog leaps in.

WILLIAM J. PORTER

*Stillness*

Into the calm old lake  
A frog with flying leap goes plop!  
The peaceful hush to break.

GERTRUDE EMERSON

Old pond, aye! and the sound of a frog jumping in.

YONE NOGUCHI

The old pond!  
A frog leapt into—  
List, the water sound!

CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE

A lonely pond in age-old stillness sleeps . . .  
Apart, unstirred by sound or motion . . . till  
Suddenly into it a lithe frog leaps.

INAZO NITOBE

Into an old pond  
A frog took a sudden plunge,  
Then is heard a splash.

JOHN THOMAS BRYAN

There is the old pond!  
Lo, into it jumps a frog:  
hark, water's music!

ASATARO MIYAMORI

The old pond!  
A frog has plunged—  
The splash!

Into the calm old pond  
A frog plunged—then the splash.

ASATARO MIYAMORI

*The Old Pond*

The ancient pond!  
A frog plunged—splash!

The old pond! A frog plunged—  
The sound of the water!

HIDESABURO SAITO

Old garden lake!  
The frog thy depth doth seek,  
And sleeping echoes wake.

MINORU TOYODA

An ancient pond!  
A frog leaps in;  
The sound of the water!

HAROLD G. HENDERSON

An ancient pond;  
Plash of the water  
When a frog jumps in.

FUMIKO SAISHO

*Fu-ru* (old) *i-ke* (pond) *ya, ka-wa-zu* (frog) *to-bi-ko-mu*  
(jumping into) *mi-zu* (water) *no o-to* (sound)

INAZO NITOBE

An old pond—  
A frog jumps in—  
A splash of water.

DAISETZ T. SUZUKI

Into the ancient pond  
A frog jumps  
Water's sound!

R. H. BLYTH

The old pond.  
A frog jumps in—  
Plop!

KENNETH YASUDA

Ancient pond unstirred  
Into which a frog has plunged,  
A splash was heard.

R. H. BLYTH

The old pond;  
A frog jumps in,—  
The sound of the water.

G. S. FRASER

The old pond, yes!  
A frog jumping in.  
The water's noise!



The old pond, yes, and  
A frog-jumping-in-the-  
Water's noise!

Old pond, yes, and  
Frog-jump-in-  
Water's noise.

Old pond, yes, and  
Frog jump in!  
Water's noise!

DONALD KEENE

The ancient pond  
A frog leaps in  
The sound of the water.

The ancient pond, a frog jumps in, the sound of the water.

KENNETH REXROTH

An old pond—  
The sound  
Of a diving frog.

PETER BEILENSEN

OLD DARK SLEEPY POOL . . .  
QUICK UNEXPECTED  
FROG  
GOES PLOP! WATERSPLASH!

HAROLD G. HENDERSON

Old pond:  
frog jump-in  
water-sound.

Old-pond : frog jump-in : water-sound

Old pond—  
and a frog-jump-in  
water-sound

NIPPON GAKUJUTSU SHINKŌKAI  
(an institution)

The old pond!  
A frog jumps in—  
Sound of the water.

HIROSHI TAKAMINE

Oh, into the old pond  
A frog plunged,  
With a splash!  
(And once again calm prevails!)

ANONYMOUS (as cited in the *Times Literary Supplement*)

Ancient pond;  
frog jumps in;  
sound of water.

CID CORMAN

old pond  
frog leaping  
splash

DAISETZ T. SUZUKI

The old pond, ah!  
A frog jumps in:  
The water's sound.

HAROLD STEWART

The old green pond is silent; here the hop  
Of a frog plumbs the evening stillness: plop!

SHUNKICHI AKIMOTO

Into the old pond  
Leaps a frog  
Lo, the sound of the water.

PETER BEILENSEN and HARRY BEHN

AN OLD SILENT POND . . .  
INTO THE POND  
A FROG JUMPS,  
SPLASH! SILENCE AGAIN.

EDWARD G. SEIDENSTICKER

The quiet pond  
A frog leaps in,  
The sound of the water.

DION O'DONNOL

AYE, THE OLD POND AND

A-FROG-THAT-IS-A-LEAPING-IN-THE-WATER

HARRY BEHN

An old silent pond . . .  
A frog jumps into the pond,  
splash! Silence again.

GEOFFREY BOWNAS and ANTHONY THWAITE

An old pond  
A frog jumps in—  
Sound of water.

MASARU V. OTAKE

The old pond,  
Frog jumps in—  
The sound of water.



NOBUYUKI YUASA

Breaking the silence  
Of an ancient pond,  
A frog jumped into water—  
A deep resonance.

SCOTT ALEXANDER

By an ancient pond  
a bullfrog sits on a rock  
waiting for Basho?

SYLVIA CASSEDY and KUNIHIRO SUETAKE

Old pond, blackly still—  
frog, plunging into water,  
splinters silent air.

Old pond:  
frog jump in  
water-sound.

DION O'DONNOL

The silent old pond  
a mirror of ancient calm,  
a frog-leaps-in splash . . .

ANONYMOUS (as cited in *Don't Tell the Scarecrow*)

The old pond.  
A frog jumps into the water—  
SPLASH.

EDWARD BOND

Silent old pool  
Frog jumps  
Kdang!

CANA MAEDA

old pond  
a frog in-leaping  
water-note

G. S. FRASER

The old pond, yes, and  
A frog is jumping into  
The water, and splash.

Old pond, yes, and  
Frog jumping into  
The water's noise.

Old pond, yes,  
Frog there jumping,  
Water's noise.

ARMANDO MARTINS JANEIRA

Ah, the old pond  
A frog jumps in  
Sound of water.

MAKOTO UEDA

The old pond—  
A frog leaps in,  
And a splash.

WILLIAM J. HIGGINSON

Old pond . . .  
a frog leaps in  
water's sound.

ROBERT H. BROWER

The ancient pond:  
A frog jumps in—  
The sound of water.

WILLIAM HOWARD COHEN

Mossy pond;  
frog leaping in—  
splash!

KENJUN IKEDA

The old pond!  
A frog jumps in  
With splash-splash.

DANIEL C. BUCHANAN

Into the old pond  
A frog suddenly plunges.  
The sound of water.

DOROTHY BRITTON

Listen! a frog  
Jumping into the stillness  
Of an ancient pond!

JOAN GIROUX

An old pond  
A frog jumps in  
The sound of the water.

ALFRED H. MARKS

The old pond:  
A frog jumps in,—  
The sound of the water

(limerick)

There once was a curious frog  
Who sat by a pond on a log  
And, to see what resulted,  
In the pond catapulted  
With a water-noise heard round the bog.

(sonnet)

A frog who would a-water-sounding go  
Into some obscure algae-covered pool  
Had best be sure no poetasting fool  
Is waiting in the weeds and, to his woe,  
Commemorates his pluck so all will know  
His name and lineage, not for the fine school  
He learned to sing at, nor, to make men drool  
The flavor of his leg from thigh to toe.  
He will not for his mother be remembered,  
Nor for his father's deeds, his honor bright,  
Nor for his brother's leg dismembered,  
And eaten by a king with rare delight.  
He will be famous simply for the sorta  
Noise he makes just when he hits the water.



*Basho*

Swoop!

Green, bug-eyed, wingless, conquering air,  
earth-thrusting legs outstretched in triumph;  
descending,

striking,  
submerging in jade, groundless depths.

And above

the jet thrown high tumbles,  
the shaken air composes to silence;  
the rings of water spread, strike shore,  
return colliding and subside.

ROBERT AITKEN

Old pond ! / Frog jumps in / Water 's sound

The old pond;  
A frog jumps in,—  
The sound of the water.

The old pond has no walls.  
The frog simply jumped in,  
And his sound does not echo at all.

FELIX-MARTI IBANEZ

*The old pond!*  
*A frog jumps:*  
*Sound of water!*

LUCIEN STRYK and TAKASHI IKEMOTO

Old pond,  
leap-splash—  
a frog.

ROBERT AITKEN

The old pond;  
A frog jumps in—  
The sound of the water.

(word-for-word)

Old pond!  
frog jumps in  
water of sound

The old pond has no walls;  
A frog just jumps in;  
Do you say there is an echo?

EARL MINER

The still old pond  
and as a frog leaps in it  
the sound of a splash

ALLEN GINSBERG

The old pond  
A frog jumped in,  
Kerplunk!

EARL MINER and HIROKO ODAGIRI

The old pond is still  
a frog leaps right into it  
splashing the water

## II

YOKO DANNO

Old-pond—a frog  
leaps in  
water sound

BILL DEEMER

HIGH KUKU

I enlightened Bashō,  
recalled the Frog,  
but he scared me!

BERNARD LIONEL EINBOND

Antic pond—  
frantic frog jumps in—  
gigantic sound.

Into an old pond,  
a leaping frog tumbles—  
the sound of water.

An old pond—  
a frog tumbles in—  
the water's sound.

from "Insomnia in Haiku Form"

16

Unable to sleep—  
I imagine an old pond,  
and a frog jumps in.

from "Travels"

hey  
the frog's fallen  
in the pond  
splash

ROSS FIGGINS

*Some Notes on the Old Pond*

1. After working with this for a while, I can't resist a pun. I don't know the legitimacy of word plays in translations, but . . .

old pond,  
frog jump in—  
a sound question

2. The next is an attempt to capture the sound by bracketing it between the interrupted moments of silence. The ambiguity is intended.

old pond,  
a frog leaps in—  
a moment after, silence

3. And finally a more literal interpretation.

old pond—  
the sound  
of a frog and water



transliteration

. . . old . . pond . . .  
 . . . frog . leap . . .  
 . . . water sound . . .

transvisions

stillness . . .  
 a frog-pond ploomp!  
 makes it breathe.

the universe . . .	ab-sence	(samsara)
a froglet moves it	bare attention	(satipatthana)
listen! . . . . .	presence	(nirvana)

silent mystery . .	dead pond
a tiny frog	tiny frog
sounds its depths.	live mind

the wordless Word:	nay
a frog-pond plop	yea
makes it heard.	aye
	?
	!
	.

bearded pond,  
 tickled by frog,  
 says, "ugh!" . . . & smiles.

my mind was still  
 till Bashō's frog  
 made it ripple.

pond plus frog is what?:  
splash? plash? or plop?  
ploop? ploomp? or flop?

LORRAINE ELLIS HARR

The quiet pond;  
And a frog jumps  
Splash!

The old pond:  
A frog jumps into it—  
Plip/plop

Quiet pond:  
Frog-jump-in  
Plop-sound.

A quiet pond;  
A frog jumps  
kersplat!

Blip!  
A frog plunges  
into the pond.

Mossy pond:  
Plunging frog's  
water-blip.

Quiet old pool:  
Blip!  
a frog jumps-in.

Water-gluck:  
Into the old pond  
a frog jumps

Old mossy pond;  
a frog jumps  
blip/splat

Blip/splat!  
Into the old mossy pond  
a frog jumps—

LINDLEY WILLIAMS HUBBELL

I've made two tries:

An old pond  
A frog jumping  
Sound of water

but after reading Curtis Hidden Page I felt that my version  
was terribly unpoetical, so I tried again:

Oh thou unrippled pool of quietness  
Upon whose shimmering surface, like the tears  
Of olden days, a small batrachian leaps,  
The while aquatic sounds assail our ears.

HISAO KANASEKI

an old pond:  
noises of frogs  
leaping in

JAMES KIRKUP

Age-old pond stillness.  
Jump of a frog disturbs it  
With a little plop.

pond  
frog  
plop!

FRANK KUENSTLER

from *EMPIRE*

Once upon a time there was a frog  
Once upon a time there was a pond  
*Splash.*

WILLIAM MATHESON

from "Ten Variations on Bashō's 'Pond and Frog' *Haiku*"

III

Jumpe, jumpe, lyttle Frogge!  
Water soundeth  
All aroundeth  
In thyss olde Bogge.

VIII

——ah vecchio stagno——  
——una rana ha saltato  
... dell'acqua il suono ...



"And what, after all," she paused, as if taking advantage—which he knew (oh, yes! he knew) she *was*, by heaven!, doing—of the last of the October light so parsimoniously, and yet with such prodigality, such largesse, being filtered into the room through the window giving on to the Park (but such squalid little panes! he could not help himself—and considering everything, considering particularly *this* thing, why *should* he help himself—from thinking), "did, as you seemingly want to tell me about it, 'happen,'—I believe that was how you expressed it?"

"Well," he began, with every intention of holding it up, confound it!; it was now, or, to coin a phrase, never.

"Well'?" she held fire and there it was, in all its shabby, its commercial, glory, glittering and luminous, between them. "Only 'well'?"

"Well," taking a perverse delight in the slowness of his enunciation, as how often, God only knows, these last months, *she* had and over matters infinitely less, to her but unfortunately not to him, important, "there was a noise, a sound, an echo, one might say."

"One 'might,' but should one, should particularly *you*, say so?"

"Oh, well, I, for all that. . . ." She sailed beyond his modest disclaimer, as she always managed, somehow, and in spite of what were to her, at least, genuine feelings of respect—if that was what he wanted—for him, to do. "And," she continued, she so invincibly continued, contriving in some fashion, out of some font of charity, some well-spring of *tendresse*, to give him, if not breathing-space, at least time to take a turn around the, he thought, wretched little *chambre de bonne* which she had the pretension to call—and the miracle of it was, had had the force, or merely the cleverness, of character to cause others to call—a "salon," "this 'noise,' this 'sound,' what exactly, if you'll allow me the indiscretion, was it? What, if I may be so bold to ask, *made* it?"

"Ah, as to the making of it, and I think it charming, *en dernière analyse*, for you to use the word, when all is said and done," knowing, as he full well *did* know, that nothing, indeed, had been said or done, that nearly nothing had even begun being "said" and that, there being worlds still to be said, surely nothing could even be considered as being "done," "that's a relatively simple matter: it jumped, or leapt, or threw itself, or was propelled—*le choix est à vous*—into it, and consequently, as such is often the case, it made a noise."

"I hope you don't, after all these years, find me—it would be shocking, my love, if you *did*, but these things happen—benighted or unenlightened, or simply deficient, but," her fine (as fine as in Florence) eyes searched vaguely for his, as though this were the last of her beacons, the last of all harbors in which to anchor her craft, "if you'll permit me, what 'jumped' into what and what made what 'noise'?"

"Ah, *there*, my dear, you have it, *all* of it. Or, rather, wouldn't you say?, we *both* have it, all of it, in all its little quivering, tremulous, so preciously ephemeral, being?"

"I cannot say, precisely, that *I* have it, but I am comforted, if that is the word, by *your* having it, having it so utterly yours, as you have always had," her face in the nearly posthumous effulgence of twilight turning slowly, and as if for the last, the desperately last, time, from his, "everything."

R. CLARENCE MATSUO-ALLARD

ancient pond—  
a frog jumping into its splash

CLARE NIKT

Hear the lively song  
of the frog in  
BrrrBrrrBrrrptyBrrrBrrrrrrrrrrIp.  
Plash!

MICHAEL O'BRIEN

My Noble Lord:  
The cat just pissed on the Basho translations.  
O ancient lake!

MAUREEN OWEN

*The Origin of Haiku*

for Bashō

The little frog    lost his footing

RON PADGETT

"Advertising translation"

old pond  
frog jumps in  
plop plop fizz fizz

CYRIL PATTERSON

Without pondering its next leap,  
a bullfrog makes its splash!

The spirit  
of the old pond is  
frog-bound.

A        a  
pon     fat  
der     old  
ous     frog  
oc       goes  
ca  
sion    plop!

Finality—  
a bullfrog croaks beside  
the lily pond.

Zen leap—  
a bullfrog makes its  
splash!

Without pondering  
its next leap,  
a bullfrog makes its  
splash!

One frog flattened  
on the road—  
another croaks beside  
the lily pond.

From the pond's edge,  
a bullfrog PLOPS into  
oblivion.

BARBARA RUCH

An old green pond.  
A small green frog dives in.  
The ping of water.



ELEANOR WOLFF

Age-old pool ya  
A frog jumps into  
the water: the sound of it

Old old pond ya  
Sound, as a frog jumps in,  
of water . . . .

GEORGE M. YOUNG, JR.

After perusing *Basho's Furuike*, I checked, and sure enough found in my file of yellowed newspaper clippings the following notice:

MAFIA HIT-MAN POET: NOTE FOUND PINNED TO LAPEL OF  
DROWNED VICTIM'S DOUBLE-BREADED SUIT!!!!

Dere wasa dis frogg  
Gone jumpa offa da logg  
Now he inna bogg.  
—Anonymous

According to the newspaper account, neither the author's nor the victim's identity has yet been ascertained.

Thought you might be interested in this strange item—another wrinkle to the age-old mystery of the frog and the pond.



## PART THREE

### COMPOSING IN ENGLISH





~~~ CHAPTER EIGHT ~~~

English Renga

Renga writing in the United States seems to have taken root in the middle of the 1970s. In 1975 *The End (& Variations Thereof)* printed a few English-language renga. The next year the Haiku Society of America held sessions on the form and published the traditional kasen format in its newsletter. This was followed by a special issue of *Haiku Magazine* with articles on the form and several renga sequences. Since then a number of renga have been published here and in Canada—first chiefly in *Cicada*, a magazine of the Haiku Society of Canada, and more recently in *Frogpond* of the Haiku Society of America. In announcing the stress to be put on renga, the editor of *Frogpond* said: “Linked poetry offers the possibility of poetry as conversation, or as group improvisation, rather than exhortation or lonely meditation. This in turn opens up refreshingly different roles for the poet, as participant rather than as alienated solip-sist.”

Although the English renga sequences I have seen are still not many, I may venture the following observations:

**RULES** The rules followed seem in most cases limited to the minimum requirements of “disjunctive linking” and alternation of three-line and two-line parts (or long and short one-line parts). This should probably be continued, except perhaps that a few parts might mention a specific object to create points to return to. What that object should be is diffi-

cult to determine, and the object may vary from one sequence to another. Also, a general, if not strict, agreement might be made that repetition of the same or similar word or image be avoided within several consecutive parts.

**FORMAT** The small size of each part should also be kept as it is. *Renga: A Chain of Poems*, the celebrated attempt published in 1972 by Octavio Paz, Jacques Roubaud, Eduardo Sanguinetti, and Charles Tomlinson, seems to fail largely because each part is a sonnet; too much tends to be said in fourteen lines for the next link to follow up on and to give a conclusion to. The Kai group of Japanese poets (see page 112) seems to have discovered this quickly.

**TIME AND MEANS** Most English renga are composed through correspondence and take up to a year to complete, in sharp contrast to Japanese attempts in which the effort is still made to complete a sequence in one sitting. The epistolary method probably should not be encouraged or discouraged, but the ample time this method allows for working on one's link may result in a series of sparklers. One of two things is recommended to avoid this: agree that one participant act as a coordinator willing to adjust his links according to the development of the sequence, or agree that participants hold back the urge to show off in every part.

The following selection is meant to give some idea of English renga now being written.

• Two-Part Excerpts •

from BLAZING TIDEFLATS: A SOLO Renga

by Cor van den Heuvel

the pigeons all rise at once  
and disappear around the corner

in front of the bank—  
wondering where the money  
went

~

the candles glow softly—  
blackout in New York City

moonlight—  
a great liner, all lit up,  
heads out to sea

from THE SPLIT MOON

by William J. Higginson, Michael McClintock, and Elizabeth  
Searle Lamb

the pup whines  
quietly, tongue frozen  
to the axe-blade

Higginson

the whiteness of it:  
this first snowdrop

Lamb

~

the arguing diminishes  
to a small point out in the wind

McClintock

a blue balloon  
escaping the five fingers  
lifts

Lamb

from A LATE BLIZZARD

by Elizabeth Searle Lamb, L. A. Davidson, and Virginia Brady Young

stirred by the cold poker,  
pitch pine splits into flame Davidson

the old virgin  
walking on ice  
to her wedding . . . Young

~  
with the twilight chill,  
she hugs her braless bosom Young

one mosquito . . .  
the moon rising  
into a cloud Lamb

from OLD WOMAN'S BANJO: A ONE-LINE Renga

by Marlene Wills, Elizabeth Searle Lamb, and Bill Pauly

coffee cold in the waiting room she awakens first Wills  
another ambulance wails in Lamb

~  
run of apple butter the old reflection in her eyes Wills  
the rocking chair rocking itself Lamb

from JESUS LEAVING VEGAS

by Virginia Brady Young, Michael McClintock, and S. L. Poulter

a bad day:  
the old woman's  
capillaries  
pucker Young

half a sandwich  
to eat slowly  
again tonight McClintock



cracking  
out of the wind  
the sound of leaves

Poulter

something light  
as thistles . . .  
the last birdsong

Young

~

smoothing his rags,  
the hobo enters  
the deserted house

Young

radio static . . .  
rain  
on a window

McClintock

from LINKED POEM

by William Matheson, Kyoko Selden, and Hiroaki Sato

all mechanized  
and artificialized, wild  
soil won't recover

Sato

"one must bear in mind one thing"

thing what

but what

thing

thing what

Matheson

from THE RAGGED MISTS Renga

by John Wills, Cor van den Heuvel, and Michael McClintock

(author not identified each time)

twenty TV screens glow  
in the christmas tree ornament

the doll's house . . .  
onto the crooked step  
drops a pine needle

~

beyond the doorway:  
blood-spattered legs  
in the glare of a flashbulb

incense . . . the ash tip  
falls off

~

morning sunlight drifts down  
from the wooded cliffs

piled on the beach  
the crabs  
grip one another

from LINKED POEM

by James Kirkup, Hiroaki Sato, and Kōko Selden

You cry; in this warm darkness

I do not know why you cry

Sato

The tree peonies

glow like lanterns in the dusk

of the melting year

Kirkup

~

under pale street lamps

dark pools flicker with dawn rains:

I am lost again.

Kirkup

Today streaks of fog tarry

over the Susquehanna.

Selden

from AUTUMN INSECTS  
Solo Renga by Kyoko Selden

closed eyes scan small print, pages  
of failures, unread letters

you've never seen your  
face mirror image has  
right and left reversed

~

she awaits her death  
she watches others await  
her final waning

what silk-thin difference is there  
if I stay to dream or go

from PEDALING A BIKE  
by Tadashi Kondo, Philip Meredith, Kristine Young, Jody  
Rashburn, and Sakura Onishi

the glare of the sun  
at the top of the mountain

Meredith

eyes closed  
the warmth of tea  
seeps through the fingers

Young

~

the bus sweeps past  
branches tapping windows  
bouncing grandmothers

Meredith

giggling and chatting  
they rewrap their lunchboxes

Young

from OUTSIDE THE WINDOW  
by Marlene Wills and Hiroaki Sato

|                                               |       |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
| autumn evening after splitting wood his wedge | Wills |
| divorce agreed upon, the house still shared   | Sato  |
| ~                                             |       |
| the egg has feathers the chicken three legs   | Sato  |
| how many zen monks to screw in a light bulb   | Wills |

from IN WINTER RAIN  
by Marlene Wills and Hiroaki Sato

|                                                                     |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| we shared a bed, bodies separate                                    | Sato  |
| a dream from fifteen years mother chasing me through cor-<br>ridors | Wills |
| ~                                                                   |       |
| memories are close now that you are distant                         | Sato  |
| clouds drift your blue sock under the bed                           | Wills |

from LINKED POEM  
by Michael O'Brien, William Matheson, Kyoko Selden, and  
Hiroaki Sato (author not identified each time)

|                                          |
|------------------------------------------|
| branch and grain of wood                 |
| fish deceived and gulls beguiled         |
| are there tears for things               |
| the coat someone threw out               |
| is an old lady going through the garbage |
| ~                                        |



did I hear cracked ice slither  
did I see ice at water's edge  
melt

melted by the whiskey  
twists to the bottom, like smoke  
like pale gold brocade

from LINKED POEM

by Kyoko Selden, William Matheson, and Hiroaki Sato

where Cydonian quinces  
are fragrant in green lightning Selden

where? at the clavier  
Scarlatti fugue Tartini  
ambiguities Matheson

~  
not barking dogs: westering  
geese with their torch-bearing cry Matheson

dead woman's spirit  
heard weaving at the bottom  
of winter water Selden

from OPIUM

by Geoffrey O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, and Hiroaki Sato  
(author not identified each time)

each scattered  
flower's a planet,  
whirling detached  
corolla of ego, habit, circumstance  
"no-one's sleep under so many eyelids"

massed and lonely,  
a migration  
a moving wall

the woodchuck shows enough sense  
to run from the camera's click

~

breeze stirring the curtains  
of so many rooms,  
the late, empty light

as she rolls the blind down:  
crescent leaning toward water tower

• Full Sequences •

BRONZE SHIELD

by Geoffrey O'Brien, Hiroaki Sato, and James Kirkup  
New York City, London, Kyoto  
from February 1980 to January 1981

bronze shield, by mezzo-  
tint of picnic girls. steady rain  
chills the museum O'Brien

my girlfriend comes fully dressed  
suffering from monilia Sato

on the nord express  
the diva next door practising  
Isolde all night long Kirkup

past thickets, benches, the river  
tumbles forward in spring flood O'Brien

in my dream, mother's  
left eye now gelatinous,  
mouth agape with grief Sato

nostrils listen, ears observe—  
eyes feel, numb with enlightenment Kirkup

pieces of face toss  
in air as the mirror hits  
the floor. the sky stays calm O'Brien

after a hint of pain  
we walk to a Turkish bath Sato

and the next moment  
the rainy season started  
with a banging door Kirkup

the street humid and empty  
"you wanna buy a radio?" O'Brien

"wanna be my friend?"  
the voice, its echo, down those  
streets, through these years Sato

loudspeaker summer's campaigns—  
blood, sweat and electioneers Kirkup

by midtown airshaft,  
only the shrill whirring  
of a giant fan O'Brien

someone's wife is someone's wife,  
face buried in someone's chest Sato

I dreamed of our Queen  
wearing harlequin glasses  
with the Crown of State Kirkup

waking, eyes still ache from the  
wide bright plain I got lost in O'Brien

a Navaho boy  
one with a crawling donkey  
the only dark spot Sato

afterimage—your green grace  
bright as a red ghost at noon Kirkup

Goethe yelled: "More light!"  
I trust my last words may be:  
"My! Whatever next?" Kirkup

Bashō on his death bed chose  
scattering over dustless Sato

laying the book down,  
trying to read the floppy  
non-denoting leaves O'Brien

on my walkman set, listen  
to my own voice's poems Kirkup



“She didn’t suffer  
‘cause she heard only herself,  
but one never knows”

Sato

“Please don’t go”—girl I’ve not met  
bangs on the wall one floor up

O’Brien

the street’s reflections  
throw themselves out of windows  
opened with a scream

Kirkup

mother breathes drip by drip,  
Marilyn Chambers perspires

Sato

summer goes: as I  
sprawl by the fire escape,  
the first cool breeze

O’Brien

a dead leaf shifts sideways—no!  
it’s a little tinted crab

Kirkup

another movement,  
but this time with all the right  
tones behind it

Sato

within the sustained note  
echoes echo themselves

O’Brien

and in my next life  
this temple bell is ringing  
before it is struck

Kirkup

through flu-flattened afternoon  
phone goes on and on and on

Sato

“I heard the shots, I  
thought it was a truck backfiring—  
I mean, I knew it wasn’t”

O’Brien

deep snow silence loneliness—  
we want to hold your hand

Kirkup

trees are all in flower  
but this avocado mayn't leaf  
unfleshed before Christmas

Sato

in the sudden brilliant cold  
the messenger's milky eyes

O'Brien

RICKSHAW (OR BUDDHA COMES TO THE WEST)

Solo Renga by Cor van den Heuvel

New York City

Winter 1979-80

summer rain—  
a rickshaw climbs a hill  
in an old movie

Peter Lorre, wearing a white suit,  
comes through the beaded curtain

under a ceiling fan,  
the chair turns slowly around  
with Sidney Greenstreet

the marquee lights whirl  
in the gloss of her lipstick

bursting from the squad car  
the cop runs toward the bar  
his neon badge pulsing

the highway veers off into darkness  
in both directions

clearing sky—  
the hiker unfolds  
the milky way

the trail map indicates  
a steep climb to the peak

reflections  
grow still in the dawn lake—  
*om mani padme hum*

slowly disappearing on the ledge—  
the lapping marks above the waterline

the afternoon sun brightens  
everything: the blue sky, the woods,  
even the shadows

an ant comes out of the hole  
drops a grain of sand and goes back in

she stops  
on the secluded path  
to look at her engagement ring

along the frozen river,  
the cliffs are encased in ice

stained with dogs' pee,  
the old snowman watches  
the moon rise

the beautiful mannequin  
gazes through reflections

fluttering wings  
leave a streak of colored dust  
on the girl's finger

reading a haiku by Buson  
about a caterpillar's hairs

a wind comes off the ocean  
shaking all the car antennas  
in the parking lot

spray flies from the shadowed waves  
into the rays of the setting sun

darkness is gaining—  
on deck, a lone man points  
into the distance



AS THE FOG THICKENS

by Hiroaki Sato, Geraldine Little, and Marlene Wills  
New York, New Jersey, and Tennessee  
from October 1980 to June 1981

As the fog thickens  
the mother goes on reading,  
her two children playing in the waves Sato

over the sand castle,  
blue voices of gulls Little

that song again of bessie's  
a neighbor wants to buy  
the dying elm Wills

eating noodles & thinking  
"Let me weep for once" Sato

on the table  
the candle sputters out—  
who's playing Bach Little

alone late night breath  
ing of the wood stove Wills

is this glow of love  
I feel when separated  
a false sentiment Sato

the songs of waking birds  
and wind through leafless trees Little

the short day  
letting the cat out  
letting the cat in Wills

and he: "in and out  
and back to work" Sato

|                                                                             |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| in the bath her limbs<br>under rippled reflections:<br>ashes on the hearth  | Little |
| heart to heart talk<br>and a self portrait                                  | Wills  |
| in the dark, eyes closed,<br>your face resembles that of<br>the Lord Buddha | Sato   |
| thinking of the moon<br>when it is full on the fields                       | Little |
| reeds frozen<br>after smoking<br>our oralness                               | Wills  |
| cough, then the sound of a shower<br>from the neighbor downstairs           | Sato   |
| watching steam<br>from the teakettle<br>sketch clouds                       | Little |
| mountain in haze<br>behind a billboard                                      | Wills  |
| when my heart is reposed<br>hers trembles with pain,<br>and vice versa      | Sato   |
| I think back to that morning<br>we shared an old toothbrush                 | Wills  |
| opening blinds<br>the rush of sun, the crystal vase<br>suddenly full        | Little |
| let's imagine icicles<br>on that house-shaped bird feeder                   | Sato   |

it would have made sense  
the speeding ticket getting home  
rather than to work Wills

across the driveway  
the musky smell of moonrise Little

a mansion like this  
I haven't seen for long  
and that has made me drunk Sato

new strings on the banjo  
up late listening for a song Wills

an owl tuning up  
the twelve-tone scale of neighbors  
quarreling again Little

the cause and the end may be  
a simple interruption Sato

on our minds now  
manure and seeds  
and signs in the breasts Wills

even the old cracked mirror  
reflects blended images Little

*déjà vu*:  
finding oneself in a position  
one was once seen in Sato

our love will it too fade  
(like grass under a fallen stone) Wills

an old couple  
ponders a fossil—twisted blades  
of a spent summer Little

"You don't seem to understand"  
"No, look at it from this side" Sato

no phone calls  
nothing in the mail  
the full moon

Wills

on the terrace a clay urn  
brims: shine and blue shadows

Little



IN YOUR PANTIES

Solo Renga on Love by Hiroaki Sato

New York City

January and February 1982

*Jilted and distracted this past winter, I decided to write poems in renga form—the form best suited to someone who can't concentrate. Here is one of them:*

In your panties  
slightly pulled down  
a crisp fallen leaf

wetness a surprise  
to the initiate

tears flow  
as fingers trace them  
in warm darkness

they sit up in the grass,  
look at the city they left

"You are that moon,  
a face I've remembered  
from another land"

falling for someone  
who'd just had his turn

her firm shoulders  
when hugged, stiffened,  
and I didn't care

"I won't let you go"  
can't be shaken off

he stares out  
at lit windows, lit towers,  
beyond her head

nose still moist with  
the smell of sex

hunger afterward  
then to an eatery  
a cavern

elegant lovers dining  
a photo for an ad

for this tryst  
underwear selected  
negligently

she waits under the moon  
for a third in three nights

how enlightening  
the phrase was when first heard:  
"sex-starved"

in love nothing changes  
and everything does

like cherry flowers  
in distant haze, you glow  
but not for me

who will be the next  
to hear you moan and coo?

"I didn't mean to . . ."

"If you meant to, you've  
succeeded"

the awaited word  
and aimless release

the day breaks,  
he walks off fully dressed  
under her gaze

working out an alba  
getting a taxi

four hours or four  
seconds sex lasts only  
while it lasts

pleasure of reading  
of those who love love

every morning  
at Fiftieth and Eighth  
I pass a woman

she looks away or up  
I look ahead or down

a third entry  
makes gentleness jar  
smiles bruise

long wedded to his habits  
he thinks of one thing

"I was more struck  
than charmed, yes, by your homage  
to the moon"

thought from the past confessed  
after snifters of Jack Daniel's

these people here  
mayn't after all be all  
for hitting the sheets

loneliness forgotten  
midnight, in city snow

below us  
white flakes in the lamplight  
rising aslant

you two almost make love  
in public, I've been told

"Here are flowers  
to make up for my  
petty protests"

two dandelions between  
your outstretched thighs



PAST MIDSUMMER

by Michael O'Brien, Lindley Williams Hubbell, and Hiroaki Sato

New York City, Kamikōshien, Santa Fe  
from July 1979 to March 1980  
(author not identified each time)

Past midsummer, but  
the year's arrested fall still  
papers a late wall with light.

The rainy season is over in Kyushu,  
but my windows are still blurred.

Only when I'm drunk  
or the demon's away, I say what's  
never forgotten.

A tangle of saplings behind the house  
on the way to the mailbox.

Letters from three continents  
in today's mail.  
I rest in the center.

After twelve years of mud-spewing  
I neither hate nor love you.

O careless love,  
alone in the music,  
the band alone in the music.

Love comes to us  
when we can live without it.

In the southwest  
trees grow  
where there is a river.

The eye is a horse  
which drinks and drinks.

Insatiably  
my eyes drink:  
animal, vegetable, mineral.

Constance Money, Annette Haven,  
and Anna Obsessed

the iconostasis before the mystery,  
smoke rising in the projector's beam  
from a rapt audience

icons drifting by . . .  
Mary Pickford . . . Linda Lovelace

and while on the subject  
I have everything  
and nothing to say

an old junkie  
turning the pages

for seventy years  
I have been turning the pages  
of the same books

generations of sparrows  
have pecked those holes on that brick wall

and the eye pivots  
from page to wall  
checking the manifest

two mature angels in relief  
hold a scroll painting

Sappho rises  
from the graves of Oxyrhynchus  
like new moons of Saturn

Lethe, honeycomb, wide missouri  
o pearl-handed dawn

I remember  
walking home along buildings,  
another night ended

all night at Nara  
the crying of the deer

"that now are wild"  
in careless love  
down by the river

rustling the leaves you were an adult,  
I was a novice

rain falls quietly  
on the belated celebrants  
O tu Palermo

nothing intact as memory  
no dawn so clear

on the subway:  
"It won't do until you forget it."  
"But I won't."

a miner is not qualified  
to appraise gems

finders, not keepers  
of the adornments  
of their dark throat of earth

of gold  
that stretches the thinnest

Agamemnon's body  
disappeared into dust  
before their eyes

sun-shot king-work  
unravelling in air

Japanese are to rebuild  
the Tower of Babel  
where the rivers shift

let us honor  
the birthplace of language



~~~ CHAPTER NINE ~~~

English Haiku

American haiku poets, living in a tradition that emphasizes freedom rather than conformity, show a distinct "willingness to experiment with ever new forms," as Alfred Marks put it in his essay on "Haiku in Japanese and English" (*Chanoyu Quarterly*, no. 9, 1974). Although there are still many who count syllables and put them in three neat lines aligned at left, many others cast their haiku in an extensive variety of typographical formations, while some compose delightful concrete haiku, so to speak. It is, indeed, no longer flippant to say "a haiku is what is so designated by its author." In view of this situation the Haiku Society of America, when sponsoring contests for high school students in 1979 and 1980, defined the haiku as "a poem in three lines or less," such as:

sunset on the pond—  
the edge of the ice sharpens  
into dark water

Clyde C. Glandon

morning snow falls  
smoke rises

Stephen Wolfe

pig and I spring rain

Marlene Wills

The following selection is meant to give a glimpse of haiku now being written in the United States.

L. A. DAVIDSON

Up the gusty street,  
an umbrella, belly front,  
bobbing on two feet.

          i  
w h t e  
          c l o u d s c u d d i n g  
a c r o s s a b l u e s k y  
          G U L L ' S  
the c r y

where sea and sky meet  
only hazy fishing boats  
dividing the gray

The seagull  
bashing it against the rock  
one more time.

using the time  
washing his teeth on deck  
to view the moon

wind changing  
with the shape of sandstone  
changing with the wind

an old farmstead  
bought for investment;  
the wild columbine

a few old people  
on steps of the gray church,  
the bell still ringing

winter morning  
without leaf or flower  
the shape of the tree

the eye hospital;  
from a snowy window ledge  
the pigeon peering in

somewhere long ago  
this black hawk in a bare tree,  
the snow deep below

coming into it  
from the bitter cold:  
the warmth of her house

*Haibun: In the Peruvian Andes*

*Cuzco. The city lies in a green valley nearly 12,000 feet above the Peruvian seacoast 300 miles to the west. Here, probably around AD 1200, Manco Capac founded his Inca Empire. Here, Francisco Pizarro in 1533 conquered in the name of Spain. And here, now, a provincial capital of Peru. The mix of cultures and remnants of cultures pulls the visitor into many levels of time.*

church bells  
and Cuzco's red tile roofs  
in dawnmist

*The air is thin. The sun burns hot when the sky is clear, but often the clouds gather and mist becomes a cold rain.*

a street musician  
shelters his harp with pink plastic  
and goes on playing  
a single coca leaf  
in the frayed red coca bag  
bought at the market

*Inca stones are in the streets, in the buildings of Cuzco. And outside of the city, not far, are Inca ruins. Tambomachai or the Inca's Bath, Puca Pucara and Kenko. Even more ancient than these are the vast gray stones of the angled fortress wall, Sacsahuamán. Pre-Inca, says the guide.*

the little Indian girl  
herding her llamas  
never stops spinning



*Sunday is market day in the small Indian village of Pisac.*

in the crumbling church  
a little more dust filters down:  
conch shell trumpets

hearing . . . not hearing  
when Sunday mass is said  
in Quechua!

as her mother kneels  
a bright-eyed baby pulls at flowers  
beside the saint's statue

*Going by train through the Urubamba Valley toward Machu Picchu: blossoming orchids on rocks near the rapids, vine bamboo and flowering trees.*

on the steep hillsides  
up from the roaring Urubamba River  
still . . . the old, old terraces

*At last, after small buses climb the almost vertical side of the mountain by means of thirteen hairpin curves, the ruins of the Inca never found by the Spanish.*

here at Machu Picchu  
a begonia growing in the stone wall  
and blossoming

dried alpaca dung  
beside the sacred condor stone;  
clouds cover the higher peaks

an ancient silence  
in this plaza of the Inca—  
but no! crickets

knitting—  
her needles ticking  
in time to Mozart

Spring morning:  
the dying calf's breath  
moves into mist.

how the lake  
outer skin to roots, accommodates  
the winter moon

The white spider  
whiter still  
in the lightning's flash

out of the fog  
only the leap and fall  
of a fish

The hole  
where the shot bird was.  
Snow falls and falls

thinking of crackling fires   your name   twisting down iced  
wind

miles of beach  
and the winter stars  
your hand in mine

on a snow-dusted twig remnant of robin song

Boy in a red cap

s  
q  
u  
i  
r  
t  
i  
n  
g  
a  
y  
e  
l  
l  
o  
w  
a  
r  
c

on the very first snow

with their pipes  
hunched under spring sky  
old men make clouds

in the widow's veil  
stars  
blown from dandelion

but, child,  
there is no song  
in the egg you break

spring breeze  
puffs through the skeleton  
of a bird

blues are the big thing  
with Monet, she said,  
spreading the Roquefort

*After Dusk*

asleep  
the firefly  
is fueling  
  
sparks  
however small  
light lovers  
  
our bodies  
listen  
to light

the farmer talks corn,  
pointing where the corn  
is talking

my mother stock-still  
before the balloon I put  
on my father's grave

he removes his glove  
to point out

Orion

trees unleaf;  
my mother  
grows smaller



walking in rain  
I pass a stranger  
I know

rain  
erasing  
the clown's face

the snowflake disappears into its drop of water

the sun goes down—  
my shovel strikes a spark  
from the dark earth

spring mountains  
in the doorknob  
of the insane asylum

playing ball—  
the girls  
bounce

the shadow in the folded napkin

morning—  
rain runs down  
the drive-in movie screen

nothing  
in the box—  
the winter wind

cloudy day—  
a branch of the tree  
goes by the window forever

the moon rises—  
dark shadows spread  
under the cabbage plants

tidepool  
in a clam shell—  
the evening sunlight

hot night—  
turning the pillow  
to the cool side

*Senryū*

in her dressing room  
the stripper powders her breasts—  
and whispers something to them

the nude mannequin  
in the dress-shop window  
. . . looks away

ovulation fold of the mountain scattered with mist

old towel folding it again autumn evening

over my fingers  
a stranger spills  
the whiteness of night

cold outside  
cold inside  
warm ( )side

l l

a a a a

b b b b

i i i i

u u u u

m m

our triangle

pipes thaw red spot on the egg yolk

first bleeding of the year

green appearing under cow hooves



pig and i spring rain

pushing hair behind my ears spring woods

gosling following its neck to the bug

morning-glory folds into herself into her folds

one fly everywhere the heat

at dusk hot water from the hose

leaving him she whispered in the grocery store

after your visit  
middle of the closet  
empty hangers

autumn night the phone rings twice and stops

o g  
r  
f frog

rain  
dr p  
o

k k k k k

c c c c c c c c

o o o o o o o o

c c c c c c c c

a a a a a

e e e

p

o

m

n

o

---

m

o

o

n

VIRGINIA BRADY YOUNG

During a downpour  
the frog's eyes  
—open

That moment at dusk  
when birds stop singing.

on the river  
a cloud  
moves faster than it moves

rings as they move  
through ripples—  
caterpillar

hanging  
from a cliff—  
roots of a tree

on the lake  
loons listening  
to loons

High tide:  
shifting of stones  
on the floor  
of the sea.

caught  
in crooked icicles—  
the wind

YOUNG READY YOUNG

Young a young  
the young's eyes  
—open

That moment of dark  
when dark was bright

on the river  
a cloud  
moves faster than it moves

Things as they move  
through vapors—  
completely

hanging  
from a wire—  
rooms of a tree

on the lake  
rooms leaning  
to leave

High tide:  
sliding of stones  
on the floor  
of the sea

rough  
in encoiled tables—  
the wind



## Sources and Credits Epilogue

Voices of frogs  
As if to accompany  
All those stars  
—Eleanor Wolff

Epilogue

Voices of hope  
As if to say  
All these stars  
—Eleanor Wells

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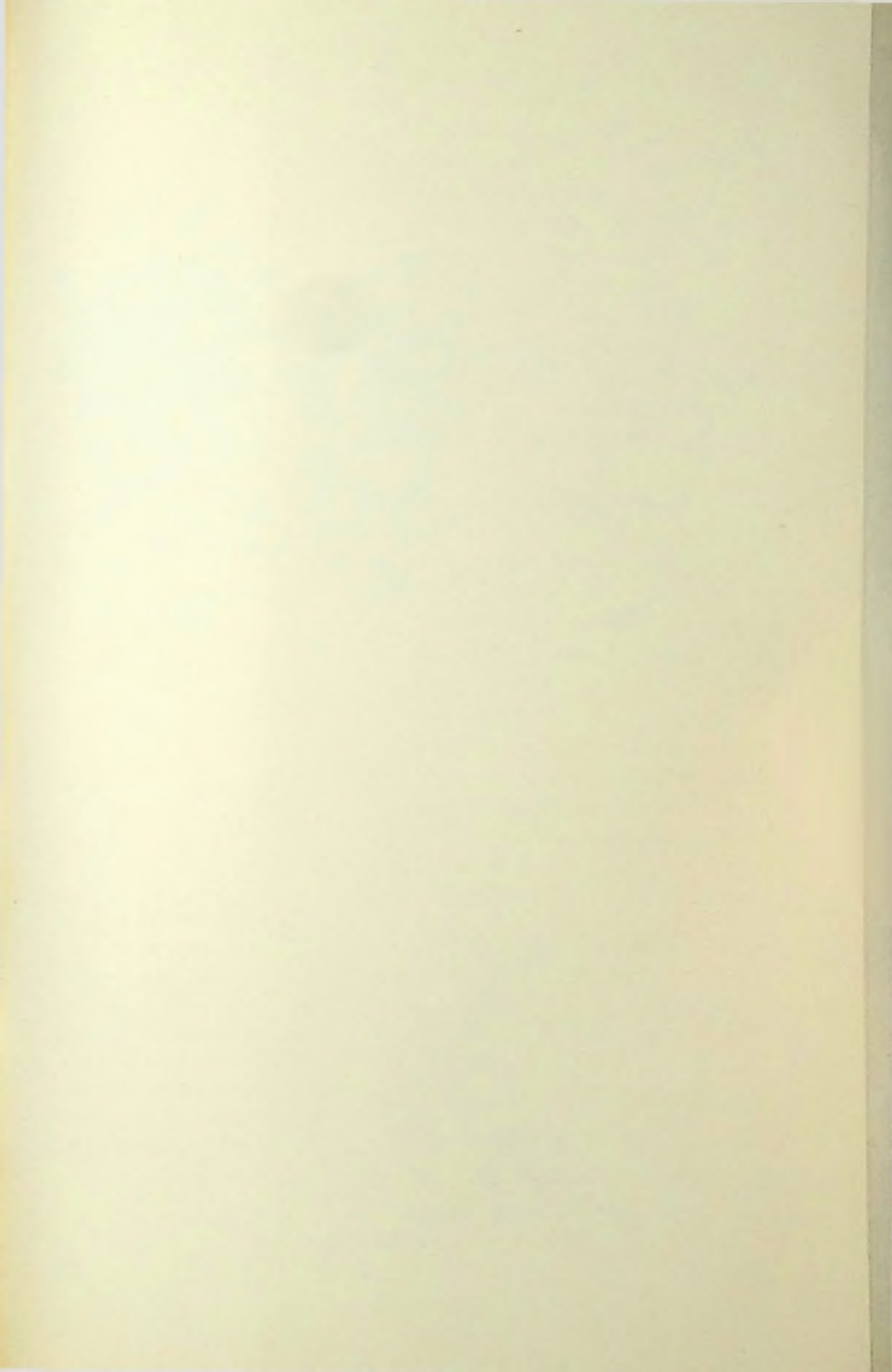
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HIROAKI SATO has translated numerous collections of the works of Japanese poets including, with Burton Watson, the distinguished anthology of Japanese poetry *From the Country of Eight Islands*, for which the two translators were awarded the 1982 P.E.N. Translation Prize. Also an accomplished poet in his own right, Mr. Sato served as president of the Haiku Society of America from 1979 to 1981. He was educated in Kyoto and, since 1968, has lived in New York, where he is an associate director of the Japan Trade Center.

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