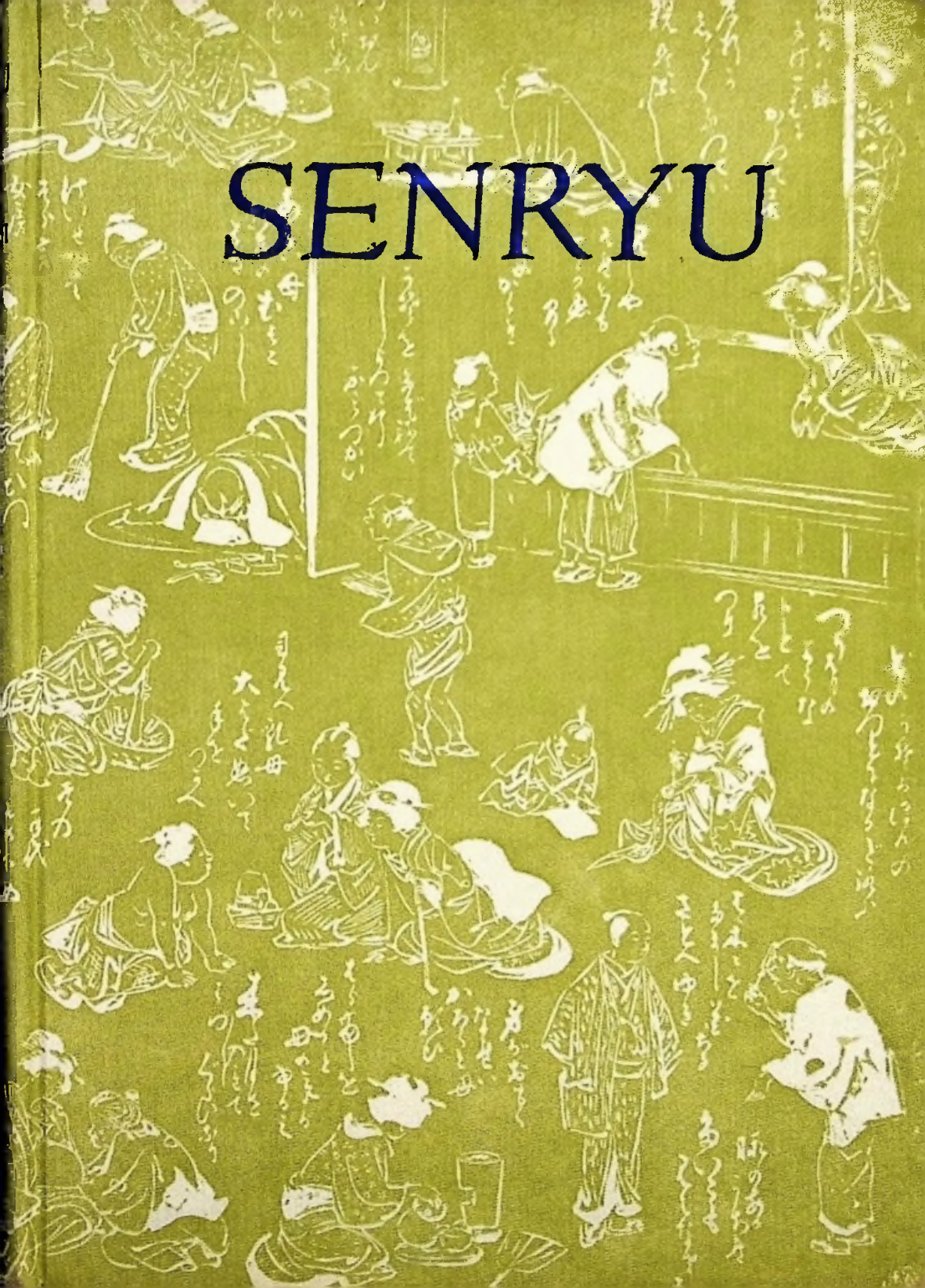
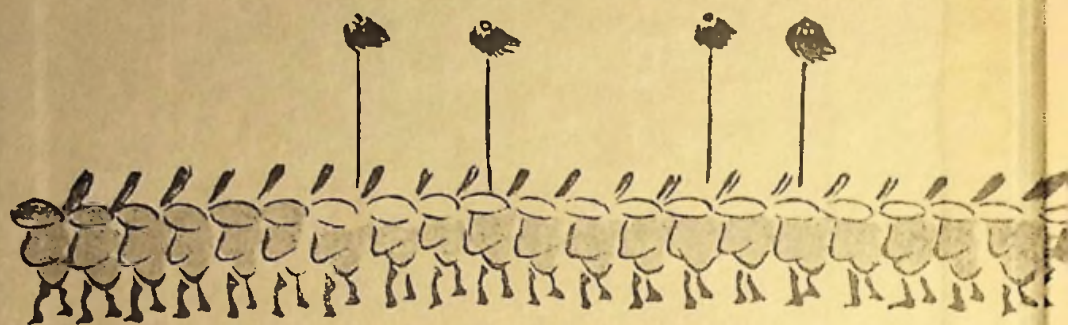


# SENRYU













SENRYU

SKIRYU

1-1

1-1





いねの花百姓の目にやしや  
The farmer's eyes;  
The flowers of rice  
Are the cherry flowers of Mr. Yoshino.

米が出来百姓の手で豆が  
Rice formed in the field,  
"Beans" formed  
On the farmer's hands.

(Blisters and callosities in Japanese  
are "mame," beans.)

けやも恨つじつまゝ そろひ  
Well brought up,  
The daughter's excuse  
Hangs together well.

(Her education enables her to make  
coherent excuses for going where  
she wants to.)

珠数の数へしらへあけてとおがみ  
The rosary-maker  
He prays with it once  
When he has finished it.

手習ひ子かへると鍋のふたをと  
When the school-boy gets home,  
He takes off  
The lids of the saucepans.

おんなの家の戸をあけて  
Unlock the door,  
Smart and sulky.

あした今朝は火のあて  
The morning after,  
The wife irons his clothes.  
Ironing day.

(She is  
the visitor)



# SENRYU

## Japanese Satirical Verses

Translated and Explained  
by

R. H. BLYTH

Author of

*Haiku,*

*Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics,*

*Outline of English Literature*

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## PREFACE

RIGHTLY or wrongly, I feel that the way to appreciate senryu is through the understanding of haiku. This approach may be justified historically, for haiku preceded senryu by about a hundred years. We may also remember Wordsworth's line of development; first, "Nature to me was all in all," then, "the Mind of Man, main region of my song." However it may be, in the introduction I have tried to bring out the nature of senryu by comparison and contrast with haiku. The two together give not only a fairly complete idea of the nature of the Japanese people, their spirituality and idealism on the one hand, and through-going realism on the other, but embrace within them the two attitudes of the human spirit, the constructive and the destructive, the "world of calm delight"<sup>1</sup> and the "strife divine."<sup>2</sup>

The principle of selection of the senryu translated is the one given by Hazlitt: "That which interests is interesting." Using the word "interests" in its largest and most profound sense, this is the one and only principle of all criticism. The average Japanese and especially the so-called intelligentsia, has a low opinion of senryu. This is quite unjustified. They have a very high value as literature and culture. They are indeed a "criticism of life," and have a philosophy implicit in them, the very implicitness of which gives them a virtue and permanence denied to more formal expressions. What is this philosophy of life? Like that of haiku, equally implicit, yet entirely different, it will not bear the light of our intellectual day; it will submit to no rational treatment. The meaning is in the senryu, but inseparable from them.

In my copy of *How to Write Senryu*, by Kimura Hammonsén,

---

1. Lawrence.      2. Arnold.

川柳作法, 木村半文銭, at the head of a selection of modern senryu, someone has written in pencil:

川柳は二度読むものではない。いかによき句であらうとも。

Senryu are not to be read twice, however good they may be.

This is in a way true, and yet, as Lawrence would say, it is a truth that kills, for it is rather the desire to deceive and be deceived that may cause us not to re-read senryu; we desire to escape from this world of reality, and indeed haiku is one of the ways to do so. In actual fact, not alone idealism but realism also has its depth and infinity. Idealism is of all space, of the past and the future; realism is of this place and this present moment, the only really living thing. Senryu brings us back to here and now; haiku is that "something evermore about to be." Both are necessary for our life, the going out and the returning, but perhaps after all, life, like charity, begins at home.

I think it will be better for you to read the Introduction after you have enjoyed yourself with the book,—but perhaps you were going to skip it anyway.

The great majority of the illustrations in this book are by Mr. Sobun Taniwaki, who died in 1947. The originals were destroyed during the war. His pictures are characterized by a humour without cruelty. The coloured illustrations, also his, are more like haiga, or haiku pictures, for they represent the spirit of a new type of senryu in which the malice and wit of old senryu are absent. The reproductions in the present work were made by kind permission of the Kôdansha.

I must thank most heartily Miss Toshiko Chiba, who did much more than merely type the manuscript. She translated many of the senryu, and made a great many suggestions as to their interpretation.

R. H. BLYTH

Tôkyô, September 1949



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## INTRODUCTION

SENRYU are expressions of moments of vision into, not the nature of things, but the nature of man. We do not see the thing-in-itself illuminated with mind; we do not apprehend life as it moves towards its far-off, unknown, unknowable goal; but as in a flash of lightning, we see a picture of the life of men suddenly suspended, every detail, every secret motive and hidden thought portrayed.

Haiku are the brief waves in the life of things, the "spots of time" that we come across in our reading of poetry. Senryu are those excruciating moments of novels; some indeed are novelettes in seventeen syllables, for example:

鏡とぎぬすんだ女郎見出して來 古

The mirror-polisher

Recognises

The stolen courtesan.<sup>1</sup>

The woman has run away with her lover, and having taken nothing with her, looks around and finds an old mirror. It is dull, being of metal that has become tarnished. One day she hears the mirror-polisher passing by, and calling him, has it polished. But the mirror-polisher has realized what, if not who, she is, and reports her to the police, and she is taken back to the Yoshiwara.

The following also brings before us the most painful and significant of what might have been a series of Hogarthian pictures:

片棒をかつぐゆふべの鰻仲間 古

---

1. When senryu have no author given, they are old senryu, anonymous.



This coffin-bearer  
 Was last night  
 At the feast of swell-fish.

Japanese are very fond of the swell-fish or globe-fish, though it is frequently fatal. The evening before, they were eating this dangerous dish, and one of the company died very soon after. Today a man who also ate his fill, but suffered no ill consequences, is one of the coffin-bearers. He looks pale, and seems to be thinking of various possibilities.

Haiku is far more simple; all the painful problems of our life are by-passed:

青柳の泥にしだるゝ汐干かな      芭蕉  
 The green willow  
 Hangs down in the mud,  
 At the low tide.<sup>1</sup>      Bashô

Take also the following:

木枯や竹にかくれてしづまりぬ      芭蕉  
 The winter storm  
 Hid in the bamboos,  
 And died away.      Bashô

The winter blast suddenly shakes the bamboo grove; it passes within its darker depths and all is still again. The wind is swallowed up, dissolved, assimilated, or, as Bashô says, hidden in the bamboos.

1. The form of haiku and senryu is identical, 5, 7, 5 syllables. The presence or absence of a season-word is the simplest means of differentiating them, but in the translations I have used a slightly different line-arrangement, by which they may be distinguished at a glance.

Things come out of nothing, and pass into nothing. There is cause and effect, but there are also, as here, effectless causes, and causeless effects; the world is made of law, but mystery shrouds the waving of the bamboos and the stillness that follows.

蜻蛉やとりつきかねし草の上

芭蕉

The dragon-fly  
Could not alight  
On the blade of grass.

Bashô

The leaf is too weak, or the wind is blowing, or there is some unskillfulness on the part of the insect itself. Whatever the reason, the dragon-fly keeps trying to get onto the grass with that blind persistence which is part of life itself.

冬庭や月も糸なる蟲の吟

芭蕉

In the winter garden,  
The moon is a thread,  
The voice of insects too.

Bashô

In the garden, all the grasses are withered, and trees are bare. In the sky a slender crescent moon hangs like a wisp of pale hair. The voices of the insects also are weak and faint, a mere thread of sound.

In Bashô and his true followers, haiku has the purity of Nature. The desire of the haiku poet is that of Arnold in *In Kensington Gardens*:

Calm soul of all things! make it mine  
To feel, amid the city's jar,  
That there abides a peace of thine,  
Man did not make, and man cannot mar!

In the latter half of the seventeenth century Bashô was giving to haiku its essential qualities of absorption in nature, "loneliness," depth of

simplicity, non-intellectuality, unsentimentality, the "religious" life towards which Japanese poetry had been developing for the past thousand years.

But at the same time, there was an opposite tendency, seen most clearly in Bashō's contemporary and disciple Kikaku, towards making man the main region of song, towards wit and intellectuality, bringing out the discords of life, the contrast of man and nature, ideal and real, desire and attainment. The following are all by Kikaku:

我雪と思へば軽し笠の上

Being my own,  
The snow on my bamboo hat  
Feels light.

憎まれてながらふる人冬の蠅

He is a winter fly,  
Disliked,  
But long-lived.

Even the following famous verse is senryu in its humour and hyperbole:

鐘一つ賣れぬ日はなし江戸の春

These great temple bells,—  
Not a day passes but one is sold,—  
Edo in spring!

However, if this were really a senryu, it could perhaps mean that the fire-bells were sold every day, fires being so common in Edo.

猫に喰はれしを蟀の妻はすだくらん

The wife of the cricket  
Bemoans, perchance,  
His being eaten by a cat.



阿呆とは鹿も見らん鳴子引

Even deer

May think him a fool,  
The bird-clapper puller!

夕涼みよくぞ男に生れける

How good

To be born a man,<sup>1</sup>  
Cooling in the evening!

きられたる夢はまことか蚤の跡

Did I only dream

I was cut down with a sword?—  
A flea-bite!

朧とは松のくろさに月夜かな

“A hazy moon”

Is the blackness of a pine-tree,  
The moon of night shining.

Kikaku here gives a kind of definition of what is meant by a hazy moon. The black cloud of the pine tree is necessary to bring out the dim, obscure, dream-quality of the moon. This directness and non-chalance is typical of the tough-minded Kikaku as contrasted with the tender-minded Bashô.

Etsujin, another disciple of Bashô, has this verse:

うらやまし思ひきる時猫の恋

I feel envious;

Just as I had given up hope,<sup>2</sup>—  
Cats in love!

---

1. Because he can sit practically naked, and a woman cannot.

2. For some clandestine meeting.

Hagiwara Seisensui contrasts this with Bashô's verse.

猫の恋やむ時間のおぼろ月

Cats in love;  
When they cease,  
The hazy moon over the bed-chamber.

Nothing could bring out more clearly the two states of the human spirit.

Onitsura, the contemporary of Bashô, played Marlowe to the latter's Shakespeare, and shows unmistakable signs of the tendency of haiku towards senryu, a tendency checked once and for all by the genius and mysticism of Bashô. Examples of Onitsura's verses that are in some ways against the religious attitude of haiku:

鶯や音を入れてただ青い鳥

The uguisu,<sup>1</sup>  
When it stops singing,  
Is just a green bird.

冬はまた夏がましちやと言はれけり

In winter,  
People say  
Summer is better.

野も山も葎かとぞ首のだるくこそ

Fields and mountains  
Are like day!  
My neck feels heavy.<sup>2</sup>

1. A kind of nightingale.    2. With looking at the moon.

又もまた花に散られてうつらうつら

Yet once again  
Have the cherry blossoms scattered on me,  
While adoze.

Onitsura is perhaps the first to use colloquialisms for artistic effect. This reaches its highest point in Issa, but we can find examples also in Bashô, though these are rather isolated phrases. In the above verse, the whole thing is colloquial; *Mata mo mata*, "again yet again," *hana ni chirarete*, "fallen on by the flowers," *utsura utsura*, "having forty winks."

Senryu, however, is colloquial par excellence, for it is the literature of the unliterary, the poetry of the bourgeoisie. It has no appearances to keep up, it is unashamed in its lack of embellishments and figures of speech. We see here a profound connection here between senryu, ukiyoe and the Yoshiwara. Ukiyoe, it is true, has not the realism of senryu, whose pictorial expression is the *senryu manga*, or caricature, but both senryu and ukiyoe have popular appeal, preoccupation with man and indifference to nature, complete obliviousness to so-called religion or poetry. They both speak a language that the people can understand.

There is a verse by Kako (eighteenth century?) which is indistinguishable from senryu:

風一荷擔ふ暑さや國扇うり

The fan-seller;  
A load of wind he carries,—  
Ah, the heat!

Buson, 1715-1783, wrote such verses as these:

炭うりに鏡見せたる女かな



A woman showing  
A charcoal-seller his face,  
In a mirror.

ふぐ汁の我生きてゐる寝覚かな

Waking up,—  
I am still alive,  
After eating swell-fish soup!

Coming to Issa, 1763-1827, we find irony and cynicism; a criticism of life in the narrower sense of the phrase, and conspicuous humour in a great number of his verses. It is perhaps only Issa's deep piety, his undoubted religious attitude that causes us to class many of them as haiku, not senryu.

大根引大根で道を教へけり

The *daikon*-puller  
Showed the way  
With a *daikon*.<sup>1</sup>

人はいさ直な案山子も無りけり

The people, yes,—  
But none of the scarecrows even,  
Is upright.

羽はえて銭が飛ぶなり年の暮

Growing wings,  
Money is flying,  
At the end of the year.

---

1. A long, sausage-shaped turnip.

名月を取つてくれろと泣く子哉

The bright moon!  
The baby cries,  
"Give me it! Give me it!"

Even his death verse is more like that of a senryu writer than a haiku poet:

盥から盥にうつるちんぶんかん

From bathtub  
To bathtub,<sup>1</sup>—  
Stuff and nonsense!

Just as the genius of Bashô placed haiku for ever beyond the region of puns and witticism, so the genius of Issa succeeded in uniting, to some extent, the virtues of haiku and senryu. This had its cause partly in the bitter and humorous yet gentle character of Issa, partly in his balanced view of man and nature. We gaze at the moon; we eat and drink, marry and give in marriage: what is the connection? Issa shows us:

山里は汁の中まで名月ぞ

A mountain village;  
Right into the broth,  
The bright full moon.

The family are having their meal outside the house, and they can see the moon in the bowls they are eating from.

Shiki, 1866-1902, in turning to Buson rather than to Bashô for inspiration and example, inclines towards the non-religious, towards man, when he is not composing his wonderful still-lives. His ill-health

---

1. That is, from birth to death.

also turned him towards pessimism, cynicism, the bitter taste of life.  
The following are by him:

病中筍を贈られて  
くちをしや春の筍水薬

Being sent some bamboo shoots while ill.

Mortification:  
Spring bamboo shoots,—  
Medicine to drink!

夕立や蛙の面らに三粒程  
A summer shower:  
About three drops  
On the frog's face.

行秋の鐘つき料をとりに来る  
Departing autumn;  
Coming for the fee  
For ringing the temple bell.

The following are pure senryu:

夏帽や吹きとばされて葦の中  
A straw hat,  
Blown off  
Into the gutter.

夏帽子人帰省すべき出立哉  
Setting out  
In a straw hat,—  
He must be going to his native place!



新年の暁にあひぬ夜中頃

In the New Year,  
About midnight,  
I met a coffin.

The above are but a few examples of the tendency towards senryu which we find in haiku before the inception of senryu, and continuing even after it, down to the present time. Let us now take haiku and senryu and contrast their several characteristics.

## SENRYU AND HAIKU

1. A haiku is the expression of a moment of vision into the nature of the world, the world of nature. If man is present, nature is faintly suffused with him:

大旦やむかし吹きにし松の風

鬼 貫

The Great Morning:  
Winds of long ago  
Blow through the pine trees. *Onitsura*

A senryu is the expression of a moment of psychological insight into the life of human beings; nature is either absent or a mere background:

若後家のふしょうぶしょうに子に迷ひ 古

The young widow  
Is unwillingly fascinated  
By her child.

This is very delicate. The young woman whose husband has died, wishes to be attracted by some eligible bachelor. Her feelings ask for an object, something to love. The little boy (or girl) involuntarily supplies that want, and it is with some reluctance that she feels his bewitching power over her.



2. Haiku expresses the nature of a particular thing, but through it the nature of all things. In other words, there is a movement between the two, of contraction to the particular and of expansion to the general. This movement is the life of haiku as it is the life of life.

蛤の口しめてゐる暑さかな

芭蕉

The shell of the clam  
Is shut :

Ah, the heat !

*Bashô*

This is seeing the world in a grain of sand, the heat of the world in the shut-ness of the shell of the clam. The clam is shut by accident, no doubt ; there is no connection between the heat and the shutting of the shell. It is simply that all shut things, even refrigerators, are hot. This is decided arbitrarily by the mind, and no amount of science or common sense can dislodge the poet from his position. It reminds us of what Aldous Huxley tells us in his introduction to D.H. Lawrence's letters. With regard to the theory of evolution, though confronted with overwhelming evidence, Lawrence simply refused to believe it, insisting, "I don't feel it here !" as he placed his hands over his solar plexus.

The following haiku shows us to what a poetical realm this interpenetration of poet and object "gently leads us on" :

白椿落つる音のみ月夜かな

蘭更

Only the sound  
Of white camellias falling :  
A moon-lit night.

*Rankô*

A senryu stops still ; it does not lead to something beyond itself. It is a photograph, not a picture :

長嘯とんぼのとまる鎧の先

古

A long conversation ;  
A dragon-fly settles  
On the tip of the halberd.



His master has met a friend on the road, and he squats on the ground waiting until it shall be ended. It is a warm day of early autumn, and a dragon-fly settles on the point of the halberd he is holding. We may contrast this with a very similar haiku by Buson:

日は斜閤屋の鎗にとんぼ哉

In the slanting rays of the sun,  
Dragon-flies on the halberds  
At the Barrier.

The centre of the picture is the red dragon-flies perched on the gleaming halberds standing there. Behind is the great gate that leads from one province to another. In the senryu the dragon-flies bring out the length of the talking and the boredom of the man waiting in the sunshine. In the haiku we feel space and time in the long level rays of the sun near the horizon. Man is present, but only in his works, his symbols.

Haiku is mystical, the poet is dissolved in the object. The senryu writer remains outside, invisible, anonymous even, but we are conscious of a duality. This may be illustrated by the following pair of verses:

我笠や田植の笠にまぢりゆく

支 考

My *kasa*  
Mingles with the *kasa*  
Of the rice-planters.

Shikô

The poet, on a journey, walks through the rice-fields. His plaited, umbrella-like hat mingles with those of the rice planters. Himself and the rice-planters and all their *kasa* are felt as one continuous, living entity.

道間へば一度にうごく田植笠

古

Asking the way,  
All the *kasa* of the rice planters  
Move together.

In the *senryu*, the writer is separate from the planters in the field, and more important, the *kasa* are not alive; they have no relation to his *kasa*.

3. Haiku has a consummate simplicity; it has the purity of nature, which does not cry or strive.

松風の落葉か水の音涼し 芭蕉

Needles falling  
In the wind of the pine trees?  
The sound of the water is cool. *Bashô*

There is a vagueness and mysteriousness about this verse which corresponds to that of Nature. The wind blows in the pine trees; we hear the sound and see the topmost branches move. Pine needles are scattered on the moss beneath the trees. There is the sound of running water somewhere, a placid and clear sound.

雲雀より上にやすらふ峠かな 芭蕉

Resting  
In the mountain pass, higher  
Than the skylarks. *Bashô*

This has a feeling of peace yet height; *in* Nature, yet above it.

すゞしさや朝草門に荷ひ込 凡兆

The coolness!  
Bringing in the morning grass  
Through the gate. *Bonchô*

In mid-summer, not only is work avoided at noon, but the fodder for the horse is cut in the early morning and evening to have it as fresh as possible. When the poet gets up, the farmer has already been abroad and cut the grass that, still covered with dew, is brought on his back through the simple gate of the farmer's house.

涼しさや松の葉ごしの帆かけ舟

子規

The coolness!

Between the pine needles,  
Sailing ships.

Shiki

Shiki gives us a miniature in green and blue and white, the cool colours. This verse was composed at Suma, and there is another verse by the same author in the same place:

涼しさや石燈籠の穴の海

The coolness!

Through the hole of the stone lantern also,  
The sea.

At Suma the sea seems everywhere; even through the stone lantern that stands before the shrine, the blue sea can be seen glittering. It interpenetrates everything.

打水に暫く藤の雫かな

應子

After sprinkling water,

For some time,

Drops from the wistaria.

Kyoshi

The water in the pail dashed over the plants on this dry, hot day, continues to fall and drip from the wistaria blossoms. These drops of water and the white blossoms have such an affinity that the sound of the dripping water is to the ear what the blossoms are to the eye.

Senryu deals with the imperfect, the degraded, the weak, in other words, with ourselves.

女房と相談をして義理をかき

古

Talking it over with the wife,

Failing

In one's duty.

Hearing of some calamity, or friend's troubles, the husband decides to send some money or practical help. In the evening he talks the matter over with his wife, who, without being especially mean, brings up various objections, and mentions hardships which their own family is suffering. The husband decides to postpone his assistance, and this really means to abandon the idea.

けいせいとはつばすしても恩にかけ

古

Even when the courtesan farts,

She does it

As a favour.

When the courtesan makes a rude noise before her guest, she turns it into a kind of compliment, saying that they are as intimate as husband and wife.

内宛見ぬいて質屋貸さぬなり

古

The pawn-shop,

Seeing his intention,

Won't lend what he asks.

A man took something to the pawn-shop, betraying that he must have the money at all costs, and the pawn-shop dealer beats him down unmercifully. Senryu shows us the infinite complications of human life, the contradiction of motives, the waste of life.



4. Haiku is religious in its attitude; it not only takes religion seriously, but that it takes everything religiously.

富士行者雲にまがへる白衣哉 碧梧桐

The devotees on Mt. Fuji;  
Their white raiment  
Mingles with the clouds. Hekigodô

There is something in this verse that reminds us of Browning's *A Grammarian's Funeral*. On the top-peak,

meteors shoot, clouds form,  
Lightnings are loosened.  
Stars come and go! let joy break with the storm,  
Peace let the dew send!  
Lofty designs must close in like effects.

But the Japanese poem is quiet and mild; the Buddhist atmosphere is different.

行先に都の塔や秋の空 太 臈

Ahead,  
A pagoda of Kyôto,  
In the autumn sky. Taigi

The verse does not say so, but we feel this is evening. As the poet goes on foot towards the ancient capital, the pagoda of jet is silhouetted against the pale green of the distant sky. It represents the unattainable, the city of the dream which is always to be, but never is. And this is the appropriateness of the season; or conversely, the movement into the future, the pagoda with its religious associations and faintly Indian flavour, the far-off sky, bring out the nature of autumn.

Senryu is on the whole irreligious; religion is at best weakness,

at worst superstition. God watches our sufferings, not with pity, not with pleasure, not with indifference, but with *interest*.

辻切を見ておはします地藏尊

古

Someone trying his sword on a chance wayfarer,

Jizô

Calmly gazing on.

A man cuts down and slashes to death an innocent and to him unknown man, to see if the sword he has bought is of good quality or not. Jizô,<sup>1</sup> a stone statue by the wayside, stands looking on with no change of expression, doing nothing to help the unfortunate or punish the guilty.

Another example, also connected with Buddhism :

ゆうれいになつてもやはり鵜を遣ひ

古

He became a ghost,

But all the same,

Manipulating the cormorants.

In the Nô play *The Cormorant Keeper*, 鵜飼, Nichiren meets the ghost of a cormorant keeper, who asks him to save him from the pains of the next world which will come from his profession of fishing. Nichiren tells him to demonstrate his skill, and afterwards he will pray for his soul. The author of the senryu sneers at the inquisitiveness of Nichiren in asking the man to show how he uses the cormorants to catch the fish.

5. Haiku is in a certain way idealistic and romantic; it tells the truth, but not the whole truth.

---

1. God of mercy, patron of children and travellers. His statue stands usually in very lonely places.

古御所の蓬にまぢる牡丹かな

鳴雪

In the old palace grounds,

Peonies grow

Among the mugwort.

*Meisetsu*

Weeds, and flowers of glory are growing together between the ancient palaces which in the fading of their magnificence have taken on a profounder and more subtle splendour. Time and place are one; the past is here in the present. Man and nature are one; all human history is there in the peonies and the mugwort. This haiku is in the Chinese style, being Japanese only in the form. The Japanese poem, however, avoids the diffuseness and sentimentality of the Chinese. In the following Chinese prose-poem, the chrysanthemums are substituted for the peonies, with a feeling of dreariness that is absent from Meisetsu's verse:

狐眠敗砌。兔走荒台。

盡是當年歌舞之地。露冷黃花。

煙迷衰草。悉屬旧時爭之場。

盛衰何常。強弱安住。念之令人心灰。

A fox sleeps on the desolate palace stairs;

A hare sports in the ruined hall,

Once the scene of song and dance.

The dew-drops hang cold on the yellow flowers;

Mist wanders over the withered grasses

Where of old a battle was fought.

Do not all things rise and fall?

Where are the victors, where are the vanquished?

When we think of this, our hearts turn to ashes.<sup>1</sup>

Senryu will not let us leave this world, will not allow us to go back to the past. It does not give us this sweetly false, self-pitying delight.

1. *Saikontan*, Part 2, No. 69.

Senryu tells the whole truth, but in so doing, something of the delicacy, the volatile life is crushed and shrivelled.

琴やめて薪の多くべ引給ふ

古

She stops playing the harp,  
And takes away  
Some of the fire-wood.

The lady is playing the *koto*, or long harp, and seems absorbed in her aristocratic and aesthetic occupation, but no, she stops, and going into the kitchen, removes part of the excessive amount of firewood beneath the stove. This verse is faintly cynical. It begins like a Chinese poem or *waka*, but steps out of it into the real world.

As an example of the treatment of historical subjects we may take the following, in which the serious and literary hyperbole of the historian is parodied by the irresistible writer of *senryu*:

清盛のいしやははだかで脈をとり

古

Kiyomori;  
The doctor who feels his pulse  
Is naked.

In the *Heike Monogatari*, we have the following passage, describing the illness of Kiyomori in 1181, from which he died after eight days:

. . . the heat of his body was like a burning fire, so that if anyone came within eight or ten yards of him, the heat was unbearable. When water was poured on him from a pipe, it flew off again hissing in clouds of steam and spray, as though it had struck red-hot iron or stone, and the water that did strike him burst into flames so that the whole chamber was filled with whirling fires and thick black smoke.

The *senryu* says that the doctor who attended him must have taken



off all his clothes to be able to sit by him and feel his pulse. This treatment is better than mere parody; it is rather a *reductio ad absurdum*. Contrast this with the following haiku:

須磨寺やふかぬ笛きく木下やみ 芭蕉  
 I heard the unblown flute  
 In the shadows beneath the trees  
 Of the Temple of Suma. Bashô

Bashô saw at this temple the flute that Atsumori, 1169-84, used to play before his death, one of the most tragic in Japanese history.

6. Senryu picks up everything that haiku drops. It sinks to very low levels, but

Nature, with equal mind,  
 Sees all her sons at play;

and senryu follows Nature into the Yoshiwara:

大門を出る病人は百一ツ 古  
 Of a hundred  
 Who go out of the Great Gate,  
 Only one gets well.

The Great Gate is the entrance to the Yoshiwara. Of those who depart from it, few there are who recover from their diseases.

Senryu not only "debunks" the romantic hero, and takes the guilt off the poetic gingerbread, it parodies haiku itself.

煮うり屋の柱は馬に喰はれけり 古  
 The post  
 Of the cheap eating-house  
 Was eaten by the horse.

This is a parody of Bashô's

路ばたの木樺は馬に喰はれけり

The Rose of Sharon  
By the road-side,  
Was eaten by my horse.

Other examples of parody:

いざさらば居酒屋のあるところまで 古

Now then!  
Right up to  
The wine shop!

This is a parody of Bashô's

いざさらば雪見にころぶところまで

Now then,  
Let's go snow-viewing  
Till we tumble over!

Another parody of the same verse:

雪見には馬鹿と氣のつくところまで 古

Snow viewing,—  
Till we tumble to the fact  
That we are fools.

There is a well-known verse by Kyorai:

何事ぞ花見る人の長刀

What's the meaning of it,—  
Carrying a long sword  
While flower-viewing!

A parody, by Hammonsens, 半文銭:

何事そ齒を抜く人の長刀

What's the meaning of it,—

Carrying a long sword

When you're going to have a tooth out?

An almost blasphemous parody is the following:

新造の夢は廊下をかけ廻り

古

The young wife's dreams

Wander

Over the corridor.

This is a parody of Bashô's famous death-verse:

旅に病で夢は枯野をかけ廻る

Ill on a journey,

My dreams wander

Over a withered moor.

But senryu is parody in a deeper sense of the word. It shows us the world as a parody of what we imagine it to be, or wish that it were, what orthodox religion says it is, the world of saints, sages and philosophers. In Lord Jeffrey's review of the *Rejected Addresses*, he says:

The imitation lets us more completely into the secret of the original author, and enables us to understand far more clearly in what the peculiarity of his manner consists than most of us would ever have done without this assistance.

If we say "Original Author" we get some idea of the work of senryu, for it lets us understand the "peculiarity of His manner." As the hymn puts it,

He works in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform.

Shiki has a fair number of haiku of this kind, for example:

神田大火  
陽炎や三千軒の家のあと  
The Great Fire of Kanda  
Over the ruins  
Of three thousand houses,—  
Heat waves.<sup>1</sup>

When the criticism is expressed directly, intellectuality alone remains:

目に見えぬ神なればこそ信じられ  
God is believed in,  
Because  
He can't be seen. *Shimpei*

7. Haiku are tender; senryu are (usually) tough.

ほろほろと山吹散るか瀧の音 芭蕉  
Trembling, fluttering,—  
Are the petals of the mountain rose falling,  
In the sound of the waterfall? *Bashô*

This is a waterfall formed by a river in the mountains of Yoshino. The flowers of the mountain rose are quivering as if about to fall. The trembling of the yellow blossoms with the trembling of the ground as the water thunders down the ravine,—there is a world of motion in a petal of the flower, and the heart of the poet trembles as it falls.

1. These "heat waves" are usually the wavering of the landscape over the warm earth of spring, the season of poetry and beauty.



破垣やわざと鹿子のかよひ道

曾良

The broken fence,—

Left on purpose

As a path for the fawn.

Sora

The fence, which has fallen down, has not been mended, because the owner, seeing that the young deer wandered into the garden, left it open for them to pass into the garden when they liked. The poetry is not so much in the owner's desire to see the pretty, shy creatures, but to let them do as they please, in Japanese, "to have them live."

鷹の目も今や暮れぬと啼く鶉

芭蕉

The hawk's eyes

Now darkened,

The quails are chirping.

Bashô

Some see in this verse Bashô's sympathy with the weaker creature. It is not this which we feel in this verse, but the waves of the ocean of life as they surge and recede. It is like breathing in and breathing out. When one form of life sleeps, another wakes. This is the true tenderness of haiku. Contrast the following senryu, the vision that sees men as they really are, the hawk's eyes that are never darkened:

賭場の犬質屋の門にまつてゐる 古

The body-guard of the

gambling house

Is waiting at the gate

Of the pawn shop.

A man who went to a gambling house gambled away all his money and even his clothes. He takes his clothes to the



pawn-shop, the body-guard of the gambling house going with him. The picture is of the entrance of the pawn-shop with the body-guard standing outside.

Haiku may fall into weakness, and the decay of life; senryu into cruelty.

古琴や鼠出ゆく春の暮

曉台

The old *koto*;

A mouse comes out;

An evening of spring. *Kyôdai*

There is a strange and tenuous relation between the age of the *koto*, a kind of harp, its nature, the mouse, and the spring evening. In all there is something degenerate, something of death and weariness, something secret and dark.

花見から帰れば家は焼けてゐる

剣花坊

Back from the flower-viewing,—

Their house

Is burnt to the ground! *Kenkabô*

This senryu is heartless, and yet it is poetry. Life is like this. The warmth of the sun brings out the cherry blossoms; and it dries the house, so that it burns briskly. There is a sameness, but also what a violence of difference, in the flowers, their faint perfume and pinkness, and the blackened stumps of pillars and posts.

8. Senryu is more intellectual than haiku, in the sense that it says everything there is to say. Haiku is satisfied with little:

松風の軒をめぐりて秋暮れぬ

芭蕉

The wind from the pine trees

Blows round the eaves:

Autumn is over. *Bashô*

When haiku is intellectual, it is rather naïve:

蛇くふと聞けばおそろし雉の聲 芭蕉

They say the pheasant eats the snake:  
How fearful, now,  
Its voice! *Bashô*

At other times haiku only appears to be intellectual:

黄昏の月何処にか梅の影 虚子

Twilight;  
The shadow of the plum tree,—  
Where is the moon? *Kyoshi*

This is an experience which everyone has had. All day there have been shadow and sunlight under the plum tree. It grows dark, and darker. And suddenly, as it were, there is the shadow of the plum tree on the ground beneath it. Where there is shadow there is light, and this must be the light of the moon.

This verse, or at least, the explanation of it, has an intellectual, cause-and-effect quality that is the antithesis of poetry. But this syllogistic form is a mere appendage of the poem, which is in praise of the moon, its mystery. Unseen, unwearying in its shining, shining, like the sun, upon the just and upon the unjust, with us when we know it not.

水流元入海。  
月落不離天 (禪林句集)

The water flows, but back into the ocean;  
The moon sinks, but is ever in heaven.

It must be clearly understood, however, that senryu, as poetry, is also non-intellectual, since it represents an instantaneous perception of a

relation between things, which is not that of cause and effect, but a vital one.

目についた女房この頃鼻につき 古

He now turns up his nose

At the wife

That caught his eye.

This is only verbal and intellectual. Contrast this with the next, where the intellectual element brings out the character of the woman:

家賃より高い染賃著る女房 古

His wife,—

Her clothes-dyeing bill

Higher than the rent!

In the next, the intellect has been subdued into the (poetic) element the senryu writer worked in:

女房を怖がるやつは金が出来 古

The chap

Who's afraid of his wife,

Makes money.

This is a picture of the life of a vast number of married people, in the United States especially.

9. Haiku avoids hyperbole, all violent scenes and emotions; senryu takes in all these, especially sex, and the relations between men and women. It flourishes even in vulgarity, but like *haiku*, has also great delicacy of feeling:

ぬひものを少しよせるも礼儀なり 古



Putting the needle-work  
Just a little aside,  
Is also good manners.

When the visitor comes in, she just gives the needle-work a little push; it does not enlarge the sitting space, but shows the feeling, to make the guest welcome and comfortable.

Take the following also :

小まくらのしまりかげんに目をふさぎ 古

As the *komakura*  
Is being tightened,  
She shuts her eyes.

The *komakura*, a "small pillow," is a piece of wood put at the root of the hair when it is dressed in the Japanese style. This shutting of the eyes is taken rightly to be of a delicate significance that can be expressed only by stating the bare fact.

Another example of minuteness of observation, or rather, to speak more exactly, of attending to what everyone notices but few see the value of, is the following :

はこの子命をすくふ左り利き 古

Playing battledore and shuttlecock,  
She saves her life  
By changing to the left hand.

The writer of the senryu is struck by the way in which the girl in her bright kimono changes the battledore from the right to the left hand in order to reach the shuttlecock.

10. In haiku, the reader's coöperation is necessary. This is partly because haiku often bring together extremely remote things.

人病むやひたと來て鳴く壁の蟬

虚子

The sick man ;

A cicada

Crouching on the wall.

Kyoshi

*Hita to kite* means that the cicada has come to the wall of the sick-room and is standing on it, but very close, pressing his body tightly to it, making the strong sizzling sound. The voice of the insect is in sound what the life of the sick man is in feeling, and the peculiar way in which the cicada sticks close to the wall intensifies its deep, inexplicable affinity with the sickness.

山寺の宝物見るや花の雨

虚子

Looking at the treasures

Of the mountain temple ;

Rain on the cherry-blossoms. Kyoshi

The poet has gone to a temple deep in the mountains. He is looking at the Buddhist images, the hanging scrolls and other ancient treasures of the temple. Outside, rain is falling all around ; the cherry blossoms are wet with it. There is some distant connection between the damp cherry flowers and the great works of the past ; and the more distant, the deeper.

In *senryu* everything is done for us, and with ease we see the contradictions and paradoxes of human life.

腸を吐き出すやうな夏の犬

古

The summer dog

Seems as if

Bringing up his entrails.

It is one of the hottest days of summer,



and the dog is panting so deeply that he seems as if about to vomit his internal organs. The connection between the heat and the dog and his profound yawns and panting is clear.

11. The difference between the humour of haiku and of senryu is obvious, but far from easy to state in words. Both lie to a great extent in contradiction and paradox, but senryu is the easily seen opposition of intention and result, ideal and real, body and spirit, dignity and impudence. The humour of haiku is much fainter, yet deeper, older, born before our day, discovered rather than created, most there when least noticed. In the following, the humour is distinctly perceptible, but so delicate as to be inseparable from the haiku:

春寒く葱の折れふす品かな

太 祇

Spring is cold;

In the field,

The leeks lie prostrate.

Taigi

This has something in it reminiscent of Crabbe and his descriptions of the scenery of rocky coasts and barren fields. We feel the power of nature even when the leeks do not stand up in vigorous green, but lie flat on the ground in a dejection that is remotely comical.

みそささいきよろきよろ何ぞおとしたか 一茶

The wren,

Is looking about,—

“Have you dropped something?” Issa

This verse gives us the nature of the wren, its somewhat jerky, twitching movements, its lack of poise. Also, through the colloquial language and popular tone, Issa has made us feel familiar to the wren. He has got rid of that false “wonder” of poetry which has coloured so much of English verse.

足早の提灯を追ふ寒さかな

虚子

Following behind  
The swift footed lantern,—  
How cold it was!

Kyoshi

A man in front is carrying a lantern on this cold, dark night. He also is cold and is hurrying along, and the man behind must hasten to keep up with him. This increases the feeling of cold.

鶏の空時つくる野分かな

虚子

The cock tells the hour  
In the evening  
Autumn storm.

Kyoshi

The cock is supposed to tell the hour of dawn, but in this case, it suddenly crows in the dusk, when the autumn tempest is tearing off the leaves from the trees, making the houses shudder. Its cry therefore has an uncanny forboding sound quite different from its usual, somewhat empty cheerfulness.

It is not necessary here to quote examples of humour in senryu.

12. Senryu and haiku have another quality which is hard to name, but which we may call *transcendence*, in the sense that the senryu poet stands above all things and persons, times and places.

Take these examples of transcending;

Propriety:

盗人の糞を見てゐる立ちのまま

古

The thief's dung;<sup>1</sup>  
Standing there,  
And looking at it.

1. It was believed that if a thief left his excretion in the hall, the family would not wake.



## Humanity:

鶏が欠伸をしたとつんぽいひ

古

"The cock  
Has gaped!"  
Says the deaf man.

## Theology:

南無女房乳をのませに化けてこい

古

"O my deceased wife!  
Come back from the dead,  
And give the baby some milk!"

## Pity:

人魂のいじけて飛ぶはかかり人

古

The jack-o-lantern  
Goes cowering along:  
He was a parasite.<sup>1</sup>

人魂の頓死とみへて矢の如し

古

The jack-o-lantern;  
He must have died a sudden death,—  
It goes like an arrow!<sup>2</sup>

## Authority:

汝らは何を笑ふと隠居の屁

古

"And what may you all  
Be laughing at, may I ask?"  
The retired master's fart.

1. This is the spirit of the dead man, who was a dependent when alive.

2. His spirit left the body so quickly, it is still moving at full speed.

## Learning:

寂寞として先生は河豚を喰ふ

古

The teacher

Seriously

Eats the globe-fish.

The transcendence of haiku is a kind of other-worldliness. It omits all that seems to refuse to enter into the world of poetry. The transcendence of senryu is in its being beyond emotion, custom, ways of thinking, morality, religion, race, above humanity,—indeed, above poetry itself. All is seen as necessary, *as it is*.

13. Democracy (a word that nowadays means whatever one wants it to) implies two things all important to the human spirit, *respect* and *criticism*. Haiku shows the profound respect the Japanese have for all things animate and inanimate. This is the foundation of poetry and religion. As soon as a man loses this, he ceases to be a human being. In senryu, the other quality, the critical spirit is found to an extent that would be difficult to parallel in world literature. In particular, it may be noted, senryu speaks of Japanese history, of the gods and the great historical personalities in a way that would be hardly possible in other countries. For example, Amaterasu Omikami, Goddess of the sun and the light, was visited by her brother Susano-o, who behaved insolently to her, whereupon she hid herself in a cave. The senryu is:

女神先づ叱かれ玉ふ世の教へ

古

The goddess

Was first scolded,—

A lesson for us in this world.

The senryu writer, disregarding these “historical” facts, pretends that

the goddess was scolded, and that this was the first example of its kind in the history of the Japanese, an example that has been followed ever since by women, who when grumbled at, sulk in their boudoir until enticed out.

Other examples:

大和竹とも云ひそうな御仕打

古

"Yamato take,"—

His behaviour

Sounds like that!

Yamatotakeru no mikoto (81-113), third son of the Emperor Keikō, is the most famous hero of legendary times. Dressed as a woman, for example, he killed the chief of the Kumaso. Here the senryu writer says contemptuously of him, "His name, 'Japanese bamboo' sounds rough and wild like his character."

肩で息きし乍ら韓を攻め玉ひ

露 水

Breathing with her back,

She attacked

Korea.

*Shakusui*

This senryu concerns the Empress Jingu (170-269)<sup>1</sup> who conquered the three Kingdoms of Korea: Shiragi, Koma, and Kudara. At this time she was pregnant, and this is what is referred to in "breathing with her back."

民草の烟りを笏で数へられ

露 草

The smoke of the people

Is measured

By his sceptre.

*Rosō*

1. Other dates are given.

This is a quite morally irreverent reference to the Emperor Nintoku (313-399), the most benevolent of all the Japanese emperors. He is usually pictured looking over the city of Osaka, noting sadly how little smoke is rising from his people's homes. The senryu writer facetiously supposes he is measuring the amount of smoke with the sceptre he is holding up.

There is a story concerning the meeting of Saigyô-Hôshi (1118-1190), the greatest of monk-poets, with Yoritomo, the first Minamoto Shôgun. At the end of their talk Yoritomo presented Saigyô with a silver cat. He gave it to a child playing at the Shôgun's gate. Senryu concerning this incident are:

千本も煙管の出来る猫を呉れ 古

He was given a cat  
A thousand pipes  
Could be made of.

ぶち殺しても金になる猫を呉れ 古

Even if you beat it to death,  
The cat he was given  
Would turn into money.

西行も初手は鼻づら擦つて見 古

Even Saigyô at first  
Couldn't help  
Rubbing the cat's nose.

It should be pointed out that there are hundreds of examples of such disrespectful senryu, ancient and modern.

14. Nothing brings out the difference between senryu and haiku more clearly than their relation to the subject of sex. To haiku,



sex hardly exists; to senryu, it is all-pervading. There are, it is true, a few semi-love verses by Kikaku, Ransetsu, Buson, Kyoshi, but they amount to nothing. Senryu is concerned above all things with the vital relation of man to man and man to woman. A great many verses deal with the subject of the Yoshiwara, and something must be said about this matter.

In the first place, due to the influence of Confucianism, Japanese home life had become extremely stiff and formal, little or no intellectual or emotional intercourse being possible between young people of the opposite sex, or even between husband and wife. Married couples were never seen together, especially in the street, and the only place where a man could meet a woman freely was at the houses of prostitution. These places were of all kinds, but the women employed there were often clever and artistic, and had picked up in various ways an education denied to their more virtuous sisters.

Further, from the point of view of senryu, the Yoshiwara was a place where human feeling was less disguised than elsewhere. For the study of human psychology, no place could be better. It did not, of course, encourage a very lofty view of human nature, but it must be remembered that people are not so very different in one place or another.

As for the institution of public prostitution, like war or slavery or sweating or racial discrimination, it is indefensible, and should be abolished. Nevertheless, so long as these continue to exist in the world, we cannot deny ourselves whatever profit is bound up with these institutions; as an example, the very senryu in question. The attitude of the senryu writer towards the Yoshiwara is that of God, who does not condone or condemn, but takes note of the sufferings, the pleasures, the vices and virtues of mankind as they are manifested in such places. It is tragic, it is comic, it is so,—there is nothing more to be said than this concerning any phase of life. These three elements, the grievous, the humorous, and the inevitable,

enter into all the best senryu on this subject.

In this respect we see more clearly, perhaps, than in any other, that senryu are *works of art*. To reject senryu concerning the Yoshiwara on moral grounds, would be comparable to rejecting Hamlet because he planned and performed murder. It will be said that Shakespeare did not approve of murder. This may well be so, as far as he himself and his own actions were concerned, but it is hardly possible to say that he *disapproved* of it in Hamlet and Othello and Macbeth. Ripeness, not morality, is all.

15. By Zen we mean a state of Self-consciousness, in which though we know and are fully conscious that I am I, and the flower is the flower, we are also deeply conscious of one life, one existence rather, moving and flowing in and between us. With Zen as a method of attaining this state we are not now concerned, and for the purpose of poetry we must emphasize one particular aspect of Zen as a way of living, its simplicity, directness and non-intellectuality.

Lawrence said, "Religion is an uncontrollable sensual experience."<sup>1</sup> "Uncontrollable" means that it is involuntary, beyond the conscious will; "sensual" means non-rational. We may substitute the word poetry for religion, and haiku for poetry, and see clearly the relation between Zen and haiku. In both there is this experience of the irreducible individuality of ourselves and the things around us, and at the same time, and only at this time, of the blending, fading, universal nature of the perceiving subject and the perceived object. We may quote Lawrence again to illustrate this matter:

(What is a tree?)

The tree gathers up earth-power from the dark bowels of the earth, and a roaming sky-glitter from above.

(What does the tree do to me?)

---

1. *New Mexico*.

I am conscious that it helps to change me vitally. I am even conscious that shivers of energy cross my living plasm, from the tree, and I become a degree more like the tree.

(What do I do to the tree?)

And the tree gets a certain shade and alertness of my life, within itself.

Every error is an image of truth; every distortion is under law. Can an empty cigarette packet be brought into poetry, can it be made *alive*? It can:

And who in solitude like this,  
Can say the unclean mongrel's bones  
Which stick out, splintered, through the loose  
Side of a gravel pit, are not  
The precious relics of some saint,  
Perhaps miraculous? Or that  
The lettering on this Woodbine-  
Packet's remains ought not to read  
*Mene mene tekel upharsin?*<sup>1</sup>

In the same way the emptiness and harshness of life, its meanness, its very lack of poetry and Zen are expressed so that we feel the "calm soul of all things" within them all. Once more,

Nature, with equal mind,  
Sees all her sons at play;

and senryu causes us to realize the meaning of this "all." Senryu picks up all that haiku rejects. Indeed, it avoids the poetical as if it were some deathly gas in which the real cannot exist. It will not allow itself to be carried away by any enthusiasms, for it wishes "to

1. David Gascoyne, *The Gravel-Pit Field*.



see life steadily, and to see it whole." Yet it is not spiteful. Its motto is "depellare superbos" but also "parcere subjectis," to put down the proud, and spare the oppressed.

In haiku, the Zen is an entering into the life of Nature, just wanting what Nature wants, no more, and no less, so that what happens, the blooming of the flowers and their falling, is the fulfilment of the secret desire of our inmost heart. In senryu we are in the world of man, a stream of tendency that is muddied by morality, will, intellect, sentimentality, all the things that are so pleasantly absent in the world of nature. But here also we can live by Zen, as the lotus lives in the mud, indeed, *is* the mud. Haiku has what is called *sabishisa*, loneliness, which means a kind of self-lessness, and quietness of eye and ear, avoiding all violence, hyperbole, folly and crime. Senryu, on the other hand, is like a mirror that reflects all things without discrimination; it has a light of its own that shines in the dark places of the mind. The one thing that senryu rejects is, as said above, the poetical *per se*, haiku, for senryu believes in the *whole* truth, and includes the unpoetical, the anti-poetical together with the poetical. It never fails to see the man in the saint, the worm in the bud, nature red in tooth and claw. Thousands of senryu have been written about money,<sup>1</sup> but not a single haiku. It is the root of all evil, no doubt, but the point is that is a *root*; it belongs to human nature no less, perhaps more than the flowers of spring and the moon of autumn.

これ小判たつた一晚居てくれろ

古

Ah, *koban*,

If only you would stay with me  
Even one night!

1. In 川柳江戸貨幣文化, about three hundred senryu dealing with money are collected, classified and analysed.



A *koban* was a gold coin of some value. Whenever he received one, which was rarely, he had to use it at once to pay the rice merchant or the tax-collector. He would like to have been able to keep one in his possession for just one day.

16. Religion, most deeply conceived, is concerned with one problem and one alone: is life worth living? On the one hand so much suffering, as far as we can see, useless and meaningless; on the other, all the values of heroism, integrity of mind, poetical experiences, the wonders of art and music, the manifold interests of nature and science. The average man decides one way or the other, usually on the optimistic side; as Matthew Arnold says, the world has made up its mind *to live*.

But this is with the conscious mind; what people have in their inmost heart is another thing. Even the spiritually enlightened feel sometimes that God has forsaken them. Saigyô in one of his best-known *waka* declares:

心なき身にもあはれは知られけり  
 鷗立つ沢の秋の夕暮

Even in the mind of the mindless one<sup>1</sup>  
 Arises grief,  
 When the snipe wings up from the marsh  
 In the autumn evening.

The man who is above all worldly concerns, who lives a life in harmony with God and man,—even he feels a kind of loneliness, a kind of despair when he sees the snipe rise from the swamp into the misty, darkening sky of autumn. This is the view also of haiku, that there is something deeply tragic in time and space, in the human as opposed to the divine.

---

1. The enlightened man, the saint.

But senryu is above even this. Nothing is sacred; man is the measure of all things:

西行の嚏で鳴の歌が出来

古

With Saigyô's sneeze,  
He can make a verse  
About the snipe.

The senryu writer says that the snipe suddenly rose from the marsh because Saigyô sneezed. Without sneezing, poetry is impossible. This is true, and it is not a truth that kills. It gives us a certain kind of sweetness and light that is lacking in all -isms and -ologies; it bestows on us a "sad lucidity of soul."

17. The question whether senryu is poetry or not has been debated by Japanese critics ever since the inception of senryu, and there seem to have always been three schools of thought: those who say senryu is poetry, those who say it is not, and those who say it doesn't signify whether it is or not. It may be easily seen that the second class of critics has a poor opinion of senryu, and as was mentioned before, Japanese people, that is, the people that matter, have a rather contemptuous attitude to senryu similar to that formerly held with regard to ukiyoé. This is partly due, in the case of senryu, to the fact that there is a great deal of chaff mixed with the grain, or to use a more appropriate metaphor, many rotten apples among the good ones. But to go back to the question whether or not senryu is poetry. It has been truly said that in the Kingdom of Poetry there are many mansions, and the problem before us may be more profitably expressed,—what kind of poetry (if any) is senryu? Then after deciding this matter, we may proceed to enlarge, if need be, our idea of poetry from our experience of it in senryu.

If it were accepted that haiku is poetry, it would not be difficult

to prove that senryu is. Take, for example, the following senryu:

ブリキ屋が寝ると一度に夜が更ける 半 治

When the tin-smith goes to bed,  
Suddenly  
It gets late.

*Hanji*

Living next door to the tin-smith, there is a great racket all day long, but one does not notice it. The noise continues until late in the evening, for he has to work long hours to make a living. It stops. Becoming suddenly aware of the quietness, we realize, at the same moment, that it is late. This fact is not deduced from the cessation of hammering and half-musical rattling; the lateness is perceived *in* it, simultaneously with it. In other words, it is a poetical, not a scientific or psychological experience. Like all spiritual life, it runs parallel to cause and effect, is congruent with a logically framed nexus, but in an essentially different realm. It is the life of this world that poetry portrays for us, and senryu are poetry in so far as they do this. Sometimes, as was pointed out before, senryu forgets its essentially sardonic, ironic character and gives us a haiku-like poetry:

二三点渦を散らしてかも浮み

翫

Making two or three eddies,  
The wild duck  
Floats there.

*Hisago*

This is a kind of dynamic picture of the wild duck just after it alights on the water of the lake. It touches the water with its feet once or twice as it comes down and the glassy surface is marked. This senryu is indistinguishable from haiku. Sometimes the cynical element is almost too strong for the poetry:

絞首台七千萬が一人欠け

太郎丸

On the scaffold ;  
Seventy million,—  
Now one less.

*Tarômaru*

Sometimes the material is too crude, too shallow, for us to feel strongly and deeply and permanently the experience of the author :

奉迎の鼻先きへ来る馬の尻

Welcoming the Emperor,—  
Right in front of my nose  
Comes a horse's hindquarters !

There is humour, there is truth, there is even "a criticism of life" here, but the blocking of a man's view of a procession by the rump of a policeman's horse does not go far enough or deep enough. Mercutio says, of his wound, as he lies dying:

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door ; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve.

This is poetry, and it is the poetry of senryu.

### Conclusion

Senryu is the whole truth, but emphasizes the unpopular, the motives which are rationalized, the sordid side of life. It sometimes points out things which are neglected or unnoticed, far from satire or cynicism. For example :

待つてゐる女ただただ地を見つめ

清 美

The waiting girl  
Looks at the ground  
Only.

*Seibi*

But senryu is not The Whole Truth, for it omits all that haiku



includes. Haiku and senryu together, there express the nature of life, but there is an irreducible intellectual element in verbal expression which seems to make it impossible for literature to do what music does, be and say two things at once. In verse we have either idealism or realism, classicism or romance, cynicism or sentimentality, creation or discovery. There have been attempts, it is true, to combine the virtues of these pairs in one verse, not unsuccessfully. On the part of haiku we have noticed examples from the earliest times, reaching their culmination in Issa. Here are some examples from senryu, in all of which we find the poetical together with the real, the whole world of the transcendent spirit with the half-world of the dichotomous intellect:

日の長さ琵琶の買手が二人来る 古

The length of the day!

Two people came

To buy *biwa*.<sup>1</sup>

元日の町はまばらに夜があける 古

In the streets of New Year's Day,

Here and there

Dawn is breaking.<sup>2</sup>

夢の世に夢を大事に二日の夜 古

In this dream-world,

Dreams are a matter of grave concern,

On Second Night.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. A kind of lute. 2. People get up late.

3. On the second night of the New Year, the "first dream" shows one's good or bad fortune for the following twelve months.

花の留守悠然として虱を見

古

While they are out cherry-blossom-viewing,—  
Quietly, calmly,  
Looking for lice.

牛方のあきらめて行く儼雨

古

The cow-herd  
Walks along  
resignedly,  
In the sudden shower.



There used to be a great deal of talk about “significant form” in art, and this had a salutary effect upon art criticism, if not upon practice, but it was later remembered, or rediscovered, that the subject of a picture is not a matter of indifference, that the Annunciation is in some ways a better subject than a butcher’s shop. What we want from art and poetry is some kind of *human warmth*. Strangely enough, this human warmth also has a *shape*, a significant form, and when we feel and see both, we are fulfilled in our life.

In the same way, it is easy to speak of humour, satire, the light touch, Zen, transcendence, but behind and through all these there must be, and is, in the best senryu, this same human warmth, a warmth that is not commiseration or sentimentality, not the *lachrimae rerum*, but under and in all the sharp criticism and malicious perspicacity, that tragic integrity of mind which feels as painful but does not reject, which sees the good and the true and the beautiful, but is not overwhelmed by them.

## THE ORIGINS AND TECHNIQUE OF SENRYU

The immediate origin of senryu was Maekuzuke, 前句附, which, arising in the Genroku Era, 1689-1703, continued into the Temmei Era, 1781-89, spreading among the people, and appealing to a still greater number than did haiku, which had seen the beginning of its flourishing period a hundred years before with the advent of Bashô, 1644-1694, and Onitsura. It called itself literature, and indeed poetry, 詩, but its value is rather relative than absolute, relative to the senryu which arose from it. It was composed between the eighth month and the eleventh (according to the Lunar Calendar). A haiku master of critical ability was chosen, and he edited the verses collected. Here are some examples:

The tsukeku, 附句, is:

すましこそすれ すましこそすれ

With a straight face,  
A set face.

The maeku, 前句, is:

無いふりが金持至極上手なり

Pretending to have no money,  
The wealthy man  
Is extremely clever.

The second part is thus composed beforehand, and the first part afterwards. Together we get:

Pretending to have no money,  
The wealthy man  
Is extremely clever,



With a straight face,  
A set face.

Another, well-known example:

切りたくもあり 切りたくもなし  
I want to kill him, (cut it)<sup>1</sup>  
Yet I don't want to.

To this is added, as a kind of post-prefix:

盗人をとらへて見れば我子なり  
Catching the thief  
And looking at him,—  
My own son!

Also an alternative:

さやかなる月をかくせる花の枝  
Hiding  
The clear moon,—  
Branches of cherry blossoms.

Also:

心よきの矢の少し長いをば  
The arrow  
That suits me,  
Is a little long.

One of the selectors of the *maekuzuke* was Karai Hachiemon, 柄井八右衛門; his pen-name, Senryu, 川柳, "River Willow," became the name of the new form of verse. He seems to have belonged to

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1. *Kiru* can be taken in either sense, "to kill" or to simply "to cut."



the Danrin school of haiku, a school in opposition to which Bashō had set up his own, serious, spiritual, more or less mystical, yet objective school; but Hachiemon was better known as an excellent selector of maekuzuke. His death verse is:

木枯やあとで芽をふけ川やなぎ

The winter wind;—  
But bud in days to come  
O river willows!<sup>1</sup>

The way in which maekuzuke developed into senryu is parallel to the change from waka to haiku, the first seventeen syllables becoming independent of the following fourteen. It is of the utmost importance to notice, in this connection, that senryu, like haiku, implies in its very origins an echoing of meaning before and after the verse itself. It is part of a chain of thought and feeling and is long in significance though short in form. Both spring ultimately from the linked poem; both belong to the non-aristocratic ranks of the people. The inner distinction of haiku and senryu we have already dealt with.

The chief repository of earlier senryu is *Haifu Yanagidaru*, 俳風柳樽, the first collection of which was published the second year of Meiwa, 1765. Successive collections appeared, until by the 10th year of Tempo, 1839, a hundred and sixty had been published. The best of them are those from the first to the twenty-fourth inclusive. For various reasons, chiefly perhaps because of a change for the worse of popular sentiment and culture, the verses of the later collections are inferior, leaning towards the playful and comic and descending to lower levels.

Senryu degenerated into kyoku, 狂句, or Mad Poems, originated

1. This expresses a hope for the future prosperity of senryu ("river willows").

by the fourth of the poetic descendents of Senryu, 隠岐丸. An example of Mad Poems is the following:

箱へ入れすぎて娘を箱へ入れ                      古  
     Boxing up the daughter too much,  
     They put her  
     In a deal box.

This corresponds to the popular lines:

It was a cough that carried her off,  
 It was a coffin they carried her off in.

But the Japanese has the idea that the parents coddled her so much that she died of mere weakness, knowing nothing of life.

### *Vocabulary and Syntax*

Senryu has one peculiarity of expression which is difficult to explain to those unacquainted with Japanese. Unlike haiku, which end with nouns, or emotional exclamations, *kana*, *ya*, senryu end usually with an abbreviated form of the verb. This gives them a peculiarly sharp and pungent meaning. In the following translations, use is often made of the participial form, which is much weaker, but is non-committal in tense and number.

### *Poetic Brevity.*

This brevity is not so much in saying a great deal in seventeen syllables, though this can be and is done, but rather in seizing just the right part which is so much greater than the whole. For example:

祭から戻ると連れた子をくばり                      古  
     Coming back from the festival,  
     Parcelling out  
     The children he took.

*Personification*

Personification occurs seldom in haiku but often in senryu. A modern example:

自動車に今日の疲れを洗はれる 凡 柳  
 Today's fatigue  
 Being washed away  
 From the motor-car. Bonryû

*Colloquialisms*

From the beginning of senryu, colloquial language was realized to be ideal for the purpose:

何になりますと大工は切つてやり 古  
 "What's this for?"  
 Says the carpenter  
 As he cuts it off.

The carpenter wonders what the amateur is going to make of the plank or pole.

これはまあ招んだやうだと膳を出し 古  
 "Why, this looks as if I had invited you!"  
 He says,  
 As he puts out the small table.

The visitor has come by accident, but there are so many delicacies it looks like an invitation.

*The Composition of Senryu*

There is no necessity of knowing all the difficult names of insects and flowers and festivals, no special vocabulary or mannerisms.

In fact, the ease with which senryu can be composed, its fatal facility, has been its great drawback. Nevertheless, it can be said of senryu, what can be said of few or none of the other forms of expression, that everyone is capable of writing a few good ones, for everyone sees something of universal human nature in himself or those around him.

*Senryu as Portrayal of Customs and Manners.*

Senryu began in Edo among the business class, in the Meiwa Era, and portrays in this and succeeding times, the characters and manners of the people. Nowadays, many of these customs are no longer to be seen, and since those times, especially after the war, the character of the people of Tōkyō also has changed in some degree. Senryu have been extensively used as material for the study of ancient customs. One may mention the work of Nishihara Ryuu, 西原柳雨, who studied 100,000 senryu for the practices, superstitions and popular ideas contained therein. For example, as showing the keenness of the people of Edo for the first bonito, their gourmandise, and love of the first of things:

魚賣りぶたれた訳は供を割り 古

The reason the bonito seller

Was beaten,—

He cut across the line of attendants.

A Daimyō's procession is wending its way along the road in a leisurely manner, and the impatient fish-seller cannot wait until the end of it, but attempts to cross the road, and gets beaten for his pains.

錢のない非番は窓へ首を出し 古

Off duty,

And no money,

He sticks his head out of the window.



This portrays the wearisome life of the samurai of the lowest rank.

浪人の系図ばかりを食い残し

古

The masterless samurai  
Has eaten all  
But his family tree.

The samurai who is out of the service of a lord lives in dire poverty. He has sold everything that will fetch money. All that remains is the genealogical table of his descent. Even this he would sell if he could, but no one wants it.

Examples from the later Meiji Era :<sup>1</sup>

半鐘は近くどんより夜が明ける

緑 天

The fire bell is near-by ;  
An overcast sky  
Lightens.

*Ryokuten*

The nearness of the fire was shown by the number of strokes. If distant, one stroke; if very close, three strokes, as probably in the present verse. There being no danger, they stand at the gate watching the fire, until it begins to grow light in the eastern sky. The next verse really "dates:"

蓄音機不思議さうな二三人

冠 柳

Two or three people  
Looking astounded,—  
A phonograph !

*Kanryû*

Some verses that belong to the Taishô Era, 1912-25 :

1. The earlier Meiji period has few good senryu; this was partly due to the political conditions, the revolution and restoration; partly to the vogue of Mad Poems, *Kyôka*.

鉛筆と一緒にさげるビール拔

雲 雀

Carrying

A pencil,

And a beer-bottle opener.

*Hibari*

This is a picture of the café waitresses of the time. They always had a *sennuki* and pencil dangling from their aprons.

のろのろとした葬式の川がかけ

紋 太

The funeral procession

Creeping along,

My work gets behind.

*Monta*

Nowadays, like everything else, funerals are speedy, but at that time motorcars were not used, and the funeral procession went on foot. He has to spend the whole day at it, and his work suffers.

自轉車に乗れる産婆の受けがよし

長 城

A midwife

Who can ride a bicycle

Is in favour.

*Chôjô*

This is an example of increasing speediness.

三角の空地ガソリン注資所

南 枝

A triangular piece

Of waste ground,—

A gasoline filling-station.

*Nanshi*

A piece of land that could never in former times have been used for anything now comes into its own.

*Proscripts*

Older haiku often had proscripts, and some modern senryu also. In both cases, the proscrip is usually not absolutely essential but enlarges and clarifies the verse. A painful example of senryu, obviously imitated from foreign verse:

戀人を失ふ

チューリップ勝手な方に向いて咲き 照夫

On the Death of My Lover

The tulip

Blooms in the direction

It wants to.

*Teruo*

*Anonymity*

The anonymity of early senryu is a strange but significant characteristic. It suggests an indifference to fame, and a coöperative creative urge without parallel in the annals of modern literature. It reminds one of folk music, of the mediaeval church-builders and Bible illustrators.

*Principle of Selection*

There are about 120,000 Old Senryu, of which just over 17,000, the first twenty four collections, are the best. No art suffers more than senryu by the inclusion of poor quality verses. The right thing to do would be to exclude those which do not possess *all* those indispensable elements of sharp criticism, humour, humanity, reality, and universal significance. However, in the making of this book a number of verses have not been rejected, though they contain little more than some variety of humour. Life is a sad thing at best, and we cannot afford to let slip opportunities to smile or laugh.

*Conclusion*

Perhaps the best (unconscious) advocacy of senryu ever written is contained in a letter from R. L. Stevenson to W. E. Henley in 1884, when Stevenson was thirty four. It begins, "I keep better, but no great shakes yet," for he was dangerously ill from haemorrhage of the lungs, and lay for several weeks between life and death. He continues,

. . . . My view of life is essentially the comic . . . . And to me these things are essentially good; beauty touched with sex and laughter . . . . Tragedy does not seem to me to come off; and when it does, it does so by the heroic illusion; the anti-masque has been omitted; laughter, which attends on all our steps in life, and sits by the death-bed, and certainly redacts the epitaph, laughter has been lost from these great-hearted lies. But the comedy which keeps the beauty and touches the terrors of our life . . . . embraces the greatest number of elements of fate and character, and tells its story, not with the one eye of pity, but with the two of pity and mirth.

Senryu is "beauty touched with sex and laughter." It "attends on all our steps in life," and of all the arts, "embraces the greatest number of elements of fate and character," looking upon all things "with pity and mirth."





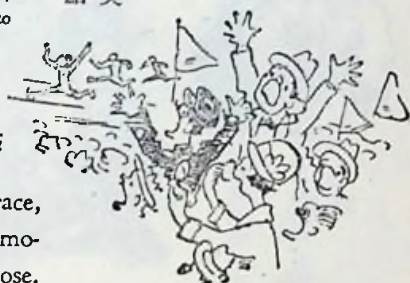
# SENRYU

## WOMEN

應援の中に彼女のコンパクト 鮎美  
Ouen no naka ni kanojo no kompakuto

In the cheering throng,  
The girl  
With her compact. *Ayumi*

Everybody is intent on the race,  
which is at its crisis. At this mo-  
ment a girl is powdering her nose.



口説かれて娘は猫にものを云ひ 古  
Kudokarete musume wa neko ni mono o i

The girl talks  
Only to the cat,  
Being made love to.



The girl does not dislike the man who  
is making love to her, but she talks to  
the cat to hide her embarrassment and conceal her feelings. "Don't  
you love me even a little?" he says to her. "What soft paws you  
have!" says the girl to the cat. But there is another, unspoken  
conversation going on between the two people.

團扇ばかり見て娘返事せず 牛耳郎  
Uchiwa bakari mite musume henji sezu

The girl  
Makes no answer,  
Only looks at her fan. *Gyūjirō*



There is a mystery here that encompasses all women, and will never be resolved.



似合つたと云はれて娘子を捨る 古

Niatta to iwarete musume ko o suteru



Told it becomes her,  
She gives the baby  
Back.

Feminine delicacy and shyness, so impossible to a mere man, are seen so clearly as the unmarried girl gives back the baby to the mother. Only in this bashfulness, a proper object of satire, can we see the bloom on the human soul. Only by humour can we preserve it from sentimentality and affectation.

丸ノ内島田にみんな振り返り 小次郎  
Marunouchi shimada ni minna furikaeri

In Marunouchi,  
Everyone looks back  
At the *Shimada*.

Kojirō

Marunouchi is the most modern and up to date part of Tōkyō, and thus the *Shimada*, a special form of Japanese hair-dressing, looks out of place. It was formerly used by girls of about eighteen, and by *geisha*.





その頃の女はいふがまゝになり

At that time,

Women

Were so obedient!

路 郎

Jirō

This senryu refers to women of past ages, so much more willing to please and be pleased than modern women.





Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, oriented vertically.



長いこと女がまたす洗面所 室風  
Nagaikoto onna ga matasu semmenjo

In the wash-room,  
How long  
She keeps them waiting!  
*Shippu*

Women are peculiarly and mad-  
deningly insensitive in such matters.



一日の機嫌も帯の締め心  
Ichinichi no kigen mo obi no shime-gokoro

古

The day's mood,  
In the tying  
Of the sash.

If she feels in a good temper the *obi* is tied neatly and firmly.  
If she is out of sorts, she ties it too tight or too loose.



男なら直に汲まうに水かきみ 古  
Otoko nara suguni kumouni mizu-kagami

If it were a man,  
He would soon finish  
drinking,—  
The water-mirror.

The girl cannot resist looking at herself  
in the water. The charm of this *senryu* lies  
in its polite indirectness.

焼芋を囲んで人を説くなり 映絲  
Yakiimo o kakonde hito o soshiru nari



Round the roast sweet-potatoes,  
Speaking ill  
Of other people. *Eishi*

These are two of the pleasures  
of life. Combined, they are some  
of the best that this world offers to women.

子を抱けば男に物が言ひ安し 古  
Ko o dakeba otoko ni mono ga ii-yasushi

Holding a baby,  
It is easy  
To talk to a man.

The baby is a kind of protection;  
it occupies the hands, it makes the man  
also feel at ease. In Old Japan es-  
pecially, a girl could hardly speak to  
a man, she was so retiring by nature  
and upbringing.



小説と自分ときりで泣いてゐる 涙艶  
Shousetsu to jibun to kiri de naite iru

With a story,  
And herself,  
Weeping. *Ruien*



There is just the story and herself,  
and she feels free to indulge in her  
lachrimose enjoyment. It is a kind of  
paradise.



惚れ惚れとする日のあつた鏡なり 豆坊  
Hore-bore to suru hi no atta kagami nari



Time was,  
When in this mirror  
I was charmed by myself.

*Mamebô*

Wrinkles and white hair now; black hair and smooth cheeks then. The mirror is unchanged, yet it is not the same mirror. The original says, "The mirror with the day when I was charmed."

此の邊が箆筭だつたと灰をかき 小次郎  
Kono hen ga tansu datta to hae o kaki

"My wardrobe  
Was about here";  
Scratching in the ashes. *Kojirô*



Their house was burnt down, and afterwards they went to see the remains. The wife began digging about with a piece of wood or something. Women cannot help saying and doing quite unnecessary and useless things. They cannot resign themselves to fate as men can.



我々婦人はと痩せつぽちが立ち 珍茶坊  
Wareware fujin wa to yaseppochi ga tachi

"We women . . . !"

A skinny creature  
Stands there. *Chinchabô*

It is no accident that most suffragettes and



women workers are unattractive people. Beautiful women have their privileges which they properly value more than their rights.



子が出来てからはあらはに肌を出し 笑子  
Ko ga dekite kara wa arawa ni hada o dashi

After she has a baby,  
She openly  
Exposes her body.

Shōshi

Japanese women, after they have had their first child, will expose their breasts in public without a second thought. This is a national custom, and perhaps a good one.

手拭を絞る女は口を曲げ  
Tenugui o shiboru onna wa kuchi o mage

家路郎

The woman  
Wringing out a towel,  
Grimaces.

Yajirō

The point of this senryu is that a man would not screw up his face in this way, not simply because he has more strength, but because he would not put his heart and soul into such a thing as washing.

女ばかり居て盗人の音にする 都門  
Onna bakari ite nusubito no oto ni suru

Being women only,  
They decide that the noise  
Was made by a burglar. Tomon



If there were a man there, the women would think nothing of the slight noise heard in an adjoining room, or suppose it to be a rat, but as they are all women, they get the most out of their fears.

江戸に育つ河豚の顔を知り

周 魚

Brought up at Fukagawa,

I know

What face the globe-fish have.

Shigyo

Fukagawa is the place nearest to the sea in Tokyo, and was famous for globe-fish, a great delicacy, but dangerous because of its poisonous character. People who live on the outskirts or Tôkyô have very few chances to see what a globe-fish is. Cowardly people don't eat it. This is the boasting of a man who was born in Fukagawa, who lives there and has eaten many globe-fish.







詐らぬ姿で女眠るなり  
Itsuwaranu sugata de onna nemuru nari

花冠坊

A woman,  
Asleep,—  
Without pretence. *Karembô*



While she is awake, a woman is always acting, more or less successfully. But when asleep, she looks herself, just as pretty or as ugly as she really is. This is true of men too, but of women more.

晝過ぎの娘は琴の弟子も取  
Hirusugi no musume wa koto no deshi mo tori

古

The girl past her prime,  
Takes in  
Pupils on the *koto*.

The "afternoon girl," that is, a young woman of twenty two or three, has no more chance of marrying, so in a half-hearted kind of way (represented by *mo*, in the original) she teaches the *koto* or harp to girls of the neighbourhood.

きやつきやつと騒ぐ膝ぎりの水 銀之助  
Kya' kya' to sawagu hiza-giri no mizu 銀之助

Fussing and frolicking about  
In the water,  
Knee-deep. *Ginnosuke*



Some women are wading through a stream. It is only knee-deep, but holding up their skirts with one hand, their shoes or clogs in the other, they chatter and giggle: "How cold it is!" "Aren't there a lot of stones!" "Be careful, or you'll fall in!" "Don't hurry, I can't go so quickly!" "Mind that



hole!" "Oh, what a fright I had!" "I told you to be careful." The difference between men and women is all seen in this snapshot of life.

道普請通る女が歌になり  
Michibushin touru onna ga uta ni nari

嬉 楽



The road-menders;  
The women passing by  
Turn into their songs. Kiraku

The gang of men sing as they lift and  
drop their picks all together.

"This girl is pretty—  
But won't look at me;  
That one is charming,  
But knows it too well."

There is something admirable in the way they can swallow and digest  
every female that passes by them.

國ばなし盡きれば猫の蚤をとり  
Kuni-banashi tsukireba neko no nomi o tori

古

The stories about home  
All finished,—  
Catching the cat's fleas.

These two people are women. One is a maid in Edo, and the other, perhaps her younger sister, has come up from the country. After she has told all the news of their home and village, they sit silent, thinking about it all, catching the cat's fleas as a kind of relaxation to their feelings.

女連れ少し散財して歸り  
Onna-zure sukoshi sanzai shite kaeri

飛 公

The women go home,  
After squandering  
A little money.

Hiko

If these had been men, they would have spent a good deal, perhaps all they had, but being women, a mean and cautious tribe, they eat some cakes and drink some tea, buy some powder and soap, and that is all.

髪がよく出来たでたすきやつと越し 古  
Kami ga yoku dekita de tasuki yatto koshi

Her hair done beautifully,

At last

She gets the *tasuki* over her head.

A *tasuki* is a sash or cord used for girding up the long sleeves of the kimono, which get in the way while working. After having had her hair arranged, it is quite difficult to get this cord over the head without disturbing the hair.



## CHILDREN

標本を運ぶ級長羨まれ  
 Hyouhon o hakobu kyuucho urayamare

黄子朗

The monitor

Carrying the specimens,—

They have heart-burnings.

Kôshirô

This verse shows us, with a painful veracity, the feelings of the elementary schoolboys. The face of the monitor is also visible, and that of the teacher engrossed in himself, and entirely ignorant of the real life of the children.



ソラ御出子は家中を綱渡り 花笑  
 Sora oide ko wa ie-juu o tsuna-watari

“Here now! Come along!”

The child walking

the tight-rope,

All over the house. Kashô

The child is walking for the first time, and takes such careful and unsteady steps that he looks like a man walking the tight-rope.

雨だれを手へ受けさせて泣きやませ  
 Amadare o te e ukesasete nakiyamase

古

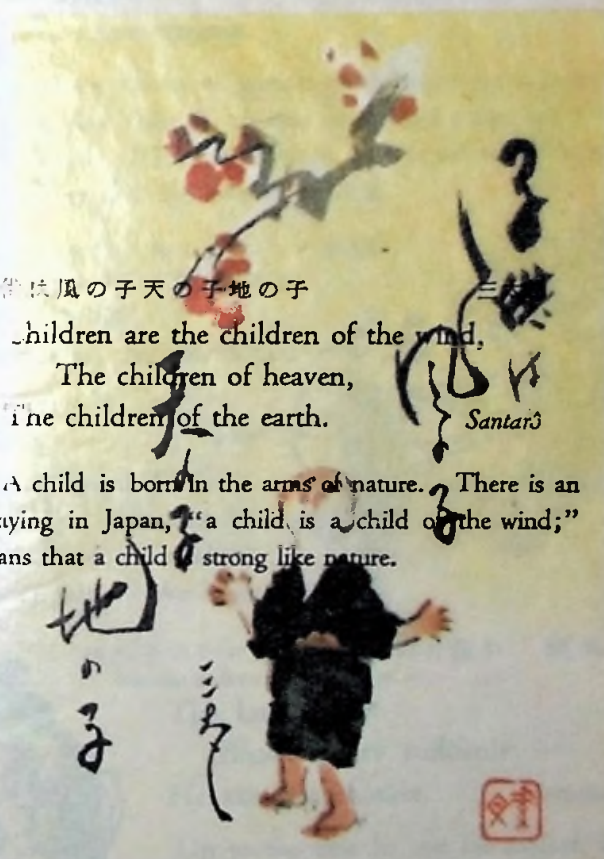
Letting him catch the rain drops

In his hand,

And stopping his crying.

The child has been crying for some time, and at last his mother goes on the verandah, and holding out his hand, gets him to catch the drops of rain falling from the eaves. It is so interesting to watch, and the feel of the water so peculiar, that he quite forgets to cry.





子供は風の子天の子地の子

Children are the children of the wind,  
The children of heaven,  
The children of the earth.

*Santarō*

A child is born in the arms of nature. There is an old saying in Japan, "a child is a child of the wind;" it means that a child is strong like nature.





親ゆへにまよふては出ぬ物狂ひ  
Oya yueni mayoute wa denu monogurui

古

They do not become  
Mad,  
For their parents.

There are many stories of parents going insane on account of love for children, but there is no case of a child going out of its mind for its parents. This verse brings out the difference between the love of parents and the love of children.

人情が棄子を無駄に囲んでる  
Ninjou ga sutego o muda ni kakonderu

子陽

Human emotion  
Surrounds the abandoned  
baby,  
Uselessly.

Shiyô

People stand around the baby  
loud in their pity, and loud in  
their condemnation of the mother.  
But no one intends to take home the child.



迷ひ子のいきなり泣いて母に逢ふ  
Mayoigo no ikinari naite haha ni au

綾丸

The lost child

Began to cry suddenly,—  
He saw his mother.

Ayamaru



Up to the time he met his mother, his tears have been stifled and hesitant, but now he sees the one who will really sympathize with him, and he leaves the policeman or person who is so kindly leading him, and rushes blubbing to mama.

客の靴さがせば坊や穿いてゐる  
 Kyaku no kutsu sagaseba bouya haite iru

Searching for the visitor's shoes,—  
 The little boy  
 Has them on. *Kôka*

The shoes are left at the entrance,  
 and when the visitor is about to leave  
 he finds them missing. They must  
 have been stolen by a thief, or carried  
 off by a dog—but no, look! the little  
 boy is wearing them, many sizes too  
 big, and trotting around in them.



ピストルの方が刀の子にぶたれ 阿彌丸  
 Pisutoru no hou ga katana no ko ni butare



The child with a pistol,  
 Beaten  
 By the child with a sword.

*Amimaru*

There is a strange difference felt here between the real and the symbolic.

菓子のある子へ遊ばうよ遊ばうよ  
 Kashi no aru ko e asobou yo asobou yo

待男

“Let's play! let's play!”

To the child  
 Who has some cakes. *Matsuo*

As with Aesop's fables, we feel keenly  
 our wickedness and stupidity, our selfishness  
 and slyness, when we see it in children or  
 animals.

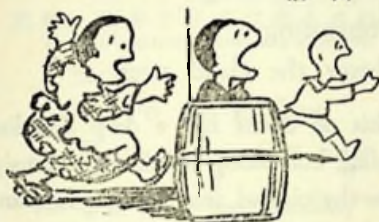




樂隊が来てかくれんぼ皆駆け

Gakutai ga kite kakurembo minna kake

信山



As the band approaches,  
All the children playing  
hide-and-seek

Run out. *Shinzen*

The children forget that they are hiding, and all come out of their hiding-places to see what is making the music.

三輪車貸して貰ふに後を押し

Sanrinsha kashite morau ni ato o oshi

清二四

Pushing behind,  
To be lent  
The tricycle.

*Seijiro*

One child is riding the tricycle, and the other is pushing from the back, because he hopes to get a ride on it in reward.

座敷中歩く子明日で下ろす靴 木魚

Zashiki-juu aruku ko asu de orosu kutsu

The child walks all over  
the room  
In the shoes  
That will be worn from  
tomorrow.

*Mokugyo*



The shoes are new, and he walks about the room (where shoes are never worn) because he can't wait till tomorrow.



子をほうる眞似をしてゆく橋の上 古

Ko o houru mane o shite yuku hashi no ue

Crossing the bridge,  
Pretending  
To throw the child over.



This no doubt has a deep Freudian meaning, but taking it more generously, we see the pleased fear of the child and the mutual strong grasp of each other as the little play is performed.

道ばたにすわつて父をねだるなり 古

Michibata ni suwatte chichi o nedaru nari

Sitting down on the path,  
Clamouring  
To his father for something.

The little boy is walking down the street, and sees something in the shop he wants. The father mutters something and pulls him on. The boy plumps down in the middle of the path, howling for the toy or sweets. The father looks nervously round, feeling himself beaten.



すねた子を壁からやつとひつべがし 古

Suneta ko o kabe kara yatto hippegashi

At last,  
Tearing off from the wall  
The sulky child.



As she was scolded, or for some other reason, the little girl becomes sullen, and presses herself against the wall and won't turn round. The more the mother entreats her, the more stubbornly she sticks to the wall. At last, losing all patience, the mother tears her off the wall by main

force. In this "tearing off from the wall," we feel the nature of the child and of the mother.

臺所へ楷書を見せにやらされる 朽 咲

Daidoko e seisho o mise ni yarasareru

Sent

To the kitchen

To show his fair copy.

Kyûsaku

"Go and show your mother," is the father's final comment on the child's well-done task. Senryu here makes us feel, through its humour, the fine threads that hold a family so strongly together.



遊ぶ子をねちきる様に鼻をかみ

Asobu ko o nejikiru youni hana o kami

剣花坊

Blowing the nose

Of the child at play,

As though trying to twist it off. Kenkabô



When we blow a child's nose we are very often in a state of irritation, and somehow or other feel a desire to do a little more than merely hold the handkerchief to his nose. To this is added the fact that the

child is trying to get away as soon as possible.

拭いてやる涙ついでに鼻をかみ

Fuite yaru namida tsuideni hana o kami

不倒人

Wiping away the tears,

And incidentally

Blowing her nose for her.

Futôjin



The child cries and the mother dries the tears and then at the same time has to wipe her nose. If you have done this, you know the meaning of this senryu; if you haven't, you don't.

かみなりをまねて腹がけやつとさせ 古

Kaminari o manete haragake yatto sase

Imitating thunder,  
At last she gets  
His "belly-apron" on.

The *haragake* is a kind of triangular pinafore which is the undermost garment.



The child is frisking about so much that the mother finds it impossible to get his *haragake* on, so she makes a noise like thunder: "Goro-goro-goro, goro-goro-goro. Oh, how awful! If you don't put on your *haragake* at once, the thunder-god will snatch away your navel! Be quick!" She uses the common saying to persuade him to let her put it on.

親類が来ると赤子のふたを取

Shinrui ga kuruto akago no futa o tori

古

Relations come  
To see the new-born child,  
And take the lid off.

They take off the cotton wool which is laid over the baby, look at it, and put it back, just as if it were a saucepan of something and they lifted the lid and peeped in.



## MOTHERS

子守唄もう格氣などせぬときめ  
Komori-uta mou rinki-nado senu to kime

映 絲

The cradle song;  
She decides  
Never to be jealous  
again. *Eishi*



He has not come home; he is late  
again tonight. She is sewing, and suddenly the sleeping baby begins  
to cry. She stops her needle-work and begins to sing, and as she  
sings, looking at the baby's sweet face, she thinks, "Why should  
I fret myself about my husband; this child is enough of happiness  
in this world."



大丈夫ですかと女房子をはなし 掬水子  
Daijoubu desuka to nyoubu ko o hanashi

"All right?"

And the wife  
Let the baby go. *Kikusuishi*

The mother hands the baby over to  
the father, who wants to carry the baby  
for a little while. But the baby is more to  
her than her own body, and only after  
making sure and then asking, does she let  
go of the precious little thing.

改札を小さく抱いて通るなり 棕仙  
Kaisatsu o chiisaku daite touru nari

She passes the ticket barrier,  
Holding him in her arms  
Very small. *Ryōsen*





Not wishing to pay for the child, who is of age, the mother squeezes him as small as possible, and passes by successfully.

女親柱を打つて瘤を撫で  
Onna-oya hashira o butte kobu o nade

阿彌丸

The female parent  
Strikes the post,  
While she rubs the bump.

*Amimaru*

Nearly all Japanese mothers have the habit of striking the chair or post on which the child has bumped itself, to put the blame on something other than itself.



今のかかさんは吉原からと云ひ 古  
Ima no kakasan wa yoshiwara kara to ii

"My new mama  
Came from the Yoshiwara,"  
He says.

The little boy has a new mother, and when asked who and what she is, he answers without shame or embarrassment or lewdness. His innocence has pathos, but it is not pity alone that we feel for him. Some admiration, envy and congratulation are blended with it, and a feeling of the inevitability of it all.

月の歌

母は嬉しく子に疲れ

鈴ン坊

The song of the moon;

Holding the child

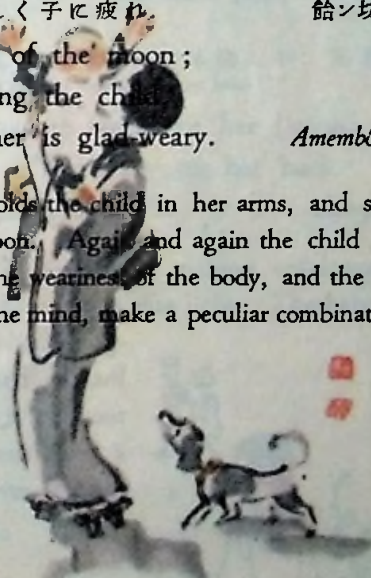
The mother is glad-weary.

*Amembo*

The mother holds the child in her arms, and sings the song of the moon. Again and again the child gets her to repeat it. The weariness of the body, and the motherly happiness of the mind, make a peculiar combination.

に  
疲  
れ

鈴ン坊







眠つたを母は知らない子守唄 一角  
Nemutta o haha wa shiranai komori-uta

Not knowing  
The baby is asleep,  
The mother still keeps up  
the cradle song. *Ikkaku*

The woman is carrying the baby on her back, and, singing the child to sleep is, as it were, intoxicated with her own singing and goes on long after the child is asleep. The mother's devotion to the child is also expressed, but from a humorous point of view.



稼がねばならぬ背中によく寝入り 凡柳  
Kaseganeba naranu senaka ni yoku neiri

She has to work for her living,  
The baby on her back  
Sleeping well. *Bonryu*



A woman is making envelopes at night under a dim light. The baby on her back is sleeping soundly, blissfully ignorant of the toiling mother and a hard and cold world outside. There is a distant but unmistakable tragic contrast here, a faint, grim humour that preserves it from sentimentality.



學校へ皆なを出して母の朝 逸名子  
Gakkou e minna o dashite haha no asa

Getting them all off to school,  
The morning  
Is the mother's. *Itsumeishi*



## FATHERS

子を持つて近所の犬の名を覚え 古

Ko o motte kinjo no inu no na o oboe

Having a child,  
He learns the names  
Of dogs round about.

Before the child was born he took little notice of the dogs living nearby, but now that he has a child, the father carries him about and tells him the names of the dogs that he sees.



His world is enlarged for him by the child.



それからを聞かれて困る鬼が島 鉄次郎  
Sorekara o kikarete komaru oni-ga-shima

The Ogre's Island;  
Being at a loss when asked,  
". . . . And then?" Tetsujirô

A father told his child the story of The Ogre's Island at some length, and finished it, to his relief. But the child is not satisfied, and asks "What happened then?" The father doesn't like to shut him up by saying, "That's all!" and he finds it difficult to explain exactly why the story is now at an end.

"The Ogre's Island" is a tale about a boy who was born from a peach. He was brought up by an old man and woman. He went to vanquish the ogre on an island, and, helped by a dog, a monkey and a pheasant, returned home in triumph with many treasures.

目のさめた子を女湯へ抱いてくる  
 Me no sameta ko o onna-yu e daite kuru

Carrying a baby

That has woken up,  
 To the women's bath-house.

The wife went to the bath-house, leaving the baby asleep. It has woken up and begun to cry. The husband does all he can, but the baby begins to scream and bellow, and he is at his wits' end to pacify the child. At last he comes carrying the child to the bath-house for his wife to take over.



手拭を一つ子供と風呂へ行き  
 Tenugui o hitotsu kodomo to furo e yuki

夢路

Carrying only one towel,  
 Going to the bath house  
 With a child.

Yumeji

Usually it is the mother who takes the children to the bath-house, but in this case, the father took the little boy. He must be a good, kind father, because to bath a child is a very troublesome thing.

肩車親爺の帽を子が被り  
 Kataguruma oyaji no bou o ko ga kamuri

五健

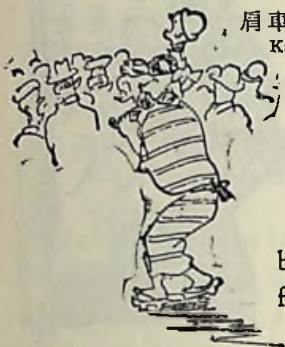
Riding on his shoulder,  
 The boy  
 Puts on his father's hat.

Goken

This senryu is mostly sugar. It may be noted, however, that the little boy puts on his father's hat from necessity or convenience, not



from choice or desire to appear comical. Also, the father is extremely uncomfortable.



肩車親爺何にも見えぬなり  
Kataguruma oyaji nannimo mienu nari

二の町

The child on his shoulders,

The father

Can't see anything at all. *Ninomachi*

There was a crowd of people, and the little boy wanted to see what was happening, so his father lifted him up onto his shoulders. The child was very interested and enjoyed himself. The father could see nothing at all, but he too was satisfied, with the child's pleasure.

今買った喇叭を吹いて子を起し  
Ima katta rappa o fuite ko o okoshi

暑岐

Awakening the child,

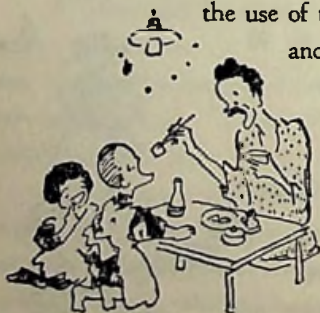
By blowing the toy  
trumpet

He has just bought. *Shoki*



There is something of Zen in this, in

the use of the thing to give it to the sleeping child;  
and in the unselfconsciousness of the father.



晩酌の肴大方子に喰はれ 草樂子  
Banshaku no sakana oukata ko ni kuware

The relish taken with

the evening drink,

Almost all eaten

By his children. *Sôrakushi*



This is a purely Japanese picture. It is night; the father has just come home, and sits on the floor before his small dining table, the children around him. He keeps on putting tidbits into their mouths, one by one, with his chopsticks, and by the end of the meal has himself eaten little more than the rice.

This senryu is almost entirely one of sentiment, but we feel also the father's inconvenience, and dissatisfaction with his meal.



亭主のは節のちがつた子守唄 源 坊  
Teishu no wa fushi no chigatta komori-uta

The cradle song  
Of the husband,  
Is a bit off.

Gentô

The father carries the child about the room singing the cradle song out of tune and mixing up the words and music. But the strange thing is that in this unmusical and unmelodious voice, we hear the love of the father far better than if he sang with the voice of an angel.

泣いた子を父さん母に押付ける  
Naïta ko o tousan haha ni oshitsukeru

葉之助

The father  
Forces the crying baby  
On the mother. Yônosuke



This shows clearly the biological and spiritual difference between men and women in regard to children. Tenderness, an affection without limit, self-abnegation,—these are what the father gives the baby over to.





子をあやしめやし出て行く若い父 而笑子  
 Ko o ayashi ayashi dete yuku wakai chichi

Going off  
 Fondling his child,  
 The young father. *Dishôshi*

When we read this, we must see the childishness and fatuousness of the father as well as his sweetness and goodness.

おしまひに父も乗り出す腕相撲  
 Oshimai ni chichi mo noridasu ude-sumou

Arm-wrestling;  
 The father  
 Joins in at last.  
*Itsumeishi*



Two children, brothers, were playing at arm-wrestling. The father was looking on smiling. At last, "Have a try with me," he says, leaning forward.

"Arm-wrestling" is a game in which two people hold each other's hand, with their elbows on the table or the *tatami*, and try to push the other's hand over.

せがまれていろんな顔をして見せる 春雨  
 Segamarete ironna kao o chite miseru



Urged on by the child,  
 He makes all kinds  
 Of faces. *Harusame*

The father makes a face, and the child is so pleased, he makes another and another, until he is quite worn out.



交叉點亭主大きな方を抱き 九 起  
Kousaten teishu oukina hou o daki

At the crossing,  
The father carries  
The bigger one.

*Kuoki*

Mother and fa-  
ther and two chil-

dren are going somewhere. When they come to a crossing the father shows his tenderness as a father and a husband by spontaneously picking up the heavier of the two children, leaving his wife the other.

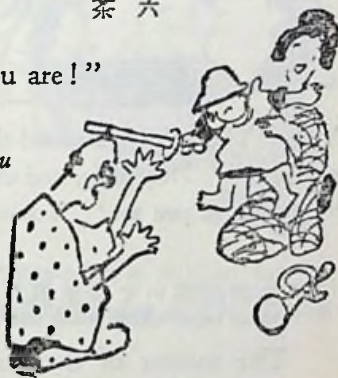
オ、強い強いと親爺打たれてゐ 茶 六  
Oo tsuyoi tsuyoi to oyaji butarete i

"How strong, how strong you are!"

Beaten,  
The father rejoices. *Charoku*

The child is beating his father with a wooden sword, saying, "Ei! Ei! Ei!" but the father rejoices in the pain, crying out, in his pleasure,

"Oh, how strong you are! What a brave boy!"



閉め出しを喰はせて親爺起きてゐる  
Shimedashi o kuwasete oyaji okite iru

栗 丸

The father  
Has fastened the door,  
But sits up still. *Kurimaru*

The son did not come home till the early hours of the

morning. This had happened before and the father was angry and shut and bolted the door. But he could not go to bed and sleep. The son has come back, finds the door locked and hardly dares to knock. The father waits inside, wishing but not willing to open the door.

双六をも一度負けるお父さん  
Sugoroku o mo ichido makeru otousan

不浪人

The father

Loses the backgammon

Once more.

Furônin



Father and son are playing *sugoroku*, a game something like backgammon, in the New

Year. The father loses, and the boy, highly elated, says, "Let's play another!" They play, and the son wins again, and the father says, "How clever you are! You won twice!"

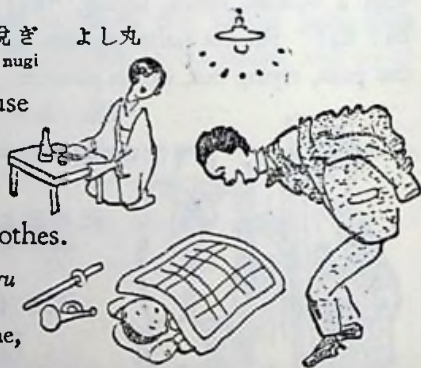
子の寝顔覗いて亭主服を脱ぎ よし丸  
Ko no negao nozoite teishu fuku o nugi

The master of the house

Gazing at the  
infant's face

While changing his clothes.

Yoshimaru



When a Japanese comes home, he usually takes off his foreign clothes and puts on Japanese. While doing so the father peeps at the face of the sleeping child. He cannot wait until he has changed.





清書に知らぬ字のある親の顔 古  
Seisho ni shiranu ji no aru oya no kao

In the fair copy  
There's a character he  
doesn't know,—  
The father's face!

The boy is showing the father his fair copy, and the father is reading it aloud. Suddenly he comes to a Chinese character which he can't read, and the expression on his face changes.

優等を子より自慢の親爺かな  
Yuutou o ko yori jiman no oyaji kana

仙潮

At his being first,  
More than the boy  
himself,  
The father boasts. Senko



The boy is top of his class, but thinks less of it than the old father who drags him around and boasts of it to all and sundry.



男親さし上るよりげいがなし  
Otoko-oya sashiageru yori gei ga nashi

維根樓

The whole of the father's repertoire,  
Is to throw the child  
Up in the air. Isôro

All the father can do is to throw the boy up in the air and catch him. When this is done, he has no other means left to amuse the child.



## WIVES

一言もいはず女房の家になり  
Hitokoto mo iwazu nyoubu no ie ni nari

古

Not saying a word,  
The house  
Is the wife's.

When the woman of the house does not speak, for some reason, the husband is quite at a loss what to say or do; he is a stranger in his own home. It is quite different if *he* is silent; his wife can rattle the saucepans and prance about the house quite nonchalantly.

仲直りもとの女房の聲になり  
Nakanaori motono nyoubu no koe ni nari

古

Making it up,  
The wife's voice  
Changes back to normal.

The married couple have been quarreling, and the wife's voice that was shrill and strident is now suddenly once more sweet and tender.

美しさ叱られぶりのいゝ女房  
Utsukushisa shikarare-buri no ii nyoubu

古

A gentle wife;  
Her attitude as she is scolded—  
What beauty!

The husband is grumbling to his wife about something, and she listens submissively, and with bowed head. He suddenly feels the moral beauty and aesthetic goodness of her self-abnegation and humility. This senryu is inverted, compared to most; goodness is perceived in something bad.

碁會所と醫者とへ迎ひ二人出し

Gokoisho to isha to e mukai futari dashi

古

Sending two people,  
One to the go-house,  
One to the doctor's.

The father has gone, as usual, to the place where people meet to play go, a game like checkers, and if anything goes wrong, he must be fetched from there. Someone in the family is ill, however, so two messengers have to be sent.

よい女どこぞか女房きづをつけ

Yoi onna dokozoka nyoubu kizu o tsuke

古

In the beautiful woman,  
The wife  
Finds some defect.

A man's admiration for another may be whole-hearted, not a woman's. Infatuation is possible, but not natural to women. The wife admits the other woman's personal charms, but—there is always a “but.” Her brow is too broad, the nose too slender, something is not quite right.

大著述妻は近所の仕立物

Dai-chojutsu tsuma wa kinjo no shitatemono

古

A great work;  
The wife  
Takes in the neighbours'  
sewing.



The man sits at the table, his hair on end, his clothes untidy, a grim look on his face, writing the book of the century, the work that will set the

Thames on fire. His wife meantime must earn their living by taking in other people's needlework.

飯焚に百ほどたのむとうふの湯

Meshi-taki ni hyaku hodo tanomu toufu no yu

古

To the cook she says  
A hundred times,  
"Don't forget the bean-curd water."

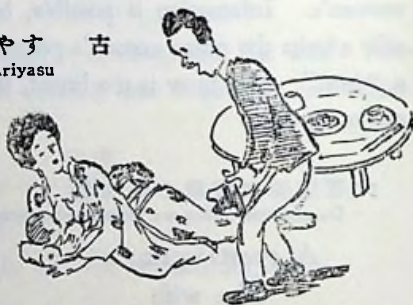
The water bean curd is boiled in is supposed to be good for washing clothes in. The mistress keeps telling the maid-servant, *ad nauseum*, not to throw away the water after the bean curd is cooked. In this repetition, this persistence about a small thing, is seen a whole world of the human mind.

添乳して棚に鯛がござりやす

Soeji shite tana ni iwashi ga gozariyasu

古

Giving the baby  
the breast,  
"On the shelf  
You'll find some  
sprats."



The wife is lying down feeding the baby, and her husband comes back home late. She tells him casually that there is some fish in the cupboard. When a woman has a baby, and especially when she is feeding it, she is almighty. The woman's language, "gozariyasu," shows that she was formerly one of "those women," and takes some pleasure, perhaps, in putting her husband in his place.





胸倉の外に女房手を知らず 古  
Munagura no hoka ni nyoubu te o shirazu

The wife

Knows no other way,  
But to seize him by the lapels.

This is a very simple verse, but it shows the difference between Japanese and foreign women, that they are incapable of slapping and pummeling a man.

里のない女房は井戸でこわがらせ 古  
Sato no nai nyoubu wa ido de kowagarase

The wife without a parents' home  
Frightens him,  
At the well.

When Japanese couples quarrel, the wife often goes back to her parents' home. This one has none, so she frightens her husband well as if she is going to commit suicide by



あの女房すんでにおれが持つところ 古  
Ano nyoubu sundeni ore ga motsu tokoro

That wife,—

I could have had her,  
Almost.



He says boastfully that he could have had her as his wife, but truth, which, as D'Annunzio says, is always looking at us with its implacable regard, makes



him add, "almost."



賣り拂ふ物の中から女房抜き  
Uriharau mono no naka kara nyoubō nuki  
丸 柳

The wife  
Takes out some things  
From those to be sold.

Ganryū

A rag-iron-and-bone man comes, and the wife carries out some odds and ends to sell. As the man is weighing them, she picks out one thing and then another that she now sees some use for. The cupidity, meanness, and triviality of mankind are lightly touched and seen askance.

肩越しに火事を見てゐる長襦袢 姫小松  
Katagoshi ni kaji o mite iru nagajuban

The *nagajuban*,—  
Looking over his shoulder  
At the fire. Himekomatsu



The *nagajuban* is a petticoat-like undergarment worn by Japanese women under the kimono and when they sleep. It is scarlet, and gives a rather erotic impression. In the middle of the night, when they were asleep, the fire-bell rang. Getting up, they looked out of the window at the fire, sufficiently far away not to be dangerous, sufficiently near to be exciting. The woman stands behind the man, looking over his shoulder.

理に勝つて女房あへなくくらはされ 古  
 Ri ni katte nyoubu aenaku kurawasare



Winning in reason,  
 The wife was struck,  
 Pitifully.

In old Japan women, especially wives, lived a very subjected and repressed life. It is possible, however, to exaggerate this in comparison with the position of women in the West.

置き所をあらまし女房云つて出る 古  
 Okidoko o aramashi nyoubu itte deru

Giving him an idea  
 Where all the things are,  
 The wife goes out.

This requires no explanation. It happens millions of times a day, that is all.



年上の女房必死の糠袋 花 醉  
 Toshiue no nyoubu hisshi no nukabukuro



The wife older than her husband,  
 Desperately  
 Uses the bran-bag.

Kasui

This is almost too painful even for senryu. Trying to turn back the wheels of time, to restore a fading beauty, the object so poor, the means so vulgar. The "bran-bag" is a small bag of rice-bran used as a kind of beautifier, in olden times.

墓口へ女房幾らか入れて呉れ  
Gamaguchi e nyoubu ikuraka irete kure

詩 廊

The wife  
Kindly  
Puts some money in my purse.

Shirô

The husband is going out, and the wife, looking into his purse, sees he has very little money in it. She takes some out of her own and puts it in his.

Many Japanese men, especially teachers, for example, hand all their money to their wives.



先妻は地震で死んで若返り  
Sensai wa jishin de shinde wakagaeri

剣花坊

The first wife  
Dying in the earthquake,  
He became younger.      Kenkabô

After his wife had died in the earthquake he married another, a very young girl and he seemed to renew his youth. Seen together with his new young wife, he looked much younger than when with the old woman who died.

世帯苦の外に色氣も戀もなし  
Shotai-ku no ho'ka ni iroke mo koi mo nashi

詩 廊

Neither love,  
Nor lust,  
Only domestic cares.

Shirô

This is life of a poor married woman with several children, and more coming. She has but little pleasure in sexual relations, and what



love there was between her and her husband has long since vanished. The children become ill, quarrel, are under-fed, bring no joy or hope to her; what has she to live for?

たゞ散歩だけが女房氣に入らず 貴山

Tada sampo dake ga nyoubu ki ni irazu

Just going for a walk

Does not please

A wife.

Kizan

She likes to buy something, or go and see somebody.



だらうといふに嫁いゝえいゝえ

Darou to iuni yome iiye iiye

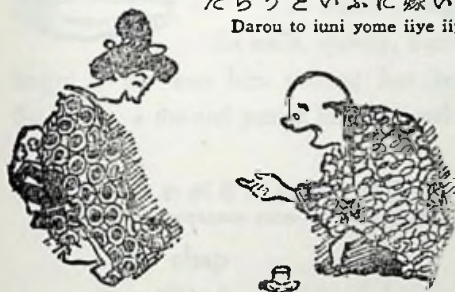
古

"... aren't you?"

"No, oh no!"

Says the young wife.

Asked if she is not in the family way, she bashfully denies it.



洗濯に嫁長刀の身ごしらへ 古

Sentaku ni yome naginata no migoshirae

The housewife,

Hanging up the washing,

Prepares for halberd practice.

A Japanese washing "line" is not a rope, but a long bamboo pole, which is lifted up quite high on wooden supports at each end.

The lifting up of the pole looks very much like lifting up a halberd, es-



pecially as the sleeves are tied up with a *tasuki* or cord for that purpose.

花嫁の土産は里へ活如來

Hanayome no miyage wa sato e iki-nyorai

古

The young bride's present  
To her parent's home,  
A living *Nyorai*.

The young mother has taken the newly-born child to her parent's home, and they are over-joyed. The baby is a living Buddha, and no present could be better than this.

## HUSBANDS

針箱へ亭主の足の爪が飛び

Hari-bako e teishu no ashi no tsume ga tobi

剣花坊

The husband's toe-nail  
Jumps  
Into the sewing box.

Kengkabô



The wife is sewing clothes, and the husband sitting down beside her finds a pair of scissors lying there. He begins to cut his toe-nails, quietly, because he knows his wife will be angry if she sees him ruining her best scissors on his toe nails. Suddenly, a toe-nail jumps into her work-box and the fat is in the fire.

女房をこわがる奴は金が出来

Nyoubou o kowagaru yatsu wa kane ga deki

古

The chap  
Who's afraid of his wife,  
Makes a lot of money.

He has to work hard, can't go to the prostitute house, can't spend much money for play, can't keep a concubine.



町内で知らぬは亭主ばかりなり

Chounai de shiranu wa teishu bakari nari

古

All the town  
Knows about it,  
Except the husband.



This deception is, like most, a self-deception. Unconsciously, we are afraid of the truth, and hide even the possibility of it from ourselves as long as we can.

帯しめるそばに頼杖ついて待ち  
Obi shimeru soba ni hohozue tsuite machi

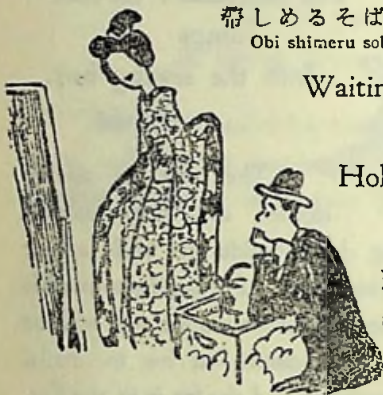
那岐坊

Waiting by her,

As she ties her sash,

Holding his chin.

Nakibô



This is a picture of something that happens all over the world every day, as husbands are kept waiting by their wives. The husband waits patiently, resignedly even, his chin propped on his hands. However, it may be noted that if the wife were kept waiting, she would help him in some way.

目についた女房このごろ鼻につき  
Me ni tsuita nyoubô konogoro hana ni tsuki

古

Recently

He turns up his nose  
At the wife that struck his eye.

The only value of this verse is in the contrast between "eye" and "nose." What he once feasted his eyes on, he now sniffs at.





共に出る亭主鏡へ聲をかけ  
Tomoni deru teishu kagami e koe o kake

星 紅

They are going out together;  
The husband  
Speaks to the mirror. *Seikô*

Women are always late on such occasions,  
and she is still sitting before the mirror.  
The husband expresses his exasperation  
to the reflection of his wife in the mirror.

糸巻きの向ふに亭主踊つてゐる  
Ito maki no mukou ni teishu odoruteru

古

The husband is dancing  
Before  
The thread-winder.

The husband is holding the thread and  
moving to and fro in a clumsy way, as if  
dancing in front of his wife who is winding it.



伸び上る欠伸電氣をたのまれる  
Nobiagaru akubi denki o tanomareru

仙之助

Stretching and yawning,  
He was asked  
To put on the light. *Sennosuke*

The man stands up and stretches him-  
self, and his wife says, "While you're  
about it, please turn on the light."

## MOTHERS-IN-LAW



手間取つた髪を姑じろじろ見 古  
 Temadotta kami o shuutome jiro-jiro mi

The hair-dressing  
 Takes a long time,  
 The mother-in-law eyeing it  
 narrowly.

This is from a kind of professional jealousy perhaps,  
 also from the human instinct to watch anybody else working hard.

あんまよりうまいうまいと姑褒め 芥子郎  
 Amma yori umai umai to shuuto home

"Much better than the masseur,  
 Much better!"  
 Praises the mother-in-law.

*Keshirô*



The point of this lies in  
 the exceptional attitude of the old woman to her daughter-in-law, who  
 is massaging her. She feels in such a good mood, so physically re-  
 laxed, that she forgets her jealousy and spite, and praises her daughter-  
 in-law unstintedly.



口に稱名眼には嫁をねめ 古  
 Kuchi ni shoumyou me niwa yome o neme

In her mouth,  
 The name of Buddha,—  
 Her eyes glaring at her  
 daughter-in-law.



A Japanese mother-in-law was particularly odious, because, in addition to the natural sexual jealousy in regard to her son, she had nothing much to do after her daughter-in-law entered the house and was doing the work. As she grew older, there remained only the worship of the Buddha and the pestering of the daughter-in-law,—a strange but common combination of good and evil.

珠数さらさらと押し揉んで叱言なり 古  
Juzu sara-sara to oshimonde kogoto nari

Rubbing and rustling  
The rosary,  
And scolding.



This verse is very similar to the preceding. The phrase "Rubbing and rustling the beads," is taken from the Nô play of *Kanjinchô*.

姑の尻をひつたので気がほどけ 古  
Shuutome no he o hitta node ki ga hodoke

The mother-in-law breaks wind,  
And the feeling  
Is relaxed.

The mother-in-law has been grumbling at the daughter-in-law. The husband says nothing, not wishing to make matters worse. In the silence that follows, the mother-in-law, coughing, or for some reason, breaks wind, and smiles. The daughter-in-law titters, and the tension is relived. One touch of nature.

## OTHER RELATIONS



失戀のまゝを孝行世帯染み 光郎  
Shitsuren no mama o koukou shotai jimi

Disappointed in love,—  
She is domesticated,  
A dutiful daughter. *Mitsurô*

This is a good girl, whose feelings must  
have some object, whose devotion, loyalty  
and faithfulness, thwarted in one direction, find vent in another.

持参金嫁なけなしの鼻にかけ 古  
Jisankin yome nakenashi no hana ni kake

The bride  
Hangs her dowry  
On what nose she has.

The bride is not over-pretty, that  
is, her nose is so flat as to be invisible from the side, but she boasts to her husband about the amount of money she brought with her. To brag or boast, in Japanese, is "hana ni kakeru," to hang on the nose; from this comes the point of the senryu.



移り香を胸にたゝんで嫁しまひ 古  
Utsurika o mune ni tatande yome shimai

The bride puts them away,  
Folding in her breast  
The lingering scent.

The husband did not come home that night. In the morning, he made some excuse or other and took off his clothes and changed

夢一佛 新はれて水争ひにかゝはらず

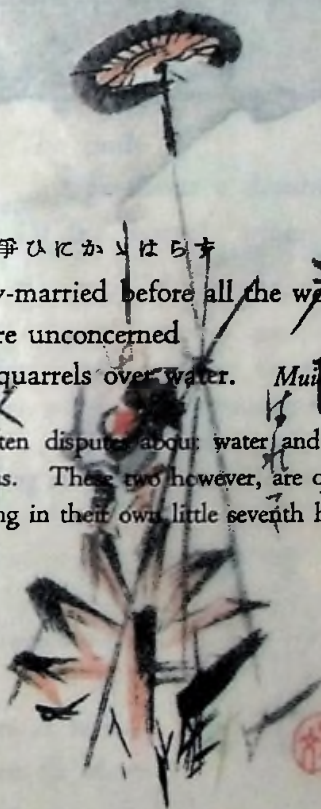
Being newly-married before all the world,

They are unconcerned

About the quarrels over water. *Muichibutsu*

There are often disputes about water and irrigation in rice-growing areas. These two however, are quite indifferent to them, being in their own little seventh heaven.

は  
ら  
ず  
夢  
一  
佛







to his everyday ones. When the young wife folded the clothes to put them away, she found they had a faint scent, of powder or perfume. She did not, however, cry aloud or tear her hair, only finished putting away the clothes with their slight scent, "folding it in her heart," like a gentle and obedient Japanese bride of olden times.



花嫁が露程なめる蝶の酒

Hanayome ga tsuyu hodo nameru chou no sake

古

The bride

Sips about a dewdrop

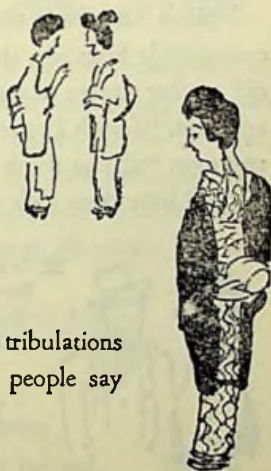
Of the butterfly wine.

Two children, the "male butterfly" and the "female butterfly," pour out the wine from a wine vessel in the marriage ceremony, and for this reason the saké is called "butterfly wine." The bride does not guzzle the wine, but only tastes it, as if *she* were a butterfly. There is something about this verse that reminds one of *The Rape of the Lock*.

よくゆへば悪くいわれる後家の髪  
Yoku yueba waruku iwareru goke no kami

古

When she dresses it well,  
She is spoken ill of,—  
The widow's hair.



This expresses one of the many trials and tribulations of a widow. If she does her hair nicely, people say she is going after some man or other.



後家の質男物から置き初め 古  
Goke no shichi otoko-mono kara okihojime

The widow's pawning;  
She begins  
With the man's things.

There is almost nothing in this, and yet this "nothing" is somehow or other interesting and significant. When she goes to the pawn-shop, she takes first the things that she does not need herself. There is something calculating about this, something that shows the selfishness and self-love of mankind.

死にたくば死になと娘むごく出る 古  
Shinitakuba shinina to musume mugoku deru

"If you want to die, die!"  
The daughter says,  
Cruelly.



This is something that the moralists have conveniently forgotten, the native hardness of the human heart. The old mother groans about the heartless disobedience of her daughter, and says, "I wish I were dead!" Her daughter takes her at her word and says, "If you think you would be better off dead, why don't you die and have done with it?"

金のある内は駄落よく笑ひ 桃太郎  
Kane no aru uchiwa kakeochi yoku warai

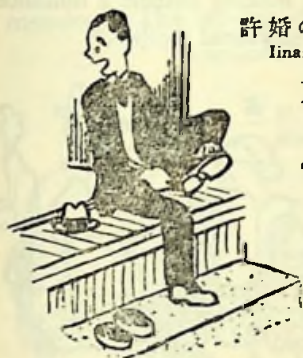


The elopers  
Laugh and laugh,  
While they still have money.

Momotarô



This is true of all people, and only especially of an eloped couple.



許婚の下駄と知りつゝ靴を脱ぎ 小太郎  
linazuke no geta to shiritsutsu kutsu o nugi

Knowing it is his fiancée's  
*Geta*,

Taking off his shoes. Kotarō

Perhaps, to be both poetical and cynical, he will get more pleasure out of the *geta*, or wooden clogs, than from the girl herself.

母さんは死んだときかす離縁状 臥龜坊  
Kaasan wa shinda to kikasu rien-jou

The bill of divorce;  
He tells him,  
"Your mother died." Gakibō



The man has divorced his wife, and when the little boy asks him why his mother doesn't come home, he replies that she is dead. When he answers, his feelings are very complicated. There is irritation at being questioned, pity for the child, regret for the former wife, uneasiness as to the new one who will be coming. What he thought was finished and over, still continues to live its own life within his mind.



出戻りの仕様のないを一人連 破久扇  
Demodori no shiyouno-nai no wa hitori tsure

The divorcee  
Brought home  
One that couldn't be helped. Hakusen

Divorced from her husband, she has come back to her parents' home with a child that "couldn't be helped." This "shiyô ga nai" may also mean that he is a naughty boy, making himself a nuisance all round, an unwanted appendage to the unwanted mother.

出されたを出てきたにする里の母 古

Dasareta o detekita ni suru sato no haha

The wife was sent away;  
But her mother  
Makes out she just left.



The virtue of this verse is in its brevity. The original is literally

"sent away was came away, makes out her mother." The wife has been divorced, but the mother pretends that the husband was no good, lazy, ill-educated, with no prospects, and that her daughter quite rightly left him of her own accord.



出戻りの少しはいける口になり たゞ夫

Demodori no sukoshi wa ikeru kuchi ni nari

The divorced woman  
Is now able  
To drink a little.

Tadao

While she was married, she was unable to indulge her desire to take a little saké, but now she can do so. There is a compensation in everything.

おかしさは夫婦喧嘩に狎が吠え

Okashisa wa fuufu-kenka ni chin ga hoe

古

The lap-dog barks  
At the matrimonial quarrel,—  
How funny it is!

When the dog begins to bark in chorus with his master and mistress, we realize that they are all just three dogs barking, and what is said is only one way of barking; the actual words are of no particular meaning. The lap-dog is a "chin" or Chinese dog, with a very comical face and bark.



二三丁出てから夫婦つれになり  
Nisan-cho dete kara fuufu tsure ni nari

古

Husband and wife

Come together,

After they have walked two  
or three blocks.



In Old Japan married people never walked in the streets together. Husband and wife have to go somewhere, so they go out of the house separately and meet farther down the street.

人参に親の秤の欲がはね  
Ninjin ni oya no hakari no yoku ga hane

古

The ginseng

Was increased,

From parental love.

The doctor has told the parents to give the child so much ginseng (a kind of medicinal, forked radish) every day, but the parents want the child to get better, so though the ginseng is very expensive they give it more than the doctor prescribed.

子が出来て川の字形に寝る夫婦  
Ko ga dekite kawa no ji-gata ni neru fuufu

古

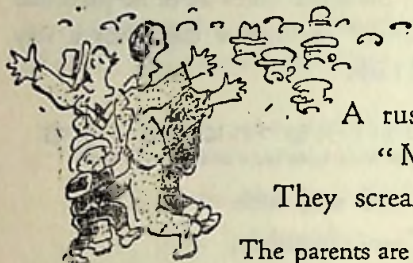
Having a child,

The couple sleep

Looking like the character for "river."



The character for "river," 川, looks like the mother, the child, and the husband lying side by side.



人雪崩れ子が居ますよと必死なり  
Hito-nadare ko ga imasuyo to hischi nari

A rush of people,— 櫻月

"Mind, there's a child here!"

They scream frantically. Rôgetsu

The parents are concerned about the safety of the child, and this is right and proper, but there is something frenzied, something excessive about their carefulness for *their own* child.

仲直り初手に笑ふは恥のやう  
Nakanaori shote ni warau wa haji no you

古

Making up a quarrel,

Apparently ashamed

To be the first to smile.

A wife and husband have been quarreling, and someone has persuaded them to stop. They both wish to make it up again, but each hesitates to make the first advance, for it would be a kind of admission of defeat, or of having been in the wrong.

このあばた見つけなんだと仲の良さ  
Kono abata mitsukenanda to naka no yosa



"I didn't see this pock-mark  
Before!"

They get on well together.

The newly-married couple were sitting together one day, when suddenly the husband noticed a small pock-mark he had never seen before. "That's because you powder so thickly." "No, your eyesight is poor!" They are still in love.



姉婿とゆつくり話す姉の留守  
Anemuko to yukkuri hanasu ane no rusu

粹多樓

Talking at ease

With her brother-in-law,  
Her sister being out. *Suitarô*

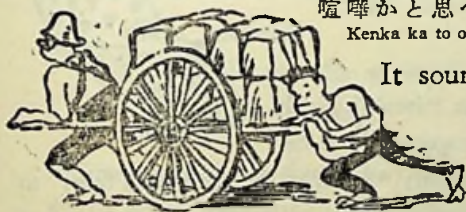
When her sister was at home, she was never able to talk freely with her brother-in-law. She always felt herself to be, what she actually was, watched by her. Jealousy pokes up its ugly head everywhere, and spoils the most innocent (?) relations. What a difference when her sister was out! She had a pleasant talk with him on all kinds of subjects.

口止めをして弟をいい子にし 張六  
Kuchidome o shite otouto o ii ko ni shi

Closing the younger brother's mouth  
Makes him  
A good boy. *Chôroku*



A girl was talking with her lover when her younger brother came along by chance and found them. "You won't say anything about this to anyone will you? You are a very good boy, aren't you? Oh, what a good boy you are!"



喧嘩かと思へば車押してくる 古  
Kenka ka to omoeba kuruma oshite kuru

It sounded like a quarrel,—  
But they come  
Pushing a cart.

He heard some people shouting one against another and thought they were quarreling, but when they came closer he found that they were saying "Heave ho!"

Heave ho!" "Stop! Stop!" "No, that's all right, push on the other side!" "Oh, what a weight!" The cart was loaded with some heavy goods, and being pushed up a slope.



もう一度入歯をとれと孫ねだり

Mou ichido ireba o tore to mago nedari

春雨

"Do take out your teeth  
Once more!"

Begs the grandchild. *Harusame*



One is reminded of *King Solomon's Mines*. To be able to remove and put back parts of the body is wonderful not only to children and savages. And the child in this verse finds particularly interesting the face of his grandmother or

grandfather when the teeth are out. It looks almost like another animal.

秋冷に未だ残暑で居候 古

Shuurei ni imada zansho de isorou

Autumn cold;  
Lingering summer heat  
For the *isorô*.



There is a pun here on "*isorô*," which means both "is" and "a hanger-on," "a dependent." It is now late autumn; "a leaf of the paulownia falls," to his surprise, but he has no warm clothes to change into, so he has to be in the same clothes as during late summer, when the heat is still great.





後妻は舌のまわらぬ文をかき  
Gosai wa shita no mawaranu fumi o kaki

迷 亭

The second wife  
Writes an awkward  
Letter.

Meitei

A man has married again, for love, this time, a woman of flashy charms, but poor in education and quality. Hers is a "tongue that won't go round" letter, uneloquent, unpolished, clumsy.

向ふから硯を遣ふかゝりうど  
Mukou kara suzuri o tsukau kakariudo

古

The dependent  
Turns round the ink-stone,  
And uses it.

There is a whole world of sadness in this simple action. The dependent asks permission to write a letter, and goes to the master's table. He must not, however, sit on the master's cushion, so he sits the other side of the table, on the tatami, and turns the ink-stone round to him in order to rub the solid ink on it.

獨り者蚊帳をまるめて仕舞ふなり 古  
Hitorimono kaya o marumete shimau nari

The bachelor  
Rolls up the mosquito net  
And puts it away.



The mosquito net should be folded up, but this is not an easy task. It is like making a two-dimensional map of a three-dimensional globe. The bachelor simply jumbles it all up together and rams it into the cupboard.

掛人寝言にいふが本の事

Kakariudo negoto ni iu ga hon no koto

古

The parasite  
Only tells the truth,  
When he talks in his sleep.

This bitterness of a hundred and fifty years ago is as keen as ever.



一人もの本氣になつて蚊を殺し

Hitorimono honki ni natte ka o koroshi

三太郎

The bachelor  
Kills the mosquitoes  
In earnest.

Santarô

The man is living alone. In the evening, reading a book by himself, not very happily, the mosquitoes begin to bite him. It is the last straw, it is adding injury to insult, and he takes his revenge on the mosquitoes for an indifferent and unfriendly world.

しる荷物に馬の顔は長し

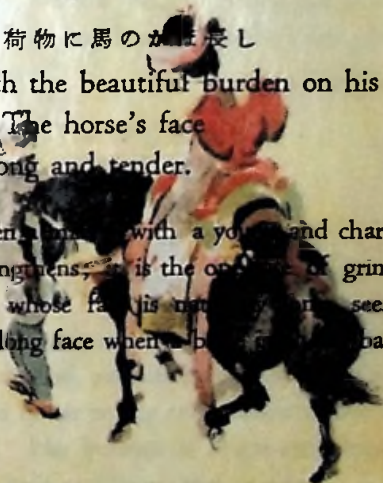
春 雨

With the beautiful burden on his back,

The horse's face  
is long and tender.

*Harusame*

When a man with a young and charming woman,  
his face lengthens, it is the opposite of grim. Thus the  
horse too, whose face is naturally grim, seems to get an  
unusually long face when a beautiful burden is on back.





Handwritten text in Chinese characters, likely a signature or calligraphy, located in the upper center of the page. The characters are dark and somewhat faded, with a small red seal visible below them.

## PROFESSIONS

鍋いかけすてつべんからたばこにし  
Nabe-ikake suteppen kara tabako ni shi

古

The tinker  
Has a smoke  
First.

This verse gives a feeling of leisureliness that belongs to the past, and also to the profession of saucepan-mending. He makes all the preparations necessary for his job, and then, just when you think he is going to begin, he calms his spirit with a few puffs of the short Japanese "nose-warmer."

萬歳に下女ありつたけ笑ふ也  
Manzai ni gejo arittake warau nari

古

The servant  
Laughs at the *manzai*,  
For all she is worth.

The Japanese expression *arittake* means that her soul is consumed in laughing, at the *manzai*, comical dancers at the New Year. This *senryu* shows us the rather empty and shallow nature of the servant, slightly sub-human. Her humour is coarse and almost bestial; hers is a grovelling soul, such as Dante often portrays.

ブリキ屋が寝ると一度に夜が更ける  
Burikiya ga neru to ichido ni yo ga fukeru

半 治

When the tin-smith goes to bed,  
Suddenly  
It gets late.

Hanji

Living next to the tin-smith, there is a great racket all day long, but one does not notice it. The noise continues until late in the even-

ing, and then stops. Becoming suddenly aware of the quietness, we realize, at the same moment, that it is late. This fact is not deduced from the cessation of hammering and half-musical rattling; the lateness is perceived in it, simultaneously with it.



犯人をおもちやの様な刑事室  
Hannin o omocha no you na keiji-shitsu

加茂女

In the detectives' room,  
Treating the offender  
Like a play-thing. *Kamojo*

This senryu well expresses typical Japanese detectives before the war. They were not scientific and ruthless, but like children with toys; sneering and contemptuous, treating people as foolish, childish criminals, without value, as worthless, as play-things.

世を捨て名所を拾ひ頭陀袋  
Yo o sutete meisho o hiroi zudabukuro

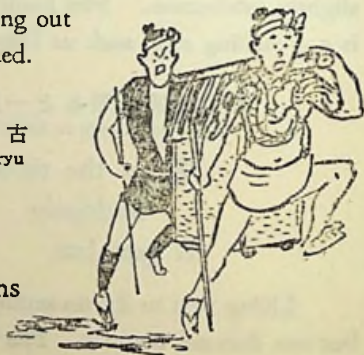
古

The wallet,  
Throwing away the world,  
Picking up the beauty-spots.

This senryu pokes fun at the poetical pilgrim who has renounced the world, and yet walks over it picking out the best bits. The wallet is personified.

宙を飛ぶ駕かき腕に雲に龍 古  
Chuu o tobu kago-kaki ude ni kumo ni ryu

The palanquin bearers,  
Flying in the air,  
Have clouds and dragons  
on their arms.





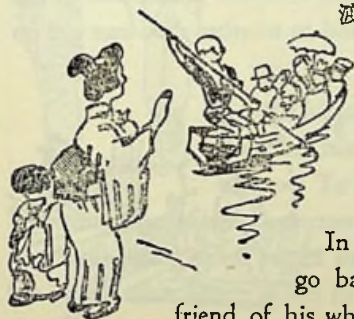
Palanquin-bearers usually had tattooing on their back and arms. To give themselves lightness and speed, these bearers had dragons and clouds tattooed on them. It is superstitious perhaps, but also, or therefore, human.

田樂を持つて馬方しかりに出 古  
Dengaku o motte umakata shikari ni de

Holding the *dengaku* in his hand,  
The pack-horse driver  
Comes out to scold the  
horse.

*Dengaku* is baked bean-curd covered with *miso*, a kind of sauce. The horse gets tired of waiting for his master in the pub, and begins pawing the ground, eating things he shouldn't, or making a nuisance of himself in some way.

The driver comes out with the *dengaku* in his hand, and shouts at the horse. This is a road-side scene of Old Japan.



渡し守一棹もどす知つた人 古  
Watashimori hitosao modosu shitta hito

The ferryman  
Backs a stroke;  
He knows him.

In the ordinary way the ferryman won't go back once he has started, but it is a friend of his who calls to him, so he gives the boat one big shove back with his pole, and takes him (or her) on.

紐引いてからが車掌の捨言葉 蚊象

Himo hiite kara ga shashou no sutekotoba

Pulling the cord,  
The conductor  
Lets go a Parthian shaft.

Bunzô

The man tries to squeeze on the car  
but the conductor shuts the door and  
pulls the cord. The would-be pas-  
senger curses the conductor, who says, "Next time you want to ride  
on my car, you'd better wash behind your ears!"



改札へ係ゆるゆるやつて来る 十五夜

Kaisatsu e kakari yuru-yuru yatte kuru

The ticket inspector  
Comes to the wicket  
Slowly.

Jûgoya

Many people are standing in line, and when  
the appointed hour arrives, the ticket inspector  
is seen coming in an almost insultingly leisurely manner. He shows  
more clearly than words could express, his complete indifference to the  
travellers' comfort of mind and body, and to whether they ever get on  
the train or not.

首ばかり舞臺において湯にはいり

Kubi bakari butai ni oite yu ni bairi

古

Leaving only his head  
On the stage,  
He gets in the bath.



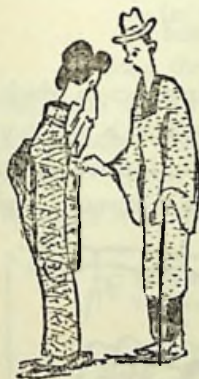
The actor has played the part of a man who has had his

head cut off. He steps off the stage, and gets into a hot bath. He squats there with one head sticking out of the water and one still on the stage. The audience sits weeping and excited. There is here the contrast between art and reality.

旅芝居庄屋の娘ぶらつかせ 古  
Tabi-shibai shouya no musume buratsukase

The travelling theatre  
Made the daughter of the village  
headman  
Love-sick.

When the village girls see the actors from the city, they realize how uncouth the village swains are, and fall in love with these debonair young men. The daughter of the village headman feels the pangs of love especially deeply, and after they have gone, goes into a kind of decline.



清姫をどこでまかうか旅役者 當百  
Kiyohime o doko de makouka tabi-yakusha

The strolling player:  
"This Kiyohime,—  
Where shall I give her the slip?"  
*Tôhyaku*

When in a certain village, the travelling player enjoyed himself with a village girl, who, to his dismay, left her home and began following him everywhere. To express his annoyance, he calls her Kiyohime, one of the characters of a Kabuki play. In this play, a handsome young priest stayed with a village headman, whose daughter fell in love with him. When he ran away from her, she followed him, changing into a snake, and wound herself round Dôjôji Temple bell,



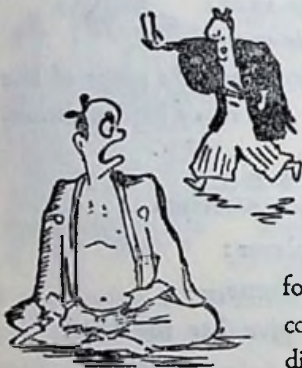
under which the priest had hidden himself, and roasted him to death.

榮屋のばくち鎌倉の諸大名 古  
Gakuya no bakuchi kamakura no sho-daimyou

The gambling of the green  
room,  
By the daimyô's  
Of Kamakura.



The *daimyô's*, the feudal lords, of Kamakura come in the play of *Chûshingura*. Their part is quite unimportant, just sitting still, looking consequential, just dolls, just scenery. All in their fine costumes, they sit in the green room gambling. Fine feathers do not make fine birds.



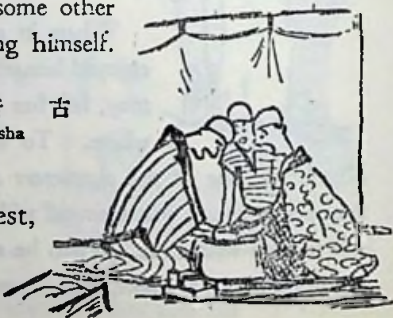
暫の聲なかりせば非業の死 古  
Shibaraku no koe nakariseba higou no shi

If there were no voice  
"Wait!"—  
An untimely end.

Kabuki plays have many scenes in which, for example, a faithful samurai is about to commit suicide, when a voice is heard in the distance, "Wait! Wait a moment!" and someone appears with a letter or some other excuse for his refraining from killing himself.

生死流轉にひまのない安役者 古  
Seishi ruten ni hima no nai yasu-yakusha

The utility man,  
Not a moment's rest,  
Living and dying and  
transmigrating.



The utility man must be a kind of chameleon, playing innumerable parts, a masseur, a traveller, a prince, a thief,—dying and resurrecting without rest.

怠勢よく出て出前持名を忘れ  
Isei yoku dete demaimochi na o wasure

呑氣坊

Going off in high spirits,  
The delivery boy  
Forgets the place.

Nonkibô

This is a subtle variant of "pride goes before a fall." The boy is so self-confident that he does not attend carefully enough to the directions, and forgets the name of the house.

追はぎの案山子まではぐ秋時雨  
Oihagi no kagashi made hagu aki-shigure

古

The robber,  
He robs even the scarecrow,  
In the autumn shower.

Walking through the rice fields, it suddenly came on to rain. All round was the dusky yellow of the rice, and shelter nowhere. The robber looked about and saw a scarecrow, and stole its hat and clothes. *Oihagi*, "robber," means "a man who follows and strips," and the scarecrow is "stripped" of his clothes.

つめられぬやうにと禿頭をかけ  
Tsumerarenu youni to kamuro gan o kake

古

The *kamuro*  
Offers up a prayer:—  
Not to be pinched!

Realism here achieves effortlessly a perfect balance between youth and wickedness, humour and sadness. The young prostitute does not

ask to be delivered from her life of shame, but only from being pinched by the old woman who owns her.



色をするつらかと遣手縄をかけ  
Iro o suru tsura ka to yarite nawa o kake

古

"So you're pretty enough to get  
an *iro*, eh?"

Says the Yarite,  
Binding her with a rope.

An *iro* is the lover of prostitute who is so fond of him that she sleeps with him without receiving money. The *Yarite*, or matron of the brothel, ties her up as a punishment.

習ふよりすてる姿に骨を折り  
Narau yori suteru sugata ni hone o ori

古

More than learning it,  
Getting rid of that appearance  
Takes time and trouble.

This has a general, proverbial application, but its literal meaning is that a woman who has learned, with great trouble, the arts and accomplishments, the deportment and manners of the Yoshiwara, will find it much more difficult to drop than she did to acquire them.

♪ やう 治場で聞けば此頃おれに化け  
Ryoujiba de kikeba konogoro ore ni bake

古

Hearing it in the consultation room,  
"Recently, he disguised himself  
As me!"

The doctor hears talk, in the operating room or consultation room, of a certain priest disguising himself as a doctor and going to

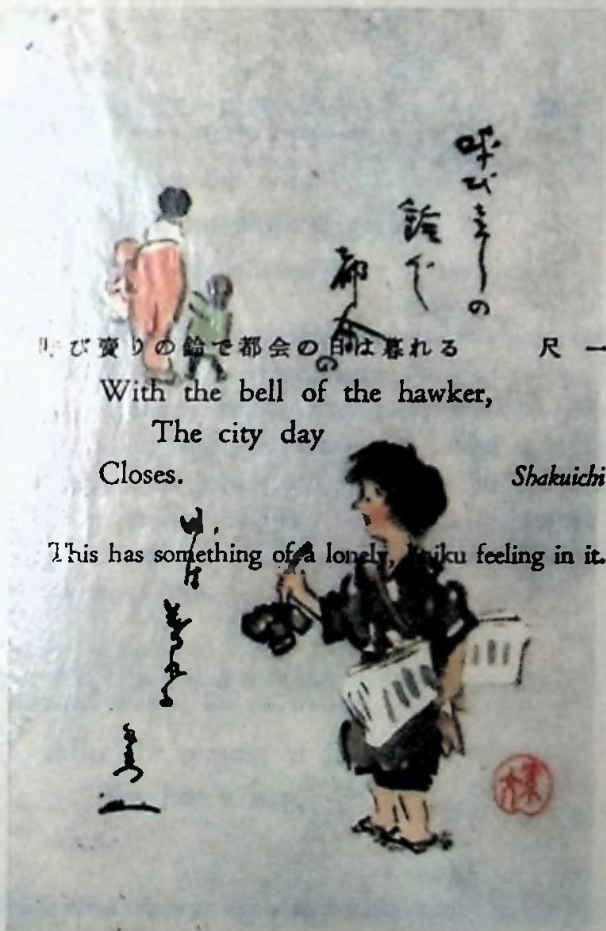


叫び賣りの鈴で都会の日は暮れる 尺一

With the bell of the hawker,  
The city day  
Closes.

*Shakuichi*

This has something of a lonely, haiku feeling in it.





the Yoshiwara. He fumes and splutters, for various reasons. It was a common thing, at this time, for priests to go to such places dressed as doctors.

指のない尼を笑へば笑ふのみ  
Yubi no nai ama o waracba warau nomi

古

Smiling at the nun  
With no little finger;  
She just smiles.

This nun was formerly a courtesan, and had made an oath of eternal fidelity to some man or other, cutting off (part of) her little finger, as a token. Later she had become a nun. Someone, probably a man, sees this missing finger, and involuntarily smiles as he thinks of the contrast between her present and past life. The nun smiles a little in return, but she says nothing, for there is nothing to say. Everything is said in the mutual smile, that arises from the deep, subterranean, hidden life of both.

きぬぎぬのあとには身になる一と寝入り  
Kinu-ginu no ato wa mi ni naru hito-neiri

古

After the parting of lovers,  
She has a nap,  
Alone.

Realism is often taken as implying a concentration on the unpleasant facts of life, but this is not the meaning for senryu. It implies rather a lack of both loathing and desire. In the above verse, we see the girl asleep, alone. This is the *sabishisa* of senryu, the loneliness of every human being, and the feeling of awe which we have, as Hawthorne says in *David Swan*, at the sight of any human being asleep.



知るを知るとせず問はれて知りんせん 古  
 Shiru o shiru to sezu towarcete shirinsen

Being asked if she knows,  
 Not acknowledging she knows,  
 "I don't know."

The language of this, *shirinsen*, "I don't know," belongs to the courtezans of the Yoshiwara. Many of these women had more education and accomplishments than the average man. However, no man likes a woman to be better educated than himself, and so when asked, for example, "Who is the painter of that hanging scroll?" they would answer, hiding their knowledge, "I don't know."

手拭ではたいてぜげんこしをかけ 古  
 Tenugui de hataite zegen koshi o kake

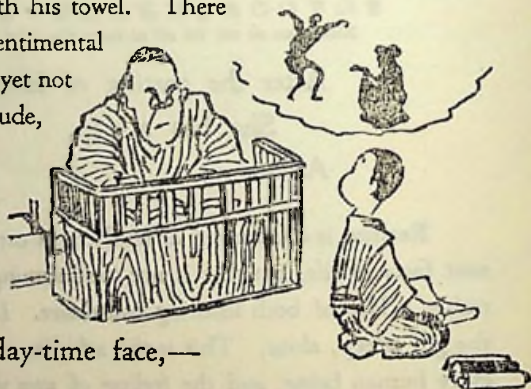
The pander  
 Dusts it with his towel,  
 And sits down.

The woman, who is selling herself or a child, is so poor that the hut is all dust and dirt. Before sitting down to do business, the pander flicks the dust off with his towel. There is here a completely unsentimental and unsympathetic, and yet not insensitive or callous attitude, that is typical of senryu.

晝の顔番頭色師  
 とはみえず 古

Hiru no kao bantou iroshi  
 to wa miezu

The clerk's day-time face,—  
 No sign  
 He is a libertine.



At night he goes to the Yoshiwara, but in the day-time his face is stern, and he scolds the young men and women as though he had the virtue of Socrates and the chastity of Joseph.



日本語で問はれ改札ホツトする 吐潮  
Nippon-go de toware kaishatsu hotto suru

Asked in Japanese,  
The ticket-collector  
Is relieved.

Tochô

The ticket collector sees a foreigner making his way towards him, and a feeling of dismay invades his breast, as he mechanically clips the other passengers' tickets. What is his relief when the foreigner speaks to him in more or less fluent Japanese!

お後のが空いてますよで車掌逃げ  
O-ato no ga suite masuyo de shashou nige

かなめ

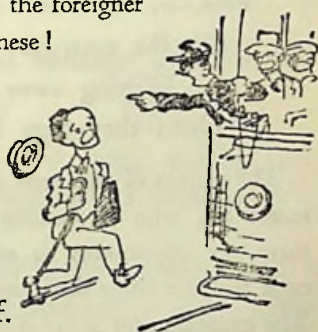
"The one behind is not  
crowded,"

Says the tram conductor,

As he goes off.

Kaname

This is "the tender mercies of the wicked."



新米の巡查日向に立盡し 好浪  
Shimmai no junsu hinata ni tachi-tsukushi

The new policeman,  
Standing all the time  
In the sun.

Kôrô

This is "new brooms sweep clean." In a few days, when

his uniform is not so new, he won't stand in the broiling sun, but in the shade somewhere.



牛肉屋 融さのやうに磨いでゐる  
Gyuunikuya ikusa no youni toide iru

妙々子

The butcher  
Is sharpening it  
As if for battle.

Taedaeshi

There is a ferocity about a butcher's sharpening his knife that makes us shiver, though we know he is a peaceable man, and has no intentions on our liver and lights.

笑ひ止むまでは高座で汗を拭き  
Warai yamu made wa kouza de ase o fuki

古

On the rostrum;  
Wiping away the sweat,  
Until they stop laughing.

The subject of this verse is the public entertainer, who is working hard, and takes the opportunity to wipe his hot neck and face while the people are laughing at the last funny remark. The entertainment is not funny to the funny man.



今日抜いて明日斬り合ふ講釈師  
Kyou nuite cshita kiri-au koushakushi

古

The professional story-teller  
Draws his sword today,  
And fights to-morrow.

This means that, like the serial story in the newspaper or magazine, the story-teller stops at the most exciting place, to whet the appetites of the hearers.



荒打に左官斗りは本の顔

Ara-uchi ni sakan bakari wa moto no kao

古

Giving a rough coat of plaster,  
Only the plasterer  
Has his normal face.

When they are giving the house a rough coat of plaster, made of mixed earth and chopped straw, all the workmen's faces become spattered with mud and unrecognisable. Only the real plasterer looks ordinary, because his face is always dirty, and so looks himself today as well.

反れるだけ反つて角兵衛ことわれ

Soreru dake sotte kakubei kotowarare

光右衛門

The *kakubê*

Bent back as far as humanly possible,—  
And then was refused. *Kôuemon*

A *kakubê* was a man who danced to the tabor, bending over backwards, or standing on his head, in the New Year, before people's houses.

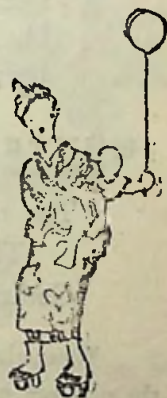
After he had done his best and nearly broken his back in two, the woman came out and sent him away with nothing.

うしろの子前へ廻すが守上手 古

Ushiro no ko mae e mawasu ga mori-jouzu

Swinging round the baby  
From the back to the front,—  
That's a clever girl!

The nurse-maid slings the child round from her back to the front. This kind of thing requires skill, like turning over pancakes and flap-jacks.



乳母車腹で押し押し編んでゐる  
Ubaguruma hara de oshi oshi ande iru

五 錢

The nursemaid

Keeps pushing the pram with  
her stomach,

Knitting.

Goken



There is something pleasingly Zen-like about this senryu. Each thing has its value according to its use. Sometime the stomach is a food-bag, sometimes a child grows within, sometimes it pushes things.



じれつたいお子だと守は二タゆすり 古  
Jirettai o-ko dato mori wa futa-yusuri

"What a nuisance, this child!"

The nurse-maid

Shakes him twice.



The child is on the back of the nurse-maid. She has done everything possible to quieten him, sung cradle-songs, walked to and fro, but he keeps on crying fretfully. She jogs him up and down twice, on her back, expressing her profound disapproval of him.

糠袋下女は目鼻をつかみよせ 古  
Nukabukuro gejo wa mehana o tsukami yose

The rice-bran bag;

The maid

Gathers eyes and nose together.



When the not very beautiful maid-servant takes a bath, she uses the rice-bran to make her skin white. She is in deadly earnest, and

is dabbing her face, her eyes and nose bunched up together in the concentration of all her faculties.

川中をわらちであるく筏乗り

古

Kawa-juu o waraji de aruku ikada-nori

Walking on the middle of  
the river

With straw sandals,—

The raftsmen.



This is a very poetical senryu. It calmly omits the raft, and makes the man walk on the water.

伸びる丈うでを伸ばして縄をなひ

古

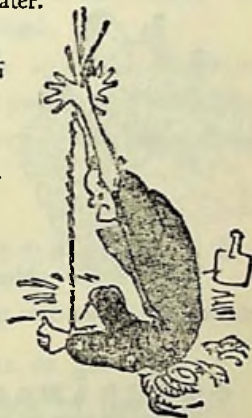
Nobiru dake ude o nobashite nawa o nai

The body stretched,

And stretching the arms,—

Making rope.

When twining a straw rope, the maker sits upright, and, holding one end with his foot, twists the other until his hands are upstretched.



畳屋はうでも道具の中に入れ

古

Tatamiya wa ude mo dougu no naka ni ire

The tatami-maker

Counts his arm

As one of his tools.



When the tatami-maker is working, he pushes the needle up through the straw



mat, and then uses his elbow to lever up the thread tightly. His arm and elbow are as much a tool as the knife and awl.

あて皮つまんで床屋斜にかまへ 華川  
Agokawa tsumonde tokoya naname ni kamae

Picking up the skin of the  
cheek,  
The barber holds it  
Aslant. *Kasen*



This is one of the many indignities we suffer meekly, but not without chagrin, in the barber's shop.



髪洗ふ上で床屋は手を洗ひ 文久  
Kami arau ue de tokoya wa te o arai

The barber washes his hands  
Over the head of the person  
Whose hair he is washing. *Bunk'yū*

The man who is having his hair washed, is blissfully ignorant of this. "What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve for."

小使は己れも歸る鈴を振り 水府  
Kozukai wa onore mo kaeru suzu o furi

The school servant  
Also rings the bell  
For himself to go home. *Suifu*

This reminds one of a haiku by Oemaru:

追ふ人にあかりを見する螢かな  
Ou hito ni akari o misuru hotaru kana



The firefly  
Gives light  
To its pursuer.

古郷へ廻る六部は氣のよわり  
Furusato e mawaru rokubu wa ki no yowari

古

The *rokubu*,  
Hurrying home  
Wretchedly.

The *rokubu*, "six parts," originally "sixty-six parts," was a man, very often elderly and retired, who was making a journey round Japan (of sixty six counties) visiting all the famous temples and shrines. He usually carried an *oi*, or portable altar on his back.

This particular *rokubu*, because of some accident, perhaps the death of a fellow-traveller, has broken off his journey and is returning to his native place with feelings of despondency. The value of this verse seems to be chiefly pictorial.

番頭は内の羽白をしめたがり  
Bantou wa uchi no hashiro o shimetagari

古



The clerk  
Wants to get hold  
Of the duck of the house.

The *hashiro* is a kind of duck, with white spots. Its charming appearance makes it a metaphor for a young girl. We have here a picture of lewdness and innocence, and as such, is rightly felt to be a proper subject of *senryu*. This is the poetry of *senryu*, that nothing is felt as disgusting; all things take their appointed place in the scheme of things.

おはぐろをつけつけ禿にらみつけ

Ohaguro o tsuke tsuke kamuro nirami tsuke

古

While having her teeth blackened,  
The matron of the brothel  
Glares at the little prostitute girls.

Japanese wives blackened their teeth to make themselves look less beautiful. It was gradually found, however, to have an aesthetic appeal, and was imitated by prostitutes. In the present verse, the matron of the prostitute house is having her teeth blackened, and being unable to speak, is rolling her eyes at the *kamuro*, or young girl attendants of the prostitutes, to keep them out of "mischief."



吉原に居ると賣トさばけもの

Yoshiwara ni iru to uranai sabakemono

古

"He's at the Yoshiwara!"

The fortune-teller  
Is a shrewd man.

The man left home a few days ago, and has not returned. His wife, worried about him, goes to a fortune-teller and asks where he is. Looking very wise, the fortune-teller gives the above answer. He knows human nature very well indeed.

使者はまづ馬からおりて鼻をかみ

Shisha wa mazu uma kara orite hana o kami

古

The messenger,  
Alighting from his horse,  
First blew his nose.

What seems a rather dirty thing to do, is really something clean and respectful. The ludicrous and the becoming are seen as one thing.





獨唱の胸から聲をふるはせて  
Dokushou no mune kara koe o furuwasete

美貴夫

The soloist sings,  
Shaking her voice  
Out of her breast. *Mikio*

Especially on those painful high notes, the soloist fairly brandishes her voice in our faces.

旦那寺喰はせて置てさてと云ふ  
Danna-dera kuwasete oite sate to iu

古

The parish temple;  
After giving them something to eat,  
He says, "Well, . . . ."

The people of the village were invited to the temple, and after they have eaten their fill, the priest says, "Well, I am sorry to have to mention such things, but the temple roof leaks, and while prices rise daily, donations are few and far between. I am sure you are all faithful believers and do not wish your temple to . . . ." Immediately after receiving something, it is difficult to refuse to give.

毛があらうものなら和尚いゝ男  
Ke ga arau mono nara oshou ii otoko

古

If the abbot  
Had some hair,  
He'd be nice-looking.

Japanese priests have shaven heads, and this gives them a rather unsexed appearance. Someone, perhaps a woman, thinks, "If only he were not shaven-headed, this priest would be a handsome and attractive man." The priest is free to cut off his hair, but we are free to imagine it back again. To the hairy, all things are hairy.



梵妻に鐘をつかして碁に耽り 浪の人  
 Bonsai ni kane o tsukashite go ni fukeri

Absorbed in chess,  
 The abbot  
 Has his wife ring the bell.

*Nami no hito*



Go is not chess, but a game like checkers, with white and black counters, in which one tries to surround the other. This verse is a satire on the Buddhist clergy. Priests, disobeying a command of the Buddha, began to marry in Japan from the 13th century. This lazy priest gets his wife to ring the temple bell while he continues his game.



禪宗は坐禪がすむと蚤をとり 古  
 Zenshuu wa zazen ga sumuto nomi o tori

The Zen Sect;  
 Catching the fleas  
 After the religious meditation.

This is a not unjust, and far from shallow criticism of Zazen and Zen. During Zazen the priests must sit perfectly still, their minds concentrated on the *kōan*, or problem, and if fleas or mosquitoes attack them, well, that is yet another *kōan*. When they have finished, they set about catching their persecutors. The senryu criticises this artificiality. Zen means eating when you are hungry, scratching when you itch. Why should the monks sit there so solemnly and let themselves be bitten, arbitrarily, and then kill the pests, arbitrarily?



ボードに向くと先生欠伸をし  
Bourudo ni mukuto sensei akubi o shi

以 條

When the teacher turns  
To the blackboard,  
He yawns.

Isan

The teacher, like the clergyman, has to keep up appearances, and hide his boredom, otherwise he can hardly scold the pupils for *their* inattention and drowsiness.

先生が泣いて盗んだ子が分り  
Sensei ga naite nusunda ko ga wakari

肋骨

The teacher weeps,—  
And the child who  
stole something  
Is found out. Rokkotsu

If the teacher stormed and threatened the children, the child who stole something or other would never confess, but when he sees the teacher cry, and say, à la Japonaise, "I was wrong. I must have taught you badly, and thus one of you took this thing; I am responsible!" he begins to cry too, and asks the teacher's pardon.



信用があつて集金人で果て  
Shinyou ga atte shuukin-nin de hate

一 光

Trusted,  
He ended his life  
As a bill collector.

Ikkō

This man was honest and faithful. Everyone



trusted him. As a result, he never advanced in position, but lived and died a collector of money. What people really trusted, after all, was his stupidity.

まき舌で容體をいふ外科の前 古  
Makijita de youdai o yu geka no mae

Before the surgeon,  
Telling him his condition,  
Trilling his words.

This senryu is rather enigmatic and specialistic, but interesting and witty. A man has got hurt in some brawl, and is explaining what is wrong with him. He is not ashamed of himself, but rolls the words off his tongue with a certain gusto. The whole man, his ways and view of life, his cynicism and insensitivity are all shown in this "rolled tongue."



代脈は何を此奴の氣で見せる 古  
Daimyaku wa nani o koyatsu no ki de miseru



He is seen by the doctor's assistant,  
Thinking in his heart,  
"What can this ignoramus  
do?"

The patient and the assistant are both acting, the assistant aping the doctor, and the patient pretending to be satisfied with it all, but inwardly cursing and contemptuous.

むづかしい細工歯醫者も口をあき 五郎助  
Muzukashii saiku ha-isha mo kuchi o aki

A difficult piece of work;  
The dentist  
Opens his mouth too.

Gorosuke

This opening of the mouth is partly on general grounds, a grimace we make when doing anything difficult; and partly because the dentist is very nearly identifying himself with the poor wretch who sits helpless with his eyes staring and mouth agape.

大道で脈を見てゐる子供醫者 古  
Daidou de myaku o mite iru kodomo-isha

The children's doctor  
Feels his pulse  
In the street.

A doctor for children happens to meet a mother or nurse carrying a little boy on her back, one of his patients. He stops and asks how the child is, feels his pulse and gives some advice. This is a kind of busman's holiday, but it shows the doctor's goodness (albeit a little fussy) and devotion.



死ぬと値がすると並かきをむごい評 古  
Shinu to ne ga suru to ekaki o mugoi hyou

"This will be valuable,"  
Is his cruel criticism,  
"When you're dead."

This implies the poor quality of the picture, and suggests that the death of the painter alone can give it any value.

のみで楊枝を削つてゐる昼休み 古  
Nomi de youji o kezutte iru hiru-yasumi

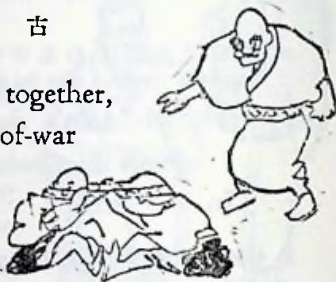
Whittling a tooth-pick  
With a chisel,  
During lunch-time.



The carpenter seldom, if ever, makes anything for himself, and here we see him concentrating on the easiest and most trifling of works in wood,—a tooth-pick. It is like a big fat man playing the piccolo.

新發知の寄ると輪袈裟で首つ引 古  
Shibochi no yoru to wagesa de kubippiki

When the young priests are together,  
They play at neck-tug-of-war  
With the surplice.



“Boys will be boys” says a simple but profound adage. These young priests of a large temple, boys of between seven and fifteen, collect together in the evening and play with their “ring-surplice,” a piece of cloth worn round the neck and hanging down in front. The sacred emblems are toys to them.

今年も相變らずと醫者も来る  
Kotoshi mo aikawarazu to isha mo kuru

柳 香

The doctor comes:  
“This year too,  
Please patronize me.”

Ryûkô

Doctors are peculiarly insensitive to the fact that they are unwanted creatures whom we call from painful necessity, not because of their personal charm.

盗み心のないが乞食の自慢なり  
Nusumigokoro no nai ga kojiki no jiman nari

半文銭

It is the boast  
Of the beggar,  
That he has not a thieving mind.

Hanmonsens



Stevenson says somewhere that even the most depraved man has his ethical code, some level below which he will not sink.

親切に教へてやつてすりも乗り  
Shinsetsu ni oshiete yatte suri mo nori

五 葉

Kindly giving advice,  
The pick-pocket also  
Got on the train.

Goyô

And it may be said that this kindness of the pick-pocket is no less real, perhaps more so, more genuine, as coming from some feeling of contrition, than that of the other passengers, particularly of the people whose pockets are picked.



車屋をのせて車屋引いてゐる  
Kurumaya o nosete kurumaya hiite iru

一 斗

The rickshaw-man  
Gives another rickshaw-man  
A ride.

Itto

Why this is comical, it is hard to say. To be very profound, it may be symbolic of the fact that every puller is really a pulled.

## ANIMALS

鶴の死ぬのを龜が見てゐる  
Tsuru no shinu no o kame ga mite iru

古

The tortoise  
Is watching  
The crane die.

The crane lives only a thousand years, the tortoise ten thousand. The tortoise must look at the crane as it dies. There is something strange and fearsome in this sight; the life and death of these semi-imaginary creatures gives us a peculiar feeling of the universal and all-pervading nature of life and death.

かめ淋し鶴に別れて九千年  
Kame sabishi tsuru ni wakarete kyusen-nen

水平坊

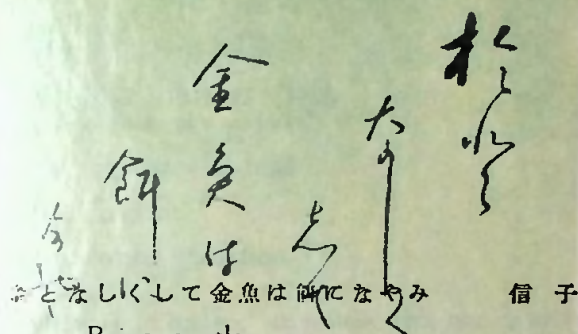
The tortoise,  
Parting from the crane,  
Is lonely for nine thousand years. *Suiheibō*

Senryu is definitely and inflexibly anti-poetical. It will not allow the slightest hyperbole or romantic falsehood to pass. The tortoise lives for ten thousand years, the crane for one thousand,—so they say. Then when the crane dies, the tortoise must live alone for the rest of the time. The motto of senryu is, "All that can be shaken shall be shaken!"

ほととぎす二十六字は案じさせ  
Hototogisu nijuuroku-ji wa anjisase

古

"Hototogisu,"  
Makes us think  
Of twenty six more syllables.

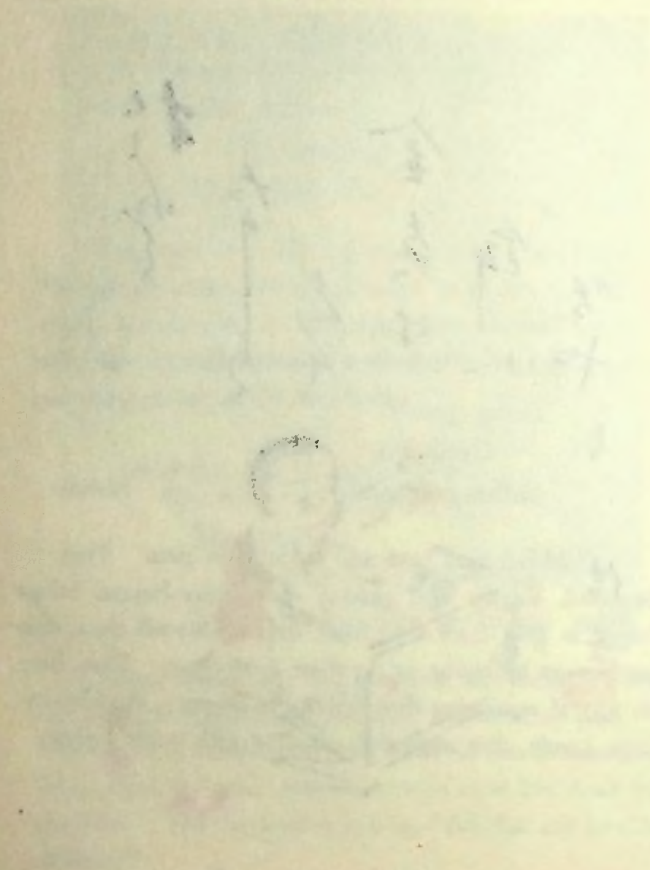


Being gentle,  
 Goldfish  
 Suffer for food.

Nobuko

Goldfish were born and made to be pets. They are beautiful, elegant and gentle. But when human beings forget to give them their food, they cannot tell them they are hungry by crying or by their demeanour. They have no way of expressing their feelings to others. And beautifully, gently, they must die. It is so with gentle people.





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This means that the five syllables of *hototogisu*, "cuckoo," makes us try to write a waka, of 31 syllables, i.e. twenty six more. It is also a kind of criticism of literature and poetry in its verbal, verbose nature, something apart from the purely poetical life, unexpressed and perhaps inexpressible.

にはとりと読みさうな名を時鳥

Niwatori to yomisouna na o hototogisu

古

What one would read

"Chicken,"

Is the word "cuckoo."

The word *hototogisu*, "cuckoo," is written with two characters, "time" and "bird," and one would suppose that this refers to a cock, which tells the time, especially of the sunrise. This verse is hardly poetry, except in the sense of satire or epigram, but it shows how the critical eye of the senryu poet penetrates even the philological shams of human beings.

ひきがへる掛物を見る姿也

Hikigaeru kakemono o miru sugata nari

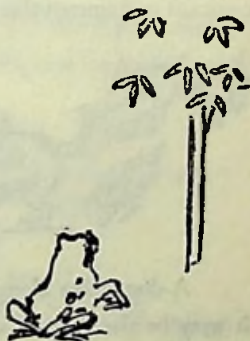
古

The frog

Seems to be looking

At a hanging scroll.

When people look at a *kakemono*, or hanging scroll, they sit and stare up at it with stupid, glassy eyes, their hands and feet just like those of the frog. This senryu criticises human beings rather than frogs.





小寝にも犬の子昨日今日を吠へ  
Koshaku nimo inu no ko kinou kyou o hoe

右近

Today and yesterday  
The puppies are barking  
Cheekily.

Ukon

This is haiku rather than senryu, in its lack of bitterness and trenchancy. The puppies have only just learned to bark, and gaze vacantly and impudently round as they yap at nothing in particular and everything in general.

ブルドック甘へる顔も同じ顔 女神丸  
Burudokku amaeru kao mo onaji kao

The bulldog's face,  
When it fawns on you,—  
It's the same face!

Nyoshingan



The expression of the bulldog does not change whether he is angry with you or making up to you. It is of a constant and immovable ugliness. But in this also, there is some charm.



犬の王様かと思れば女犬 可亭  
Inu no ousama ka to mireba onna-inu

The King of Dogs?—  
No, it is only  
A female dog.

Katei

A dog walks along in so dignified and proud a way that we think it may be the king of dogs, but look, there are several dogs following behind: it is a lady dog with a band of admirers. This is also a satire on human beings.



シャボン玉犬の頭で一つ消え  
Shabon-dama inu no atama de hitotsu kie

鬼猿子



A soap bubble

Burst

On the dog's head.

Toenshi

The dog looks so surprised, we have a delightful sensation of its humanity and kinship with us. The child blowing the soap-bubbles, the look on the dog's face,—the sweetly bitter mystery of things.

弱虫が何を吠へるとブルドック  
Yowamushi ga nani o hoeru to burudokku

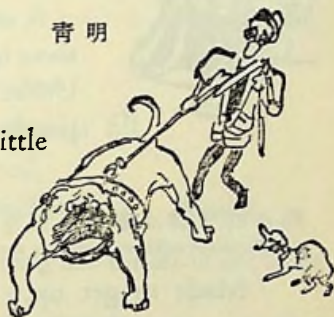
青明

The bulldog:

"What's this feeble little  
thing

Barking at?"

Seimei



When the small dog barks at the bulldog, the big dog turns his face away disdainfully, as if asking himself what this cowardly creature is making such a fuss about. ("Bulldog," in senryu, seems to be usually written as if it were "bulldock.")

自転車をあきらめて犬舌を出し  
Jitensha o akiramete inu shita o dashi

五呂丸



Giving up

The bicycle,

The dog sticks out his tongue.

Gorômaru

If this were haiku, we should call this an example of the pathetic

fallacy, but here it is conscious, and therefore humorous. The dog runs after the bicycle, barking, but tiring of so unequal a contest, he begins to pant with his tongue sticking out. The senryu writer anthropomorphizes this into an expression of derision and impudence.

なぐられた猫隅つこで顔をなで  
Nagurareta neko sumikko de kao o nade

鯛 坊



The slapped cat

Washes its face

In a corner.

Taibô

A cat bears no malice, and contentedly goes about its ordinary business once trouble is over. Unlike the dog, it is not discomfited by punishment.

起されて猫は背中へ腹をたて  
Okosarete neko wa senaka e hara o tate

古

Made to get up,

The cat gets angry

With her back.

The point of this senryu is quite lost in translation, for like the amusing things in Lewis Carrol, it depends on idiom. The original

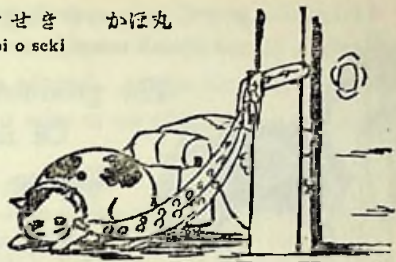


says, "The cat sticks up his stomach on his back." The Japanese for "to get angry" is *hara ga tatsu*, that is, "the stomach rises"; however, a cat actually shows no anger, but arches its back, as it stretches. When the cat is routed out from some warm place, she shows her displeasure in "setting her stomach on her back."

緋鹿の子の扱帯で猫の戀をせき かほ丸  
 Hi-kanoko no shigoki de neko no koi o seki

Damming up  
 The cat's love  
 With her scarlet  
 under-sash.

*Kaomaru*



One spring night the cat wanted to go out and meet her lover in the garden. The girl tied her to a post with her scarlet dappled under-sash. There is a harmony between the girl and the cat and the love and the red sash.

満腹の馬の機嫌は桶をかみ 鈴ノ坊  
 Mampuku no uma no kigen wa oke o kami

The horse, having eaten its fill,  
 Is in a good mood,  
 And bites its food-bucket. *Amembô*

This is very near to haiku, in its entering into the life of the horse.



何遍も外で嘶く縄緩簾 紅太郎  
 Namben mo soto de inanaku nawa-noren

Again and again  
 Neighing,  
 Outside the rope-curtains.

*Kôtarô*

Eating-houses often have curtains made of hanging pieces of rope. The pack-driver went in for a drink or a meal or both, and the horse, weary of standing so long in the cold outside, neighs repeatedly. Animals and human beings are sometimes very close to one another.





メリンスをつけて氣のいい馬の顔  
Merinsu o tsukete ki no ii uma no kao

三太郎

The good-tempered face  
Of the horse,  
Wearing muslin.

Santarô

This may be during some festival, when there is some red cloth put over the horse's back. The horse also looks as if he is enjoying himself, but this "as if" gives a depth of meaning that would be absent if the animal were supposed to be really happy and content to pull heavy loads about all day for human beings.

さげて来た鼠に巡查欠伸する  
Sagete kita nezumi ni junsu akubi suru

美 田

Bringing along a rat,  
The policeman  
Yawns.

Bisen

At this time, people were paid something for every rat they brought to the police station. This warm afternoon, when nobody was even thinking of doing anything wrong, and the policeman was sitting in his box half-asleep, a child brought a rat in, and the policeman opened his eyes and yawned as he began to perform his official business.

蜻蛉は石の地藏に髪を結ひ  
Seirei wa ishi no jizou ni kami o yui

古

The dragon-fly  
On the stone Jizô,  
Is dressing his hair.

Jizô is one of the Bodhisattvas. This senryu is quite clearly the

work of the fancy, not of the imagination, but human beings have a lot of fancies, and they are not worthless. To be rather subtle, but not perhaps beyond the bounds of truth, imagination may see itself within the fancy, just as it takes a saint to see saintliness in the sinner.

波の寄るたびに鴉は少し飛び  
Nami no yoru tabi ni karasu wa sukoshi tobi

日 車

Each time a wave breaks,  
The raven  
Gives a little jump.

Nissha

This verse is senryu, if it is so, only because the raven is a humorous, ungainly bird. Otherwise it is a haiku, and a very good one at that.

犬に藝させてる方も何か喰ひ 錦浪  
Inu ni gei saseteru hou mo nanika kui

The one who gets the dog  
To do his tricks,  
Also eats some. Kinô



This is one of the most charming senryu ever written. The girl is getting the dog to do his little tricks, and as he performs them successfully, she rewards him with a piece of biscuit. At the same time, however, she pops some in her own mouth. This somehow expresses the common nature between them, and adds a delightful poetic confusion to the scene.

食ふものを踏んでる象の恙なし  
Kuu mono o funderu zou no tsutsuga-nashi

水 府

The elephant  
Tramples on his food  
Unintentionally.

Suifu

This is a good expression of the bulk and unwieldiness of the elephant. With his great legs he crushes things without any design or ill-will. We see our own clumsiness and unwitting stupidity magnified in this great beast.

追はれると尻でかぶりを家鴨ふり 古  
Owareru to shiri de kaburi o ahiru furi

When pursued,  
The ducks shake their heads  
With their tails.

This is an excellent description of the ducks as they move away from someone who wants to pick them up, refusing to be caught.



鶏の何か言ひたい足づかひ 古  
Niwatori no nanika iitai ashi-zukai

The chicken  
Wants to say something,  
The way it's using its feet.

Chickens, especially cocks, often scratch with their feet in an irritable way, as if they wanted to say something. Most human beings fidget a little before they begin to speak.



## THINGS

ひょうたんはこゝをつかめの生れ付き 古

Hyoutan wa koko o tsukame no umaretsuki

The gourd says,  
Of its nature  
"Hold me here!"

The gourd is shaped with a kind of waist, so that it can be easily held in the hand and used as a bottle.

日本の金のうごく晴天 古

Nippon no kane no ugoku seiten

The money of Japan  
Moves,—  
This fine day!

This is the poetry of money. The business man looks at the clear blue sky, and sees money there, money changing hands, accumulating, increasing. He feels, rightly enough, that money is the root of all good, and rejoices in the fine weather that helps to produce it.

あとの無い證據おふくろさかさ桐 古

Ato no nai shouko ofukuro sakasa-giri

A proof she has no more,  
The mother gives  
The upside-down paulownia.

Gold coins of one ryô and one bu (ôban and koban) were cast with a paulownia on them. As this was done by hand, mistakes occurred, but rarely, and these coins were prized by the people of Edo as bringing good luck. The prodigal son had received so much money from his mother that in the end she was forced to give him this luck-coin, her last.

腹の立つ時見る爲めの海  
Hara no tatsu toki miru tame no umi

古

The sea,—  
Something to look at  
When we are angry.

This perhaps expresses the way the business man of Edo explained the existence of so much useless, unmarketable water.

吹立の金は田舎であぶなり  
Fukitate no kane wa inaka de abunagari

古

The newly-minted money  
Was feared  
By the countryman.

Rustics are timid and prudent. Someone offers some new coins in payment for something, and the villager is afraid to accept them.

非を理にも小判の耳が聞きとゞけ  
Hi o ri nimo koban no mimi ga kiki-todoke

古

The *koban*  
Has ears  
To hear the wrong as right.

This is a vivid way of expressing the manner in which a judge is bribed with money to distort justice.

そこが江戸小判の鰓を犬がくひ  
Soko ga edo koban no era o inu ga kui

古

That's the real Edo!  
The dog eats  
The gills of the *koban*.

"Eating the gills of the *koban*" means eating the gills of the first

bonito of the season, so expensive it is. And this is characteristic of the people of Edo, eating something delicious, however dear it may be, and above all liking to eat the first of anything.

登箱の跡から番頭壹本さし  
Hito-hako no ato kara bantou ippon sashi

古

After one "box,"

A clerk

With a sword.

One "box" means 1,000 ryô, a great deal of money, which was usually put in a box. Someone sent 1,000 ryô to another, and the clerk walks behind the box, carrying a sword to defend the money against robbers.

だに程な銀でお家さま寺参り  
Dani hodo na gin de oiesama teramairi

古

The old mistress

Offers to the temple

Silver coins like dog-ticks.

She is a rich owner of a large shop and likes going to the temple, but is so mean that she uses these small silver coins as offerings.

She is mean not only as a rich old woman, but as an inhabitant of Osaka,<sup>1</sup> where these coins were used. This senryu was written in Edo, in disparagement of Osaka, the business city.

皆色と金ちやと閻魔帳を繰り  
Mina iro to kane ja to emma chou o kuri

古

"It all comes from women and money,"

Says Emma,

Looking up his record book.

1. Where the expression *o ie sama* is used.



Emma is the Lord of Hell, who judges the spirits who pass before him after crossing the river of Rokugô. Japanese people do not believe in such a person as Emma, any more than most people believe in the Devil, but his name is used.

惚れ薬佐渡から出るがいつちきき  
Horegusuri sado kara deru ga itchi kiki

古

The best medicine  
To make love,  
Is what comes from Sado.

"What comes from Sado" is money, for in old Japan most of the gold was mined there.



オートバイまだ出ないのにまどつかせ 舍人  
Outobai mada denai noni magotsukase

The auto-cycle  
Puts them in a flurry,—  
Though it doesn't move. Toneri

The auto-cycle suddenly makes a terrible racket and everybody is startled, and people jump about, but nothing happens, it just stands there. This is one of the chief characteristics of the motor-cycle.

影法師缺點のないわが姿  
Kagehoushi ketten no nai waga sugata

流水

The shadow;  
My figure  
With not a bit of it missing. Ryūsui

This is not very far from haiku, only it concentrates on man and the nature of man and the human world. Man cannot, of himself, expand without the use of Nature, without the help of the universe

outside and around him. When this is done, as in haiku, man becomes to some extent idealized and swallowed up in Nature.

なげ入の干からびて居る間の宿 古  
Nage-ire no hikarabite iru ai no shuku

Flowers arranged in a vase,  
Withering,  
At an inn between the post-towns.

The *ai no shuku* is an inn in a small village, between the stages, where travellers do not usually stop. This senryu is almost indistinguishable from haiku, for the flowers withered in the vase express the lonely nature of the village. It lacks only a season word.

受取つたとも言ふやうにポスト鳴り 馬行  
Uketotta todemo iu youni posuto nari

The post-box makes a noise,  
As though saying,  
"I have received it!" Umatsura

When the letter is dropped into the post-box, the sound of the letter is heard, it echoes, and we have a feeling of consummation, of security, of *the humanity of things*. It is in such verses as these that we see the poetry of senryu, the poetry of Dickens.

人間を炭団で睨む雪達摩 古  
Ningen o tadon de niramu yuki-daruma

Glaring at human beings,  
With charcoal balls,—  
The snow-man.



Japanese children always use charcoal, or charcoal balls, to make the face of the snow-man.

一本のマッチに闇のたちろきぬ  
 Ippen no matchi ni yami no taji-rokinu

萬年

At a single match,  
 The darkness  
 Flinches.

Mannen

This is an excellent description of light, and particularly of the spluttering, explosive nature of a match.

風の来る度に隣の梅を賞め 古  
 Kaze no kuru tabi ni tonari no ume o home

Every time the wind blows,  
 Praising  
 The plum blossoms next door.

Whenever the breeze blows, the scent of the plum flowers is wafted to him, and each time he turns and looks at it, saying, "What a wonderful plum tree it is next door!"



やれ引くな引くなと梅の風を取り 古  
 Yare hikuna to ume no tako o tori

"Hi! Don't pull, don't pull!"  
 Taking the kite  
 Off the plum-tree.

The old man is very fond of his plum tree, which will soon bloom. The kite has fallen on the tree and the boy is trying to pull it off. The old man hobbles out to release the kite before any damage is done to his favourite tree.





夕立の樂屋と見える雲の峯 古  
 Yuudachi no gakuya to mieru kumo no mine

A sudden shower;  
 The billowing clouds  
 Seem like a green-room.

The lightning and thunder are making  
 a kind of infernal music, and the piled-  
 up clouds are like the green-room where  
 the musicians and musical instruments  
 are gathered.



月の出る方へ尺八を振り 京之助  
 Tsuki no deru hou e shakuhachi ago o furi

Wagging his chin,  
 Playing the *shakuhachi*  
 In the direction of the moon.

*Kyô no suke*

The player of the *shakuhachi* or bamboo flute-  
 a-bec, is not very skilful, but is working himself  
 up into a state of poetico-musical enthusiasm,  
 and has turned in the direction of the moon, as if to invoke her assist-  
 ance, or as though serenading her with his windy and reedy notes.

生きものゝやうに捕へる心太 古  
 Ikimono no youni toraeru tokoroten

Gelidium jelly;  
 When you go to pick it up,  
 It seems alive.

This is a "fact" that haiku neglects, but senryu eagerly records.  
 The reason for the rejection by haiku is perhaps that the jelly moves,

it quakes and trembles, but the universe does not tremble with it; the jelly must *be* alive, not "seem." But senryu is satisfied with the outside of things, and after all, the outside and inside are continuous.



蓮根はこゝらを折れと生れ付き 古  
Renkon wa kokora o ore to umaretsuki

The lotus root says,  
By nature,  
"Break me off here."

The lotus root has nodes where it is easy to break. It seems to show what used to be called "design in nature." It was once said by Christian apologists, (or said to be said) that fleas were created red or black so as to be seen easily against the white skin.

酸いといふ唇小さく小さくなり 佳 汀  
Sui to iu kuchibiru chiisaku chiisaku nari

The lips  
That said it was sour,—  
Ever so, ever so small!

Katei

This is speaking with the body, so much more expressive, so much more to be believed than what is merely spoken.

## HISTORICAL

正成は鼻をふさいで采をとり 古  
 Masashige wa hana o fusaide sai o tori

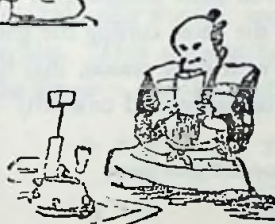
Masashige  
 Commands,  
 Holding his nose.

Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336) was the type and model of loyalty and devotion to the Imperial cause. When besieged in Chihaya Castle by Ashikaga, he prevented the enemy from scaling the wall by pouring down upon them boiling human excrement.



ぬるい茶でだんだんあつき御取成 古  
 Nurui cha de dan-dan atsuki otorinashi

With luke-warm tea,  
 Gradually  
 Promoted warmly.



The story on which this senryu is based is the following: Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1536-1598) once went hunting. Feeling very thirsty, he entered a temple and asked for tea. A boy, thirteen years old, brought it, and Hideyoshi emptied it at one gulp. He asked for another, and the boy brought him it, warmer than the previous one. He asked for one more, and this time it was quite hot, and he sipped it with enjoyment. Hideyoshi admired the boy for his cleverness, took him away with him and gradually advanced him in rank. The boy afterwards became Mitsunari Ishida, the famous general, defeated an



killed in 1600 at the battle of Sekigahara.

Besides the cleverness of the boy, in bringing the tea of appropriate temperatures, one should notice the pun on tepid tea and warm patronage, and the double use of "gradually."

駄々子のやうに俊寛ぐちを云ひ  
Dadakko no you ni shunkan guchi o ii

古

Like a naughty boy,  
Shunkan  
Grumbles and complains.

Shunkan, 1142-1178, the chief priest of Hôshôji, plotted to destroy the Taira, but his plans were discovered and he was banished to the island of Kikagashima in 1177, with two accomplices. This place was desolate in the extreme, and they lived a miserable and monotonous life. The daughter of Kiyomori, head of the Taira family, gave birth to a child, and on this joyful occasion many criminals were pardoned. A boat came to the island and took off the two other conspirators, but left Shunkan behind. Shunkan stood on the shore cursing the gods and bewailing his fate. The senryu says, with some reason, that his querulousness and childish complaints were unmanly, and unworthy of a Zen priest.



九郎介へ代句だらけの繪馬を上げ  
Kurosuke e daiku darake no ema o age

古

To Kurosuke,  
Vicarious verses  
On the votive horse pictures.

Kurosuke Inari was the tutelary deity of the Yoshiwara. When this was first established, in the 4th year of Wadô, 711 A.D. a black

fox and a white fox came down from heaven ; the black fox was near the field of one Chiba Kurosuke. The *ema* is the votive picture of a horse, found in shrines and Buddhist temples. *Daiku*, vicarious verses, means haiku written for someone else.

In the shrine, there are votive pictures with haiku written on them, purporting to be written by the women of the Yoshiwara. Actually, says the cynical author of this *senryu*, they were written by their patrons.

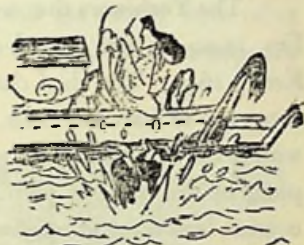
一門はどぶりとどぶりと奏問し 古

Ichimon wa dohuri-doburi to sounmon shi

The family

Report to the Emperor,

With a splash.



The Taira family were defeated by the Minamoto, and fled to the shore of Dannoura, 1185. When they were about to commit suicide, the nurse of the Emperor Antoku (only eight years old) told him there was a capital under the sea, and that many people would be waiting there for him. This she said to make him unafraid to jump into the sea. The Emperor Antoku sang:

今ぞ聞くみもすそ川の流れには

Imazo kiku mimosuso gawa no nagare niwa

波の底にも都ありとは

nami no soko nimo miyako aritowa

I knew not till now,

There was a capital

Under the waves

Of Mimosusogawa.

The Emperor and the ladies-in-waiting jumped into the sea first. The

retainers then jumped in after them, and the senryu speaks of this as their going to report something to the Emperor.

丸山で踵のないも稀に生み  
Maruyama de kakato no nai mo mare ni umi

古

At Maruyama,  
Those born without heels  
Are also few.

The Yoshiwara that was set up in Nagasaki during the Bunroku Era, 1592-95, was moved outside to Maruyama in the 19th year of Kanei, 1642. The chief clients were foreigners. These were popularly supposed to have no heels, and for that reason wore boots and shoes with heels. Prostitutes are well-known to be inclined to sterility. The point of this verse is perhaps in the "also"; the same biological or eugenic laws seem to operate with foreigners.

又文かそこらへおけと光る君  
Mata fumi ka sokora e oke to hikaru kimi

古

"Another letter?  
Put it down somewhere there,"  
Says Hikaru Kimi.

Hikaru Kimi (Bright Prince) is the hero of the *Genji Monogatari*. Being extraordinarily handsome and clever, a great many women fell in love with him. This senryu expresses his Byronic weariness, and indifference to the numerous love letters he received.



## PSYCHOLOGY

うそをつけたの大三十日来る

Uso o tsuke tonô oomisoka kuru

古

The End of the Year

Is coming;

Tell all the lies you can.

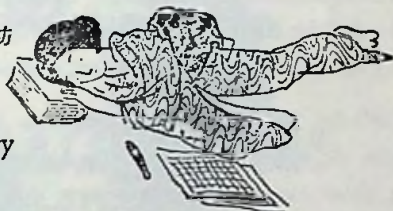
In the last days of the year, the shop-keepers and business people are at their wits' end to pay their bills and get money from other people. This is not a very moral or poetical verse, but it corresponds to reality.

字典など清少納言枕にし 剣花坊

Jiten nado seishonagon makura ni shi

"Seishônagon"

Makes her dictionary

A pillow. *Kenkabô*

The woman poses as a literary person, but becoming sleepy she puts her head on the dictionary and shows herself in her true colours. Seishônagon, of the 10th century, was the authoress of *Makura no Sôshi*.

晴天に持つて通るは借りた傘

Seiten ni motte touru wa karita kasa

古

Going along carrying,

On a fine day,

A borrowed umbrella.

Everyone who does this wishes to explain to other people why he is carrying an umbrella on such a fine day. As he cannot explain, he feels ill at ease. When he does so, he feels foolish, for he realizes

keenly what he half-suspected, that no one cares whether he carries an umbrella or not.



御近所へ御世話をかけて河豚をやめ 古

Gokinjo e osewa o kakete fugu o yame

Having caused the neighbours  
A great deal of trouble,  
He will never eat globe-fish  
again.

A man who lived alone ate globe-fish, (knowing it was likely to poison him), because of greediness, or for the novelty, or out of adventurousness. He became dangerously ill and was nursed back to health by the people of the neighbourhood. He thanked them profusely, and vowed never to eat globe-fish again.

琴棋書ならべたばかり知りんせん 古

Koto-ki-sha narabeta bakari shirinsen

“Harp, chess, writing and painting things  
Are just put there;  
I know little of such matters.”

These are the words of the courtesan to the visitor. She knows better than to make him feel inferior to herself. We have an example here of “lightness,” a quality of all good senryu and haiku, a certain maturity without heaviness, such that we find in Shakespeare and Mozart.

われよりは人に淋しい寒念佛 古

Ware yori wa hito ni sabishii kan-nembutsu

Reciting the Nembutsu in the coldest season:  
More than for me,  
It is melancholy for other people.

雪のほかに下駄の錢

雀郎

In the snow-lad sleeve  
There is money from gambling.

*Jakurô*

A samurai went some-where and gamble.  
When he came, he flushed with money, it was  
snowing. The picture has represented this senryu with a  
monkey-theater, the samurai and his servant with the lan-  
tern being two monkeys. The above, a modern one,  
is of fourteen syllables only, seven, seven.





22

15/10/19

This senryu is a remarkable one, for it describes, in a short compass, the minds of those performing the ascetic ritual (among whom is the author himself, "I"), and that of the people who hear and see them. The line of devotees dressed in white march along beating their gourds or bells, intent on what they are doing, and united in feeling with one another. Those who see them pass feel shut out of their heaven. It seems intolerably cold and lonely to be doing such things.



いたづらで困りますわと嬉しさう

Itazura de komarimasuwa to ureshisu

楚女

"Such a nuisance!

So mischievous!"

She says, pleased as punch.

Sojoo

In more general terms, we are proud, proud of everything. A man who is never sea-sick is proud of it. A man whose stomach is moved even by the thought of the tossing waves,—is proud of it.

禁札を見るその場から花を折り

Kinsatsu o miru sono ba kara hana o ori

仙外

Looking at the prohibiting  
notice,

And breaking off

A branch of cherry blossom.

Sengai

The notice board says, "Break no branches," and the man reads it carefully and breaks off a branch, not acci-



dently, not impudently, not warily, but just like a cow or monkey.

わがすかぬ男の文は母へ見せ 古  
Waga sukanu otoko no fumi wa haha e mise

Showing her mother  
The letter  
From a man she doesn't  
like.



The girl wishes to get marks for honesty from her mother, so that she can more easily hide letters from someone she likes.

うそつかぬ傾城買ふて淋しがり 古  
Uso tsukanu keisei koute sabishigari

Buying a prostitute  
That told no lies,  
I felt lonely.

She must have been a novice at the game, and had not yet acquired the habit of giving her clients the answers they would like to hear.



ヘレナ島愚人の辞書にある通り  
Herenatou gujin no jisho ni aru touri

東 魚

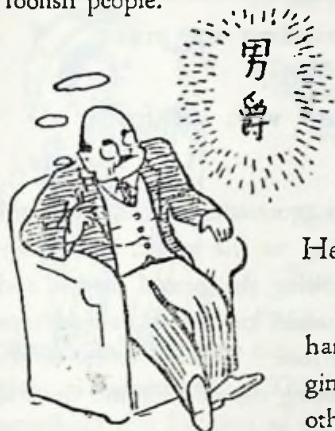
The Island of St. Helena,—  
Just as it says  
In stupid people's dictionaries.

Tôgyo

Napoleon once said that the word "impossible" was not in his dictionary. Many years after, he was banished to St. Helena where he must have realised that the word "impossible"



should have been in his own dictionary as it was in that of common, foolish people.



寄附金もう男爵のほしい頃

Kifukin mou danshaku no hoshii koro

蝶十郎

A contribution:

Now it is when

He wants to be a baron. *Chôjûrô*

A man has become rich as the result of hard work and avarice. He suddenly begins to be generous,—but this is only another form, a later stage of his greed. He now wishes to become a nobleman, conforming thus to a certain law of the evolution of human nature.



大の字になつて我が家の味を知り

Dai no ji ni natte wagaya no aji o shiri

佳 汀

Stretched out at full length,  
You feel the meaning  
Of home.

*Katei*

The first line is literally, "becoming like the letter 大." There is always a certain amount of contraction and constriction of mind and body when we are with other people, in other places. Only at home is it possible to know comfort.



奏樂が少しは分る足拍子 ツボ隠  
Sougaku ga sukoshi wa wakaru ashi-byoushi

Understanding the music  
A little,  
Keeping time with her foot.

*Tsubotara*

This is a very penetrating senryu. The girl sits there listening to the music, half-understanding it, following the general rhythm and prominent melodies, and this she emphasizes to herself, and perhaps also to others, by beating time with her foot. This movement of her foot gives her an illusion of comprehending this difficult and classical music.

口あきに税務吏がくる賣れない日  
Kuchi-aki ni zeimuri ga kuru urenai hi

A day of poor business!  
A tax collector  
Comes in first.

*Ginrin*



In old Japan there was a superstition,  
which still lingers on, that the good or

poor sale of a shop on any day is decided by the  
first customer.



抜路次のつもりの連れとてれて出る 松郎  
Nu'teroji no tsumori no tsure to terete deru

Coming back with a friend  
From an alley they thought  
they could get through,  
Feeling awkward.

*Matsurô*

They went along a narrow alley, expecting

to be able to get out, but had to come back, feeling the tittering gaze of the housewives and children upon them.



追ひ越して見ればつまらぬ女なり 鬼一郎  
Oikoshite mireba tsumaranu onna nari

Overtaking and passing her,

I saw

She was not up to much. *Kiichirō*

From behind, she looked as if she might be pretty, but on quickening his pace, and passing her with a surreptitious glance, he found her plain and unattractive. This is not a very lofty verse, but it describes something that happens as unceasingly as the tides and the seasons.

惜しがられながら天才使はれる 琴波  
Oshigarare nagara tensai tsukawareru

The genius

Is commiserated with,—

But used just the same. *Kinpa*



The boy in some office or factory is extremely clever, and everyone says that he is too good to be here; but he must work just the same. This verse is a satire on the apathy of people, the shallowness of their compassion and admiration.



恩は思娘は娘俺は俺 懐窓  
On wa on musume wa musume ore wa ore

A favour is a favour,

But the girl is the girl,

And I am I. *Kaisō*



The young man had been done a favour by somebody, who now wants him to marry his not very attractive daughter. He is in a dilemma, but cuts it, by saying to himself, "I received a favour, it is true, but living all my life with a woman I don't love is a different matter."



この菓子が一つ五銭と裏を見る  
Kono kashi ga hitotsu gosen to ura o miru

錦浪

Saying,

"Is this a five sen cake?"

He looks at the back of it. *Kinrô*

At that time, five sen for a cake was a high price. When the husband heard that it was such an expensive cake, he looked at it more carefully, turning it over and inspecting the back of it, as he ate it.

こつそりと箆笥の中で派手になり  
Kossori to tansu no naka de hade ni nari

黙念人

In the chest of drawers,

Secretly

They had become too gay.

*Mokunenjin*



The wife has not been out anywhere for a long, long time, always working about the house. For some reason or other, to dry them perhaps after the rainy season, she takes them out and looks at them, and feels herself too old to wear them any more. It should be noted that the colours and patterns of kimono are more or less fixed according to the age of the wearer, ranging from the rather bilious colours for children to the artistic but sombre hues of old age.



片乳を握るが慾の出来はじめ  
Katachichi o nigiru ga yoku no deki hajime

古

Clutching the other breast  
Is the beginning  
Of greed.

When a baby six or seven months old feeds at the breast, he holds the other as if he is afraid someone may get some of the milk, a kind of dog-in-the-manger attitude. It is the first sign of egotism and greediness.

まゝ事の仲間へ母がたのみに來  
Mamagoto no nakama e haba ga tanomi ni ki

二三吉

The mother comes to ask  
The children playing house,  
To take her own child in.

Fumikichi

The interesting point here is the fact that the mother recognizes the children's power and right in forming this group, though they are only five or six years old. She begs the favour of having her own child admitted as a member.



律義ものまじりまじりと子が出る  
Richigimono majiri-majiri to ko ga dekiru

古

The man of principle;  
Silently,  
He makes many children.

The man of integrity does not speak  
of women, does not visit prostitutes, is

apparently quite sexless,—and yet has as large a family as the best of them.

友達が笑ふと女湯をきらひ  
Tomodachi ga warau to onna-yu o kirai

ひとり

He hates to go  
To the women's bath-room;  
"The other boys will laugh  
at me," he says.

Hitori

The Japanese public bath is divided into two parts, and the little boys are always taken by their mothers to the women's half. When the boy says this to his mother, she realizes he is growing up, and that he knows the meaning and power of public opinion.



まけたのが鈴虫を聞く草角力  
maketa-no ga suzumushi o kiku kusa-zumou

句浪人

The grass-wrestling;  
The one who lost is listening  
To the sound of the *suzumushi*.

Kurônin



*Kusazumô* is a kind of wrestling in the open air with no canopy, and for this reason is called grass-wrestling. It is held on a summer evening of some festival.

The young men of the village are wrestling in the yard of the shrine. The winner is talking and laughing triumphantly with his friends. The loser sits alone on a stone in the darkness, listening to the insects chirping.

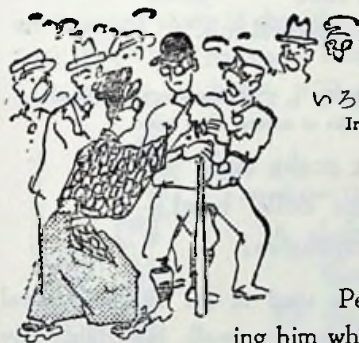
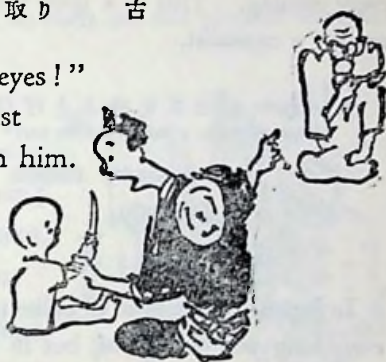


おじいが目見ろと小刀やつと取り 古  
Ojii ga me miro to kogatana yatto tori

"Look at grandpapa's eyes!"

He says, and at last  
Gets the knife away from him.

The boy has got hold of a sharp knife, and his father is trying to take it from him; but is frightened the boy will cut himself. Telling him to look at grandpapa's glowing eyes, he manages to get it from him.



いろいろの注意を選手軽く受け 雨町  
Iro-iro no chuui o senshu karuku uke

The champion  
Takes lightly  
All kinds of advice. Uchô

People crowd round the champion, telling him what to do and what not to do, but he receives their advice rather coolly. They seem much more excited than he.

普請場で薪を拾ふ大旦那 春雨  
Fushinba de takigi o hirou ou-danna

The old master  
Picking up firewood,  
In the work-yard. Harusame

The old man is very rich, and yet picks up bits of wood for firewood



every evening. This is a good satire on the avarice necessary for becoming a capitalist.

ていねいに水瓜を喰ふとげびるなり 古

Teinei ni suika o kuu to gebiru nari

Eating water melon  
Politely,  
Is vulgar.

In Japanese custom it is polite to eat up everything put before one, but in the case of water-melon, to eat all the red part, down to the white and even to the green rind, looks greedy, and is an exception to the general rule.



雛の碗小馬鹿にならぬ高いもの 古

Hina no wan kobaka ni naranu takai mono

We can't make light  
Of the dolls' bowl,—  
It's so expensive!



This bowl is used at the Dolls' Festival in March. It is very small, but elaborately made, lacquered and painted with gold. It may seem a small and trifling thing, but we can hardly look at it with contempt or indifference, because it costs such a lot of money.

本ぶりに成つて出て行く雨やどり 古

Homburi ni natte dete yuku ama-yadori

After it began to rain  
In earnest,  
Coming out of the shelter.

The man had gone under somewhere as



a shelter from the rain, hoping it would soon clear up, but it became a steady rain, so resigning himself, he came out and plodded off wishing he hadn't waited.

濡てゆく女かぞへる雨やどり 古

Nurete yuku onna kazoeru ama-yadori

A shelter from the rain;  
Counting the women,  
Going wet in the rain.

Two men are taking shelter from the rain, and having nothing better to do, are talking about the women who are hurrying along in the rain. "She is very pretty, isn't she?" "That one is running fast!" "Why doesn't she come under here I wonder?" "That makes five altogether, doesn't it?"

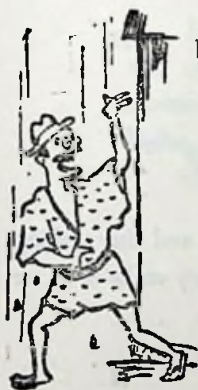


雨やどりちよつちよつと出てぬれてみる 古

Ama-yadori cho' cho' to dete nurete miru

A shelter from the rain;  
Going out now and again  
To see how wet one gets.

The man comes out and stands in the rain a little while, holding up his face. "This is wetting me too much," he thinks, and goes back. Again he pops out and tries.



こぶ巻をくはせて置いてでんじゆをし 古

Kobumaki o kuwasete oite denju o shi

Letting her taste  
The *kobumaki*,  
And then initiating her.

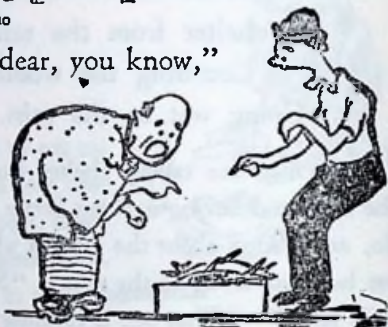


Somebody comes and admires the look of the *kobumaki* or tangle-well. She says, "Just taste it; taste it first, and then I'll let you into the secret of how to make it." This is a very delicate senryu, the point being in the word "then."

高いよと初手におどかす初かつを 古  
Takaiyo to shote ni odokasu hatsu-katsuo

"The first bonito are very dear, you know,"  
Threatens the bonito  
seller,  
Right at the start.

The first bonito, in June, are very dear, and the fishmonger feels himself to be in a commanding position, so much so that he adopts quite a bullying manner.



銅佛は拜んだ跡でたゞかれる 古  
Kuzabutsu wa cganda ato de tatakareru

After being worshipped,  
The bronze Buddha  
Is beaten.

This is a statue of Amida or some such Buddha, and after making obeisance to it, natural curiosity asserts itself, and they strike it to see what kind of metal it is made of.

蠅打でかき寄せて取る關手形 古  
Hae-uchi de kakiyosete toru seki-tegata

Pulling to him  
The pass,  
With the fly-swat.

The officials of the Barrier are bored and sleepy. When someone

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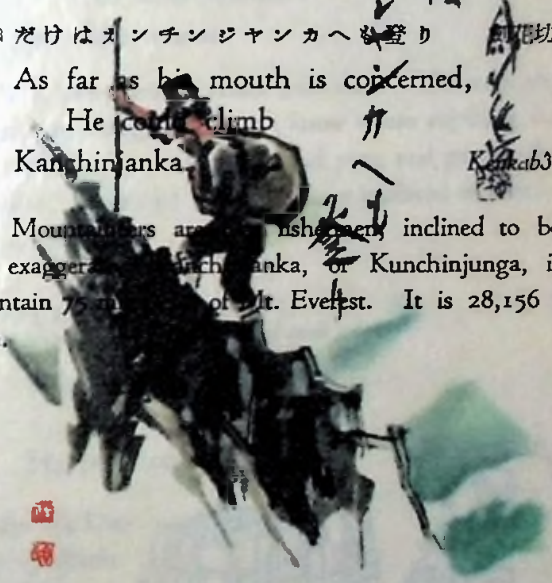
口だけはカンチンジャンカへも登り 口花坊

As far as his mouth is concerned,  
He could climb  
Kanchinjanka.

カ  
ヘ  
モ

Kanchab3

Mountaineers are often inclined to boast  
and exaggerate. Kanchinjanka, or Kunchinjunga, is a  
mountain 75 miles west of Mt. Everest. It is 28,156 feet  
high.







offers his identification card, the insolent creature pulls it to him, yawning, with the fly-swat.

At barriers in Old Japan, established between one prefecture and another, the investigation of papers, personal belongings, object of journey, etc. was extremely strict. The Japanese were and are a suspicious people.

そこら中ふたを明け明けていしゆぶり 古

Sokora-ju futa o ake ake teishu-buri

Taking off the lids everywhere,  
One after another,  
Just like a man.

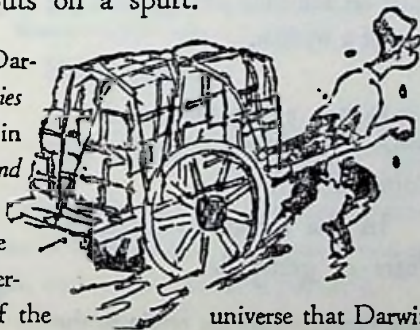
The wife is away, and a visitor has come. The man wants to give the guest something, but doesn't know where anything is. He keeps taking off the lids of saucepans and pots, and putting them on again. "Teishu," translated "man," means husband or host. Here the meaning is the latter.

車引女を見るといきみ出し 古

Kuruma-hiki onna o miru to ikimi-dashi

When the hand-cart puller  
Sees a girl,  
He puts on a spurt.

This is, after all, Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*, in seventeen syllables, and the humour thrown in for nothing, the humour which is perhaps the meaning of the



universe that Darwin left out.



謝つてゐるのに主人云ひ募り

Ayamatte iru noni shujin ii-tsunori

雅芳

He begs his pardon,  
But the master  
Keeps on scolding.

Gahô



The boy has said he is sorry, time and again, but the master goes on grumbling at him as if he had said nothing, or were defiant. The fact is, a certain amount of accumulated chagrin, inferiority complex, disappointment, misanthropy and what

not, has to come out at the excuse of the boy's mistake and no (irrelevant) apology can stop it.

あいあいといふたびめるかゝへ帯

Ai ai to iu tabi shimeru kakae-obi

古

Every time she says  
"Yes, yes,"  
Tightening her under-sash.

In the middle of putting on her *kimono*, she is called, and answering "Ai, ai," she busily pulls it tighter each time; the answering and the tightening are somehow simultaneous and even identical expressions of the nature of a woman.

蚊遣火の馳走ありがた涙なり

Kayaribi no chisou arigata namida nari

古

Doing a kindness;  
In the mosquito smudge,—  
Tears of gratitude.

This verse perhaps owes its origin to the



fact that, for example, when we knit our brows we begin to feel angry. Weeping from the smoke gives us a faint feeling of the gratitude we should feel for the smoke that is made for us.

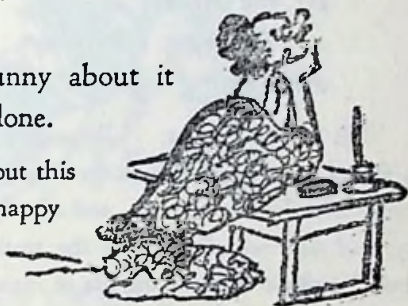
屁をひつてをかしくもない獨り者  
He o hitte okashikumo nai hitorimono

古

Farting,—

There's nothing funny about it  
When you're living alone.

There is something tragic about this  
verse. The bachelor is not so happy  
as the married man imagines,  
for it is men, not a man, that  
give value to things.



棚釣つてわざとあたまをぶつて見る  
Tara tsutte waza to atama o butte miru

古

Putting up a shelf,  
And bumping his head  
On purpose.

This is to see if it is in the way, or too high or too low.



賞められて澤庵石を持たせられ  
Homerarete takuan-ishi o motaserare

白濱

Being praised  
Into carrying,  
The *takuan* stone.

Hakuin

*Takuan* is a kind of pickle made from the dai-  
kon or long radish. It is put into a barrel with  
salt, and a heavy stone is put on it.

The woman of the house is getting someone



to move the stone, saying, "Oh, how strong you are!" The man knows he is being fooled, but cannot help swallowing the flattery.

小説に泣き泣き菓子も喰つてゐる 寅夫  
Shōsetsu ni naki naki kashi mo kutte iru

At the story,  
Weeping tearfully,  
And eating cakes. *Toraō*

This is like Homer. Ulysses and a few of his companions escaped being eaten alive by the monster, and after they had wept bitterly, ate heartily, and slept soundly. It is the truth, not the half, romantic truth, but the whole truth of the life of man.



ろうそくを消すに男の息をかり  
Rousoku o kesu ni otoko no iki o kari

古

To blow out the candle,  
She borrows  
The man's breath.

There is something mysteriously significant about this, the woman not blowing out the candle herself, but coquettishly getting the man to do it.



隣へもはしごのれいにあやめず  
Tonari e mo hashigo no rei ni ayame fuki

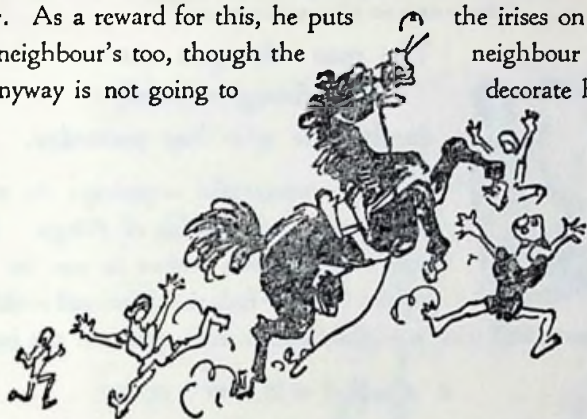
古

Putting irises

On the roof next door too,  
As thanks for the ladder.

The 5th of May is the Boys' Festival. Boys' dolls are set up in the *tokonoma*, the *koinobori* or paper carp is flown outside, and irises are put on,

the roof. A certain man who has sons borrows a ladder from next door. As a reward for this, he puts the irises on the roof of the neighbour's too, though the neighbour has no sons, or anyway is not going to decorate his own roof.



あばれ馬大手をひろげては逃げる  
Abare-uma oute o hirogetewa nigeru

古

They spread out their arms  
To the run-away horse,—  
Then take to their heels.

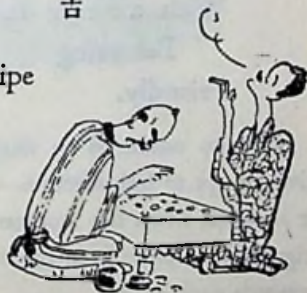
The people run out into the road and spread out their arms to stop the beast, but as soon as he comes kicking and snorting along, they run off in all directions.

吸ひ付けた方が幾分勝つてゐる碁  
Suitsuketa hou ga ikubun katteru go

古

The one who has lit his pipe  
Is winning, rather,  
In the chess game.

This means that if one of the two players pauses to light his pipe, it suggests that he is in the better position.





碁盤を出すは昨日負けたやつ

Goban o dasu wa kinou maketa yatsu

古

The man who gets out  
The draughts-board,  
Is the one who lost yesterday.

To be unsuccessful is perhaps the most painful and unforgettable of things. The man who has won wishes to rest on his laurels; the loser feels the defeat still rankling within his breast and with a slightly forced smile, gets out the board and pieces.

應援団選手よりまだ夢中なり

Ouendan senshu yori mada muchuu nari

青二才

The cheer-party,  
More frantic  
Than the players.

Aonisai

The players are doing their best, no doubt, but the cheer-party are doing more. They are drunk and delirious with excitement, without a sense of time or space.

一本のマッチで心易くなり

Ippon no matchi de kokoro-yasuku nari

春草

With a single match,  
Becoming  
Friendly.

Shunsô

Human nature is so weak, or sensitive, or apt to feel affection—or whatever it is—that when two strangers light their cigarettes or pipes from the same match, their hearts are already warm towards each other.





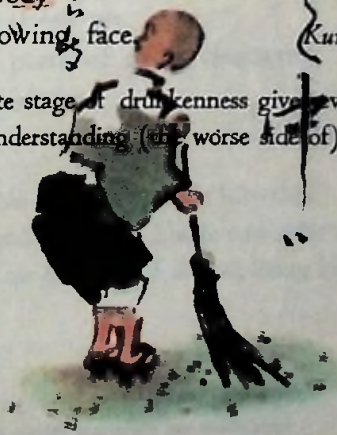
ほろ酔の中は話せる顔ばかり

While half-tipsy,  
Everybody  
Has a knowing face.

久良岐

Kuraki

The intermediate stage of drunkenness gives everyone the appearance of understanding (the worse side of) other people's characters.





踏まれても相手によれば痛くなし 信之  
Fumaretemo aite ni yoreba itaku nashi

When you're trodden on,  
It doesn't hurt,—  
According to who does it.

Nobuyuki

Sex, someone has said, is what makes a man go down a road with a woman on it rather than another without. Pain is to some extent subjective, and the above verse reminds us of Shakespeare's lovers' pinches that hurt not.



人格の裏を女にのぞかれる  
Jinkaku no ura o onna ni nozokareru

江水

The hidden parts of great characters  
Are peeped into,  
By women.

Kôsui

This is a variant on, "No man is a hero to his valet." To sleep in the same bed as Newton and Plato and Dante would be an experience that would change the tune of many of the adulatory biographers and critics.



失業をしてマルクスも読んで見る 山茶花  
Shitsugyo o shite marukusu mo yonde miru

Losing his job,  
He tries reading  
Marx.

Sazanka

This is a very simple verse, but in some ways human beings are very simple things.



子の賣つた金雷光のやうに消え  
 Ko no utta kane inazuma no youni kie

古

The money  
 He sold his daughter for,  
 Vanished like lightning.

There is something dreadfully true about this not very striking verse. Greed and prodigality are two aspects of the same quality of character.

花見から歸れば家は焼けてゐる  
 Hanami kara kaereba ie wa yakete iru

劍花坊

Back from the flower-  
 viewing,—  
 Their house  
 Is burnt to the ground!

Kenkabō

The violence of this contrast is too great for poetry,—but not for senryu, which is like the sun that shines on the just and on the unjust.



孝行のしたい時には親はなし  
 Koukou no shitai toki niwa oya wa nashi

古

When we want to cherish  
 Our parents,  
 They are no more.

This painful truth must make us patient with our children, who will as certainly not want to cherish us until it is too late.

いつまでも生きてゐる氣の顔ばかり  
Itsumademo ikite iru ki no kao bakari

新 平

From their faces,  
They are going to live  
For ever.

Shimpei

This is a satire so deep that it is tragic in nature.



重役の椅子へその氣で掛けてみる 明 烏  
Juuyaku no isu e sono ki de kakete miru

Sitting down  
In the director's chair,  
Feeling himself to be a director.

Akegarasu

Even the director himself would feel a much smaller man without his chair.

黒ン坊が黒ン坊を生んで安心し  
Kurombo ga kurombo o unde ansbin shi

左 樂

A negress  
Feels relieved,  
Giving birth to a negro.

Saraku

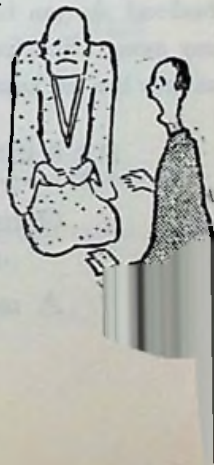
Every woman feels relieved to see the baby looks like its father, so that no suspicion, warranted or unwarranted, may fall on her.

横柄に返し今度は借りない氣  
Ouhei ni kaeshi kondo wa karinai ki

青 天

Paying it back haughtily,  
Intending  
Never to borrow again.

Seiten



When we borrow, we are weak; when we repay we have an illusion of strength, and this appears as hauteur. We also have the illusion of not going ever to borrow again.



新聞を見ながら社長聞いてゐる 菱柳  
Shimbun o minagara shacho kiite iru

The president  
Listens,  
Reading the newspaper. *Henryû*

Some man, probably one of the staff, is reporting something. He is very serious, doing his best, and perspiring visibly. The president shows his arrogance by not attending to the speech.

芝居見た晩は亭主が嫌になり  
Shibai mita ban wa teishu ga iya ni nari

半文銭

The night  
She goes to the theatre,  
She dislikes her husband.

*Hammonsens*

When a woman sees the wonderful hero of the play, and compares him to her puny husband, she can hardly bear to live with him any more. She forgets, however, that she is as little like the heroine.



戸をあけておやおやおやと雪の朝 古  
To o akete oya oya oya to yuki no asa

Opening the door and,—  
“Oh! Oh! Oh!”  
A morning of snow.



This is a parody of the haiku of Teishitsu:<sup>1</sup>

これはこれとはばかり花の吉野山  
Kore wa kore wa to bakari hana no yoshinoyama

"Well! Well!"

Was all I could say,—

Flowery Mountains of Yoshino.

Teishitsu's verse, though famous, is not of very high quality, but it is haiku, not senryu, if only because of the language. The senryu brings the experience down to the apprehension of the lowbrow.

月給日明るい街へふと曲り  
Gekkyu-bi akarui machi e futo magari

武骨

Salary day;

Involuntarily

He turns the corner into the  
street of lights. *Bukotsu*

He had no intention of going into this lighted street with its bars and cafés, restaurants and houses of assignation. It was not the money in his pocket that made him suddenly turn the corner. It was all inevitable, all determined from the beginning of time.



つなぐ手のはづかしい程月が冴え  
Tsunagu te no hazukashii hodo tsuki ga sae

よしの

The moon was so bright

As to make us feel shy,

Holding hands.

*Yoshino*

This approaches haiku in that the ostensible subject is the

brightness of the moon. But it is obvious that the writer considers the shyness and embarrassment of the two lovers a vastly more important thing than the beauty of the moon, whose brightness is thus used only as a means to peep into the recesses of the human mind.



ほころびの中炬燵から首が生へ  
Hokorobi no uchi kotatsu kara kubi ga hae

古

While the tear was being mended,  
A head  
Grew out of the *kotatsu*.

A *kotatsu* is a small stove or brazier, with a quilt over it.

When the child came in, the mother found he had torn his clothes, so she made him take them off. It being a nuisance to put on anything else, he crept into the *kotatsu*, to wait until it was finished, but it soon became boring, and he asks, "Isn't it done yet, mama?" The picture is of the *kotatsu* with a human head coming out of it.



懐が寂しく下宿月を見る  
Futokoro ga sabishiku geshuku tsuki o miru

雨 吉

His purse is lonely,  
So the lodger  
Gazes up at the moon. Amekichi

If he had any money, he would go out to drink or play, but

having none he consoles himself by looking up at the moon and feeling poetical. There is here not only a comic portrayal of the poor lodger, but a satire upon art and music and poetry, which are not the all in all that they think themselves to be.

お前がた本降りぢやにとじやまがられ 古  
Omaegata homburi jani to jamagarare

"Say, it's coming down in  
earnest now,"—

And they were treated  
As a nuisance.

People are standing under the eaves;  
somebody comes out of the house, and  
wanting to get rid of them, says, "It's  
not going to clear up . . . so . . ."



死所をきめて二人は無言なり  
Shinidoko o kimete futari wa mugon nari

圓 碧

The place of suicide being decided,  
There is nothing left  
To say.

Empeki

Speech is a strange thing. As Rôshi says,

Those who know do not speak;  
Those who speak do not know.

知 人 不 言。  
有 言 不 知。

When the place and manner of our death is fixed, words are quite useless. The lovers who talked so much before, who wept and promised, now fall silent.





はだかにて起きるが蚊張のつりはじめ 古  
Hadake nite okiru ga kaya no tsuri-hajime

Getting up naked,  
And putting the mosquito-net up  
The first time.

Putting up the mosquito net and taking it down is quite a job, and people postpone beginning it as long as possible. They have gone to sleep, but the mosquitoes are biting so fiercely that they have to get up in the middle of the night and put up the net.

書置きはめつかりやすい所へおき  
Kaki-oki wa mekkari yasui toko e oki

古

The farewell note,  
Left  
Where it can be easily  
found.

Suicides still wish to live on in the minds of the people they are leaving. Even to die, unaffectedly, is difficult.



いさましく辻で別れた俄雨 縁郎  
Isamashiku tsuji de wakareta iwaka-ame

The shower  
Made us part at the  
cross-ways,  
Bravely. *Enrô*



The simplest parting is difficult; but even lovers will part with less reluctance if a sudden shower comes on.

## LIFE

自轉車の兩足はづす水溜り 朱溪  
 Jitensha no ryouashi hazusu mizudamari

On a bicycle,  
 Lifting up both legs,  
 Through a puddle. Shukei

This has a purely pictorial value, and yet it registers an experience as common and as universal as looking at the cherry blossoms, and one which, because physical, has its own particular meaning.



聞いたかと問はれ喰つたかと答へ  
 Kiitaka to toware kuttaka to kotae

古

“Did you hear it?”  
 Is the question, and the answer,  
 “Have you eaten any?”

This is the senryu version of Bonchô's famous haiku:

眼に青葉山ほととぎす初鯨  
 Me ni aoba yamahototogisu hatsukatsuo

古

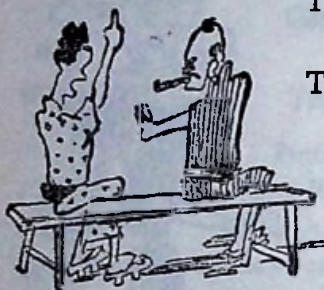
To the eye, green leaves,  
 The mountain cuckoo,  
 The first bonito!

The question is “Have you heard the cuckoo? and the reply, “Have you eaten the first bonito yet?” The senryu purposely avoids the “poetical” elements of the haiku, and though lacking rhythm and melody, attains a brevity and contrast surpassing even that of Bonchô's verse.

涼み台又はじまつた星の論  
Suzumidai mata hajimatta hoshi no ron

古

The cooling bench;  
Again has begun  
The star-argument.



People sit out on some exposed place  
on a bench to catch any cool breeze on  
a summer evening. Two men have  
begun talking about the names of the  
stars as they sit there outside with no-  
thing special to do, and only the stars to look at.

月へ投げ草へ捨てたる踊りの手  
Tsuki e nage kusa e sutetaru odori no te

古

Throwing them up to the moon,—  
Throwing them down on  
the grass,—  
The hands of the dancers.



In popular Japanese dances, such as the Bon-  
odori, the dancers turn their hands up, and then down, in  
precisely the manner described in this senryu. But seeing is believing.

The Bon-odori, or Bon-dance, is held in the evening of Ullabon,  
or Feast of All Souls, in the grounds of a shrine or some place in the  
village. All the people, old and young, dance in a circle, and enjoy  
themselves in the cool.

様々な人が通つて日が暮れる  
Sama-zama na hito ga toutte hi ga kureru

古

All kinds of people passing,  
The day  
Draws to its close.





道頓堀の雨に別れてはなれり

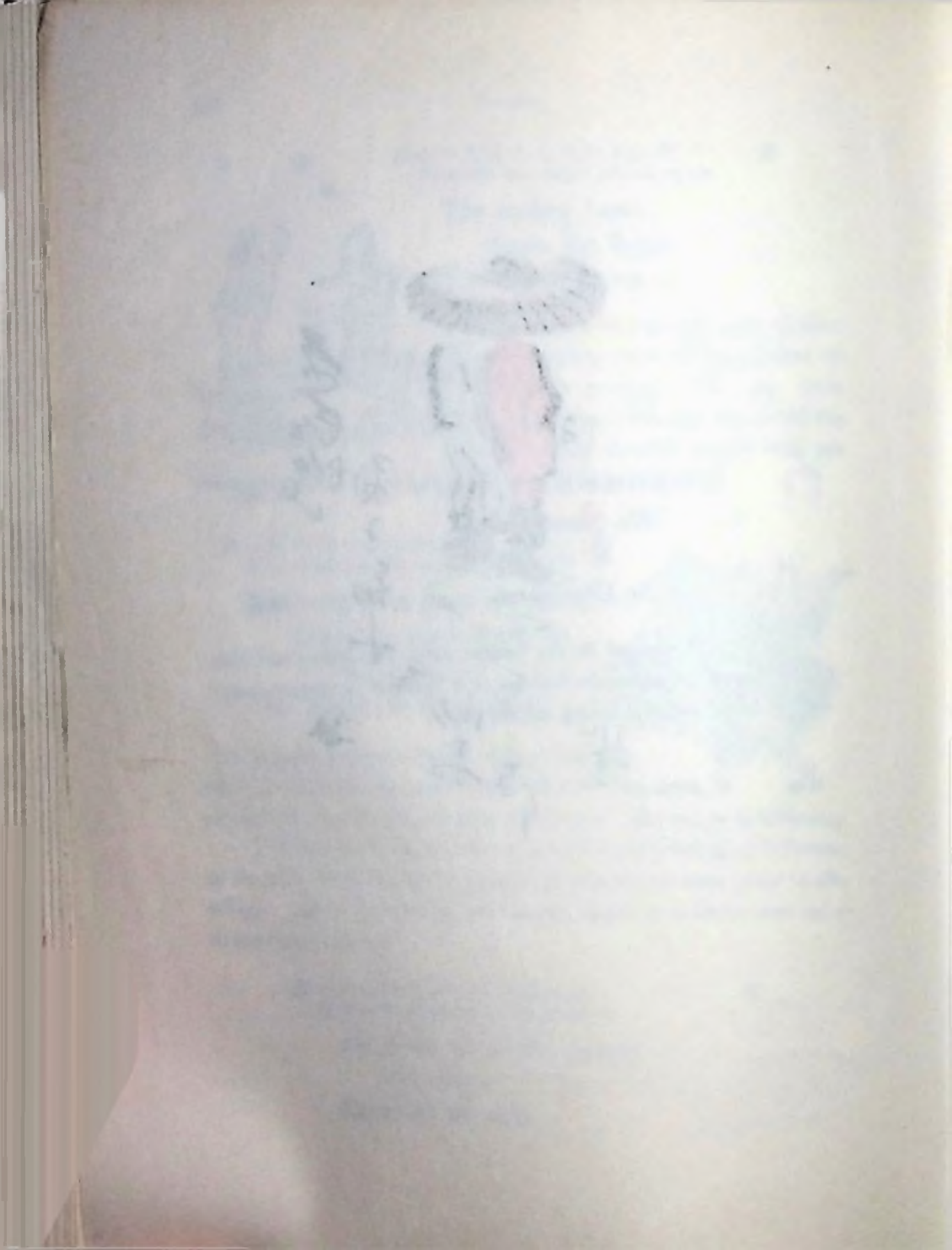
水府

We parted  
In the rain  
At Dôtonbori

Suifu

Dôtonbori is the busiest street of Osaka, and this senryu expresses the feelings of a man for a woman, combined with his feeling for the city.

水府



There is something deeply poetical in the dryness, the matter-of-factness, the "meaninglessness" of this verse. It has the human feeling of Dickens, the inevitability of Hardy.

炭團屋の女房の顔は白く見え 古  
Taden-ya no nyoubu no kao wa shiroku mie

The face of the wife  
Of the charcoal-ball maker,  
Looks white.

Compared to her husband the wife looks quite white in the face. This verse is purely impressionistic and non-intellectual.



奉迎の鼻先きへ来る馬の尻  
Hougei no hanasaki e kuru uma no shiri

剣花坊

Welcoming the Emperor,—  
Right in front of my nose,  
A horse's hindquarters.

Kenkabô

This is not a socialistic or communistic verse; it expresses the exasperation of the man at the accidents of fate, that puts the horse of the military policeman in front of him, blocking out his view of the procession. That it should be the horse's hindquarters adds insult to injury.



つくばつた話は土へ何か書き 古  
Tsukubatta hanashi wa tsuchi e nanika kaki

Squatting talking,  
They are writing something  
or other  
On the ground.



When two Japanese stand and talk for some time, they get tired and squat on the ground. The earth suggests itself as a kind of writing material, and they pick up a stick or sharp stone and begin to write characters, or illustrate their remarks with crude diagrams.



夜釣ふと月の丸さに口をきき 清美

Yozuri futo tsuki no marusa ni kuchi o kiki

Fishing at night;

Calling out to someone suddenly,  
"How round the moon is!"

Kiyomi



A man sits fishing in the moonlight, another also, a little way off. All is silent, bright as day, the moon in the midst of the dark sky. He cannot help expressing his feelings to the other angler. The

language of this verse distinguishes it from haiku; it is literally "the moon's roundness." The man is not a poet, but he is a man, not insensible to the round, silent, lovely moon.

時雨るる空にあかい吉原  
Shigururu sora ni akai yoshiwara

古

Cold winter rain

In the sky

The red Yoshiwara.

The lack of punctuation here indicates the way in which the original runs on, uniting the rain and the sky, its redness and the Yoshiwara that lies below it. We feel with it the unity of nature and man, that morality breaks. In addition, the life of the inhabitants of Edo, far-off and long ago, comes to us in the faint red glow in the sky misty with rain.

めしつぶはひとが教へる鼻の先  
 Meshitsubu wa hito ga oshieru hana no saki

剣花坊

Somebody says,  
 "You've got a bit of rice  
 On the end of your nose." *Kenkabô*

Is it possible for anybody to be told this and remain unperturbed, to be without irritation, self-consciousness, facetiousness, shamefacedness?



帯を撫で鏡を見また帯を撫で  
 Obi o nade kagami o mi mata obi o nade

剣花坊

She strokes her *obi*;  
 Looks in the glass,  
 And strokes it again. *Kenkabô*



It is always a mystery to men why women pat their hair, and do all kinds of unnecessary and ineffectual things to their clothes. The *obi* is the sash that goes round the kimono.

涼み台うしろでがまが聴いてゐる  
 Suzumidai ushiro de gama ga kiite iru

三太郎

On the cooling bench;  
 Behind them  
 A toad is listening. *Santarô*

The toad, like the frog, always has the appearance of staring and listening. The two people on the bench are talking, what is after all only a lot of nonsense. This they feel when they find they are overheard.

二階から落たさいごのにぎやかさ

Nikai kara ochita saigo no nigiyakasa

古

Falling downstairs,—

There is a mortal

Uproar!

Somebody falls bump, bump, bump, bang! "What has happened?" "Bring some water!" "Fetch a doctor!" "Hurry! Hurry!" There is a pandemonium, such that is called here "the last confusion!"

据風呂に下女がゐるうち春になり

Sueburo ni gejo ga iru uchi haru ni nari

古

While the servant

Is in the bath-tub,

It becomes spring.



In winter, the only pleasure the servant has is when she is in the bath. But this is the last day of the year, and after everyone else has been in, she sits there red as a lobster, gazing into the past and future, relaxed in mind and body, nobody to order her here and there, in a heaven of hot water. It is now one or two o'clock in the morning, already New Year's Day, the first day of spring.



あとのくさめを待つて居るへんなつら

Ato no kusame o matte iru hen-na tsura

古

Waiting,

For the next sneeze,—

What a funny face!

Christ and Buddha are here the same as Tom, Dick, and Harry.

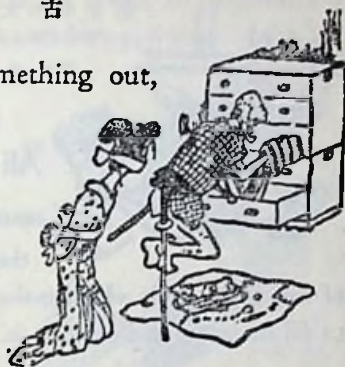


探し出す度伸びあがる猿轡 古

Sagashidasu tabi nobiagaru sarugutsuwa

Every time he brings something out,  
She sits up,  
Gagged.

The thief has bound and gagged the woman of the house, who sits up and tries to see what the thief has taken out of the drawers and cupboards, and then slumps back in dejection. This senryu is a masterpiece of compression, and yet conveys the cool indifference of the robbing and the inarticulate frenzy of the robbed.



女客亭主起つたり居たりする

Onna-kyaku teishu tattari itari suru

古

A lady visitor;  
The host keeps  
Getting up and sitting down.

For the ordinary visitor, the host tells his wife or the servant to do this or that, but when the visitor is a woman, he becomes a little excited, and keeps jumping up to fetch things.

指先きも考へてゐる将棋盤

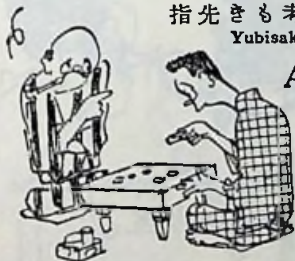
Yubisaki mo kangaete iru shougiban

桃太郎

At the chess-board,  
The fingers too  
Are thinking.

Momotarô

The two men sit facing each other, one holds a chess-man in the air, motionless and silent. The hand looks as if it too is thinking; perhaps it is.





部屋中へ大の字になる暇疲れ  
Heya-juu e dai no ji ni naru yomi-tsukare

陽氣坊

Tired after reading,  
Stretching out his arms and legs  
All over the room. Yokibô

The point of the senryu is perhaps in the last line, in the feeling of expansion of mind and body which makes the room seem small, which makes us fill the room and overflow it.

昼買った螢を隅へ持ってゆき  
Hiru katta hotaru o sumi e motte yuki

古

Going into a corner,  
With a firefly  
Bought in the day-time.

Unable to wait until the evening, she takes the cage into the darkest part of the room to see the pretty little thing glow with its soft light. The merit of this verse is in the portrayal of impatience; and the lack of mention of "a dark place."

猿轡和尚を始めたてまつり 古  
Sarugutsuwa oshou o hajime tatematsuri

Gagging them,  
Beginning with  
His Eminence the Abbot.



The humour of this is in the honorific word applied to the gagging of the Abbot. There is here a good example of

Sameness is difference;  
Difference is sameness.

They are all gagged, high and low, but the Abbot is gagged first as befits his rank, maybe with a bar of scented soap, instead of washing soap, in his mouth.

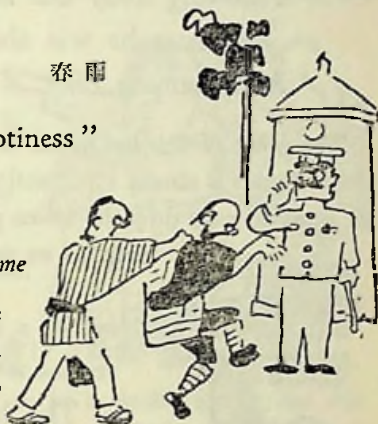
交番へ本来空が突き出され 春 雨  
Kouban e honrai kuu ga tsukidasare

"All is originally emptiness"  
Is handed over,  
To the police station.

*Harusame*

A man went to an eating-house and drank and ate his fill, and then disclosed that he had no money to pay for it. The irate proprietor hauled the man before the police and demanded him to be punished. This is the whole story, but the senryu writer reminds us of the words of Zen, that all is of its nature empty, empty in its self-nature, and that therefore there is no reason for the proprietor to be angry because the man's purse is also empty.

This is a very keen and searching criticism of Zen, which talks a great deal but so often does not carry out its teaching in daily life.



運勢を見てゐる中にすりに會ひ 浦 人  
Unsei o miteiru uchi ni suri ni ai

While having  
His fortune told,  
His pocket was picked.

*Urato*



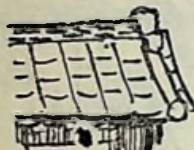
This is a simple picture of life in this foolish and transitory world.



怒鳴られたところへ西瓜置いて逃げ 夜叉女  
Donarareta tokoro e suika oite nige

Throwing away the melon  
Where he was shouted at,  
And running off. *Ya:hame*

The point of this lies in the fact that our sense of guilt is almost a physical thing, and we unconsciously drop the stolen property as soon as we are detected.



突然に引致をされる門構  
Totsuzen ni inchi o sareru mongan..ae

三太郎

The house with a big gate;  
Taken to the police-station  
Unexpectedly. *Santarô*



We get into the habit of thinking that the well-off do nothing wrong. This senryu gives us a picture of the surprise of the neighbours and passers-by.

吹きぶりのすぼめた傘に足が生へ  
Fukiburi no subometa kasa ni ashi ga hae

かむろ

Driving rain;  
Legs growing out  
Of a half-shut umbrella.

*Kamuro*

Japanese umbrellas are not very strong in the wind, and if it blows strongly, the umbrella is

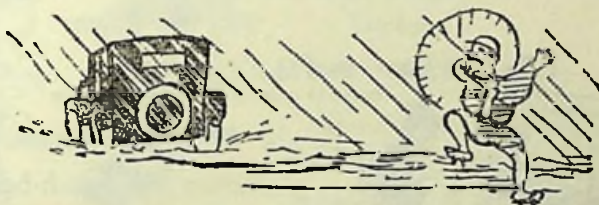
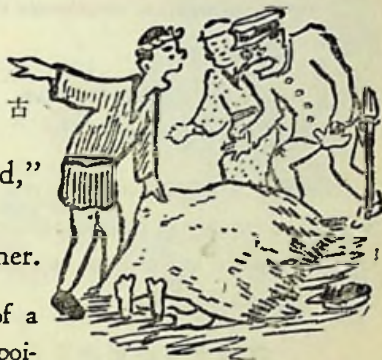


held up half-shut. The above senryu is a small cut from an ukiyoé; rain at forty five degrees, a half-furled umbrella, and human legs protruding from it. It seems as if the umbrella is walking along on two legs.

男めは逃げたそうなのを掛け 古  
Otoko-me wa nigeta souna to komo o kake

"It looks like the guy skipped,"  
He says,  
And puts a straw mat over her.

Someone finds the dead body of a woman who died by drowning or poisoning. It seems that it was going to be a double suicide, but the man let the woman die first and then ran away. The policeman puts a straw mat over her and gives his opinion of the affair.



土砂降りの中を自動車矢の如し  
Doshaburi no naka o jidousha ya no gotoshi

感 波

The motor-car,  
Through the torrential rain  
Like an arrow.

Kanpa

A man is trudging along wet to the skin, tired and bewildered in the heavy rain. A motor-car swishes by in a cloud of spray and goes as quickly as on a fine day. The man feels a complex emotion, grudging admiration, envy for the occupants, respect for modern civili-

zation, a feeling of the power of mind over matter.

自転車と話して忙しく歩き 松 ★  
Jitensha to hanashite sewashinaku aruki

Talking

With a bicycle,  
Walking hurriedly. Shôshô



Meeting a friend on a bicycle, he walked as quickly as possible, while the cyclist pedalled as slowly as he could. "Talking with a bicycle" comes from Buson's haiku:

春雨やものがたり行くみのかさ  
Harusame ya monogatari yuku mino to kasa

Spring rain;  
A straw rain-coat goes chatting  
With a bamboo-hat.



普請場へ弁当歩き歩き来る きん坊  
Fushinba e bentou matagi matagi kuru

To the place under construction  
Comes the lunch-box,  
Stepping over and over.

Kinbô

A carpenter is building a house, and his wife brings him his lunch at midday. As there are many timbers lying here and there, she has to step over them again and again. This action, by its repetition, takes upon itself something significant, symbolic, essential.



奉公の子にあつてゐる軒の闇  
 Hōkō no ko ni atte iru noki no yami

○ 丸

Talking with her child,  
 Apprenticed there,  
 In the darkness under the eaves.

*Reigan*

Two people are whispering under the eaves. Their soft voices are not those of lovers, but of mother and son. The mother asks, "How do they treat you here? Do you get enough to eat? You look a little pale. How is the work?" The boy answers bravely, and the mother listens with fear and hope in her heart.



吠えられて出鱈目の名を呼んで見る  
 Hoerarete detarame no na o yonde miru

紅衣



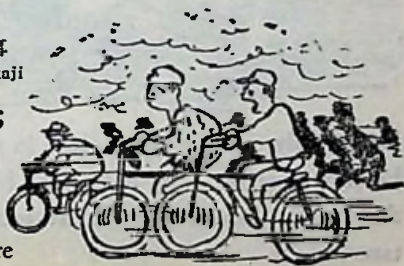
Being barked at,  
 Trying  
 Some random names. *Kōi*

The dog barked so furiously at him that he tried to soften its heart by calling it all kinds of names it might possibly have: "Spot," "John," "Marinaduke," and so on.

自轉車の彌次馬が来る昼の火事  
 Jitensha no yajiuma ga kuru hiru no kaji

A fire in the day-time;  
 Rooters come  
 On bicycles. *Bijō*

Japanese, especially Tōkyōites, are

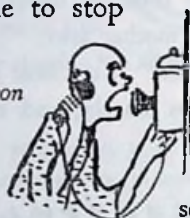


very fond of going to fires, as if they were spectacles of amusement. Sadism is too hard a word for it, perhaps, but fortunate are those with bicycles because they can pedal off at full speed toward the cloud of smoke and clanging bell.

電話口から打つ釘を止めさせる  
Denwaguchi kara utsu kugi o yamesaseru

Telephoning,  
Getting someone to stop  
Driving in a nail.

Ukon



右近



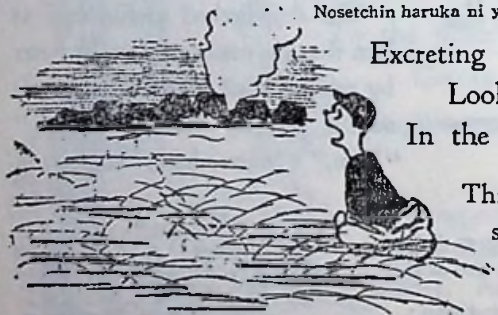
Some people can telephone in an infernal din, silence. The point of the

divided mind of the one telephoning, listening with one ear and waving to the other to get a little quietness. It is a good example of how, as contrasted with haiku, the lack of Zen is the real subject of senryu.

others only in perfect senryu is perhaps in the

野雪隠はるかに宵の火事が見え 大東園  
Nosetchin haruka ni yoi no kaji ga mie

Excreting in the field,  
Looking at a fire at night  
In the distance. Daitōen



This is an unusually poetical senryu. It is a cold winter night; the sky is clear and the stars are shining brightly.

As he squats there in the frozen field, his mind vacant, he sees quite far away a fire, and hears the alarm-bell ringing. In this senryu, there is a gradation: excreting, the field, the fire, the distance, night.



自働車が見ればみじあな人通り

錦浪

Looking from the motor-car,  
The people going by  
Are a miserable sight.

Kimô

A motor-car raises us in the scale of being, so that  
the people thronging the pavements look like insects, crea-  
tures of a lower order than ourselves.

目  
の  
下  
の  
人  
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The first of these is the fact that the...



The second of these is the fact that the...  
The third of these is the fact that the...  
The fourth of these is the fact that the...  
The fifth of these is the fact that the...  
The sixth of these is the fact that the...  
The seventh of these is the fact that the...  
The eighth of these is the fact that the...  
The ninth of these is the fact that the...  
The tenth of these is the fact that the...

駈落の其夜名所へ来て泊り 非水  
 Kakeochi no sono yo meisho e kite tomari

The first night,  
 The elopers  
 Stay at the beautiful place.

Hisui



The elopers have no special plan, no fixed place to go to. Afterwards, they will think about practical affairs, but now they are all excited and gravitate naturally towards a place that is in accord with their romantic mood. There is a fitness in times and places, as Stevenson says.

巻煙草しかめつ面で玉を突き 武將  
 Makitabako shikamettsura de tama o tsuki

With a cigarette in mouth,  
 His face screwed up,  
 Playing billiards.

武將

Bushô

Doing two things at once always produces a peculiarly "human" state of mind and body. Here, however, the man is engrossed in the billiards and his face is simply arranged to get the least inconvenience from the cigarette under his nose.



泣き別れ赤帽はセツセツと運び 映絲  
 Nakiwakare akabou wa sesse to hakobi

The tearful parting,  
 The porter carrying their things  
 Busily.

Eishi

There is a whole world in this scene, the two with their hearts breaking, the rest of mankind busy about matters that concern their anguish not in the least.

The porter is felt by them and by us to be the embodiment of inevitable and merciless fate.

旅人が旅人起す海が見え  
Tabi.bito ga tabibito okosu umi ga mie

One traveller,  
Wakes another traveller,—  
At the sight of the sea.

Chôshi

We have here a clear example of the difference between haiku and senryu. The sight of the sea in the early morning makes someone wake up a fellow traveller. But what remains in our minds is not the sea glittering in the morning sunshine, but the shaking and awakening of the traveller by someone from Adam. We feel the kinship of the men through that one touch of nature.



who hardly knows him



旅迎ひ子ととりかへる三度笠  
Tabi mukai ko to torikaeru sandogasa

古

Coming back from a journey,  
He exchanges his *sandogasa*  
For his child.

The wife and child went to meet the returning traveller. The father hands his *kasa* or travelling umbrella-like hat, and picks up the child. There is, as it were, a kind of exchange between husband and wife, and in this, an unspoken but eloquent communication between them.



骨揚げに泣きなき金齒探して居 飴ン坊  
 Kotsu-age ni nakinaki kinba sagashite i

Gathering together the ashes,  
 Weeping, weeping,  
 Looking for the gold teeth.

Amenbô



This is not a joke; this the whole truth about life. We love God, —but we must have our daily bread to do it with. Our hearts are broken, but the show must go on. When we can love without sentimentality and draw the insurance money without greed, we are not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

ダイヤの手出されて覗く切荷賣り 雨花  
 Daiya no te dasarete nozoku kippu-uri

A hand with a diamond put there,—  
 And the box-office girl  
 Peeps out.

Uka



There is nothing to say about this senryu. It is so, and it always will be so.

本部屋は木魚のやうに坐らせる みはる  
 Hombeya wa mokugyo no youni suwaraseru

The Original Room;  
 He is sat there  
 Like a wooden gong. Miharu

There are two kinds of rooms in the Yoshiwara, the *mawashi-beya* and the *hon-beya*. The poorer visitors are led to a small room, a *mawashi-beya*, or room by turns, and wait there until the courtesan comes round to them. Tl



*hon-beya* or original room is where the courtesan sleeps herself, and this is more expensive, and the visitor is given a very thick and soft cushion to sit on, such as are put under the *mokugyo*, a wooden fish-shaped gong in a temple.



そもそもどうらくの始りは夜櫻なり 古  
Somosomo douraku no hajimari wa yo-zakura nari

First of all,  
The beginning of dissipation,—  
Cherry blossoms at night.

On the Yoshiwara-zutsumi, or bank of the Yoshiwara, fine cherry trees bloomed. The people of Edo went to this noted place to see the cherry blossoms at night, which are in themselves things of pure beauty, but lead the mind toward other things, and places close by.

妓夫寮で救世軍を持て餘し 三太郎  
Gifu-dai de kyuuseigun o mote-amashi

At the Yoshiwara information  
desk,  
Not knowing what to do  
With the Salvation Army.  
*Santarô*

A Salvation Army man or woman comes to a prostitute house and begins preaching to the people there, saying that it is a sinful thing to do to sell women's bodies for money. She is so earnest and selfless, that the people of the place are non-plussed.



落日に紅のでる仲の町  
Rakujitsu ni kurenai no deru nakanochô

古

After the sun has set,  
Crimson blooms  
The Nakanochô.



Nakanochô is name of the most flourishing street of the Yoshiwara. As it gets dark, the red lanterns are lit, and the street becomes gayer and brighter than before the sun set.

人間が寄つて群つて貨車一つ 凡 柳  
Ningen ga yotte takatte kasha hitotsu

Human beings  
Crowding together,  
And one goods-wagon.

Bonryû



The railway-men are all gathered round the wagon and we feel, without a word being spoken, the feebleness of man in comparison with the things made by his hands.

妙薬をあげれば中は小判なり 古  
Myouyaku o akereba naka wa koban nari

Opening it,  
The excellent remedy  
Is a *koban*!

The sick person was given something wrapped up in paper, and told it was a specific for all diseases. Opening it, there was a gold coin inside.





偽りの世を鉄橋の下から見 路郎  
 Itsuwari no yo o tekkyou no shita kara mi

Looking out

At this world of lies,  
 From under a railway bridge.

*Jinô*

To the man who lives in a dug-out  
 under the iron bridge, the Christian or  
 Buddhist world he looks out upon may  
 well seem what it is in part, a world of  
 hypocrisy and falsehood.



どの湯へも一ト廻り入る敵討 古  
 Dono yu emo hitomawari hairu kataki-uchi

Revenge!—

Going round,  
 All the bath-houses.

The son is going about the district looking  
 for his father's slayer. In every town, the  
 bath-house is the best place in which to look for him, for everybody  
 goes there, and people are cheerful and rather unsuspecting, and so  
 everyone looking for someone to avenge himself on used  
 to go round the bath-houses.

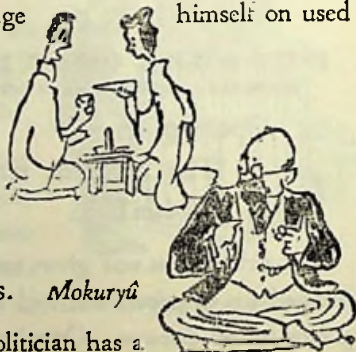
二三票藝者の腕も数に入れ  
 Ni-san-pyou geisha no ude mo kazu ni ire  
 黙龍

Two or three votes

Included

By the geisha's cleverness. *Mokuryû*

This is a satire on elections. A politician has a



favourite geisha, and he asks her to get several other people to cast their votes for him.

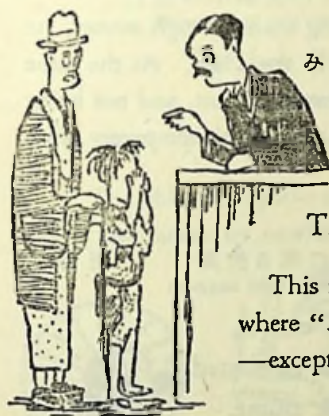
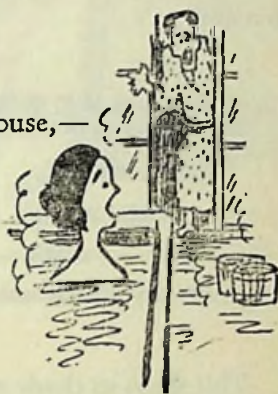
女湯へ男の覗く急な用  
Onna-yu e otoko no nezoku kyuuna you

古

A man

Peeping in the women's bath-house,—  
Some urgent business.

Something has happened at home while the wife is out at the bath-house, and the husband comes to call her. He feels conscious of the eyes of others as he tries to find her and tell her to come back quickly.



みすぼらし過ぎて孤兒院断られ  
Misuborashi-sugite koji-in kotowarare

京三郎

He looks so seedy,  
He is refused

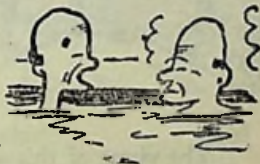
The orphanage. *Kyôzaburô*

This reminds one of the churches in America,  
where "All are welcome in the house of prayer,"  
—except the negroes.

瞑目をして相對す藥風呂  
Meimoku o shite aitaizu kusuri-buro

五葉

Facing each other,  
With eyes shut,  
In the medicated bath. *Goyô*



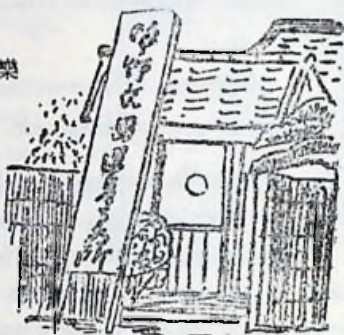
A Japanese bath-house is a pretty noisy affair; they are all enjoy-

ing themselves in the hot water. But the medicated bath is different; only sick or old people go there. They sit there in the bath facing each other with their eyes closed, saying nothing, only feeling comfortable.

立候補妻の家に假事務所 苦樂  
Rikkoubo mekake no ie ni kari-jimusho

The candidate  
Sets up his temporary  
office  
In his concubine's house.

*Kuraku*



This shows us clearly a prospective M.P. of ten or twenty years ago. Having made enough money, he wanted the honour of having a position in the Diet. At the same time he kept a concubine in a separate establishment, and not being in the least ashamed of it, he used the house as his temporary office during the election.



看護婦に憎まれに来る許婚 雨月  
Kangofu ni nikumare ni kuru iinazuke

The fiancée comes,  
To be hated  
By the nurse.

*Ugetsu*

The young man is in hospital, and the nurse is sweet on him. His fiancée comes, only to be hated by the nurse.

The virtue of this senryu lies in its indirectness, in not mentioning the love of the nurse for the patient.



壁越しに家賃のあがる事をきく

Kabegoshi ni yachin no agaru koto o kiki

寛江

Hearing,

Through the wall,  
That the rent is raised.

Kantei

The voice of the landlord is heard next door, saying how unavoidable it is to put up the rent. Only a very thin layer of plaster separates one family from the other; he strains his ears and manages to hear what he does not wish to hear, and his face registers his painful emotions.



門前の小僧習はぬ經をよむ

Monzen no kozou narawanu kyou o yomu

古

The boy living in front of the temple,  
Learns the sutras  
He was never taught.

The child who plays round the temple and in the temple yard learns the sutras by overhearing the monks chant them every day.

Japanese people use this senryu as a proverb to express the power of environment.



女の子あごで喧嘩をしてかへり

Onna no ko ago de kenka o shite kaeri

冷芳

The girls  
Quarrel with their chins,  
And she goes home.

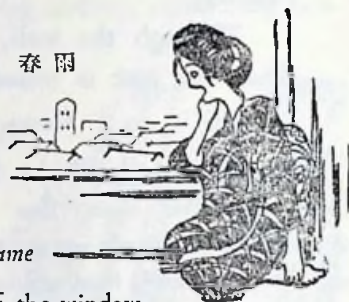
Reihô

For the Japanese the chin is quite expressive; it

is used to point with, to play the *shakuhachi* or flute-à-bec. Girls especially use their mouths, not their fists, and above all their chins, when wrangling.

桂庵の二階から見る屋根の数 春 雨  
Keian no nikai kara miru yane no kazu

From upstairs  
In the Employment  
Agency,  
How many roofs! *Harusame*



The girl sits upstairs looking out of the window, and sees so many houses, that simply *must* want somebody, she thinks.

夜の街そのつきあたり電車行く 芝 有  
Yoru no machi sono tsukiatarari densha yuku

A street at night;  
At the end,  
A tram passes. *Shiyû*

This verse is so simple that it approaches haiku in its poetry. Walking down a long dark street, suddenly, far in the distance, a lighted tram car passes across. At this moment, some feeling of loneliness, and yet of humanity, fills the mind.



大金庫運ぶ人夫はありのやう よしを  
Daikinko hakobu nimpu wa ari no you

The men  
Moving the great safe,  
Look like ants. *Yoshio*

The point of this lies in the fact that the greater the works of man, the smaller and more insignificant man is seen to be.

十年も前の心を帯に見る  
Juu-ren mo mae no kokoro o obi ni miru

禁果

Looking at herself  
Of ten years before,  
In the *obi*. *Shōka*

The woman had not taken out the *obi*,  
or broad sash, for quite a time. Looking  
at it she saw herself, her life, her emotions,  
her youth, now past and gone.



ラブシーンどこかラムネの落ちた音  
Rabushiin dokoka ramune no ochita oto

塊人

A love-scene;  
Somewhere, the clatter  
Of a falling lemonade bottle. *Kaijin*

This is typical of a certain class of *senryū*. If we think about  
it deeply, too deeply perhaps, the love-scene, at some cinema or theatre,  
is Nature in all its perfection and symmetry; the bottle that goes  
clink-clink down the steps is man with all his contradictions and  
ugliness.



食しさも餘りの果は笑ひ合ひ  
Mazushisa mo amarino hate wa warai-ai

姫子郎

Poverty also,  
In excess,—  
And they laugh together. *Kijirō*

Extremes meet; an excess of joy weeps,  
and, as here, an excess of misery makes people  
merry. The husband and wife are as poor as church mice. But the  
wife said that anyway they needn't be afraid of thieves, and the h



band said, "If a thief came, he might leave something behind by accident," and they both laughed.

血判の艶書に女優梨をむき  
Keppan no ensho ni joyu nashi o muki

交白

The actress  
Peels a pear,  
On the love-letter sealed with  
blood. *Kôhaku*



It was a common thing for people to write or seal fervid political or love letters in their own blood. The actress is quite right, logically speaking, to take no notice of such an epistle, but her vain, haughty, and indifferent look betrays that she is wrong in being right.



借りたのを絶交狀に封じ込み  
Karita-no o zekkoujou ni fuujikomi

柳珍堂

He puts the money he borrowed,  
In the letter  
Breaking off friendship. *Ryûchindô*

The point here is the confusion of mind of the letter-writer (and of all our minds) in that even though he breaks off the acquaintance and sends back the money, and any other gifts, nothing can obliterate the other's kindness of heart. In a word, inevitably he feels a knave and fool as he licks the flap of the envelope.

こま犬の顔を見合はぬ十五日  
Koma-inu no kao o miawanu juugonichi

古

The Fifteenth,  
When the Korean Dogs  
Cannot see each other.

Indirectness is used just as much in senryu as in haiku, it may be more. It is the 15th day of the month, and the shrine is full of people who have come to worship there. The two stone dogs facing each other on either side of the gateway of the shrine are unable to see each other on account of the crowds, the booths and banners.



大臣になる気東京駅につき  
Daijin ni naru ki toukyou-eki ni tsuki  
飴ン坊

Intending to become  
A Minister of State,  
He reaches Tôkyô Station.

*Amenbô*

A poor country boy reaches Tôkyô station. It is the first step on the way to becoming Prime Minister. This verse has some pity in its cynicism.

死んだ子とおんなじ服で悔みに來  
Shinda ko to onnaji fuku de kuyami ni ki  
三 絃

Calling to offer condolences,  
And bringing a child dressed  
Like the dead child. *Sangen*

This is Chance adding insult to the injury of Nature.

長い文なにかニコニコ巻き納め  
Nagai fumi nanika niko-niko maki osame  
角恋坊

The long letter;  
Smiling at something or other,  
He rolls it up. *Kakurenbô*

This is a Japanese letter, folded up sideways, unfolded as read, and then rolled up again afterwards.



We do not know, and do not want to know what he is smiling at in this Mona Lisa way, but we cannot help an involuntary twitching of the lips as we watch him savour something or other of peculiar taste.

捨てられも出来ぬ手紙のしわを伸し 吾彦  
Suteraremo dekinu tegami no shiwa o nobashi

A letter that after all  
Can't be thrown away;  
Smoothing out the creases. Yoshibiko

Here again we see the vacillation of mind, so characteristically human, the attachment to things, and the desire of freedom from them.



立話一人しやがむと又しやがみ 叱咤郎  
Tachibanashi hitori shagamu to mata shagami

Standing talking,  
One squats,  
And again squats. Shittarô

This is spontaneous and unconscious on the part of both men, and in this is the point of the verse.

子の内の片輪にゆづる水車 古  
Ko no uchi no katawa ni yuzuru mizuguruma

Among his children,  
To the cripple  
He gives the water-wheel.

An old man is dividing up his property on his death-bed. After much thought, he bequeaths the water-wheel to his deformed son, as being the only thing he can use. This verse illustrates the "heartlessness" of senryu, which will omit nothing of human nature from its scope.



佛壇へ博士になつた事を告げ  
Butsudan e hakase ni natta koto o tsuge

尺 咫

## Making known

At the Buddhist family altar,  
That he has received a doctorate.

Shakuma

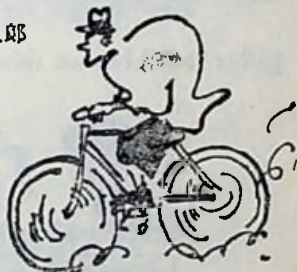
The young man's parents worked hard to allow their son to become a doctor of literature, but died before he did so. There is a kind of tragic irony in this verse, a humour that keeps it from sentimentality.



自轉車で風の神程ふくらませ 夜又郎  
Jitensha de kaze no kami hodo fukuramase

On the bicycle,  
He inflates his back  
Like the wind god. Yasharô

In old Japan, there was said to be a wind god that rode on a cloud, on his back a big bag of wind. The man on the bicycle is riding fast, and the wind blows up his coat behind like the wind god's bag.



貯繰りは闇から闇へ貸倒れ  
Hesokuri wa yami-kara yami e kashidaore

春 雨

Her savings,  
From darkness to darkness,  
Have become bad debts.

Harusame



The most interesting thing about this verse is the typically Japanese word *hesokuri*, which means (money on the) navel (by) management, that is, money saved by economising and

kept under the *obi* or sash. This money the prodigal son has borrowed from his mother, and will never pay back. The "darkness" is the secret economizing of the mother, and her secretly parting with the money to her son.



投資りの玩具へ大人ばかり寄り  
Nage-uri no omocha e otona bakari yori

維想樓

At the bargain sale of toys,  
Adults only

Gather.

Isôrô

The parents think of the price and  
gather round because things are cheap.



不景氣のどん底なれど花は咲き  
Fuukeiki no donzoko naredo hana wa saki

剣花坊

Business at its lowest ebb,—  
But the cherry blossoms  
Come out just the same.

Kenkabô

The humour of this makes the moral unsentimental. The humour is so strong that it has even killed the poetry of it.

庭いぢり佛いぢりに日の長さ

Niwa-ijiri hotoke-ijiri ni hi no nagasa

Fiddling with the garden,  
Fiddling with the family altar,—  
The length of the day! Kenkabô

The old woman does odd jobs in the garden, she tidies up the family altar, and reads the sutras a bit, but it is no good, the day is too long for her. The subject of the long day is one for haiku also, but in haiku we feel the length of the day; in senryu, the tedium, the length of life.



空をねめねめ辨當を内で喰ひ 古  
Sora o neme neme bento o uchi de kui

Scowling at the sky,  
Eating their lunch-basket  
At home.

The family wanted to go out on a picnic, but it began to rain, so they ate their lunch indoors, repeatedly looking at the rain dashing against the window-panes.

馬の屁に四五人こまる渡し舟 古

Uma no he ni shigonin komaru watashi-bune

Four or five people,  
Inconvenienced  
By the horse farting  
on the ferry-boat.



This is an extremely vulgar affair, one that would not be mentioned in most company, and



which should "be as if it had not been." The senryu writer, however, will and must have it and keep it, and bring it out again. Such things are among the miseries of life, and should be recorded as such.

保険屋と知らずに女中つゝまし  
Hokenya to shirazu ni jochu tsutsumashii

花瓢

The servant is most respectful,  
Not knowing  
He is the insurance man.

Kahyô



This is a satire that Shakespeare would have enjoyed putting on the stage.



寵愛が過ぎて人形の首が抜け 春夢  
Chouai ga sugite ningyo no kubi ga nuke

Too much affection;  
The doll's head  
Has come off!

Shunmu

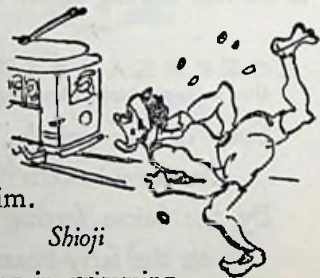
There is perhaps a parable in this.

マラソンをからかふ様に電車ぬき  
Marason o karakau youni densha nuki

沙路

The tram outstrips  
The marathon runner,  
As though making fun of him.

Shioji



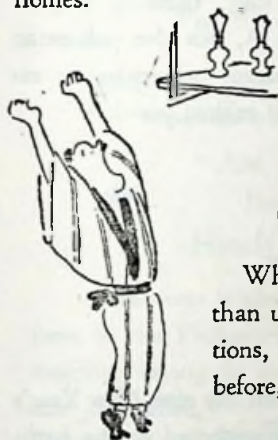
People must often feel this sort of thing in swimming-races, for example, in which the competitors do not move faster than a walking pace.

祭から戻ると迎れた子をくばり  
Matsuri kara modoruto tsureta ko o kubari

古

Coming back from the festival,  
Distributing  
The children he took.

The point of this verse lies in the word *kubari*, distributing out the children he had taken to the festival with him, to their various homes.



大欠伸棚の御神酒を見付出し  
Ou-akubi tana no omiki o mitsukedashi

古

Yawning tremendously,—  
And noticing the saké,  
On the family altar.

When yawning, our bodies stretched out more than usual, and our minds more receptive of sensations, we often see things that we had not seen before, or had forgotten.

いゝ聲で来た新内の眼が一つ  
Ii koe de kita shin-nai no me ga hitotsu

維想樓

Coming along singing a *shinnai*  
In a charming voice,  
She has only one eye.

Isôô

A *shinnai* is a kind of song with samisen accompaniment.

This is a rather heartless *senryu*, but the world is both heartless and heartful. The verse brings out a constantly experienced contrast between what is outside and what is inside.



立番巡査を寫生して叱られる  
Tachiban-junsa o shasei shite shikarareru

剣花坊



Drawing a picture  
Of the policeman on point-duty,  
He was severely reprimanded.

Kenkabô

Someone innocently drew a picture of  
a policeman on duty, thinking only of  
Art with a capital A, but the policeman  
(this is a pre-war Japanese policeman) is ex-  
tremely indignant at this lack of respect for his exalted position.

齋日の連れは大かた湯屋で出来  
Saijitsu no tsure wa oukata yuya de deki

古

Companions of the holiday,  
Are mostly decided  
At the bath-house.

The night before the holiday (the sixteenth day after New Year's Day, and All Souls' Day) the apprentices are gathered in the bath-house, and the route by which they are going back to their native places, and who is going with whom is then planned and discussed. The picture is of a bath-house full of young men, steam, the sound of water and youthful, cheerful voices.

あんまりな事に一人でふせて見る  
Ammari na koto ni hitori de fusete miru

古

Too badly beaten,  
He turns over the cards  
By himself.

We may compare to this a haiku by Issa:



負け菊をひとり見直すかな

Makegiku o hitori minaosu yuube kana

Losing at the chrysanthemum show,  
That evening

He looks at it again by himself.

There is also a similar passage in *Purgatorio*, vi, 1-3:

He who lost  
Remains behind in sorrow, and essays  
The throws again, and sadly learns.

内にかと言へばきのふの手を合せ

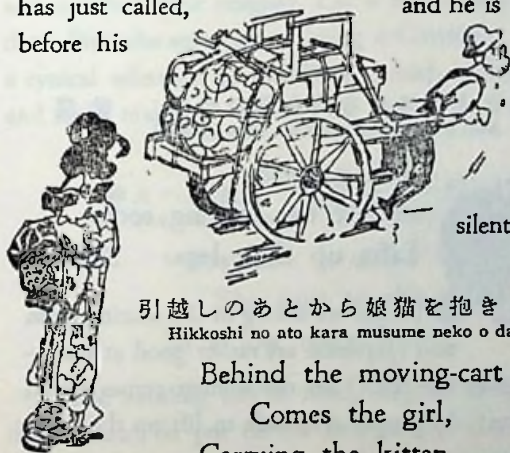
Uchinika to ieba kinou no te o awase

古

"Are you at home?" he says;  
For yesterday,  
Hands clasped.

This verse is almost as enigmatic in the original. The man has been to the Yoshiwara the night before, and has come home in the morning, saying he stayed the night with his friend. But this friend has just called, and he is unable to explain matters before his

family. He therefore puts his hands together, begging him not to embarrass him with questions, and his friend silently signals his willingness.



引越しのあとから娘猫を抱き

Hikkoshi no ato kara musume neko o daki

古

Behind the moving-cart  
Comes the girl,  
Carrying the kitten.

The people of the house are moving. This verse has a lot of feminine sweetness in it. The girl thinks, quite rightly, that the cat, being alive, is far more important than the junk piled on the cart.

有明の十六燭に朝の膳

Ariake no juuroku-shoku ni asa no zen

剣花坊

Under a night-light

Of 16 watts,

The breakfast table. Kenkabô

The people are poor, and have to get up while it is still dark. The *ariake* was a night-light, of very feeble illuminative power, and it is in the electric light of only 16 watts that they are beginning the day. The humour is in the discomfort, in the real as contrasted with the ideal.



足を上げさせる待合室のごみ

Ashi o agesaseru machiai-shitsu no gomi

秋溪

The rubbish

Of the waiting room

Lifts up their legs. Shûkei

People are sitting in the waiting room and (Japanese are rather good at throwing orange peel etc., all over the place) an old woman comes round with a broom and dustpan; the people are made to lift up their legs to let her sweep under them.

妹を連れてうるさい車中の眼  
Imouto o tsurete urusai shachuu no me

東天紅

Going with my younger sister,  
The inquisition  
Of the eyes of the train.

Tôtenkô



It is not so much that the other passengers are suspicious of him and think he is out with his fiancée, as that he *thinks* that is how they feel, and at last looks like what he is really not.

法の聲受状迄に行きとゞき  
Hou no koe ukejou madeni yukitodoki

古

The voice of the Buddhist Law,  
Reaches as far as  
The identity papers.

Those in public service carried identity cards, and on these was also certified their religion, i.e. a sect of Buddhism, thus absolving them from the suspicion of being a Christian. The verse seems to be a cynical reference to Buddhism, which is thus interfering in political and social matters.

仲人へ四五日のばすひくい聲  
Nakoudo e shigonichi nobasu hikui koe

古

"Postpone it a few days,"  
She says to the go-between,  
In a low voice.

The wedding day is fixed, but the mother tells the go-between that it must be put off for four or five days, for a certain reason. There is no one else present, but she lowers her voice as she says it.



雨やどり額の文字を能くおぼへ  
 Amayadori gaku no monji o yoku oboe

古

A shelter from the rain;  
 Learning by heart  
 The words on the tablet.

Passing a temple gate, or some such place, a sudden shower comes on, and taking shelter from the rain, the man reads and rereads the characters on the tablet hung up above until, without intending to, he has learnt by heart the unnecessary words.

冷へまするなどと火鉢で洗ふやう  
 Hiemasuru nadoto hibachi de arau you

古

Saying, "It's getting cold,"  
 and so on,  
 As if washing their hands  
 In the brazier.

"As if washing their hands" means the wringing and chafing of the hands over the brazier.



寝て居るは第一番の薬取  
 Nete iru wa dai-ichiban no kusuritori

古

The one asleep,—  
 He's the first who came  
 To get the medicine.

In olden times, it was customary to keep people who came for the medicine a terribly long time at the entrance to the doctor's. There is quite a crowd waiting. One is asleep, and he is the first who came.

寒念佛ころぶと見れば女也  
 Kan-nembutsu korobu to mireba onna nari

古

Reciting the Nenbutsu in the coldest season;  
 One fell over,—  
 Ah, it's a woman!

The single file of people walking in the snow is sexless, in feeling, and to the eye. One of them slips over on the ice, and from the red petticoat and the manner of rising, it is seen to be a woman.

女房を雪にうづめて炭をうり  
 Nyoubu o yuki ni uzumete sumi o uri

古

Burying his wife  
 In the snow,  
 He sells charcoal.

This is a verse that Buson would have appreciated, for it is mainly a contrast between the white snow and the black charcoal. The senryu nature of this verse come out in the humorously violent expression "burying his wife," which means leaving his wife behind in the snow-mantled cottage.

返事書く筆のじくにて王を逃げ  
 Henji kaku fude no jiku nite ou o nige

古

While writing the answer,  
 With the handle  
 He moves the king out of danger.

Two people are playing chess, when messenger come with a letter that must be answered at once. He takes up his brush, and writes the reply, but half his mind is on the board, and with the handle of the brush he moves the king out of check.

船頭の女房能い日にせんたくし

古

Sendou no nyoubou yoi hi ni sentaku shi

The boatman's wife  
Has chosen a fine day,  
For the washing.

The sky is blue, light clouds are racing across it. On the river, the boat lies anchored, the washing on the deck fluttering in the breeze. The language of this verse makes it senryu, but the picture is that of haiku.

羽子板で茶を出しながら逃支度

古

Hagoita de cha o dashinagara nige shitaku

Offering the tea  
On a battledore,  
Prepared to run away.

The value of this verse lies in its brevity, and as being a spontaneous picture of life. A drunken New Year guest comes to where girls are playing battledore and shuttlecock. He says he is thirsty, and one of the girls offers him the tea at arm's length on the battledore, ready to run away at any moment.

夕立の戸はいろいろにたてゝ見る

古

Yuudachi no to wa iro-iro ni tatete miru

A sudden shower;  
Putting up the shutters  
In this place and that place.

They begin putting the shutters up at the back, and the rain comes in at the side. They think it's all right upstairs, but a gust blows the rain in under the eaves. They rush about putting up the shutters here and there.



じつとしてみなと額の蚊を殺し

Jitto shite ina to hitai no ka o koroshi

古

“Keep still a moment!”

And killed the mosquito

On the forehead.

The humour here is in the expression on the two men's faces, one rather foolishly blank, and the other foolishly intent. More deeply conceived, it is in the moment of time just before the mosquito is gently slapped.

道問へば一度にうごく田植笠

Michi toeba ichido ni ugoku tauegasa

古

Asking the way,

All the *kasa* of the rice planters

Move together.

This is very near to haiku. It is only the humour of the common movement of the *kasa*, the sedge-hats of the planters, in one direction, that prevents us from saying that it is not senryu.

関守の聲を越へるまねて行く

Sekimori no koe o koeru manete yuki

古

After passing the barrier,

They go off

Imitating the guard.

Until the barrier is passed, they are all servility and meekness, but once out of sight and earshot, they walk along contemptuously imitating the haughty tones of the barrier-guard. “‘Pass!’ impudent, odious creature!” they repeat to themselves.

牛方のあきらめて行く俄雨  
 Ushikata no akiramete yuku niwaka-ame

古

In the sudden shower,  
 The cow-man walks along  
 Resignedly.

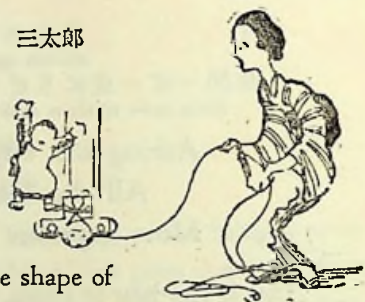
A cow is what one may call a "slow-motion animal." There is no possibility of making it hurry. The cow-man walks along cow-like in the heavy rain. Things are as they are.

母親が來ても上らぬ奴風  
 Haha-o ya ga kitemo agaranu yakkodako

三太郎

The Yakko kite;  
 Even the mother comes,  
 But it won't rise.

Santarô



The Yakko kite is one made in the shape of a *yakko* or servant of a samurai.

The little boy tries to fly the kite but it won't rise. He begins to cry, and the mother comes out and says, "Don't cry, mother will make it fly!" But it won't rise for her either.

SENRYU

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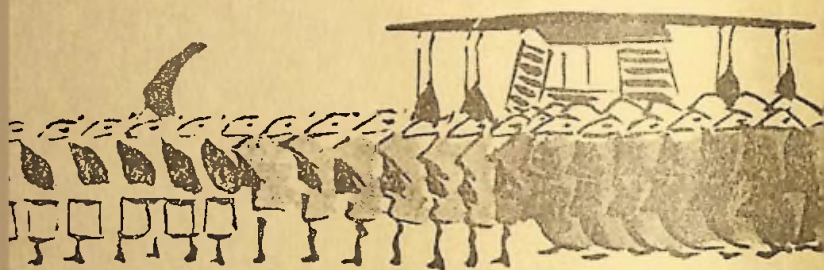
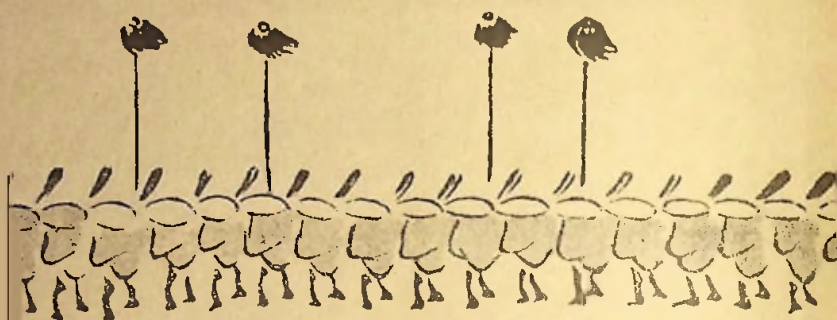
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福物の  
めんどう  
かつて  
二科とあれ

いんと  
子口の度とあり

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女房  
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