

Introduction

In Volume One of this series, I announced my plan for a multivolume anthology laid out on the organizational pattern of *Japanese Court Poetry* (1961), the foundational study by Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner underlying not only the present project but much subsequent work by other students of waka in the English-speaking world. According to the announced scheme, each subsequent volume was to be devoted to one of the periods of waka history demarcated by Brower and Miner: Volume Two to the Early Classical Period (784–1100), Volume Three to the Mid-Classical Period (1100–1241), and Volume Four to the Late Classical Period (1241–1502), as redefined by Miner in *Introduction to Japanese Court Poetry* (1967). (Volume One combines two periods, Primitive Song and Poetry, ca. 550–686, and the Early Literary Period, 686–784.) This grand plan has subsequently undergone modification in two respects. The first is that the volume at hand, subtitled *Grasses of Remembrance*, grew beyond some crucial number of pages to a bulk that made it advisable, if not inevitable, that it appear as two separately bound books. I trust the result will not pose any serious inconvenience to the reader. The other adjustment, however, has implications for future volumes and must be explained.

The truth of the matter is that Volume Two was long plagued by the issue of organization. Volume One organized itself with relative simplicity. The handful of major texts could be represented through all or a substantial portion of their poetic content, with enough space left over to concentrate on a large number of named authors as well. The early chronicles *Kojiki*, *Nihonshoki*, *Shoku Nihongi*; the local gazetteers, the *Fudoki*; the brief but important stone inscription of the *Bussokusekika* (“Buddha’s Footstone Poems”)—all provided a rich array of songs, poems, and liturgical chants amenable to consecutive presentation. *Man’yōshū*, the great eighth-century anthology occupying the heart of the book, surrendered one-quarter of its treasure in a reconceived pattern of named poets, poetic exchanges and poem-groups, and anonymous poems. Thus in the end little time was lost on merely organizational decisions.

Volume Two, consecrated to the Early Classical Period, immediately presented a different problem. Poetic texts proliferated during these three centuries, the first full flowering of court literature. The period not only encompassed the first four examples of the *chokusenshū*, or imperial anthology, the major venue of courtly times, but left a wealth of other collections, privately compiled, as well as records of poem contests (*utaawase*) and numbers of both fictional and nonfictional prose works studded with poems. How to pick and choose, how to organize that wealth

of material, persistently puzzled me. Organizing strictly by author, the simplest solution, seemed inconsistent with what I had done with Volume One. Besides, the age is notable for its books, its collections of poems, as much as for its poets. To have Volume One centered on *Man'yōshū* and let *Kokinshū* and other notable texts disappear as integers among the welter of their individual contributors seemed unacceptable. And yet, to neglect an author-by-author approach, leaving Ki no Tsurayuki or Izumi Shikibu to the mercy of the demands of a work-centered scheme, seemed equally wrong. What to do, in any case, when so much, so many thousands of poems, waited to be dealt with?

A solution eventually imposed itself. There was nothing for it but to have two volumes, one on the works and another covering the identical period dedicated to authors. Editorial advice steered me in the direction of calling this next book Volume Three, rather than Volume Two (Part Two). Hence, the originally envisioned Volume Three will become Volume Four, and so on up the line. I am acutely conscious that in future this tendency toward endless proliferation must be reined in, and that my love of the subject must not be allowed to abuse the patience of my readers. Nevertheless, the newly reconceived Volume Three will be the book of the Poets, from (roughly) Ono no Komachi in the ninth century to Minamoto no Tsunenobu at the end of the eleventh. I look forward to the challenges of giving these voices their due.

That settled, everything fell into place. The revised scheme has allowed me enough space in this volume to do something I have long wanted to do: present the five books of *Kokinshū* love poems in their entirety. Integral translations of various parts of *Gosenshū*, *Shūishū*, and *Goshūishū*, the other imperial anthologies of the period, then became plausible too. Using copiously preserved anonymous verse to represent other parts of the first three *chokusenshū* fell into place as part of the scheme. After much deliberation, I limited the representation of *shisenshū*, privately compiled anthologies, to selections from just two: the ninth-century *Shinsen Man'yōshū*, with its mixed Japanese and Chinese content, and the enormous *Kokinwakarokujō*, an encyclopedically arranged waka handbook of the late tenth century. Of all these works, only *Kokinshū* has heretofore been thoroughly studied and translated. To balance the major attention given to *Kokinshū* at the beginning of the book, I chose another weighty work for the end. One of my longtime interests has been in poems with prose contexts, and for years I had been working on a project to translate all 795 poems in *Genji Monogatari*, the greatest prose work of the period. The translations were done; I had only to add the commentaries. Working with this material gave me particular satisfaction. Not only are the *Genji* poems often unfairly dismissed, but treating them allowed me to write my own running commentary on *The Tale of Genji*. Indeed, it is obvious enough that my interest in poetry is not merely prosodic, but contextual. I like stories. And it gratifies me to let the storywriter Murasaki Shikibu come out as overwhelmingly the best-represented poet in this volume.

The division of Volume Two into separately bound books thus comes at the ap-

proximate midpoint of the material. Everything up to the *Genji* poems is in Part A; the *Genji* poem section and all the reference matter are in Part B. Otherwise, the organization is essentially the same as that of Volume One. Endnotes are keyed to poem numbers, and the back matter includes a glossary as well as conversion tables, indexes of poems by author, and a first-line index. One new twist is the inclusion of two appendixes consisting of annotated translations of the kana preface to *Goshūishū* and an attack on that anthology, *Nangoshūi*, by Minamoto no Tsunenobu (1016–97). To the best of my knowledge, no previous English translations of these two documents have been published. For translations of the kana and mana (i.e., Japanese and Chinese) prefaces to *Kokinshū*, the reader is referred to Helen Craig McCullough, *Kokin Wakashū: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry* (1985), and Leonard Grzanka, in Laurel Rasplica Rodd with Mary Catherine Henkenius, ed., *Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern* (1984).

My views on translation, lineation, and romanization remain those explained in the introduction to Volume One. I employ current, not reconstructed, Japanese, largely in the interest of familiarity and ease of pronunciation, although I am aware of the arguments favoring fidelity to historical phonetic values. I match the number of *ku* (prosodic units of five or seven syllables) with an equal number of lines in translation. To me, these units *are* lines, and I treat and discuss them as such. Their short-long rhythm is the pulse beat of waka prosody, and so I echo it in my translations. I do not, however, adhere rigorously to a set syllabic pattern in my English versions. It would be quite possible to do so—as shown by both Helen McCullough in her classic *Kokin Wakashū* and Royall Tyler in his brilliant translation of *Genji Monogatari*—but I am unwilling to forgo the advantages of shorter and longer impulse, breaks in rhythm, for the sake of a classical uniformity. Variation within pattern is my compromise. The waka pattern is by now firmly ingrained in that portion of me that makes poems, but the emergent poem itself seems to know when to go and when to stop.

Tanka is, overwhelmingly, the form that I work with in this volume. The exiguous state of the *chōka*, the long poem so abundant in *Man'yōshū*, is suggested by the fact that only three examples are selected for this volume. The form certainly survived, but one could hardly claim it flourished in the Early Classical Period. The tomb cults of ancient Japan that fostered it and the brief but vigorous experimentalism of Man'yō times were both long gone. *Chōka* remained a known alternative, useful for long complaints, but one senses in its use a dutiful reluctance to let die what once was great. Its prosody shifted in ways explained later in this book, resulting in a more rapid, less evenly paced flow. And the grand epithets of the old preparation-conclusion style are largely gone, along with the complex patterns of interlocking parallelism pioneered by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro. This volume also contains a handful of *sedōka*, and of a new form, *tanrenga*, or short linked verse, whose development into a major vehicle of poetic expression lay in the future and is outside the scope of this anthology.

Structurally, *tanka* come in two main types in this book, those that employ some form of the old two-part preparation-conclusion technique inherited from *Man'yō* days and those that do not. Both are well represented in *Man'yōshū* itself, but over the long haul of *waka* history, the *a + b* (or *a* suggests *b*) structure gave way either to a unitary concept or to a poem in which syntactic doubles are fully integrated rather than serving as pins to connect a natural image to a human situation. A few examples from the present volume may help to clarify these matters.

Starting with the *makurakotoba*, the “pillow word,” a class of fixed epithets of which a few maintain their presence in Heian and later collections, we find simple examples such as the following, where *hisakata no*, whose original meaning has become obscure, but which refers to the sky and is here rendered “shining,” modifies the noun *amatusora* (“skies of heaven”).

KKS XV:751. Ariwara no Motokata

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hisakata no | Not the shining realm |
| Amatusora ni mo | Of the skies of heaven on high |
| Sumanaku ni | Make I my abode— |
| Hito wa yoso ni zo | Yet he seems to think of me |
| Omoubera naru | As of some alien thing. |

In a few cases I have italicized the translations of these epithets to point up their special status in the rhetoric of the poem.

KKS XI:487. Anonymous

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Chihayaburu</i> | <i>Shaken-in-fury,</i> |
| Kamo no yashiro no | The house of the god at Kamo: |
| Yūdasuki | There the bark-cloth bands |
| Hito hi mo kimi o | Are bound—and not a single day |
| Kakenu hi wa nashi | My heart does not bind you close. |

As explained in Volume One, in addition to such five-syllable adjectival epithets as *hisakata no* and *chihayaburu*, there is a type of epithet that modifies verbs and that I therefore dubbed “adverbial pillow words.” An example in *Kokinshū* is provided by the following poem, in which *karikomo no* (“like scattered rushes”) impinges on *midarete* (“wildly tangled”) in *omoimidarete* (“wildly longing”).

KKS XI:485. Anonymous

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Karikomo no | Like scattered rushes, |
| Omoimidarete | The wild tangle of my love – |
| Ware kou to | Can she ever know |
| Imo shirurame ya | This yearning unless someone goes |
| Hito shi tsugezu wa | To tell of my disordered heart? |

Fuku kaze no (“as blowing wind”) modifies *me ni minu* (“unseen by the eye”) in the next poem in the same pattern.

KKS XI:475. Ki no Tsurayuki.

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Yo no naka wa | Even thus |
| Kaku koso arikere | Is love in this world: |
| Fuku kaze no | As blowing wind |
| Me ni minu hito mo | Unseen, she touches me |
| Koishikarikeri | Everywhere with longing. |

I preferred to classify such short analogical elements as “adverbial pillow words” because their five-syllable structures were the same as those of the true *makurakotoba*, but on further consideration, I agree with Tsuchihashi Yutaka (*Kodai Kayōron*, p. 448) that they are rather a type of *jo*. The *jo*, or *joshi*, is a longer preposited phrase whose function is essentially identical in some of its structures to that of *karikomo no* and *fuku kaze no* above. (I have decided to call them “short *jo*,” however, rather than Tsuchihashi’s “*makurakotoba*-type *joshi*.”) An example of “long *jo*” will illustrate the point.

KKS XI:471. Tsurayuki

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Yoshinogawa | High against the rocks |
| Iwanami takaku | Lash the waves of Yoshino, |
| Yuku mizu no | Whose water flows |
| Hayaku zo hito o | No swifter than my eager heart |
| Omoisometeshi | Was quick to start this love. |

Here everything down to *hayaku* (“swiftly”) impinges on that word, which doubles as part of the main statement of the poem. Sometimes the point of contact between the two parts of the poem is not one word (a *kakekotoba*, or “pivot word”), but an entire line, what I call a “swing line”:

KKS XX:1070. An Old Yamatomai Song

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Shimoto yuu | The rod-binding Vine |
| Kazurakiyama ni | Mountain rises under snow |
| Furu yuki no | Whose ceaseless falling |
| Ma naku toki naku | Without pause or season seems |
| Omōyuru kana | No more constant than my love. |

Line 4, “without pause or season,” works as part of both the *jo* and the main statement. This poem also conveniently illustrates the “mock epithet,” a type of *makurakotoba* (here *shimoto yuu*, “rod-binding”) that typically modifies an imagistic element in a place-name (*kazura*, “vine,” in Kazurakiyama, Mount Kazuraki).

Particularly clever and compact arrangements of the doubling technique in juncture were developed, ones that show more interest in the *kakekotoba* than in the *jo* itself. The next poem pivots on the word *hanu*, which means “spring” in the sense of putting spring into a bow by stringing it, but also is the name of the season. The *jo* here is of the type called *mushin* (“meaningless”); the point of the poem is in the pun.

KKS 1:20. Anonymous

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Azusayumi | A catalpa bow— |
| Oshite harusame | Bend it, string it, it will spring |
| Kyō furinu | Rain fell today; |
| Asu sae furaba | If it rains tomorrow too, |
| Wakana tsumitemu | I’m off to pick young greens. |

Doubling is not the only option available for the juncture of *jo* and main statement, however. There is also an echoic technique—phonetic repetition. *Ayamegusa* (“sweet-flag grass”) is echoed in *ayame* (“rhyme or reason”) in the following example, whose *jo* is palpably *ushin* (“meaningful”).

KKS XI:469. Anonymous

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hototogisu | In the month of June |
| Naku ya satsuki no | When the little cuckoo cries, |
| Ayamegusa | Sweet flag everywhere: |
| Ayame mo shiranu | Oh, sweet tangle of my love |
| Koi mo suru kana | That knows no weave or pattern! |

I have occasionally pointed up the juncture by use of italics in the translation, aiming for concision, as in the following examples illustrating *kakekotoba*, swing lines, and even phonetic echoing.

KKS XI:535. Anonymous

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Tobu tori no | Over the mountains |
| Koe mo kikoenu | Far beyond the outer hills |
| Okuyama no | Bird cries are lost |
| <i>Fukaki</i> kokoro o | <i>Deep in the silence</i> of my heart |
| Hito wa shiranamu | Is a love I would she knew. |

KKS IV:171. Anonymous

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Wa ga seko ga | As my lover leaves, |
| Koromo no suso o | The skirt of his garment blows, |
| Fukikaeshi | Showing the lining |

Uramezurashiki *In a flash of cool delight*
Aki no hatsukaze *Comes the first breeze of autumn.*

KKS XI: 537. Anonymous

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ausaka no | High on Meeting Slope, |
| Seki ni nagaruru | Down from the Barrier trickles |
| Iwashimizu | Water between rocks: |
| <i>Iwade kokoro ni</i> | <i>Without the merest whisper</i> |
| Omoi koso sure | I plunge deep in hidden love. |

The second of these examples is particularly interesting. A nature rather than a love poem, it reverses the usual analogical formulation, letting the human element for once lead into the natural.

Once established as a pivot between *jo* and main statement, the *kakekotoba* was increasingly put to use in more complex patterns of what might be described as “interleaving.” The following two examples begin on the level of primary discourse—the “statement”—and then introduce an image through a double, allow it to function in the fashion of a *jo*, and finally lead it back into the predication. *Kiku* in the first poem is both “hear” and “chrysanthemum”; *okite* is “form” (as of dew) and “get up.” The poem also makes a play on *omo[h]i*, “flames of love.” (*Omohi* is the historical spelling of *omoi*.) In the second poem this same pun on *omo[h]i* leads into *hi o tsune ni suru* (“ever-burning”), and that in turn into *Suruga naru Fuji* (“Fuji in Suruga”), the analogous element, which the last line identifies with the speaker.

KKS XI: 470. Sosei Hōshi

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Oto ni nomi | By report alone |
| Kiku no shiratsuyu | I hear of you, yet wake at night, |
| Yoru wa okite | While on chrysanthemums |
| Hiru wa omoi ni | The white dew gathers which by day |
| Aezu kenubeshi | Must perish, as I in flames of love. |

KKS XI: 534. Anonymous

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hito shirenu | Smoldering unseen, |
| Omoi o tsune ni | These love-fires burn till only |
| Suruga naru | Fuji in Suruga, |
| Fuji no yama koso | Mountain aflame forever, |
| Wa ga mi narikere | Embodies what I have become. |

All these patterns contrast with the other way of making poems: by unitary statement. Here too the *kakekotoba* found a useful role. It could give a double weight and significance to a single word, as in *samushiro* (“narrow mat”), which embeds the word *samushi* (“cold”), in the following poem.

KKS XIV: 689. Anonymous

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Samushiro ni | On her narrow mat |
| Koromo katashiki | Spreading out a single cloak, |
| Koyoi mo ya | Tonight once more |
| Ware o matsu ramu | Will she be waiting for me in the cold, |
| Uji no hashihime | The Lady of Uji Bridge? |

The unitary conception of the next poem is uncompromised, but rather enriched, by the double *shinobu kusa*. *Shinobu* (“remember with longing”) takes *kimi* (“you”) as its object and modifies *urusato* (“old village”). Simultaneously (simultaneity is the effect of doubling) it combines with *kusa* (“grass”) as *shinobugusa* (“grasses of remembrance”), the “rough fern” of the translation, a weed whose growth on old buildings is a sure sign of neglect.

KKS IV: 200. Anonymous

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Kimi shinobu | While I wait for you |
| Kusa ni yatsururu | Amid this ruin of rough fern |
| Furusato wa | In our old village, |
| Matsumushi no ne zo | The cries of the pine crickets |
| Kanashikarikeru | Are sharp with the sadness of longing. |

When wordplay is dropped, there may still be a use of analogy, but one made overt, as in this poem exploiting the fire image:

KKS XII: 561. Ki no Tomonori

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Yoi no ma mo | I am more deceived |
| Hakanaku miyuru | By love’s dark, enticing flame |
| Natsumushi ni | Than summer moths |
| Madoimasareru | That vanish in the fire before |
| Koi mo suru kana | The transient eve is done. |

A nature poem, by contrast, may demand no more than a statement of admiration.

KKS II: 72. Anonymous

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Kono sato ni | Here in this village |
| Tabine shinubeshi | I shall rest upon my way; |
| Sakurabana | In bewilderment |
| Chiri no magai ni | Of cherry blossom scattering |
| Ieji wasurete | Forgotten is the road for home. |

Let the anecdotal element fade out, the “I” be reduced to the “eye,” and something close to the poem of pure perception may be achieved.

KKS IV:191. Anonymous

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Shirakumo ni | Against the white clouds, |
| Hane uchikawashi | Wing to beating wing they pass, |
| Tobu kari no | The wild geese flying, |
| Kazu sae miyuru | Their very number visible |
| Aki no yo no tsuki | In the moon of an autumn night. |

This, however, is not representative of the “*Kokinshū* style,” the more circuitous manner preferred by poets throughout the period dealt with in this volume. Rather, the oblique approach and the “elegance” of sense confusion served as the new elements vis-à-vis the old bipartite preparation-conclusion technique. (“New” and “old” correspond roughly to Chinese and native styles.)

SIS VIII:465. Anonymous

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mokaribune | There’s a seaweed boat |
| Ima zo nagisa ni | Out there rowing toward the strand— |
| Kiyosu naru | So I would guess |
| Migiwa no tazu no | From the distant cry of cranes |
| Koe sawagu nari | Disturbed at the water’s edge. |

GSS III:90. Anonymous

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Yama takami | So high the mountain, |
| Kasumi o wakete | Flowers falling through the mist |
| Chiru hana o | To the distant eye |
| Yuki to ya yoso no | Must appear as nothing else |
| Hito wa miruran | Than a flurry of white snow. |

Further discussion of poetic types, tropes, and styles can be left to the copious commentaries on individual poems that make up much of the bulk of this book. But a word or two is in order on the question of “liberties.” Readers versed in Japanese will be aware that I have taken some. The whole *problematik* of poetic translation is taken up in a very short essay in the introduction to Volume One. My convictions and anxieties remain as stated there, and I do not intend to repeat them here. How gratifying, how reassuring it is to find a poem that will stand still and let itself be brought over more or less *sono mama*—“just as it is”:

SIS XX:1342. Izumi Shikibu

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Kuraki yori | Now from out the dark |
| Kuraki michi ni zo | Into yet a darker path |
| Irinubeki | I must enter: |
| Haruka ni terase | Shine upon me from afar, |
| Yama no ha no tsuki | Moon on the mountain crest. |

Done and done, not many liberties here. But the case is not always so. Other poems, particularly those whose mode of being depends on wordplay, impose other solutions. Or at least tempt me to find one.

KKS XX:1092. Anonymous

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mogamigawa | Mogami River— |
| Noboreba kudarū | Up and down the rice boats ply: |
| Inafune no | <i>Ply me with sweet words,</i> |
| Ina ni wa arazu | I will never tell you no— |
| Kono tsuki bakari | After this one month is past. |

This is a typical *jo*-based poem with juncture through homophonic echoing: *ina* is both “rice” and “no.” The italicized line in the translation renders the linking technique rather than the precise wording of the original. The same principle—the translator has a primary responsibility toward what makes a poem “go”—is illustrated by the next example as well.

KKS XIV:697. Ki no Tsurayuki

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Shikishima no | Not of Yamato, |
| Yamato ni wa aranu | Famous for Shikishima, |
| Karakoromo | A Cathayan <i>doak</i> : |
| <i>Koro mo</i> hezu shite | <i>No doak</i> for this desire to meet— |
| Au yoshi mogana | Oh, can't we without delay? |

Koromo (“cloak”) and *koro mo* (“[wasted] time”) won’t match in English, and so a substitute takes the place of their play.

Echoic doubles of the *ina/ina* or *koromo / koro mo* type are common and fun to deal with. A *kakekotoba* poses a knottier problem, one often beyond my powers to solve without tearing the double apart. But still, for the pun-lover (an instinctive aversion to puns is a severe handicap in appreciating much classical Japanese poetry, and a disqualification for translating it), even outrage may be irresistible. A *warekara* (“split carapace”) is a tiny crustacean; it also means “my fault.” And so (alas?), the following:

KKS XV:807. Fujiwara no Naoiko

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Ama no karu | There's a <i>crack-shell worm</i> |
| Mo ni sumu mushi no | Living in the weedy wrack |
| <i>Warekara</i> to | The seafolk harvest; |
| Ne o koso nakame | And a <i>worm like I-shell</i> not |
| Yo o ba uramiji | Blame others: “ <i>My fault!</i> ” I'll cry. |

Shudder if you will, but *waka* has an element of play that is essential to its life and its enjoyment.

In the course of rendering thousands of poems into English over many years, I have tended to let them rewrite themselves in ways that sometimes are no doubt not strictly excusable on the grounds given above. For better or worse, I am not a purist—not a perfectionist—despite my tedious ways and long delays. These poems live in their rhythms, in their need to find expression in another tongue, and in the pleasure their words convey to me—and, I hope, to you. Those are my loyalties. I have also allowed myself to write commentaries to suit my fancy as well as to suit the poems. If I have occasionally “let my hair down” (*crinitus Iopas*, indeed!), it has been because I need to free the discourse on poetry from the deadening pall of pedantry and cant that ever and anon threatens to engulf it. Discourse on poetry is discourse on life. I fear I have not gone far enough, not written well enough, to provide you, dear reader, with the pleasure I feel. The dead hand of “this is not for your amusement,” that bequest of graduate study, is still too much upon me. The Old Man Who Does As He Pleases is not yet me—quite. But there are further volumes yet to come.