

Bashō's "Cricket Chapter" As English Literature

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SUMMARY

Is it really possible to translate Japanese haikai linked verse meaningfully into English? This paper makes an attempt to explain Bashō's techniques and prosody in English and to translate the opening verses of the "Cricket Chapter" haikai sequence composed by Bashō and three followers in 1690. The translations are made as poetically as possible, in the belief that linked verse sequences can play a role in the English and American poetic traditions in the not too-distant future.

Sometime in the autumn of 1690 Matsuo Bashō and three of his disciples created a linked verse sequence later known as the “Cricket Chapter” after its inclusion in the six-chapter collection known as *Sarumino*, which was published the next year. All the sequences in *Sarumino* are fine works and are generally considered to be the high point of resonant mellowness in Bashō’s linked verse career. I have chosen to present the “Cricket Chapter” since it has some of the most daring and penetrating links in all of *Sarumino*. Participating with Bashō in this haikai linked verse sequence were : Nozawa Bonchō, an herbal doctor from Kyōto, whose poetic career was shortened three years later by being thrown in jail; Okada Yasui, a merchant and tea master from Nagoya, noted for his esthetic sensibility ; and Mukai Kyorai, a former warrior who turned to haikai and played the host for Bashō in Kyōto, and who is also famous for his renditions of the master’s sayings, the *Kyoraishō*, which was published in 1775.

Like most of Bashō’s mature haikai sequences, the “Cricket Chapter” is made up of thirty-six verses, the *kasen* form. The first mention of *kasen* in classical *renga* is in 1518,¹ and the early practice of the form involved single poets composing thirty-six verses, each one being ascribed to one of the thirty-six poetic saints, or *kasen*, by Fujiwara Kintō. At first *kasen* were regarded merely as dreamy appendages, but with the rise of haikai no *renga*—or haikai for short—the form began to be regarded as a more important mode of literary motion. It was short (it could be completed in a few hours) and it was not burdened with all the formal overtones of the more decorous hundred-verse sequence. Buson, for example, once completed four *kasen* in a single night. This informality, combined with the rapid tempo of the form, was ideal for Bashō, with his emphasis on artless art and on earthy and vigorous elegance.

By the Genroku period (1688–1703), the *kasen* rhythm had become fairly well settled.² It is essentially a miniature hundred-verse sequence, having only two pages instead of four. It has six verses on the front of the first sheet, however, as opposed to eight for a hundred-verse sequence. The back of the first sheet has twelve verses, as compared with fourteen for a hundred-verse sequence. The second sheet has twelve verses on the front side and six on the final side (the last sheet of a hundred-verse sequence has fourteen on the front side and eight on the final side). Certain rules govern the flow of images : the moon, for example, should ideally appear in the fifth verse of the front of the first sheet and twice more later on, while blossoms should appear twice at specified places.³ Bashō does not always follow these rules, however, apparently feeling that the spirit of the group is even more important to maintain. The rhythmic movement of a whole *kasen* has been compared⁴ to a single-storied apartment house that spreads over the earth but does not rise to a skyscraper climax. At any rate, it is clear that the *kasen* is a derivative form and not a break-away. It is a compression in perhaps the same way that the later haiku is a compression of haikai linkages.

The revolution achieved by Bashō and his followers took place primarily within the realm of style, in the way they reworked old materials and subtly introduced new materials into old molds. Fortunately some of Bashō’s disciples took down their versions of Bashō’s words on various aspects of haikai, and though they are not “objective” accounts in the tape-recorder sense, they are valuable personal interpretations of Bashō’s own attempts to interpret the spirit of haikai. Before turning to a translation

of the “Cricket Chapter,” I will refer to a few of Bashō’s key concepts so that the reader may grasp some of what Bashō and his disciples were aiming at when they linked their verses.

Kyorai reports that the master once said: “Verse linkages have undergone three changes. Once there were only links of objects (*tsukemono*). More recently, links of wit (*kokorozuke*) prevailed. Now we prefer to link using transition (*utsuri*), resonance (*hibiki*), scent (*nioi*), and rank (*kurai*).”⁵ The master who “once” dominated is Matsunaga Teitoku (1571–1653) — he codified the rules of haikai and made linking a somewhat mechanical matter. The “more recent” poets are those of the Danrin school, inspired by Nishiyama Sōin (1605–82), a poet who specialized in leaps of exuberant imagination. The modern poets are of course those of the Bashō school (Shōmon), whose profound and often mysterious linkages must be understood with new terms altogether. Whether this is an accurate account of haikai history or not is another question; what is clear is that Bashō felt that he needed a new vocabulary to articulate his new poetics and that the terms he uses are necessarily groping rather than definitive, and an oral rather than a written code. Moreover, Bashō encouraged his disciples and students to use all the various kinds of links, to mix delicate scent with object links and witty links. *Nioi* is a new dimension of an old tradition, especially the classical waka tradition of lingering suggestion (*yoin*).

What does Bashō mean by the term scent link (*nioizuke*)? He says different things to different disciples, so it may be helpful to discuss the various aspects of *nioi* in a sequential manner, keeping in mind that they are all parts of an indivisible whole. *Kurai* (rank), first of all, means, according to Kyorai, “. . . to link knowing the rank of the previous verse. Even if you make a good verse, it will not make a good link if it does not correspond to the rank of the previous verse. The late master gave some love verses as an example :

uwaoki no	Even when she
hoshina kizamu mo	chops dried vegetables
uwa no sora	her heart leaps
(Yaba)	

to which Bashō linked

uma ni denu hi wa	When the horseman isn’t out
uchi de koi suru	they make love inside.” ⁶

Kyorai reports that the girl is a servant at an inn or warehouse who is intimate with one or more horsemen, and that she makes casual love with one whenever he has no riders and stays inside. The social rank of the servant and the horseman are similar and the verses matched.

Another kind of link is made by *omokage*, “remembrance” or “allusion.” (I prefer the first translation for its sense of warm comradeship with the past.) Kyorai gives the following example: Bashō made

kusaio ni	After lingering
shibaraku ite wa	in my grass hut
uchiaburi	I jump out and away

to which Kyorai replied

inochi ureshiki	My life sings —
senjū no sata	a new Imperial Collection

Here Kyorai imagines the first verse to be about someone like the poet-monk Saigyō (1118–1190), and he lets his mind wander back to the time Saigyō met Yoritomo in Kamakura and was asked by the ruler to disclose the secret principles of waka. Previously, Kyorai had composed :

waka no ōgi wa	Professing ignorance
shirazu sōrō	of the secrets of waka.

But Bashō criticized him for limiting his poem by linking it so explicitly and directly to Saigyō, and Bashō rewrote it into the version given above, which is wider and more suggestive.⁷

The two terms just mentioned — *kurai* and *omokage* — are the most definite and definable forms of linkage, but another is sometimes also mentioned : *suiryōzuke*, or “conjectural link.” A famous example occurs in the *Sanzōshi*, compiled by Hattori Tohō and published in 1776. The first verse is by Bonchō :

noto no nanao no	Winter is hard
fuyu wa sumiuki	in Nanao in Noto

Bashō replies

uo no hone	I meet old age
shiwaburu made no	sucking on
oi o mite	fish bones

and comments, “I conjectured the rank of the previous verse and guessed the situation and made my verse about someone who could be living there.”⁸ The distinction seems to be that while *omokage* remembers people from the past, *suiryō* refers to people who could be existing in other places. Sometimes conjecture refers to all of creation, as when Bonchō wrote

sō yaya samuku	A cold monk —
tera ni kaeru ka	going back to his temple?

and Bashō linked

saruhiki no	Trainer and monkey
saru to yo o furu	cross the the world —
aki no tsuki	autumn moon ⁹

The first verse describes a particular person, and from this image Bashō conjectured the similar fate shared by all people and all creatures and he expressed this feeling of pathos with the image of the lonely monkey trainer and his monkey companion as they travel homeless through the world like the autumn moon. Here the suggestion of the mystery of time’s relation to space is merely suggested, leaving more for the imagination to savor and the heart to pity.

The other terms Bashō uses — *nioi*, *utsuri*, and *hibiki* — are even harder to define, for they describe not so much links as the tone and quality of the previously discussed linkages. The ambiguity is heightened by the fact that Bashō uses *nioi* in two different senses. In the first, *nioi* refers to all the aspects of the different links as a whole, a pervasive and delicate scent of unity. At other times, however, Bashō uses *nioi* to refer to an ineffable sense of connection, a serene connective tension. Once, for example, Kyokusui wrote

akikaze no	Fearing autumn
fune o kowagaru	wind in a boat —
nami no oto	the sound of waves

and Bashō replied

kari yuku kata ya	Where the geese fly,
shiroko wakamatsu	to Shiroko, Wakamatsu

and created a special “fragrance.”¹⁰ In the first verse the passenger is frightened by the waves that, following autumn, slap the boat and rock it precariously. Bashō expands the passenger’s anxiety until it covers the whole sky. He takes the heart of the preceding verse and feels the beats and vibrations of the geese wings as they disappear toward the still distant shore and the horizon. The link between the two verses expands almost infinitely.

The term *utsuri*, or “transition,” was beginning to ferment in many literary circles in the late seventeenth century, but Bashō raised it to a classical degree of suggestion. Kyorai relates that when Fumikuni visited him one New Year’s Day, the year’s first sun rose vermilion over the eastern hills amid drifting mist and reminded his guest of why the ancient waka poet Akahito (d. 736?) was blessed with that wonderful name (Red Person, or Bright Person). Fumikuni made

akahito no	Akahito
na wa tsukaretari	was named after
hatsugasumi	the year’s first mist

and Kyorai replied

tori mo saezuru	Even the birds
gatten narubeshi	sing in agreement

Bashō praised Kyorai’s link, saying that it embodied both *utsuri* and *nioi*.¹¹ Kyorai says that he used *narubeshi* to be in accord with *tsukaretari*, to show that he was in harmony with his guest since both terms are affirmative. The auspicious mood of the first verse is continued by the joyous acceptance of the second. If the middle line of the first verse had said, for example, *na wa omoshiro ya*, the last line of the second verse would have had to have been *keshiki narikeri*, which would have made both verses more detached and descriptive. Kyorai thus implies that *nioi* and *utsuri* are two aspects of the same harmonious acceptance.

Another reference to this type of refined transition is found in the *Sanzōshi*.¹² Sora composed

tsuki miyo to	Dragged awake
hikiokosarete	to see the moon —
hazukashiki	how embarrassing!

and Bashō replied

kami ōgasuru	Sweaty hair is fanned —
usumono no tsuyu	dew of gauze silk

The hokku portrays, in Sora's imagination, a court lady being awakened in the middle of the night to see the full moon, an activity she should not have forgotten. She is so sensitive, Bashō adds, that she (or a servant) must fan her nervous and embarrassed perspiration. But Bashō also opens up a new movement: the woman could be finishing her bath, the servant fanning her dry. The atmosphere of *utsuri* shifts and actively swirls from one emotion to another, and from the beginning of an action to its perfection.

Finally, there is *hibiki*, or “resonance,” about which Bashō, through Kyorai, says, “Resonance is like the sound something makes when it is hit.”¹³ When Ryūkō read

kure'en ni	On the porch —
ginkawarake o	smashing the silver-lined
uchikudaki	clay cup

Shigenari replied

mi hosoki tachi no	Look how the slender sword
soru kata o miyo	curves upward!

As he recited these poems, Bashō smashed an invisible silver-lined cup with his right hand and immediately drew an imaginary sword with his left. This is the pose of a warrior, who throws away his pleasure-cup as a sign of resolution and then examines the clean curve of his blade. One can almost hear the vibrations of the silver against the incredibly sharp edge of the blade. *Hibiki* is thus hard to separate from *utsuri*: it seems to be a very sharp and almost violent form of transition.

All these terms that Bashō uses are definitely not mechanical aids for grinding out formula verse. Once Bashō said, “Modern haikai must be based on art that you find in daily life. In the haikai meeting you should exhale them with instantaneous force.”¹⁴ And again: “Haikai should ride on the breath (*ki*) of your spirit.”¹⁵ A poor link occurs because “The hammer-like strokes between the verses was not maintained and the rhythm faltered.”¹⁶ Haikai poets need to harmonize their breathing and their minds and attain a vigorous intuitive unity as they create. A thought should not linger too long in the mind; neither should a haikai poet overly indulge in conscious poetic technique or argumentation. Bashō used the figure of a person felling a huge tree, the implication being that unless he or she moves quickly the tree will fall on him or her. He also compared poetic creation to cutting into an opponent's hand-guard, to slicing open a melon, to the movement of one's mouth when one eats a pear, and to making thirty-six fast-moving *yariku* verses.¹⁷

More and more, toward the end of his life, Bashō stressed the importance of this overall avoidance of artificiality, forced logic, and overly ornate imagery. He used

the term *karumi*, “lightness and spontaneity,” or, perhaps, “openness to experience.” Most commentators assume that Bashō used *karumi* only in his very last period, but Ogata Tsutomu has shown that *karumi* plays a major role in earlier works such¹ as *Sarumino* as well.¹⁸ The ideal of *karumi* allows the real experiences of ordinary people to be freely mingled with the most hauntingly delicate of purely poetic responses. Art and nature, and person and person, become indistinguishable — at least in theory. The closest a European critic has come to espousing this type of esthetic is T. S. Eliot’s discussion of the “Metaphysical Poets,” where he says, “When a poet’s mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man’s experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza (*sic*), and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.”¹⁹ Bashō was obviously aiming at something different than the fragmentary unity desired by T. S. Eliot; and Bashō’s desire for total group unity is something Eliot could hardly have endorsed. Yet there is a spiritual affinity between the two, especially in the realm of linking images, and linking them lightly. For both poets, links are nothing if they are not finally spontaneous.

Realizing that Bashō was reaching for a new poetry and a new poetics makes reading his mature *renku* a heady and almost dangerous excursion into an all too uncharted region — and especially so in English. The “Cricket Chapter” (*kirigirisu no maki*) is also known as the “Ash Tub Chapter” (*akuoke no no maki*), and it has been previously translated into English by Earl Miner.²⁰ The present paper will try to put more stress on the connotative rhythms and links that Bashō and his followers always — as the above discussion has tried to show — kept in mind. The *kasen* is so rich that I have translated only the first half: the front and back of the first sheet. Some idea of the depth of the whole will, hopefully, be apparent. Suffice it to say that reading these poems is a physical experience; unless you swim you will drown.²⁰

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The Cricket Chapter

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| 1. akuoke no | Drops from the ash tub |
| shizuku yamikeri | stop — |
| kirigirisu | crickets |

The opening verse, the *hokku*, is by Bonchō. There is a wooden tub full of water into which ashes are strewn and allowed to settle. The ash-acidic water (plum acid was also sometimes used) was thought to be an excellent stain and dirt remover, and many cleaners and housewives used it as such. It could also make, for example, teal cloth darken to indigo. This acidic water was allowed to drip down into a smaller tub below, where it was easier to wash or dye the clothes. Bonchō’s *hokku* does not specify whether the tub belongs to a professional cleaner or a private home, but this doesn’t deeply matter, for the enveloping stillness is all-important. The upper tub has run dry and is suddenly silent after a long day of use, and the resulting silence is filled with the high cry of crickets. These crickets shrill, according to the Japanese

imagination, *ri ri ri ri*... by rubbing their wings together in the faintly chill autumn air. First one fragile voice and then another makes its way to the porch. These voices are so thin that human sounds have drowned them out, and the scene takes on overtones of melancholy and longing. A person, probably alone, sits on the porch feeling tired from the day's work but regretting that the light has already gone, that time is passing. The sound of the crickets washes over the person's senses more cleanly than any piece of cloth can be washed. Lost in memories, the person feels a brief shock of recognition in the cricket's hovering sound.

There are two classical poems which may have been in Bonchō's mind as he made the hokku. Both of them are representative of an important imagistic tradition. The first is by Saigyō (*Shinkokinshū* 472) :

kirigirisu	Crickets!
yosamu ni aki no	As the autumn nights
naru mama ni	grow colder
yowaru ka koe no	do their voices weaken?
tōzakari yuku	They fade farther

The fate of the crickets succumbing to the cold leaves the poet without any companions at all and reminds him that he, too, must eventually walk the same path to death. The tactile sensation of cold is blended with the aural sensation of failing sound. Bonchō's verse is not so desolate, though it does hint of passing time. The second poem is by Fujiwara Yoshitsune (*Shinkokinshū* 518) :

kirigirisu	Crickets cry
naku ya shimoyo no	in the frosty night —
samushiro ni	must I fold my sleeve
koromo katashiki	and on this cold mat
hitori ka mo nen	spend the night alone?

The poet is not only alone but also destitute and facing the prospect of a bleak winter, and by implication, old age. This tanka is, like the first, darker and more somber than Bonchō's verse, but it haunts the outskirts of that hokku.

Crickets are traditionally thought to drink the dew off grass and foliage at night, and are believed to sing and enjoy the dark moistness that follows the heat of the last warm days of summer. There is thus an aqueous continuity between the plunking drops in the tub that finally stop and the moist pulsing of the crickets. This continuity extends to the sound structure of the poem itself, where *keri* and *kirigiri*—blend their high vowels and clicking consonants in a throbbing embrace, which in turn echoes “*aku oke no shizuku.*” Yet Bonchō's craftsmanship does not let the poem turn into pure sound, which would be not poetry but music.

Prosodically, *keri* divides the poem into separate but linked images, one human-made and the other natural, which are radically juxtaposed. This “cutting word” marks a cesura, a hush between worlds. There is mystery and wonder here. The drops in the tub are suddenly realized to have stopped: the sound is of crickets, not water, or is it? A minor revelation, but one of the trademarks of the Bashō school. If there were only one single, lonely cricket, the poet might be recognizing himself in its slender cry.

Past and present are also fused, for Bonchō could have used the present-time *kana* if he had wished to, which would not have implied change or completion. And the placement of the “cutting word” at the end of twelve syllables instead of five suffuses the verse with soft and subdued forward-moving energy. Neither the “cutting word” or the “season word” is included artificially, or from a sense of formality the way they often are in Teimon haikai. Bonchō’s words embody the lonely stirring of autumn itself.

Before discussing the next verse, the wakiku, it would be helpful to briefly note Bashō’s conception of the opening verses of a haikai meeting. Kyorai reports that once he was invited for the first time to visit Masahide, a local officer of Zeze in Ōmi, and that he was asked to join a haikai party. As the guest, Kyorai had to compose the hokku, but he took a long time to compose it, so Bashō interrupted and presented a hokku of his own and thus smoothed out the atmosphere. Later Bashō reportedly said, “Since you were a rare guest, you should have realized that you would be asked to compose and have been ready. Besides, if you are asked to make the hokku, you should present your verse as soon as possible, not caring overly much about its excellence or poorness. How long do you think a night is? If you spend too long on the hokku, the whole evening will be wasted. Your conduct lacked style, and was rather unpleasant, so I made the hokku myself.”²¹ Masahide quickly linked a wakiku to Bashō’s hokku :

futatsu ni wareshi	Splitting a cloud —
kumo no akikaze	the autumn wind

But when Kyorai made the *daisan*

takegōshi	How quiet the shade
kage mo shizuka ni	of the bamboo lattice!
tsuki sumite	The moon shines clear

Bashō amended it to

chūrenji	Opening
nakagiri akuru	the latticed door
tsukikage ni	in bright moonlight

In the latter verse the speaker opens the small paper screen door (which has a latticed window) and moonlight floods the room. Bashō scolded Kyorai for inexcusably linking such a tranquil moon to the violent sky of the wakiku. Bashō’s great concern for maintaining a smooth relationship between host and guest and poet and poet was thus based on a passion for conserving social and esthetic order.

When he went on his poetic journeys, Bashō was often placed in the position of being the guest, and thus of composing the hokku. He usually presented a light-hearted verse and then later, before publication, revised it to give it more power and enable it to stand on its own. At the time of the group meeting, the most important thing, he felt, was to create a harmonious rhythm for the whole haikai group. In the “Crick-et Chapter,” Bashō plays the host, and will try, in the next verse, to embrace Bonchō’s verbal gift and glide with it into a deeper current.

2. abura kasurite Lamp oil runs out —
 yoine suru aki sleeping early in autumn

The sun sets earlier and earlier as autumn deepens, and people must begin to use oil lamps to stave off the surrounding darkness. A poor woman or man such as the person portrayed here does not own much oil, so the lamp exhausts itself early before the person really wants to go to bed. Or perhaps she is already lying in the darkness listening to the dripping and then suddenly to the crickets, when the oil uses itself up in pure consummation and the room slips into darkness. Just before it goes out, the lamp throws flickering light and shadows over the walls of the simple hut, which suddenly disappear as quietly as the drops of water. There is *wabi*, or bare loneliness here, but the image is mellower than Saigyō's lonely autumns of destitution. At least the night is cool enough to sleep in after the hot summer season.

Physically, the water dripping from the tub and coming to a halt resonates in the oil coming to an end. Perhaps the flickering of the lamp as it goes out is a visual continuation of the pulsating sound of the crickets. The final *aki* echoes the opening *aku* of the hokku. The second verse, however, with its sleek, moist *-ura*, *-uri*, and *-uru*, is even softer than the opening verse; but both are matching mundane scenes filled with unordinary feelings.

Since the wakiku is in part a greeting to the guest (here Bonchō), Bashō continues the softly melancholic mood. Bonchō's use of a traditionally "unpoetic" word, *akuoke*, is consonant with Bashō's colloquial verb, *kasurite*. In both cases, lofty and lowly words are caught in the flow of a single verse. Common words thus come to be invested with a new and stinging pleasure. *Kasurite* may possibly be a word derived from Bashō's native Mie Prefecture, or it may be a reflexive transitive verb, in which case it would mean that the oil uses itself up as opposed to passively submitting to the flame. This is similar to the distinction, which goes back to the *Manyōshū*, between, for example, *yosuru nami*, waves which push against the shore with their own power, and *yoru nami*, waves which simply wash in.²²

The cesura after *kasurite* is a silent pivot that balances the two halves of the verse as they press against each other. There is a tactile sense of coolness as night rushes in with the darkness and covers the person's skin. Two powerful immediacies meet, and the immediacy of darkness prevails, though only after having been allowed in finally by the disappearing light.

Since the social and emotional level of the subject in the hokku and the wakiku seems to be the same, there is *kurai*, or rank at work here. Both verses are appropriately humble yet relaxed. The gentle calm pervading both is an auspicious beginning to the kasen sequence and can perhaps best be described by the term *nioi*, or scent. There is perhaps a touch of *hibiki*, too, in the sounds of the drops of water and the crickets and then the oil flaring out. How much red must one mix with blue before the whole turns to purple?

3. aradatami Laying out
 shikinarashitaru new straw floor mats
 tsukikage ni in moonlight

The third verse, the daisan, is difficult to compose because it must turn away from

the movement of the hokku and strike out in a new direction. In the present verse, by Yasui, the image seems to be that of a young couple who have just moved into their new house, which has not yet been graced even by furniture, and who are enjoying the moonlight after turning off the lamp. However, the *daisan* should not be a love verse since no love verses are permitted in the first six verses, so the darkness does not have sensual overtones. Some have seen this as a monk sitting in a new temple room in the country, but Buddhist sentiments are also forbidden until the seventh verse. A possible alternative is that an old caretaker is watching over the new house until the owner moves in. Or the owner himself may have come to the house to enjoy the autumn moon. At any rate, both the new floor and the bright moon inject a cheerful tone into the *kasen* which has until now been somewhat somber. My own feeling is that the owner of the house is playing host to a guest in his new villa, and that they lazily let the lamp go out and enjoy the moonlight flowing over them, cool and tingling. The smell of boards freshly cut and the scent of the straw mats mingle. Outside bamboos swish in the surf of the moonlight.

As in the hokku and wakiku, two suggestive images are juxtaposed, here separated by the cesura after *-taru*. If Yasui had written *tsuki no kage*, it would have been metrically correct but would have failed to evoke the sense of relationship implied by *ni*. The light here becomes a mysterious membrane in which both people and moon exist but do not exist apart. This is also as it should be, grammatically, since the *daisan* should end either with the inconclusive verbal form *-te*, or with a particle such as *ni*. Unlike the wakiku, which should give some sense of completion and end with a noun, the *daisan* should end sufficiently vaguely to allow many interpretations and stimulate a wide range of associations by the following poets. Since no more than two verses, according to Bashō, should share the same explicit link, the *daisan* must sow the seeds for new links rather than running the image of the hokku into the ground.

Since the autumn moon appears, the third verse becomes the “moon seat,” or *tsuki no za*. I say “becomes” because the moon should, ideally, appear in the fifth verse. However, there is some justification for putting the moon here since the hokku is autumnal and autumn should not continue for more than three verses. In any case, Bashō was never hesitant to juggle the moon seat around, subordinating rules to elegance (*fūga*) and feeling. In fact, Kanda Hideo has come up with some interesting statistics : In the 135 *kasen* composed by Bashō and his followers, the first appearance of the moon occurs in the following numbers : 29 in the ninth verse, 28 in the eighth verse, 26 in the eleventh verse, 24 in the seventh verse, 9 in the sixth verse, 9 in the tenth verse, 5 in the fifth verse, 4 in the twelfth verse, and only one in the third verse!²³ Thus Yasui’s verse is unique in its placement. He could have waited for autumn to come again, but perhaps he didn’t want to force the rhythm and break the mood of the meeting.

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| 4. narabete ureshi | Happy at lining up |
| tō no sakazuki | ten wine cups |

The fourth verse is by Kyorai. From a lonely house with one or two people enjoying the moonlight, Kyorai’s verse moves to a banquet at which ten people are present to honor some auspicious occasion. Kyorai expands the image of wealth and san-

guine acceptance of the world. Although the setting seems very dignified, there is a hint of dizziness and release. Perhaps it is a house-warming party or perhaps a more informal gathering. The ten people sit on the new, fresh-smelling floor mats and enjoy the white tint of the moonlight on them. The hearts of the people and the moon are equally full. And the cups! As they are filled with wine they glisten and sparkle (if they are coated with silver they are glowing). The vaguely-felt aqueous quality of the moonlight in the previous verse is now concretely realized. Continuing the *nioi*, or scent of fulfillment, it is natural that the laying down of the new straw matting should lead to the laying out of the wine cups: a sense of work well done pervades both these gentle actions. The feeling of close intimacy continues. The warmth of the *daisan* literally pours over into the fourth verse, and the freshness and hope in the fourth verse are of the same high *kurai*, or rank, as they were in the third.

There is no specific seasonal reference here, so the verse is regarded to be *zō*, or “miscellaneous.” Perhaps “human-centered” would be a better translation.

To add to the sense of harmony and fulfillment, this verse is the first to be made up of a single statement. There is no electric juxtaposition of images or diction. Here action is accomplishment. This is fitting, since it is the first of the *hiraku*, or level verses. These should be light and loose and unobstructed on to the end of the *kasen*.

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| 5. chiyo fukete | Celebrating all |
| mono o samazama | the things that will live |
| nenobi shite | a thousand years |

The fifth verse is by Bashō. He imagines the *ne no hi*, which is the springtime celebration of the first Day of the Rat in the first lunar month. The word also means pulling or lengthening roots, and people often went to the fields and pulled up small pines and prayed for good fortune. The imperial kitchen traditionally prepared twelve green vegetables on this day, including lettuce, fern shoots, hollyhock, and mugwort. It was, of course, an auspicious day, and the gathered young pines suggest longevity, euphemistically referred to as a thousand years, with their evergreen color. Bashō is probably remembering a poem by Saigyō (*Sankashū* 1171):

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| chiyo fubeki | Though we gather |
| mono o sanagara | things that live |
| atsumu to mo | a thousand years |
| kimi ga yowai o | can we ever know |
| shiran mono ka wa | the length of your life? |

“Your,” of course, refers to the emperor and Saigyō asks a rhetorical question because the supposedly divine ruler will live for at least forever even without the influence of the evergreen offerings.

Bashō thus continues the numerical imagery from the fourth verse, but he expands from ten to a thousand, perhaps implying that the happiness in the previous verse is unbounded. And he implies that the celebration in the previous verse was for an old person of the auspicious age of seventy-seven or eighty-eight. Bashō also

brings the scene out from an enclosed banquet room into the natural expanse of an outdoor celebration. The wine cups are here taken to be for the purpose of celebrating the festival day. And, as the previous verse celebrated a clean new house, Bashō's verse celebrates a clean, lambent new year. Spring has now succeeded fall in the first three verses, but if you take *o* as meaning "although," the verse takes on overtones of pity and loss, and could be translated as:

Although they should have lasted
a thousand years, we plucked them all
for the celebration

It is hard to know precisely what Bashō is aiming for, but it is surely a mixture in some degree of joy and pathos.

With its reference to the historical *ne no hi*, or "root day" festival (initiated, it is said, by the imperial court) and to the poem of Saigyō, Bashō's verse partakes of *omokage*, the "remembrance of things past." In its jump from the act of lining up wine cups to the lining up of evergreen offerings, is there not a fragrance of vigorous *utsuri*? And, since the verse maintains the same level of propitious expectation as well as noble imagery, *kurai*, or rank is also at work. Bashō may, however, be referring to the gathering of pines by ordinary people since the custom had become very popular by his time.

The verse ends with the inconclusive *-te*, which was ordinarily reserved for the *daisan*, but which Bashō is using again (after waiting for another verse to come in between) to express the grandeur of a scene in which his feelings swell rather than coming to a swift halt.

6. *uguisu no ne ni* Large light snow falls
tabira yuki furu through the songs of warblers

The sixth verse is by Bonchō. The snow is large and wet, yet it is tossed lightly out of the sky in flakes that almost turn into flat drops. It is so moist it is turning into liquid haze. Snow is often a winter image, but here an early spring snow falls after the appearance of the warblers. The temperature is rising but it is still just below freezing. Yet warmth, like the birds' notes, is clearly here. This is the second straight spring verse, and it also continues the freshness of the root festival. Bonchō seems to be making another allusion to the delicacy and wonder, as well as to the explicit imagery, of Saigyō's (*Sankashū* 15)

nenobi suru Mist rises up
hito ni kasumi wa before those who celebrate
sakidachite the Day of Roots
komatsu ga hara o and trails across
tanabikitekeri a field of tender pines

In the spring mist the little pines, too, seem to be trailing with the mist, hovering above the ground along with the haze. Although Saigyō put much emphasis on *sabi*, or loneliness, *hito* is here probably plural, and one can easily imagine a scene somewhat like the one that ends Truffaut's version of *Fahrenheit 451*, in which a small

group of literati walk up and down in the mist and wet snow of early spring reciting their favorite books, seemingly completely content and never even running into each other. Saigyō's poem also conveys a depth of harmony between people and people and people and nature that is, to say the least, difficult even in a small, closed elite group of courtiers. Each of the nouns in the poem is followed by a verb, so the scene is active, but the movement is muffled and muted by the mist so that no one seems to be going anywhere and nature appears to shift back and forth between being and becoming. The place is not specific, and the whole has the palpability of a dream.

A second poem of Saigyō's (*Sankashū* 16) follows directly after the previous one, and they are closely linked :

nenobi shi ni	Going to the fields
kasumi tanabiku	of trailing mist to celebrate
nobe ni idete	the Day of Roots,
hatsuuguisu no	I just heard the song
koe o kikitsuru	of the first warbler

The year's first warbler is always poignant, for it marks a turning point. The speaker in the poem implies that he is also picking young pines as a ritual offering, that he is involved in the action. The mixture of aural and visual sensuousness in the poem resembles that in Bonchō's verse. In fact, in both of Saigyō's poems there is a feeling of the smallness of the young pines and the largeness of mystery and amazement. The festivities are not even explicitly mentioned in Bonchō's verse, and, like Saigyō, Bonchō has enlarged the meaning of the evergreen offerings: the various things (*mono o samazama*) of Bashō's previous verse become the delicate intermingling of warbler notes and large wet snowflakes—both tumble out of the sky together and constitute the real materials of the celebration. But materials that quickly pass. If Bonchō is indeed referring to the first warbler of the year, the sound is flashing and then gone. Which melts more quickly, the flakes on the ground or the warbler's voice on the air? It is a fitting response to the tentative ending of Bashō's verse.

Although the scene is classically elegant in its reverberations, Bonchō uses the colloquial word *tabira*, broad and floppy, which is not found in waka and which has many folk etymologies. It probably refers to snow which lies as thinly as a bed curtain or the unpadded cloak worn under armor or in the summer heat. Or the flakes may be as wide as a sword blade. This last meaning would give the verse *hibiki*, or resonance, as though the snowflakes were literally cutting through the thick but unseen song of the warbler. In any case, the diction is more colloquial than that of Bashō's verse, so the *kurai*, or rank, is broken. The festivities are the same, linked by *omokage*, the remembrance of Saigyō, as is the feeling of limitless wonder. Verses five and six both expand outwards.

7. noridashite	I ride
kaina ni amaru	but can't hang on —
haru no koma	a spring colt

The seventh verse is by Kyorai. He writes of a spring horse, which is both a horse in spring and a young colt being taken out for its first riding season. The

colt's raw, untamed power is too much for the rider, who fights but finally gives up. There is a fragrance of slight madness in the way this untamed horse runs in the opposite direction from that in which it is supposed to, the kind of limited madness admired and perfected literarily by Bashō and his followers. There is *utsuri* in the movement of the snow that drifts against this sudden surge of animal energy, and there is *hibiki* which resonates from the warbler and makes you hear the colt's hooves pounding against the wet ground. Kyorai thus links his verse intimately to that by Bonchō before it. Just as the warbler sings the first song of spring, so this colt out for its first ride shows a resistance to his master so spirited it resembles a song. In the sixth verse the tension between the two different energies, snow and sound, is mute; but in the seventh verse man and animal come into open conflict. The scene is on a plain far away from the niceties of the capital, and raw nature makes its debut. There is still snow on the ground, and perhaps the flakes of previous verse now slant down in furious profusion. Even the air is young and fresh and bucking.

The burst of strength contributes to the rhythm of the whole *kasen* because Kyorai's verse is the first on the back of the first sheet, the beginning of the *hatsura*. Modifying the rules of classical *renga* in a miniature way, the first six verses of a *kasen* should create a harmonious mood by refraining from dealing with complex and turbulent subjects such as love, religion, famous places, pathetic recollections, and so on. Ōta Mizuho has described the movement from the first six verses into the back twelve verses as being like when a person first waits nervously and stiffly at the door and is then let inside where he or she can stretch out and relax (this metaphor obviously has implications for the study of feudalistic Japanese social relations as a whole).²⁴ Still another metaphor has been proposed by Terada Torahiko: "Renku is closer to music than to literature."²⁵ He feels that the *jo-ha-kyū* schema, first applied to *renga* by Nijō Yoshimoto, is not as helpful as an analogy taken from Western music: the sonata form. "The musical movement of the first six verses," he says, "is usually spontaneously graceful and unified in a mood of composure and dignity." This description does have certain resemblances to what goes on in the quiet opening mood and auspicious scenes in the first six verses of the "Cricket Chapter." Terada goes on: "Here (i. e. in the first six verses) the vigorous activities of deities, Buddhas, love, and evanescence are not permitted. The tempo feels close to an *andante* (slow and gentle). The musical movement of the next twelve verses becomes quite vibrant and passionate, full of loving, adoring children, falling sick, or becoming a monk. Still, the tempo seems somewhat stately and steady, and feels like an *adagio* (leisurely and quiet but quicker than the *andante*). However, the third movement of the next twelve verses becomes rather light-hearted, as when someone forgets his or her manners and stretches his or her feet out on the cushion. Or someone who becomes lax about things, quarrels with the neighbors, boasts of owning a Sesshū, or teases a pock-marked boy. In general it feels close to a *scherzo* (quick, bright, and light-hearted). The tempo is a fast *allegro* (nimble, quick) which sometimes becomes a *presto* (the fastest passage). But when we come to the fourth movement, we return once more to the quiet of the opening. Then blossoms (*hana*) are mentioned and the final verse finishes off the whole collection with a feeling like that of a twilight in spring. The rhythm is of course *largo* (gentle and expansive) or *lento* (slow)."²⁶

This is interesting as far as it goes, but it leads to a disastrous conclusion: "Renku,

like music, depends for its existence on rhythm, melody, and harmony. Corresponding to the separate sounds of music, there are natural and emotional images, and the feelings linked with them which linger on. Haikai-renku is a rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic movement in which the elements follow and then overlap each other. Even though these elements, corresponding to sounds, possess separate 'meanings,' they do not make up the plot of a story within the collection of verses as a whole. Even if there happens to be a plot, it is the plot of a purely musical movement which cannot be expressed in words. Thus renku is closer to music than to literature. So it is no wonder that literary people in our country today have not acknowledged the existence of haikai-renku."²⁷ Although it is true that much of the beauty and movement of haikai is ineffable, this certainly does not mean that it is closer to music. In fact, much of the sharp shock of haikai comes from its artful use of vivid colloquial expressions which very definitely have meanings which root them in the realm of human relationships, not formal harmony. The rules and structures of haikai exist in order to force the poets to reach deep, reverberating images and even a master-image for each collection or sequence as a whole. The changes in rhythm are more related to creating a group atmosphere in which several poets can continue over several hours to work together with each other and create productively than they are to the requirements of Western music. It is precisely because haikai can say what ordinary conversation cannot that it is an important form of human communication. If Torada's metaphor applies to haikai at all, then it applies mainly to second-rate poets who write by the book and not with their hearts. Classical renga perhaps comes closer to the pure, immaculate formality of music, but even here there is poignant diction which points back to human events several hundred years earlier. Poetry is rhythmic, but it is more than rhythm. In a good poem or sequence of poems rhythm and meaning are miraculously married. This is a stubborn mystery and it cannot be adequately explained with concepts taken from other media and other cultures. Kyorai's verse is about not only a bucking horse but also a bolting rhythm.

8. maya ga takane ni Clouds cling
 kumo no kakareru to Mount Maya's peak

The eighth verse is Yasui's. The action continues, moving to a festival being held for the safety of horses. Mount Maya, named for the mother of the Buddha, rises to the north of Kōbe, and on its peak stands a temple housing an image of Kannon, patron bodhisattva of horses. On the first Day of the Horse in the second lunar month, farmers and warriors living nearby would bring their horses to the temple to be blessed. Although the verse does not explicitly refer to spring, the momentum of spring lingers on and the energy of the horses is still felt. The peak is not, physically speaking, especially high, rising to about 2,292 feet; but its spirituality lends it loftiness.

There are two earlier poems which Yasui seems to be remembering. The first is by Minamoto no Yorimasa and appears in the second scroll of the *Shinzokukokinshū* (130):

- ōmiji ya The road to Ōmi!
 mano no hamabe ni I stop my horse

koma tomete	by the beach of Mano
hira no takane no	and watch the blossoms
hana o miru kana	on the peak of Mount Hira

The delicate (and common) conceit is the comparison of the clouds on the peak to cherry blossoms. The speaker is amazed by the beauty of the scene. Another verse that comes even more directly into Yasui's verse is by, again, Saigyō (*Shinkokinshū* 585):

akishino ya	Ah, Akishino!
toyama no sato ya	Is the foothill village
shigururan	in cold rain?
ikoma no take ni	Clouds hang
kumo no kakareru	over Ikoma's peak

Akishino is an area near Nara, and Ikoma means, literally, Mount of Vivacious Horses, and thus provides an *omokage*, or remembrance, link for Kyorai's and Yasui's verses. Saigyō's poem does, however, refer to winter, while Yasui sings of early spring, a difference that perhaps symbolizes the warmer outlook toward the world of the Bashō school of haikai as a whole. Also, the energy in Saigyō's poem is diffuse and suggestive, whereas Kyorai and Yasui create a sharp, clear image.

There is a natural, if leaping, *utsuri*, or transition, between Kyorai's and Yasui's verses. In fact, Tohō records that Bashō pointed to these two verses as a good example of how the energy of the group flew from the spring colt to the mountain peak and then even higher into the clouds.²⁸ The young colt of the warrior is transformed into a horse being led, along with many others, to be blessed on sacred Mount Maya. The time is a month later—in the second lunar month—but the imagery forms a continuous flow of energy. The vision of the untamed colt leads naturally, through *hibiki*, to the soaring and independent spirit of the mountain, with the focus switching from close to distant, as if the rider himself were looking up from his horse suddenly to see the stunning peak. The snow flurry is beginning to climax and then break up, leaving clouds only on the mountain top, with the horses now and then being flecked with sunlight. The strong sound of the place name and the reference to Buddhism set up a rougher flow of sound than may be displayed in the first six verses, and they echo the clashing force of the peak and the clouds. The implied pounding of many hooves also echoes even into the upper air. Is it mere coincidence that the last syllable of the seventh verse and the first syllable of the eighth verse are both *ma*? The sound breaks in half on the peak.

9. yūmeshi ni	Eating sand lance
kamasugo kueba	in the evening—
kaze kaoru	a scented breeze

The ninth verse is by Bonchō. The meal is a white, scaleless fish that is one and a half inches long and has a faint blue band along its back. Fisherpeople on the shores of northeastern Honshū and the Inland Sea would boil sand lances until their oil oozed out and could be used for lamp oil. Then they would send the fishes in straw bags called *kamasu* to farmers to be used as fertilizer. Very poor farmers

had to eat these dried fish, baked, for food. *Kamasugo* is the colloquial word in the Kyōto-Ōsaka area for *ikanago*, and this gives a local flavor to this verse by Bonchō, a resident of Kyōto. And there is a geographical connection between Mount Maya and the nearby Inland Sea, where the fish in this verse was caught. There is a further *omokage* remembrance of Saigyō's *toyama no sato*. But the colloquial diction does not stop here. *Yūmeshi* is a rather rough and unsophisticated word and is appropriate to the ordinary people, probably farmers, portrayed here. *Kueba* is likewise an unaristocratic word. Bonchō thus uses three colloquial words, which is somewhat daring even for haikai, and they bring the image downstream from the mountain peak to a household of plain people.

The most beautiful part of the verse is the linking of the hazy peak in the distance with the thick, dim air of twilight. Although these farmers are poor, they still enjoy the shifting of day into night. *Kamasugo* are a lightweight side dish and seem to be an especially concentrated form of atmosphere here. It is almost as if the farmers were eating the dense twilight air. In the last line the sense of smell is also introduced, but the wind is tactile as well as olfactory: it brushes against the mountain in the distance, picks up the still visible greenness by fondling, as it were, the new leaves of the slope trees (for the wind here surely belongs to summer), and finally swirling into the mouth of a farmer about to eat a piece of fish. And then, comically, a fish-scented breeze comes from the person's mouth as he or she chews. At the same time the wind carries the fragrance of the mountain trees and mixes with the salty smell of the fish. There is a scent of *hosomi*, or slender penetration, here, with the slender fish evoking a voluptuous wind. A similar sense of someone tasting the heart of the world can also be felt in this poem by Robert Penn Warren:

Listen! Stand very still and,
Far off, where shadow
Is undappled, you may hear

The tushed boar grumble in the ivy-slick.

Afterward, there is silence until
The jay, sudden as conscience, calls.

The call, in the infinite sunlight, is like
The thrill of the taste of — on the tongue — brass.²⁹

10. *hiru no kuchido o* How good it feels
 kakite kimiyoki to scratch the leech bite!

The superb tenth verse is by Bashō. The humble setting continues. The person eats the open-mouthed fish with his or her mouth, and now a relative of the fish has bitten the farmer and left its mouth-mark. Leeches live in ditches and wet fields, so the farmer has probably been bitten by the blood-sucker while working in the fields, planting rice or pulling weeds. Human bites nature; and now nature bites human. Perhaps the leech enjoyed the farmer's blood as much as the farmer enjoyed the fish. One immediately imagines the bite as being on the farmer's hand, perhaps because of another verse by Bashō:

te no hira ni	A louse crawls
shirami hawasuru	across my palm—
hana no kage	blossom shadow

There is incredible immediacy here : light and fragrance and skin all move together. The tenth verse also mixes the tactile qualities of mouth and hand. The fingertip scratches where the mouth has sucked. One implication is that when the farmer smells the fragrant breeze his or her senses come alive and he or she is reminded by a sharp itch, an itch which is not merely painful, of the satisfaction of a day's work. When he or she scratches the pink mark, there is another vivid sensation: utter contentedness. The breeze can swathe the surface of the skin, but the leech has penetrated underneath the surface to the carnival nerves and bacchanalian synapses themselves. One suspects that there is also some relation between the little lump on the person's skin and the fingers scratching it, and the larger lump of Mount Maya and the cloud bank against it.

Hanging over all is a feeling of cool release. Leeches are summer creatures, and the farmer's work has been done in sweltering heat. Now the farmer relaxes, stretches out his or her feet, and enjoys the cool stirrings of the breeze. Perhaps the farmer holds both chopsticks in one hand and scratches. The mountain peak is also rather cool in the distance. The crops must be growing well, too, and there is a sense of thick verdure ; as thick, perhaps, as mountain clouds heavy with moisture. *Nioi*, *hibiki*, *utsuri*, and *kurai* all transcend themselves here and seem almost to merge.

An interesting grammatical point is that the last three verses have all ended with attributive forms. There is a sense in which *kakerareru* modifies *yūmeshi*, and *kaoru* modifies *hiru*. The counterpoint is subtle and links the three verses vigorously. The vowel rhythms of ninth and tenth verses are also remarkably similar : the ninth verse reverberates with "a"s and "u"s, while the tenth verse flows with "i"s and "o"s. The predominance of higher, frontal vowels in Bashō's verse gives it warm intensity not found in Bonchō's verse, with its deeper vowels. If Bashō's verse is primarily yellow, then Bonchō's is blue-green. Together, the two verses create a dialectic of heat and cool pleasure.

11. monoomoi	Today I can forget
kyō wa wasurete	love's tangled thoughts,
yasumu hi ni	this day of rest

The first love poem is by Yasui. *Monoomoi* is a classical word and refers primarily to longing and thoughts of frustrated love. Who would have thought that lowly leeches could have inspired the pinings of love! The sufferer in a love affair came more and more to be identified with the woman in classical Japanese poetry, so the speaker in Yasui's verse is probably female. But this is the most abstract verse in the sequence so far, and the exact image is hard to determine. Perhaps a servant girl has been given a rare day off from her grinding work schedule to visit her parents' home, where she doesn't have to worry either about her job or her love(s) in her employer's house. Or again, this could be a country girl who takes a rest from her work in the fields and the swirling emotions of the village and walks down to the river, where she is sucked by a leech, which gives an edge of excitement to her thoughts of

her lover(s) back in the village. Perhaps she is trying to decide which lover she likes best, and the leech reminds her of one of their kisses. Then again, this may be a professional lover who takes the day off and puts leeches on her shoulders to suck the stagnant blood out and soften the muscles. There is something definitely erotic about leeches in Japan: in Kawabata's *Snow Country* the heroine Komako's lips are twice compared to a leech. In fact, there is even a folk song to the effect that the abode of a leech is the hip of a young bride. Perhaps there is something moist and soft about a leech's and a woman's skin. At any rate, the love expressed in Yasui's verse is surface and sensual and gives way to present gratification in a manner unsuited to tanka.

Yasui's verse is the fourth straight to end in an attributive form. The subject comes in the last line, and is followed by the connecting particle *ni*. The verb is unperfected and lingers blissfully on. The rhythm resembles that of the previous two verses. The unexpected movement from leeches to love has the transitional quality of *utsuri*, and has the technical name of *mukaizuke*, or a facing link, in which two different people (or animals) are brought together in a unique way.

Incidentally, why is introspective and imageless poetry associated with the feminine point of view in Japanese — and often European — literature? This is an important problem. A superficial answer would hold that women are more emotional and less active and thus more detached from the scenery and power relations of the outer world through which men so widely stride.

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| 12. mukae sewashiki | A letter from my lord |
| tone yori no fumi | with an urgent request |

The twelfth verse is by Kyorai, who continues the season of love. This verse is so closely related to the previous one that "day of rest" easily fastens itself onto the present fourteen syllables, the whole almost making up a classical tanka. Thus Kyorai's verse embodies the mental logical "heart-link" or *kokorozuke* which Bashō so criticized in the practitioners of the Danrin school.

Kyorai perhaps takes the woman to be one of low economic means who has been made the mistress of a rich, powerful lord or merchant. The woman is plagued by her economic situation and by jealousy of her patron's wife, even though he has been given a house where they can make their meetings in secret. *Monoomoi* would then refer to the tension of feminine rivalry as well as to the loneliness of love. Or then again, Kyorai could be imagining a prostitute grieving over the fact that her lover is too poor to rescue her from the urgent proposals of a rich and lustful customer. She has no choice, but at least she receives the courtesy of a letter proposing a patron-mistress relationship from the rich man. Though Kyorai's verse explores horizons of love not dealt with in waka, there is a classical resonance of *omokage* in the probable reference to the "Kiritsubo" episode in *The Tale of Genji*. In that story, the emperor's chief mistress becomes ill from the jealous atmosphere at court and is taken home to recover, during which time her lord sends her many anxious letters — none of which, however, keep her from dying. Kyorai may also be remembering the No play *Yuya*, in which the lord Taira no Munemori urgently asks his lover Yuya to come visit him in the capital. The distance between these classical scenarios and the economic worries of the

prostitute in Kyorai's verse gives the verse a woman's-eye realism.

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| 13. Kintsuba to | People call me |
| hito ni yobaruru | Gold Swordguard — |
| mi ni yasusa | what a fine life |

Bashō cannot wait to jump in with this, the thirteenth verse. Again it is he who makes a totally unexpected link that leads off in a major new direction. The speaker, first of all, changes from a woman to a man. Exactly what kind of man is not totally clear, but he is surely a rich merchant or a samurai. In the latter half of the seventeenth century the Tokugawa regime forbade swords to be worn by any but samurai, and since the swordguard is gold he would have to be a rich one. However, in the brothel quarters of the Kyōto-Ōsaka area, the term “golden swordguard” had come to take on the meaning of an ostentatiously rich merchant, one who patronized the arts, such as tea and prostitution, and whose tastes were gaudy. The name also implies, of course, that the man has power, wealth, and status. It is nevertheless possible that in Bashō's verse Gold Swordguard is the name of a man who does not have much money but who has wit and charm and who is somewhat humorously honored for something else than real gold.

There is a very strong intimacy implied in the use of a nickname, especially in Japan. There are examples as far back as written records go. In the *Kojiki*, for example, the rambunctious male god from Izumo is called “Divine Ruler of the Great Country,” (*ōkuninushi no mikoto*) and the god of the dwelling place of magic snakes, Mount Miwa, is called “Divine Ruler of Great Things,” (*ōmononushi no mikoto*). Characters are often identified with their occupation, as in the opening lines of the *Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*: “It is a now the past. There is a man called Old Bamboo Cutter” Or nicknames were associated with personal characteristics or looks. Bashō himself decided to change his pen name to Bashō (Banana Plant) from Tōsei (Blue Peach) after the banana plant which he had been given as a gift grew up and graced his garden, causing people to call his residence the Banana Plant Hut. In this way Bashō expressed his easy intimacy with the people around him. Pronouncing the name, especially the nickname, is a communal act, different from the act of camouflage practiced by novelist Mary Evans when she wrote under the male name of George Eliot.

That Gold Swordguard was a fairly common nickname can be seen from the following verse:

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| onmonogatari | The young man realizes |
| kakugo no maegami | his lord's request |

This refers, of course, to the lord's initiation of a young man, his bangs still long, into the rites of homosexuality. To this Saikaku added :

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| kintsuba ni | The gorgeous boss |
| shintei tōsu | has had his fill — |
| kure no tsuki | waning moon |

The lord has satisfied his desire to the bottom of his heart and the moon now hangs over his cooled passion. This image is distinctly more erotic than the scent of love

we are presented with in Bashō's verse, but the idea of a colorful "big man" is the same.

The man in Bashō's verse feels the ease of living with the people who respect him and call him by a high-class nickname. This is quite a shift from the poor woman in the previous verse, but there is *hibiki* in the fact that both people are sharply called out to, and *utsuri* in the daring transition from a two-verse sequence on the pains of love to the satisfied resolution by the man here. *Mi no yasusa*, the enjoyment of life, echoes Bashō's earlier *kimiyoki*, the good feeling of the leech bite, and perhaps he throws his verse in here in order to keep the *kasen* from taking a dark turn. Taken in the context of the previous love verses, the present verse implies that the man could also be called Gold Swordguard by his lord. But now, instead of going reluctantly to a forced meeting, he goes joyfully, knowing that he receives his lord's respect. Perhaps Gold Swordguard could also be translated as right-hand man. I have put the verse in the first person because I feel that Bashō is empathizing with his subject, perhaps even using this respected man as a persona rather than merely making a description from a distance. Bashō did praise objective observation of nature, but the martial (if a bit gaudy) emotion seems close to an expression of Bashō's own self-confidence. Bashō expresses himself strongly precisely at this moment in order to inject energy into the group and stimulate confident verse-making by the other poets.

14. atsuburozuki no Again the moon
 yoiyoi no tsuki above the hot bath

The fourteenth verse is by Bonchō. The flamboyant man in the previous verse now visits his favorite bathhouse, perhaps in the brothel quarters, night after night. Like the character in a humorous story of the period who becomes possessed by a fox and is unable to stay away from the bathhouse, this man is literally crazy about hot baths. The word *furo* did not come into use until the Kamakura period.³⁰ In earlier periods people either took cold baths or went to natural warm springs. *Furo* seems to be related to *muro*, "room," and originally implied a bathhouse rather than the modern meaning of individual bathtubs. *Furo* referred to the water heater, which was blown on in order to fan the flames. The bath that the man in this verse goes to consists of rooms full of steam and hot water. After taking his bath, he undoubtedly loves to go up to the second floor to gaze at the moon; or, if the walls are scanty enough, he may be able to watch the moon from the bath itself. To get to the bathhouse he walked down a cool and, perhaps, willow-lined canal of the brothel district. From the second floor he can see others now strolling down the same streets. Or perhaps an old rich man is simply enjoying his retirement by bathing in his mansion and then admiring the moon from his private garden. Anyway, the moon over the exciting water gives the verse a touch of the crazy elegance (*fūkyō*) that Bashō valued so highly.

The moon here is even moister than it is in the third verse. The air of the bathhouse is almost pure liquid, precluding clear visibility: humidity can only be felt with the skin. The moon also seems to emit a vapor which touches the man's eyes. The enclosure of the bathhouse expands to become the enclosure of the humid heav-

ens, in which the moon is a kind of magic familiar. There also may be a link along the lines of that described in a popular Edo *kyōka* song :

kintsuba ni	How good, shine! shine!
nitaru koyoi no	how completely good —
tsuki no kage	the brightness of the moon
sasesase yogozansho	that seems tonight
tento yogozansho	to be a gold swordguard

There is a pun here on *sasesase*, which means not only to put the sword in its sheath but also to pour the wine at hand. The moon is linked with liquid, of course, in English literature as well. Compare John Donne's "A Valediction : Of Weeping" :

O more than moon,
 Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere,
 Weep me not dead, in thine arms, but forbear
 To teach the sea what it may do too soon.

The moon in Bonchō's verse is as immediate as a sting of hot water and almost as humorous.

It is worth noting that this is the third straight verse to end with a *no*-plus-noun construction. Bashō decided to make Kyorai's ending more effective by ending his verse with the same rhythm ; now Bonchō continues this rhythmic harmony within the group, but keeps his image jumping far enough ahead to avoid the slight stagnation that occurs between verse eleven and verse twelve. In strict *kasen* composition the moon is supposed to appear in the thirteenth verse (the seventh verse on the back side of the first sheet), but Bashō and his followers do not, again, follow the rules to the letter, and here the autumn moon shines into the fourteenth verse.

There is gorgeous and colorful *nioi*, or scent, in both Bashō's and Bonchō's verses. The absolute contentment is expanded from the man to the wide reaches of the sky. The moon is also seemingly so satisfied with its position that it returns to shine night after night.

This verse is a good example of the compression of two separate images into a single poem. The effect gives as sharp a pleasure as any bath. This is not just any autumn moon. It is unique and exhilarating and therefore, in the highest sense, realistic. This is what Checkhov meant when he said :

In my opinion descriptions of nature should be very brief and have an incidental character. Commonplaces like : " The setting sun, bathing in the waves of the darkening sea, flooded with purple and gold," etc... " The swallows, flying over the surface of the water, chirped merrily "—such commonplaces should be finished with. In descriptions of Nature one has to snatch at small details, grouping them in such a manner that after reading them one can obtain the picture on closing one's eyes.

For instance, you will get a moonlight night if you write that in the dam of the mill a fragment of broken bottle flashed like a small, bright star, and there rolled by, like a ball, the black shadow of a dog, or a wolf — and so on. Nature appears animated if you do not disdain to use comparisons of its phenomena with

those of human actions, etc.

The same, too, in the sphere of psychology.³¹

Bonchō achieves just such a small aural detail with the echo between *-tsuba* and *-tsubu-* in *atsuburo*.

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|-----------------|--------------------|
| 15. chōnai no | Autumn passes |
| aki mo fukeyuku | through the town — |
| akiyashiki | a deserted mansion |

The fifteenth verse is by Kyorai. The previous verse now refers to a group of friends who go together to a bathhouse and then enjoy the moon, and Kyorai's verse implies that the group of men is looking at a deserted and mysterious mansion in the moonlight on their way home. A single man or woman may, of course, be implied, but a group of men would match the mood of the group of men making this *kasen*. It is beautiful and at the same time sad for the men to see the once-grand house now empty and overgrown with vines. The shadows cover some of the destruction, but the men are nevertheless deeply struck by time's passage.

Since the speciality of Bashō and his followers is the welding together of two or more seemingly disparate objects, an encompassing image is needed to evoke the full meaning of autumn. Hence the deserted mansion: the structure still stands, with all its memories of moon-viewing banquets and pleasant baths, but the people and their hearts are gone; now only passers-by are left to wonder and vaguely remember. Verses nine through thirteen have dealt mainly with human emotions, and even the moon is modified by human intentions. Kyorai's verse is the first to present an almost non-human description of what humans once were but are no longer. The pathos is humble, since the mansion is modified by the colloquial "through the town." The sad *nioi* of the wildly growing grasses in the yard scents even the moonlight. Even sadder is the fact that the autumn moon in the previous verse is suddenly realized to be the moon of late autumn; time has passed unnoticed and with mysterious quickness, and "deserted" (*aki*) almost comes to take on the meaning of autumn (*aki*) itself. If the remains were those of the once-flourishing bathhouse, the pathos would be even sharper. Even in the floating world time eventually passes, and those who stand in wonder staring at the remains are finally reminded that autumn has come to the rest of the town — and to themselves — as well, even if in less obvious form and with more subtle destruction.

This is the third straight verse to end with a colloquial noun. It is also the fourth straight verse to end with a noun, though the noun does not follow the possessive *no*. The quick rhythmic repetition thus continues through the whole group; and each poet carries along and is carried along by the spirit that resides in all of them but in no one of them alone.

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|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 16. nani o miru ni mo | Wherever I look |
| tsuyu bakari nari | only dew |

The sixteenth verse is by Yasui. The outward observation of nature continues, but this time there is no specific object. If one tries to imagine a scene, perhaps the

first thing that comes to mind is the wasted garden of the deserted mansion that is completely covered with drops of dew. But in Japanese poetry dew has always been a symbol for, or better, has always evoked feelings of, evanescence. But Yasui's is not a classical renga verse where evanescence is a somber subject. The verse is not only an abstract statement such as "Everything is dew" or "Nothing lasts," but it is also a more humble and sensually empirical observation: "Wherever my eyes look, on all the grasses and vines, on everything, lies dew." And dew is also, of course, a traditional metaphor for tears: the speaker's wet eyes bestow tears onto nature itself.

It is not clear whether the dew is that of evening or that of morning. Taken in relation to the previous two verses, the dew is left by evening, but taken by itself the dew in the present verse could just as easily be that of morning. If the latter, it would last only as long as the moon does after sunrise, and it would be as delicate as it is sad and lonely, a good example of *karumi*, or lightness, being mixed with lonely *sabi*. But there is an even deeper ambiguity here. Dew can belong to either spring or autumn, and it serves a double duty; for the next verse is the traditional "blossom seat," and Yasui must bridge the gap between autumn and the dawn. Two different seasons should not appear in adjacent verses, and in order to maintain the proper distance, Yasui uses the technique of inserting a relatively abstract verse which moves in two directions at once.

Yasui breaks into a new rhythm by ending with a verb. Rather than being striking and eclectic, Yasui's verse is as passive and freely-flowing as water.

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|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 17. hana to chiru | This body which falls like petals |
| mi wa sainen ga | wears a cloak of light |
| koromo kite | from the Western Paradise |

The seventeenth verse is Bashō's. No single interpretation of this verse is possible, but variety will perhaps whet the imagination.

It seems that there is a manuscript signed by the monk Sainen on the 21st of the 6th month of 1142, which contains forty-seven poems praising the western Pure Land paradise of Amida Buddha.³² Sainen, who may have been a disciple of Hōnen, four times mentions dew as an image for the decaying body. It is unclear whether these poems were extant in the Genroku period, but they may have been known in a scattered form by way of oral transmission, a common practice in Buddhism. In addition, one of the stories connected with Saigyō speaks of him going to Nishiyama in Saga to become a hermit monk. In Nishiyama he did penance at a temple called Shōjiji, or as it is more popularly known, Blossom Temple. It is here that Saigyō is thought to have written his famous lines, *hana no moto nite / haru shinamu*, "I wish to die in spring under the blossoms." This scene was so popular that it was reworked into a No play.

Now it happens that there is another legend in which the Master of Shōjiji turns out to be Sainen. The veracity of this legend is suspect, but if it is true it means that the cloak Saigyō received to indicate his formal monkhood could have come from the hands of Sainen. According to this explanation, Saigyō took one syllable (*sai-*) of his Buddhist name from his master, Sainen. It is possible that Bashō, who had a

special fondness for Saigyō, looked into the life of the poet and came across this legend. If this interpretation is correct, then *sainen ga koromo* implies, by indirect remembrance or *omokage*, Saigyō himself, not Sainen.

But *sainen* need not necessarily refer to an obscure medieval monk. In fact, haikai usually mentions only very famous people, or saints — such as Komachi or the bodhi-sattva Monju. Anyway, Saigyō is implied in another way that is not so so literal or historical. The wandering poet-monk left several poems which may help link Bashō's verse to Yasui's. The first is Number 118 of the *Sankashū* :

morotomo ni	You flowers,
ware o mo gushite	fall all together
chirine hana	with me —
ukiyo o itou	I am filled with a heart
kokoro aru mi zo	that scorns this melancholy world

The poet feels an affinity with nature while spurning the complexities of the human “bitter world” of painful, changing emotions. Another poem is based on feeling deeply for what is even more fragile than dew (*Sankashū* 765) :

tsuyu no tama (wa)	The beads of dew
kiyureba mata mo	disappear and then
oku mono o	are left again —
tanomi mo naki wa	it is finally my life
waga mi narikeri	that will never return

Dew can be replenished by nature, but people cannot. Blossoms and dew are thus complementary images for the same process of decay. Saigyō also wrote several poems on the significance of worshipping the west. Among them is (*Sankashū* 205) :

nishi ni nomi	Because I know this house
kokoro zo kakaru	draped with sweet-flag
ayamegusa	is fragile as all things,
kono yo bakari no	I send my heart
yado to omoeba	only into the west

The important point is that although the house is covered with fresh, young, vigorous spring flowers, it will eventually come to ruin, as will the poet. Thus Saigyō separates his heart from his immediate surroundings and prepares for the journey into eternity, into the pure western paradise of Amida, the only lasting house. (There is also a pun which makes the sweet-flag also face west in order to protect the house from bad energy coming from that direction.) The very fertility of spring gives rise to the thought of death and loneliness. The Pure Land occurs in another spring poem as well (*Sankashū* 869) :

nishi o matsu	I will hang
kokoro ni fuji o	wisteria on my heart
kakete koso	that waits for the west
sono murasaki no	and see the purple
kumo o omowane	clouds of Amida

The poet uses the purple wisteria as a *memento mori*, since Amida is supposed to appear like a shining purple cloud to the souls who enter his Pure Land. Still another poem (*Sankashū* 871) depicts the early morning hours, as Bashō's verse also does :

yume samuru	Along with the echoes
kane no hibiki ni	of the bell
uchisoete	that wakes me from dreams,
totabi no mina o	I have just chanted ten times
tonaetsuru kana	Amida's gracious name

The bell that wakes Saigyō from his sleep is the same bell that wakes all people, hopefully, from evil passions to reality. He does the prescribed ten recitations of Amida's name and then writes a poem about it. (Compare this with Bashō's

hana no kumo	Clouds of blossoms—
kane wa ueno ka	is the bell in Ueno
asakusa ka	or Asakusa?

although this is an evening poem.) Saigyō wrote several poems based on the image of the moon's pure light sinking into the west, but they are only distantly related to Bashō's verse. I have quoted Saigyō at length to show his great moral and esthetic concern with meditation on the western region, and the integral part it plays in his poems.

Although the influence of Saigyō on Bashō is strong, it is not necessarily overwhelming. *Sainen* could refer to the humble prayers of literally millions of people, for the Pure Land was, and still is, a very important image in Japanese Buddhism. In fact, there still remains in modern Ibaragi Prefecture a Pure Land sect temple called Sainenji. Thus the cloak does not need to be a black monk's robe only. It could be the sunrise glow reflected from the setting moon which bathes a believer in a thin but spiritual light. Or it could be a cloak of thoughts about the glory of the western Pure Land. Or it could even be cloak tinted by the sunset in the west. At any rate, the image of "wearing" is very tactile. (Is it too much to imagine the enveloping human skin itself as the cloak which fades and falls and which is thus by its very physical immediacy an inescapable reminder of death and rebirth in the western paradise?)

The blossoms have symbolic resonance, but, since this is the "flower seat," they are very real blossoms. The speaker's body falls like the blossoms and also with the blossoms in an ecstasy of release. Life and death, dew and blossoms, sight and sound and touch and smell are all wrapped in an almost cosmological scent of *nioi*.

Bashō decides to continue the quick rhythm of forward-moving, continuative verbal endings which Yasui began. And while staying, of course, in the natural world, he also brings the focus back to human emotions. He interprets the previous verse as referring to spring, and he jumps sharply in that direction. But he is still not specific about the time, although the cherry blossoms suggest middle to late spring. The poem is, in the best sense, ambiguous.

18. kiso no suguki ni	Spring comes to an end
haru mo kuretsutsu	in pickled Kiso vegetables!

The beautiful eighteenth verse is by Bonchō. The scene is probably that of a layman or monk who is making a pilgrimage to Mount Ontake in Kiso (modern Nagano Prefecture). Now it happens that Mount Ontake is one of the most sacred mountains in Japan. The chief Shinto priest there told me that the divine lineage of the mountain goes back to Takeminakata-No-Mikoto, the second son of Ō-Kuninushi-No-Mikoto. The son of this Izumo god, like his father, put up quite a resistance to the incursion of the heavenly deities from Ise, but in the end he was defeated and forced to flee north to Mount Ontake in the country of Shinano (Nagano Prefecture). The first shrine was built there in 701, and just over a hundred years later the Shingon Buddhist saint Kōbō Daishi claimed the mountain for his religion, proclaiming the essential Buddha (*honchi*) to be Yakushi and the Shintō manifestation (*suijaku*) to be Zaō. Ever since then Buddhist priests and mountain hermits have been doing meditation and purification rituals (*shōjin kessai*) for a hundred days at the foot of Mount Ontake before climbing to its peak, because the mountain is believed to be the physical body of the Buddha (or god, as the case may be). It is likely that the person portrayed in Bonchō's verse is a real ascetic, since Mount Ontake was not opened up for groups of lay pilgrims until 1782, ninety-two years after Bonchō's verse was composed. If it is only a pilgrim, and especially if it is a woman pilgrim, then she and her friends must be viewing the sacred mountain from far in the distance.

The pickled vegetables are a colloquial word that gives an earthy haikai taste. They are grown in middle to late spring, and they root the verse in time. The vegetables are closely related to Buddhism, since they were widely used as a staple of monks'—and pilgrims'—vegetarian diets, though ordinary people ate them as well. Thus the person in the verse may have been doing meditation on Amida on the sacred mountain so hard that he does not notice the changing of the seasons until he notices a change in the vegetables. Or it is possible that Bonchō imagines—with a stroke of imagination equal to Bashō's—the monk to be literally sucking spring into his mouth, to be tasting the macrocosm of nature on his lips.

Bonchō takes the cloak in the previous verse to be the cloak of a traveling monk, thus extending the remembrance or *omokage* of Saigyō and other wanderers. Even nature is a traveler here. The pathetic power of time passing in *no*—a whole region has been pulled into spring—embodies an inexorable movement in which humans and nature are equally implicated. It is not the rising temperature which tells the monk of the season's turning—Mount Ontake is famous for being cold even in the summer—but something about the fading aftertaste of spicy vegetables eaten in loneliness. Spring itself is also, by implication, startled to see how far it has come as it reaches a sort of self-consciousness on the lonely monk's tray.

On a more literal level, there is a possible remembrance link with Yoshida Kenkō, who went to Ontake and wrote (*Fūgashū* 1845) :

omoitatsu	When you decide
kiso no asaginu	to deepen your faith,
asaku nomi	dye those sleeves
somete yamubeki	whose cloth is still
sode no iro ka wa	white as Kiso linen

The white robe is required for purification. The poet cuts his thoughts off from secular

matters and puts on cloth, but he desires an even deeper faith and power of decision. The poem is thus rhetorically complex, but it lacks the pure and deep shock of recognition that is the center of Bashō's verse.

Bonchō here disobeys the rule of *sarikirai* so stressed by Teitoku, which states that certain words, concepts, and grammatical structures must not be repeated too closely together — some things, such as eyebrows and cuckoos, must occur no more than once a sitting — or the flow of the series will clot and subside into uniformity. Already in the fourteenth verse Kyorai has explicitly mentioned time passing (*fukeyuku*–), and now, only three verses later, Bonchō again mentions ephemerality: *kuretsutsu*, “comes to an end.” Ordinarily this temporal expression should occur only once a sitting, but the spirit of the present meeting overcomes tradition, as Bashō and his followers so often do.

This is the third straight verse to end in a verb. The rapid rhythm of the group continues. It is interesting that the poems which deal primarily with human feelings and affairs tend to end in nouns, while those which move out and pan, as it were, across nature, tend to end in verbs. There seems to be a reverberation between the last word in Bashō's verse, *kite*, and the first word of Bonchō's verse, *kiso*: the whole snowy mountain becomes the ghost of a spectral robe. This is the first time in this *kasen* that a disciple has produced a verse that reaches the same level of excellence and implication as Bashō does. Bonchō must have been carried along by a powerful group of passion on this night. Both Bashō and Bonchō compress into a single verse the earthiness of immediate sensation, “The taste,” as G. M. Hopkins put it, “of alum on the tongue,” and the ineffable beauty of the oneness of nature and humans. These two verses are good examples of what Yeats, speaking neither merely of words nor of feelings, called “style”:

.... a still unexpended energy, after all that the argument or the story needs, a still unbroken pleasure after the immediate end has been accomplished — and builds this up into a most personal and willful fire, transfiguring words and sounds and events.... It is in the arrangement of events as in the words, and in that touch of extravagance, of irony, of surprise, which is set there after the desire of logic has been satisfied and all that is merely necessary established, and that leaves one, not in the circling necessity, but caught up into the freedom of self-delight; it is, as it were, the foam upon the cup, the long pheasant's feather upon the horse's head.... That shaping joy has kept the sorrow pure, as it had kept it were the emotion love or hate, for the nobleness of the arts is in the mingling of contraries, the extremity of sorrow, the extremity of joy, perfection of personality, the perfection of its surrender, overflowing turbulent energy and marmorian stillness; and its red rose opens at the... trysting place of mortal and immortal, time and eternity.³³

It is no wonder that Yeats became deeply interested, through Pound, in Japanese poetry. One can only wonder how he might have written about Bashō's and Bonchō's verses.

* * * * *

Although “the Cricket Chapter” goes on for another eighteen exciting verses and another sheet, front and back, I hope the reader will allow me to leave that transla-

tion and commentary for a later time. Here, in place of a conclusion, of which there can be none, I would simply like to mention a couple of questions with which any reader of linked verse, and especially haikai, must come to grips.

The first question is that of group composition. The spirit of the group, or *za*, pervades the process of creation of haikai to an extent unknown in the West. However, the group spirit, rather than being an archaic remnant of communal consciousness, may actually point to a very fertile area of poetic creation in English and other European languages. Group spirit is only just beginning to emerge in the West, but it has analogs in the "stream of consciousness" technique. Although the group "stream" of renga and haikai is even more complex and compressed than that of, for example, Joyce's *Ulysses* or Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, the dream-like linking of images invokes similar responses. (In one novel, *The Waves*, Virginia Woolf actually does attempt to constantly shift back and forth from the consciousness of one character to that of another!) Yet one can only imagine the tense silence that would probably have resulted if Joyce and Woolf had been asked to sit down together and create a joint prose poem.

A somewhat closer method is that of the Surrealists. Michel Bonjour gives a hint of their spirit :

The inner discourse, rich as its is in unpredictable images, puns, *non sequiturs*, gives us a taste of the primitive freedom which our civilization has repressed. . . . his (the Surrealist's) main weapon is non-intervention, passivity, drifting. Consequently the categories of Time, Space, Causality, and individual Responsibility which make up the framework of our culture, undergo a radical transformation. Surrealism is a method of disorientation : this is the purpose of the Surrealist way of life, with its collective activities, its paradoxical discipline, its endless games, its wanderings and exploitation of love. Above all, disorientation is achieved through idleness, through the radical rejection of work as a value and as an activity.

When they are successful, the Surrealists become the passive toys of uncontrolled "magnetic fields," they dwell and dissolve in a sea of subconscious drives and objective coincidences : there arises a new coherence, the ins and outs of which are lost in a twilight zone. Twilight is the true Surrealist light, for it facilitates the manifestations of this *other* coherence which can also be called the *Surreal* or the *Marvellous*.³⁴

The movement at the moment is primarily negative and passive in its orientation, based as it is on the denial of the need for the individual to fight in war or to fight against others in peace to make a living. Its passivity is still, even now, too new and too raw to be able to turn out great works, to achieve Bashō's type of active, artful passivity. But, as in haikai, literature is regarded by the Surrealists as a very serious group game.

There has recently begun to appear a trickle of literature on the concept of play, an activity that has always had overtones of guilt in Europe and America, at least for those people who were not born aristocrats. The German philosopher Eugen Fink, for example, says :

The mode of play is that of spontaneous act, of vital impulse. Play is, as it were,

existence centered on itself. . . . In contrast to the restless dynamism. . . and relentless futurism of our life, play is characterized by calm, timeless “presence” and autonomous, self-sufficient meaning—play resembles an oasis of happiness that we happen upon in the desert of our Tantalus-like seeking and pursuit of happiness. . . . Time is then experienced, not as a precipitous rush of successive moments, but rather as the one full moment that is, so to speak, a glimpse of eternity. . . .

The great philosophies have always recognized the eminent essentiality of play, which common sense on the other hand does not recognize, because for it play means only frivolity, artificiality, unreality, idleness. Thus Hegel says for example that play, because of its disinterestedness and superlatively lighthearted nature, is the most sublime and only true form of seriousness. And Nietzsche says in his *Ecce Homo*: “I know of no other way of coping with great tasks, than play.”³⁵

Play of course, can only really happen in a group, and the kind of sublime play mentioned by Hegel can take place naturally in a group form such as haikai. Is not this ideal very close to Bashō’s concept of *karumi*, or lightness?

One group of four poets with connections to Surrealism—Octavio Paz, Jacques Roubaud, Eduardo Sanguineti, and Charles Tomlinson—actually created a sequence of “chain poems” in Paris in 1969.³⁶ Entranced by the idea of creating a “collective poem,” these four poets wrote in four different languages, but the images combine into a single whole. The poets chose the sonnet form, with each of the twenty-seven sonnets containing a certain number of lines by each poet in his native language. The version published in English has, of course, a full translation of each sonnet on the facing page. Only time will tell exactly how significant the sonnet sequence is, but one is immediately struck by the diversity and raggedness of the different verses, the lack of overall harmony and a single overarching atmosphere. As Octavio Paz notes, “. . . we discovered that we had replaced the linear, melodic order by counterpoint and polyphony: four verbal currents which flowed simultaneously and which wove between them a network of allusions.”³⁷ Perhaps the poets could have interpenetrated each other’s images more closely if they had all been writing in the same language. At any rate, sustained practice is required to write collective verses, and as a first step the experiment is obviously important.

The second question I would like to briefly raise is this: Although there is as yet no long tradition of human-to-human linked verse composition, is there not a tradition of human-to-God discourse in verse which constitutes a very real kind of linked verse? I refer, above all, to the “mataphysical poets” of the seventeenth century, and especially to John Donne and George Herbert. In a cultural tradition that stresses individuality and separate selfhood as the highest good, these poets attempted to negate their individual selves and identify themselves (as perhaps Bashō’s followers identified with their master) with God. Whether God “objectively” exists or not is not the point here: to Donne, Herbert, and the others, God was a very real Being, a kind of superior friend and partner.

This tradition deserves a separate essay in itself, and here I will give only one example. The entire work of George Herbert is contained in a single volume entitled *The Temple*. The individual poems literally make up the architecture of a poetic cathedral, each poem dealing with a different part of the total structure. Something

very similar to "heart links" and "scent links" tie the whole together — perhaps they could be called "devotion links." There are also specific imagistic and verbal links that shift with the poet's mood and which help Herbert expand the whole series into a single hymn.

The first poem is called, appropriately, "The Church-Porch." It is a moral prolog as well as the physical entrance to the Temple :

In brief, acquit thee bravely ; play the man.
 Look not on pleasures as they come, but go.
 Defer not the least vertue ; life's poor span.
 Make not an ell, by trifling in thy woe.
 If thou do ill ; the joy fades, not the pains :
 If well ; the pain doth fade, the joy remains.

Theology becomes imagery, and theologically speaking this is also a humble front porch.

Then Herbert enters the church proper. He starts with a poem called "The Altar," which is typographically shaped like an altar. Later he moves on to the activity performed upon the altar : "The Sacrifice." The poems that follow describe specific rituals : there is a Thanksgiving poem, a Good Friday poem, a poem on the sepulchre where the body of Jesus was laid, an Easter poem, and finally an ecstatic wing-shaped poem called "Easter Wings," which describes the glory of the Resurrection. Then a new series begins centered around sin and pain. This is followed by poems on faith and baptism and love, culminating in a poem on Jordan, that chosen land found within the heart of every true believer. The next series describes the daily round of worship : the reading of the scriptures, mattins, and evensong, with a mention of Whitsunday. Soon there is a cluster of poems, whose titles are indicative of their subject matter : "Church-Monuments," "Church-Music," "The Windows," and so on. There are other poems still, which describe celebrations such as Christmas and Lent and the seven deadly sins. After vividly meditating on the various objects within the sacred memory of the church, Herbert finally invites the reader to the Upper Room to break bread with Christ in a feast of divine love, a glimpse of Heaven. Even this bare outline provides some idea of the complexity of Herbert's poetic architecture, and some of the links between the poems in the series should be obvious. Herbert's poems are not quite as passionate as those of Donne, and one has the impression that he is surveying different but connected stories portrayed in stained glass along the cathedral in his mind rather than breaking out of his cosmic isolation the way Donne is sometimes able to. Nevertheless, Herbert attempts a real dialog with God, and although God's verses are never written down, they definitively influence the flow of Herbert's poems, whose structure of association and progression is a response to God's voice which Herbert can hear within his heart. If Herbert's and Donne's religious verses do indeed constitute a linking of images and thoughts with God, then these poems, written at a crucial turning point in the intellectual history of England, could constitute an important aspect of the creation of a linked verse form in English in the decades ahead. More translations from the Japanese tradition, especially the earthy haikai tradition which is in some ways close to modern American-English poetry, will also of course be necessary.

NOTES

1. Fukui Kyūzō, *Renga no shiteki-kenkyū*, Tōkyō, Seibidō, 1930, p. 432.
2. I follow the regulations given in the discussions of Ebara Taizō, *Bashō dokuhon*, Tōkyō, Kadokawa Shoten, 1955, pp. 98 ff.; Kanda Hideo, "Renku wa mure no geijutsu," *Kasen no sekai*, Kadokawa Shoten, 1969, pp. 126 ff.; and Namimoto Sawaichi, *Bashō shichibushū renku kanshō*, Tōkyō, Shunjūsha, 1964, pp. 41-56.
3. See, for example, Higashi Akimasa, *Renku nyūmon*, Tōkyō, Chūōkōronsha, 1978, p. 43.
4. Kanda, *Op. cit.*, p. 132.
5. My discussion is indebted to those of Nakamura Shunjō, in *Bashō kushū*, Tōkyō, Iwanami Shoten, pp. 286-292, and Miyamoto Saburō, in "Renku no bigaku," in *Kasen no sekai*, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-264. Bashō's words come from *Kyoraishō*: see *Rengaronshū haironshū*, Tōkyō, Iwanami Shoten, Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei, No. 66, 1961, p. 368.
6. *Kyoraishō*, *op. cit.*, p. 370.
7. *Op. cit.*, p. 371.
8. *Sanzōshi*, *op. cit.*, p. 425.
9. *Op. cit.*, p. 422.
10. *Op. cit.*, p. 425.
11. *Kyoraishō*, *op. cit.*, p. 369.
12. *Sanzōshi*, *op. cit.*, p. 425.
13. *Kyoraishō*, *op. cit.*, p. 369.
14. *Op. cit.*, p. 364.
15. *Sanzōshi*, *op. cit.*, p. 399.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Ogata Tsutomu, *Za no bungaku*, Tōkyō, Kadokawa Shoten, 1973, pp. 127-147.
19. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, New York, Harcourt and Brace, 1932, p. 247.
20. Earl Miner, *Japanese Linked Poetry*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 316-335.
21. *Kyoraishō*, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
22. This example is given by Asano Nobu, *Sarumino chūshaku*, Tōkyō, Ōfūsha, 1966, p. 363.
23. Kanda, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-32, who quotes Miyamoto.
24. Ōta Mizuho, *Bashō renku no kompon kaisetsu*, Tōkyō, Iwanami Shoten, 1930, p. 387.
25. Terada is quoted by Kanda, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
26. Quoted in Kuriyama Riichi, "Renku wa geijutsu ka," in *Kasen no sekai*, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Sanzōshi*, *op. cit.*, p. 424.
29. Robert Penn Warren, *Audubon: A Vision*, New York, Random House, 1969, p. 23.
30. Kōda Rohan, *Hisago-sarumino-shō*, Tōkyō, Iwanami Shoten, 1937, p. 202.
31. Chekov's letter to his brother is quoted in Miriam Allott, ed., *Novelists on the Novel*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1959, p. 304.
32. Ōta, *op. cit.*, pp. 396-8.
33. William Butler Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, New York, Macmillan, 1961, pp. 254-5.
34. Michel Beaujour, "The Game of Poetics," in Ehrmann, ed., *Game, Play, Literature*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1971, pp. 64-5.
35. Eugen Fink, "The Oasis of Happiness: Toward an Ontology of Play," in *Game, Play, Literature*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21, 25.
36. Paz, Roubaud, Sanguinetti, and Tomlinson, *Renga*, New York, George Braziller, 1971.
37. *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

I have referred to the commentaries and texts of Asano Nobu (*op. cit.*), Kōda Rohan (*op. cit.*), Nakamura Shunjō (*op. cit.*), Namimoto Sawaichi (*op. cit.*), and Ōta Mizuho (*op. cit.*), as well as to those of Itō Masao, *Bashō renku zenkai*, Tōkyō, Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1976; Shida Yoshihide and Amano Uzan, *Sarumino renku hyōshaku*, Tōkyō, Furukawa Shobō, 1977; and

Takatō Takema, *Bashō renku kanshō*, Tōkyō, Chikuma Shobō, 1971. I would like to express my appreciation of all these efforts at understanding, although I have not necessarily accepted all the opinions or interpretations given in these works.