“Rewalking Along the Way of Poetry”

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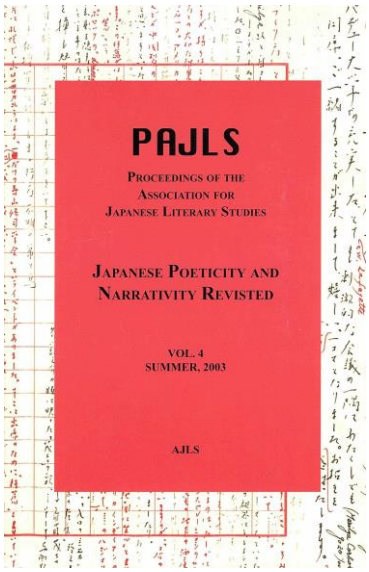

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REWALKING ALONG THE WAY OF POETRY[1]

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TERAYAMA SHŪJI; LIKE FLOWERS THAT ARE THROWN IN

I used to think that uta or tanka poems were difficult to remember and impossible for me to compose. It is the domain of expression I tried to stay away from and was unable to feel close to for complex reasons. I would like to gradually talk about my complex emotions toward tanka but the point of my talk will focus on the fact that I recently discovered some precious secrets of tanka poetry composition and have developed an intimacy towards this genre of poetry for the first time in my life.

There were several steps for my encounter with tanka. First, this June in Hokkaidō, there was a large-scale gathering to discuss Terayama Shūji's achievement. The meeting was organized by Mr. Yamaguchi Masao, a well-known president of Sapporo University, who had been Terayama's spiritual mentor. I was invited to join a panel titled "Terayama Shūji Association for this time only" and was asked to write a poem for the conference. When I was told that they would not pay for my writing, I initially lost interest in contributing for them. But when I was told on the phone that my poem could still be included if I would finish it by the next day, I suddenly had a desire to write, oddly forgetting about the condition for my contribution.

I was ready to write and looked around my study, where books were piled pell-mell. I sensed that something strange was remaining in the room and realized that fourteen or fifteen books related to Terayama were sitting in a corner, creating an air different from the rest of the room. I realized that I had been fond of him for a long time without clear consciousness. The books I have about Terayama didn't look remarkable: They included a sub-culture magazine featuring him, a book he wrote on horse racing, and the like. I threw all these books in my shopping basket and added Saitō Mokichi's Iwanami collection of thirty-five volumes, thinking that I would first focus on Terayama's tanka and then wanted to

[1] The original of this paper is from Yoshimasu Gōzō,"'Uta' no michi o tadori naosu, (「歌」の道をたどりなおす)" in Art Vision, vol. 31–1, 2003: 187–241. Professor Yoshimasu gave us permission to translate the portion of this essay into English (pp.214–239) and to include it in our proceedings. The topics and key points of the essay we have translated correspond well to those of the talk he gave us during the Purdue Conference held in 2002.

take advantage of this opportunity to start reading Mokichi's tanka as well.

I live in Hachiōji, which has a Daiei store. I love that store because it is extremely appropriately deserted. I went to a cafeteria there and spread Terayama's books all over the table and started to read them. I believe I was also reading Tsukamoto Kunio's books. To read a variety of books in a random order corresponds well with the books that "are spread all over the table." And it is the very picture I have of Terayama as well. I believe he was a great plagiarist, so to speak. He was good at quickly picking up and stealing words and passages from various sources. We talk about quoting ideas from someone as gentlemanly conduct, but Terayama seems to have needed a sort of thief's swiftness and roughness in order to devour various people's ideas all at once and transform them into his own. He was a genius in this sense.

When I was thinking about Terayama, I was also writing a commendatory note for an art book of Mr. Nakagawa Yukio, an eighty-four-year-old grand master of flower arrangement. My grandmother and my mother both used to be flower arrangement teachers and as a kid, I was familiarly exposed to such terms as "frog (kenzan)" and "throwing in (nageire)." I was thus thinking of tanka and flower arrangement at the same time. In my commendation of Mr. Nakagawa, I quoted my favorite lines from Dylan Thomas' poem ("The force that through the green fuse drives the flower"; see a pamphlet in *Ma no yama—Nakagawa Yukio sakukinshū A Flower is a Mystic Mountain*). I was thinking of a recently held art performance event in which two hundred thousand tulips had rained down from the sky.

"To throw in!" "Throwing-in!"… What does the "throwing-in" do? The "throwing-in" has something powerful. According to my understanding, the act of "throwing-in" creates a perfect arrangement just by throwing a group of flowers in a very genuine and swift manner. The words such as "to arrange flowers (lit. to give life to flowers ("ikeru"))," "to throw flowers in," and "to tattoo flower stems into a vase as if they were needles ("sasu")" are indicative of the type of artistic actions, which are probably based on the spirit of the medieval Japanese aesthetics. Behind Terayama's act of plagiarism/quotation, we should see a spirit parallel to that behind the flower arranging performances. From memories in our brains, fragments of images/ideas suddenly pop up, our mind then quickly grabs them and we scribble them down in the form of memo. Weren't tanka poems originally composed that way? Imagine that we recover in our bodies this keen sense of action suggested by such acts as to insert a stem of flower into a vase with a swift push ("'shutto'

sashiireru"), to tattoo flowers in a vase (hana o "sasu"), and to start a needle of incense (senkō o "sasu"). Then, I wonder what kind of poems we can start to create. With this vision of poetry composition, I wrote a poem dedicated to Mr. Terayama, in which I spoke to him this way: "You were a giant genius, who was walking up above the dark sky, wearing girl's high clogs. What would you do if you were still alive here today?" This focus on the act of poetry composition practiced à la flower-throwing-in was the beginning of my discovery of tanka's secrets.

I would now like to talk about Terayama's poems, but I would first let you listen to his voice recorded in his poetry reading tape. He came from Misawa in Aomori prefecture and we would assume that he would show a heavy Tōhoku accent. It may depend on people who hear him, but for me, his reading doesn't sound like a Tōhoku dialect. It sounds like something more cleanly articulated (although he probably enunciated more clearly than usual for a recitation). Talking about his enunciation with a number of people, I found out that his dialect was that of Furumagi, an area a little remote from the city of Aomori. An expert from Hachinohe, Mr. Toyoshima Shigeyuki, claims that Terayama's accent displays some strength of neutrality different from the heavy accent usually associated with the Aomori dialect, that is, this region's dominant dialect. In this sense, the impression I had about the way he sounded was not erroneous. He spoke somewhat differently from the typical Tōhoku dialect. (By the way, we can talk about the same kind of language with Mokichi as well). Now, please listen to Terayama.

亡き母の真赤な櫛を埋めに行く恐山には風吹くばかり Naki haha no makkana kushi o umeni yuku Osorezan niwa kaze fuku bakari

(I went to Osorezan in order to bury the bright red comb of my late mother. There was nothing there but the wind that was blowing endlessly.)

降りながらみづから亡ぶ雪のなか祖父の瞠し神をわが見ず
Furinagara mizukara horobu yuki no naka Oochichi no miharishi kami o waga mizu

(In the snow that dies out while falling, I cannot see the gods my grandfather gazed with awe.)

濁流に捨て来し燃ゆる曼珠沙華あかきを何の生贄とせむ Dakuryū ni sutekishi moyuru manjushage akaki o nan no ikenie to sen

(Burning equinox flowers that I threw away into the muddy stream. What can I sacrifice their redness for?)

見るために両瞼をふかく裂かむとす剃刀の刃に地平をうつし Miru tameni ryōme o fukaku sakan to su. Kamisori no ha ni chihei o utsushi

(In order to see better I am ready to cut both of my eyelids open deeply with a razor; a reflexion of the horizon is on its blade.)

新しき仏壇買ひに行きしまま行方不明のおとうとと鳥 Atarashiki butsudan kaini yukishimama yukuefumei no otōto to tori

(After going out to buy a new family Buddhist altar, my little brother and his bird have lost their traces.)

In the last poem, he recites very carefully by creating a subtle space between "to" at the end of "otōto" and "to" in the beginning of "tori." Related to this kind of subtlety, I would like to add another important characteristic of Terayama, which stays at the bottom of his genius as a usurper of language, exercised in a "flower-throwing-in" fashion. I would call this characteristic his fundamental gambler-ness. It is a very deep part of his being, determining his world vision and founding his artistic creativity. Repeatedly chewing this image of Terayama I already had had, I was struck this time by his use of "uru (to sell)" in one of his poems that reads:

売りにゆく柱時計がふいに鳴る横抱きにして枯野ゆくとき "Uri ni yuku hashiradokei ga fuini naru yokodaki ni shite kareno yuku toki (I was on the way to sell my wall clock; It chimed all of a sudden, when I was walking through a desolate field by holding it under my arm.)

The picture of him holding the clock sideways under his arm moved me. I believed this was an honest picture of his self, awed by that inexplicable sensation of a gambler. The moment I was struck by such a mysterious charm of this poem, I felt in love again with the poet, or with the type of sensation evoked by him, or with the picture of him holding the large clock sideway. Anyway, I experienced the special moment that allowed me to develop a new closeness towards this poet.

SAITŌ MOKICHI: THINGS THAT ARE PRIMITIVE-MAN'S-HEART-LIKE

As you may know, Mr. Terayama spent much of his time around Shibuya and its vicinity. He used to live in an apartment there and pub-crawl coffee houses by carrying books and letters. Pop songs he wrote had frequent references to Akasaka, Aoyama, and Shibuya. His home was originally Osorezan and Aomori but at the same time, Shibuya, Aoyama, and Akasaka were also his home ground. With such thought, I

arbitrarily opened a page of one of Mokichi's books, which I was carrying with me—a bulky, rather burdensome collection of books that I had felt I would never read—and I happened to meet with Mokichi, who came up to me with this poem (Let me imitate the way he recites). It reads:

青山の町蔭の田の水さび田にしみじみとして雨ふりにけりAoyama no machikage no ta no misabita ni shimijimitoshite ame furinikeri (On a rice paddy covered by rust-colored fur in back of the Aoyama streets, rain is falling nostalgically.)

It is a rainy scene from the time when Aoyama still had rice paddies in back of their streets, which are now full of fashionable boutiques. Mokichi gazes at the rain that was falling in a rice paddy located at the corner of downtown Tokyo in such a way as to overlap it with the rain he saw in his childhood at Kaminoyama, Zaō, and places along the Mogami River. I surely sense Mokichi's eye that sees these double images. Working at a mental hospital in Tokyo, he is a city person, more specifically a type of Tokyoite who has just started to live there. I feel like I can be connected with him in this poem and I am impressed by this poem. My encounter with Mokichi's poem thus occured as if I had read it by swiftly borrowing Terayama's eye.

We are taught about Mokichi as the author of such poems as "のど赤き玄鳥ふたつ屋梁にいて足乳ねの母は死にたまふなりNodo akaki tsubakurame futatsu hari ni ite tarachine no haha wa shi ni tamōnari (A couple of swallows perch on the beam with their red throats and my mother is now passing away). Mokichi is, however, not limited to this kind of poem. He is also the author of the poem we have talked about, in which I fondly picture his eyes that narrow with keen emotion. It is by pure chance that I encountered this poem and this accidentalness amuses me. The poem next to it in the same book displays the similar look of the poet:

うちどよむ街のあひの森かげに残るみづ田をいとしくおもふ Uchidoyomu chimata no ai no morikage ni nokoru mizuta o itoshiku omou (At the foot of a woody patch of land between the city quarters stirred always with noise, I found a small rice paddy: My heart goes to it tenderly).

These Mokichi are another "Mokichi" that we have never been taught. That is a Mokichi who views things with gentle and compassionate eyes. Here is another one:

黒土に足駄の跡の弱けれどおのが力とかへり見にけり Kurotsuchi ni ashida no ato no yowakeredo ono ga chikara to kaeri mini keri (On the black soil my footmarks are printed weakly. I turn my head and gaze on them: they are still the signs of my life strength).

This feel of the soil! That is probably Aoyama's soil and at the same time it should also be the soil along the Mogami River. The poet attentively watches that kind of soil image. The "deep nostalgic emotions (shimijimitoshite)" attached to his gaze are surely the source of vitality of these poems. I realized these points when I first discovered these poems.

A monthly report appended to the volume one of his collection includes an essay by Satō Haruo, who reports that he was so moved by Mokichi's poems that he immediately visited him. In another book, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke talks about Mokichi's poems that moved and enlightened him (I will refer to this episode more in detail later). Anyway, I have collected my inspirational discoveries about Mokichi this way. Among these episodes, the one, I believe by his son, Kita Morio, is inspirational. During the time he composed the poems I have discussed, he followed an odd rule of making a poem before a stick of incense had burnt out. This rule may sound like a weird cult-like ritual, but the episode can be viewed as a cute, smile-provoking picture, in which he is working so hard under a modest light of burning incense. This rule indicates that a poem that cannot be completed within the time of an incense stick burning is no good. In other words, poetic creativity is here measured by the poet's sense of certain swiftness, an ability to scribble a memo on any materials and to compose poems in a flower-throwing manner, that is, to grab poetic moments as radical happenings. This approach to tanka composition allows me to savor the subtle and delicate air intrinsic to the moments when poems are being created. This thought led me even to believe that I too can compose tanka poems.

My reflections on Mokichi started while I was hosting a series of radio show titled "With poems in your pocket," which were aired from NHK for 6 months. I had chosen twenty-six poets for the series and Mokichi was one of them as his name had been on my mind for years. During this show, the program director visited me twice a week by his motorcycle and I could not find time to read the lengthy collection of Mokichi's poems. It was therefore the last resort, in its literal sense, that I

decided to rely on a record that included poetry readings by Mokichi. When the deadline was very near, I took a trip to Amami Oshima with nothing but the Mokichi's tape and listened to it throughout my trip. Soon, I was struck by the idea of rearranging poems he recited in the same manner Terayama used with other people's texts. I needed courage to edit the existing tape. I brought my favorite poems at the beginning and then slowly determined a new order for my tape. I thus made a "portable poem collection" for my own but it was a very difficult operation. You needed to courageously gamble about how to rearrange the order of the recited poems. My initiation toward Mokichi started when I had decided to put at the beginning of my tape a particular poem with which I had been impressed for a long time.

The poem I put at the beginning of my tape is: "Garēeji e torakku hitotsu irantosu sukoshi tamerai irite ikitari." This doesn't sound like a poem by Mokichi. It was originally included in his tanka anthology published right before WWII had broken out. This Showa 15 (1940) anthology included a series of poems referring to the atmosphere of the time. It is, however, a mystery why he chose this particular poem in his tape. By hearing his recitation, you can sense the feel that the poet wants to convey by describing this scene. Everybody is familiar with this odd sensation associated with the action of putting a car into a garage by driving backward. Mokichi is looking at such an action from his room upstairs probably, responding to somewhat awkward movement of the car. Mokichi's eyes are child-like and animal-like here, with a particular softness expressed through the line, "sukoshi tamerai (after a small hesitant pause)." The way he recites this line really convinces me that this is a secret aperture from which his poetical emotions ooze out. Please listen to his recitation.

ガレージへトラックひとつ入らむとす少しためらひ入りて行きたり
Garēeji e torakku hitotsu irantosu sukoshi tamerai irite ikitari (A pickup truck was being put into a garage. After a small hesitant pause, it went on to be put in.)

Don't you feel like you meet with a totally different Mokichi? We can approach him from this kind of poems. It still remains a mystery why Mokichi chose this poem. My guess is that he chose this so as to indicate the importance of the line, "sukoshi tamerai." In my tape, the poem that follows this starts with "Ishigame no (A terrapin)." Mokichi reads this line with a slight accent. I am now anxious to imitate his way of reading this poem. "Ishigame no umeru tamago o kuchinawa ga…" "Kuchinawa"

is a snake. And the poem goes on with "machiwabi nagara nomu to koso kike." The poem sounds as if it makes us understand the mind of the snake. Mokichi's heart is delicately stirred up when he has learned how much snakes become anxious before finding terrapin eggs." The emotion behind the line, "sukoshi tamerai" and that behind the line "machiwabi nagara (after an impatient wait)" are very close.

石亀の生める卵をくちなはが待ちわびながら呑むとこそ聞けIshigame no umeru tamago o kuchinawa ga machiwabi nagara nomu to koso kike (I was told that after an impatient wait a snake would swallow eggs that a terrapin has just layed.)

For the next one I won't imitate it. I will let Mokichi read it. It is a very well-known poem.

ゆふされば大根の葉にふる時雨いたく寂しく降りにけるかもYū sareba daikon no ha ni furu shigure itaku sabishiku furi ni keru kamo (Late in the evening, a winter shower wets the leaves of white radishes: it is raining with such coldness.)

Together with the melody we hear in the line of "machiwabi nagara" and the movement of the poet's heart behind the line of "sukoshi tamerai," we can smoothly savor the tonality of this celebrated poem. Don't you feel like we are almost ready to compose poems of our own?

I have to apologize in advance to editors and publishers if they are here, but I must claim that it is no use reading introduction-to-tanka type of books in paper back and other versions. They will simply confuse you. I strongly believe that in order to truly appreciate Mokichi, each reader ought to create a book of anthology by and for himself out of Mokichi's cassette tape. This is the key point of my talk. What matters is how each of us would recast and rearrange the existing poems so as to develop personal connections with the poet. Every time you listen to the tape, you should patiently start your operation all over again and keep repeating your revisions and readjustments in such a way that would enable you to hear very subtle "heartbeats of the poet's universe." I believe the very spirit that pursues subtle voices of lives in the universe was behind Mokichi's creativity. That is why I stayed away from him for a long time, sensing that he had something overwhelming. However, I was so touched by the discovery of this cute, animal-like, primordial, and extremely primitive heart in him. I believe that together with this heart, Mokichi, who now became a Tokyoite, recited his poems by listening to

his own Kamiyama accent. His voice is very charming. Behind the solemn look of his portrait photo, he hides his eyes that nakedly tremble with the lines of "sukoshi tamerai" and "itaku sabishiku" in the poems we have studied. For me, this discovery was an eye-opening experience. Let me add Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's Mokichi experience. Akutagawa, one of my favorite authors, writes a wonderful essay in which he claims that Mokichi taught him what tanka was about. Let me quote passages from his essay.

> To discuss Saitō Mokichi is not a task one can take lightly. At least for me, it is not easy to do. It is because Mokich has taken firm root in a corner of my heart. I happened to read the first edition of his *Shakkō* when I was a high school student. *Shakkō* immediately uncovered a whole new world in front of me. Since then, together with him, I have loved tadpoles, breezes that go through the field of thickets, Aoyama Cemetery, Miyake Hill, electric lights that are on in the afternoon, and the veined palms of a woman…("Hekiken (biased opinions)," in *Akutagawa Ryūnosuke zenshū*, vol. 11)

Akutagawa must have been too excited. He repeatedly refers to *Shakkō*, But I could not find any of these things he learned to love from that book. And I found all these topics Akutagawa referred to in Mokichi's second anthology, *Aratama* (A new soul). It seems like Akutagawa was so excited that he could no longer care about the title of the book he loved dearly. Anyway, by reading *Aratama*, I have discovered things that were new in Tokyo at their time—an electric light, walking down hills in Akasaka, etc. And I reexperience the gentleness of their hearts that vividly responded to the new urban things at the time the poems were written. It takes quite a while for me to begin savoring the book with this fondness. It may even be necessary for us to stay away from Mokichi's collection for years in order to ripen our sense of reading poetry. I want to stress that we will probably be mistaken if we mold our reading according to text-book-like frameworks set by how-to-read-Mokichi type of guide books. I believe the best way to learn from poems is to take notes and create a portable collection for your own.

YOSANO AKIKO: THINGS THAT "AERIALLY" FLY INTO THE POET'S HEAD, TOGETHER WITH SADNESS

Now, I will talk about Yosano Akiko. About ten years ago, I was in Sao Paulo seriously studying about Horiguchi Daigaku, a nice poet who

composed elegant and gentle poems. He was a son of a diplomat living in Rio de Janeiro, where he translated poems for *Gekka no ichigun* (a group of people under the moon). I was trying to prove how strongly Brazilian climate had influenced on Horiguchi's work. In the middle of the examination of my hypothesis (which I still think as a believable one), I rented a video from a shop located in the Asian district of the city and I was suddenly exposed to the voice of Yosano Akiko popping up from that tape. I assume that people today can no longer memorize tanka poems. I don't know why but our minds are set up that way. I certainly cannot memorize any tanka poems. What really surprised me about this video tape was the fact that as soon as I had heard Akiko's voice, this broken mind of mine immediately memorized her poem. I was shocked and could not explain why this had happened to me. Now that over ten years have passed from that experience, the way of tanka seems to have gradually uncovered itself to me.

The poem I memorized in Brazil is this: "Naohana ga tokorodokoro o makie shite katsu samishi kere Katsushika no no wa." As I am reading it, I am seeing particles of sound dance as if they were taking a walk and images—yellow flowers and all—scatter on a lacquered craft. Musical and visual articulateness of this poem are probably factors that allowed me to memorize it. Anyway, I believe Akiko is a genius, successfully allowing me to memorize this poem for good.

菜の花がところどころを巻絵してかつ寂しけれ葛飾の野はNanohana ga tokorodokoro o makie shite katsu samishi kere Katsushika no no wa (Decorated here and there with rape flowers, the field at Katsushika remains somehow sad).

I have just noticed that there is a small modulation in "Katsu" in "Katsushika." I detect this may be the secret key of this poem. This is a sudden discovery. Anyway, I would like to introduce you to three or four more poems by Akiko. When I was examining the secret of this poet's poetry composition, I realized that Akiko was upset about her fame, which consisted of people's sole appreciation of her popular poems from her first anthology, poems such as "やは肌のあつき血潮に触 れも見で Yawahada no atsuki chishio ni furemo mide…(without trying to touch the warm blood that runs beneath my young skin…)." She believed that those popular poems were of rather poor quality and that the ones into which she put all her heart were never recognized. That's why she herself compiled an anthology of selected poems, which is still available from Iwanami. If you look at the poems selected there, you realize that she

chose only 15 or so poems from her anthology of people's favorite, *Midaregami* (tangled hair), and that in contrast she chose two to three hundred poems from her later anthologies, including the poems from *Ryūsei no michi* (routes of shooting stars), to which I now introduce you. Akiko expressed her frustration regarding people's valuation of her work in the postword of this anthology.

Poems of her later years are generally sad, and especially lonely after the death of Tekkan; she took trips all the time; there was a time when she visited places in which her favorite disciple Takuboku lived and composed poems as if she were Takuboku himself; and some poems remind us of Santōka. They are lonely but moving poems. I keep saying to everyone that Akiko's later poems are great but those scholars of Akiko never listen to me seriously. I am absolutely sure of my judgment but I studied further when I prepared my talk for the radio show, "With poems in your pocket." The sources of the tape I listened to were mostly taken from *Ryūsei no michi*.

This anthology was completed right after the Great Kantō Earthquake. The manuscript of *The Tale of Genji* she had finished translating into modern Japanese were all burned and lost during the quake. Her spiritual mentor, Mori Ōgai, died the same year. She became aware of her own aging with a critical sense of solitude. Every time I read her poems from this anthology, I sensed that the root of her loneliness had reached my heart through subtle channels. I was reminding of Origuchi Shinobu's theory, according to which a poet receives something flash-like that flies into his head aerially ('hirarito') while trying to compose his poems. He can complete his poems by being possessed by this "something". The aerialness of such poems, together with their sad emotions, can then be gently transmitted to the readers and transcribed in their heads. That may be why I memorized Akiko's poem so naturally. Let's listen to a sad song like the following from her tape:

片がはの長き渓川夕月がながす涙のここちこそすれ Katagawa no nagaki tanigawa yūzuki ga nagasu namida no kokochi koso sure (Only one side of the mountain stream goes on longly. It looks as if the evening moon were flowing her tears.)

Her voice is rather low and sounds like she is assuming someone else's voice; it sounds husky as if tips of a writing brush were rubbing her throat.

Note also the ominous connotations attached to the word "katagawa." My interpretation resides in that the choice of this word

comes from Buson, whom she studies extensively. Buson's vocabulary, due to his association with the discriminated class, is filled with words evocative of scars such as "kata" (lit. one side of a pair; fig. incomplete, deformed, etc.), "poor," "blank' (shiroi), and the like. "Katagawa" in the above poem subconsciously implies Buson's "kata" and even "nagaki (long)" may have a subconscious reference to "nagai/nagō" in the well-known verse from Buson's *Shunpū batei kyoku* (Song of the Spring Wind on the Kema Bank), that reads "春風や堤長うして家遠しHarukaze ya tsutsumi nagō shite ie tōshi" (Spring breeze. The river bank is so long that I am far away from home; underlined by the translator). The choice of the word and image of "kata" is extremely powerful and as a whole the poem is a superb piece by a genius poet. The poem is indeed remarkable.

御空よりなかばはつづく明きみち半はくらき流星のみち Misora yori nakaba wa tsuzuku akaki michi nakaba wa kuraki ryūsei no michi (From the sky continues the route of a shooting star, half in shadow, half in light.).

As I have transcribed this poem with notes I was taking, I realize the poet's focus on something represented by the one-sidedness ("katagawasei") is here transformed into something represented by halfness ("hanbun"). These foci seem to delineate the existence of something dislocated in Akiko's heart.

とこしへに同じ枝には住みがたき身となりぬらし落葉と落葉Tokoshie ni onaji eda niwa sumigataki mi to narinurashi ochiba to ochiba (Two leaves fall separately as they cannot forever stay together on the same branch).

From inside the house in Musashino, Akiko watches falling leaves. Two leaves can no longer be together and fall in separate ways.

Let me add two more poems.

落日が枕にしたる横雲のなまめかしけれ直江津の海 Rakujitsu ga makura ni shitaru yokogumo no namamekashikere Naoetsu no umi (The setting sun lays his head on a coquettish bank of clouds. Above the sea at Naoetsu).

The last poem I introduce to you has something unusual. I would like to hear your responses to Akiko's reading in the tape. This poem was

composed when she was on the way to Hokkaidō. She was following the itinerary Takuboku had taken and the poem described the moment of her boat's arrival at a port in Hokkaidō. As you know Akiko is a daughter of a wealthy merchant Surugaya in Sakai. That means she is from Osaka. Yet, she reads with a striking accent in the line "Hokkaedō no (underline emphasis by Yoshimasu)." Is this accent part of her unusual voice that sounds as if it came from the other world and slipped through the surface of water? Please let me know if you have your specific answers to this mystery. Anyway, Akiko reads this poem in an extraordinary way.

わが船の港の口にかかるとき北海道の霧はれにけりWaga fune no minato no kuchi ni kakaru toki Hokkaidō no kiri harenikeri (My boat was coming through the mouth of the port, Hokkaido fogs started to be cleared).

Some people say that her voice reminds them of the way Noh performers enunciate. I don't agree with this opinion and want to discuss the points I have about this voice. One of Akiko's favorite disciples, Horiguchi Daigaku, claims that she was the only teacher he had in his entire life and she gave him tremendous spiritual influences. He once points out that Akiko was relatively largely built but her voice was very thin and she taught him *The Tale of Genji* and other texts with a low voice almost impossible to understand. I haven't taken this episode literally, but recently, in *Bungakkai*, Kōno Taeko had a literary dialogue with Yamada Eimi, in which Kōno mentioned what she heard about Akiko's voice: it was so thin and low that it was hard to understand. It seems very possible that Akiko's voice was actually very low and people of her time knew about it. A microphone and a recording system with high sensitivity can fully record her reading with a low voice. I then imagine that it would be possible that originally, she read this poem with a low and unenunciated voice. The machine could amplify the original reading, creating the existing tape in which Akiko sounds unusually mysterious. What we have here may simply be a mechanically created mystery. My examination of poetry readings by different poets has thus led me to the area that is, I believe, near the core of the Way of tanka poetry.

I understand that this is just the very beginning. I have just finished creating my first notebook for my journey for the tanka's way. I expect I will have much farther to go. As for the beginning entrances that I have shown you for the development of your own poetry reading, they are just part of omnipresent entrances. Today software for audio texts and visual

texts of different poets from the past are more and more available. You have good opportunities to interact with them. Each of you should study the materials you find over and over again and try to arrange, rearrange, and establish the best order of the poems for you. It is life-long learning process, which allows you to approach, in a very personal way, to the birth of poetry, that is, a nuanced realm of expressiveness where poetic hearts start to germinate in a truly precious and primordial manner.

(translated by Eiji Sekine)