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Chinese Poetry in Hiragana: *Kana-shi* in Thought and Practice

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TRANSLATED BY ASHTON LAZARUS

What Is *Kana-shi*?

The term *hiragana no kanshi* ひらがなの漢詩 has the ring of a contradiction. *Kanshi* 漢詩 (Chinese poetry) is called *kanshi* because it is written with *kanji* 漢字 (Chinese characters), so writing *kanshi* in hiragana would indeed be logically impossible. And yet, in the Edo period (1603–1868) there was a literary form that can only be described as *hiragana no kanshi*. The simplest way of understanding what it was is to take a look at an actual poem.[1]

雨の日に蝸牛を愛す

かたつぶりへ
国はおもし角のうへ
虎にあらで竹の園
手水鉢にあそべども

雨の日のおもしろみ
家はかるし殻のうち
龍に似て茨の垣
なめくじりの憂名なし[2]

"Love for a Snail on a Rainy Day"

Snail, snail—
the pleasure of a rainy day.

The kingdoms on your horns are heavy,
the families within your shell are light.

Though not a tiger, you live in the bamboo garden;
though resembling a dragon, you creep around the
bramble gate.

You play among the washbasin
but you don't have the slug's dreadful reputation.

The author is Fūkyoku 風曲, a poet of the Mameda 豆田 family from Kanazawa, and it appears in a collection called *Wakan bunsō* 和漢文操 (The Appeal of Japanese and Chinese Writing, 1727) edited by Matsuo Bashō's 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694) disciple Kagami Shikō 各務支考 (1665–1731). As indicated by the title, the poem is about a snail on a rainy day. The poem (see figure 1) consists of four couplets each made up of two lines of five syllables, a structure similar to that of five-character eight-line regulated verse (*gogon risshi* 五言律詩). As is customary in regulated verse, the ends of the even-numbered lines rhyme (that is, in the original the

This translation is based on Kawahira, "Hiragana no kanshi: Kana-shi shi hotei" and incorporates material from Kawahira, "Hiragana no kanshi: Kana-shi to sono shisō." Translations of poems are by Ashton Lazarus unless otherwise noted.

1 Lineation follows the original. For the sake of readability, *furigana* has been added above the kanji.

2 Kagami Shikō, *Wakan bunsō*, p. 532.

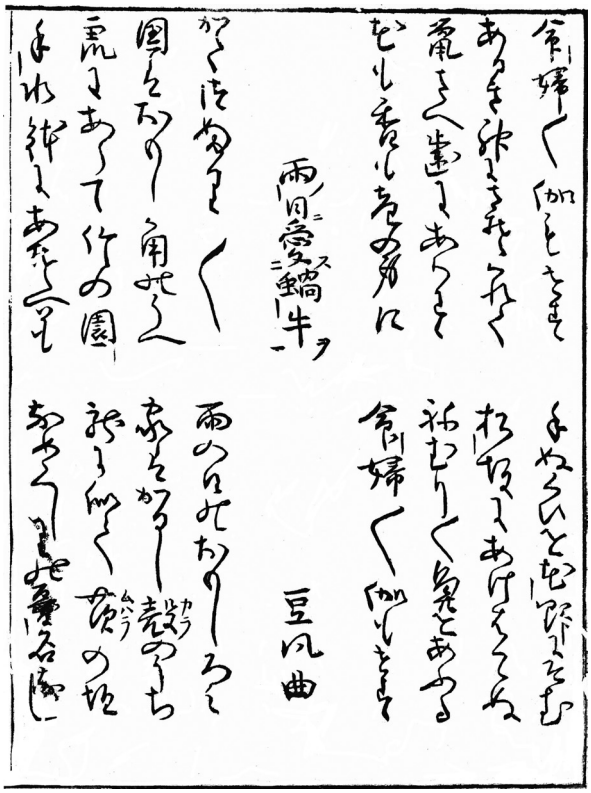

Figure 1. Fūkyoku. "Love for a Snail on a Rainy Day." *Wakan bunsō*. Ed. Kagami Shikō. 1727, Edo period. Fukuoka. Permission of Kyushu University.

i sound is repeated: *omoshiromi*, *uchi*, *kaki*, *nashi*).

The poem alludes to both Chinese and Japanese sources. The second line is a reference to the so-called "Battle on the Horns of a Snail" passage from the "Zeyang" 則陽 section of the *Zhuangzi* 荘子 (ca. third century BCE). It tells of how war between two kingdoms seems important to those involved, but when placed in perspective becomes as insignificant as that which occurs between the horns of a snail. The fifth and sixth lines delineate a contrast: "Though it certainly does not appear to be a tiger, it nonetheless plays in a noble's bamboo garden" leads to "Though he possesses a dragon horn, symbol of the emperor, he crawls about the bramble-laden gate of a commoner's dwelling." The final, eighth line of the poem asserts that the snail's reputation is not as bad as that of the slug, which appears in Sei Shōnagon's 清少納言 (dates unknown) list of "Exceedingly Filthy Things" in *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子 (The Pillow Book, ca. 995–1004).[3] Love for a snail on a rainy day—this sort of world cannot be expressed through the "refined" (*ga* 雅) language of *waka* 和歌 (court poetry) and it also resists the *kanshi* form with its rough lack of charm. Indeed, the invocation of "snail, snail" is what gives the poem its flavor.

Kana-shi 仮名詩 was hence a new kind of poetry (*shi* 詩) that differed from preexisting forms like *kanshi*, *waka*, and *haikai* 俳諧 (later known as haiku). During the Edo period the endeavor to compose avant-garde, experimental *shi* was undertaken by several poets. Their poems shared much of the same spirit and method as the later *shintaishi* 新体詩 (new-form poetry) of the Meiji period (1868–1912), which was influenced by Western poetry.[4] But since Edo-period Chinese-style poetry written in kana—that is, *kana-shi*—is still not widely known, this essay aims to introduce the story of its formation and development through readings of specific poems. It is furthermore worth noting that in the Edo period *kanshi* written in hiragana was known variously as *kana-shi*, *haishi* 俳詩, and *washi* 和詩. I prefer the term *kana-shi* and will hereafter use it to refer in general to this kind of poetry.[5]

There is a work by Yosa Buson 与謝蕪村 (1716–1783) that is sometimes referred to as a miracle of the Edo period. This "Chinese poem" mourns the death of Buson's friend Shinga 晋我 (d. 1745), referred to here as Old Sage Hokuju. It became widely known in the modern period, with the poet Hagiwara Sakutarō 萩原朔太郎 (1886–1942) lavishing praise upon it.[6]

北寿老仙(ほくじゅろうせん)をいたむ

君(きみ)あしたに去(さり)ぬ　ゆふべのこゝろ千々(ちぢ)に

3 Sei Shōnagon, *Makura no sōshi*, p. 377.

4 Hino Tatsuo has pointed to translations of long-form Chinese poetry as a forerunner of *shintaishi*. See Hino, "Shintaishi no ichi genryū." And while it seems that *kana-shi* did not have a direct influence on *shintaishi*, the two share a sensibility that challenged dominant poetic forms like *kanshi* and *waka*.

5 For earlier research on *kana-shi*, see Matsumoto, "Haishi (Jō)" and "Haishi (Ge)," and Hori, "Kana-shi no konkyo." Besides this, little of substance has been done on the topic. Matsumoto's study introduces various forms of *kana-shi* through a rich selection of poems, while Hori's study describes and explains *kana-shi*'s theoretical background. Building on these studies, this essay engages with not only the history of *haikai* but also problems of intellectual history in order to analyze the historical background of *kana-shi*'s formation and later development.

6 Horikiri, "Buson no haishi."

何ぞはるかなる
君をおもふて岡のべに行つ遊ぶ
をかのべ何ぞかくかなしき
蒲公の黄に　薺のしろう咲たる
見る人ぞなき
雉子のあるか　ひたなきに鳴くを聞ば
友ありき　河をへだてゝ住にき
へげのけぶりの　はと打ちれば　西吹風の
はげしくて　小竹原　真すげはら
のがるべきかたぞなき
友ありき　河をへだてゝ住にき　けふは
ほろゝともなかぬ
君あしたに去ぬ　ゆふべのこゝろ千ゝに
何ぞはるかなる
我庵のあみだ仏　ともし火もものせず
花もまいらせず　すごへとゐめる今宵は
ことにたうとき [7]

"Mourning the Old Sage Hokuju"

You left in the morning. In the evening, my heart in
a thousand shards
How far you have gone!

Thinking of you, I wander in the hills.
Why are the hills so sad?

Among the yellow dandelions, shepherd's purse
blooms white.
But you are not here to see this.

Is the pheasant here? I hear its mournful voice:

"I had a friend. He lived on the other side of the
stream.

Eerie smoke rose and scattered, a strong west wind
swept over the bamboo field, over the sedge moor,
leaving nowhere to hide.

I had a friend. He lived on the other side of the
stream; today
There's no sound at all."

You left in the morning. In the evening, my heart in
a thousand shards
How far you have gone!

In my hut, I have no strength to offer a light to the
Amida Buddha,
have given no flowers. In the twilight, lingering
snow,
a sense of awe.[8]

With refrains like, "You left in the morning. In the evening, my heart in a thousand shards" and "I had a friend. He lived on the other side of the stream," this is a remarkable composition that could be described as a modern free-verse poem written in classical language. As several scholars have already written commentaries on the poem[9] there is no need to go into the details of its formation and interpretation, though I will revisit its significance and relationship to *kana-shi* later in the essay.

On the Eve of *Kana-shi*

The creation of *kana-shi* according to a clear genre-consciousness and methodology can be dated to the Kyōhō 享保 era (1716–1736). To wit, volume one ("Chinese Poems") of Shikō's compilation *Honchō bunkan* 本朝文鑑 (Prose Mirror of Japan, 1718) includes eighteen *kana-shi*, while volume two ("Kana-shi") of *Wakan bunsō* (mentioned above) contains thirty-five *kana-shi*. During these twenty years the composition of *kana-shi* was becoming more popular.

I delve further into the development of *kana-shi* below, but first I would like to discuss a literary experiment that likely had the same roots as *kana-shi* and immediately preceded the period of its popularity. It is a text titled *Wakun santaishi* 和訓三体詩 (Japanese Glosses of *Santishi*, 1715), written by Bashō's disciple Morikawa Kyoriku 森川許六.[10] *Santishi* 三体詩 (Jp. *Santaishi*) was an anthology of mid- and late Tang (618–

7 Yosa Buson, *Isonohana*, pp. 258–59.

8 Translation by Haruo Shirane. Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, pp. 548–49.

9 See, for example, Horikiri, "Buson no haishi," and Kiyoto, "'Hokuju rōsen o itamu' shiron."

10 Murakami, "Kyoriku 'Wakun santaishi' o megutte."

906) poetry collected by the Song-dynasty (960–1279) poet Zhou Bi 周弼 (active mid-thirteenth century). It was read widely in Japan starting in the Muromachi period (1336–1573) and especially in the early Edo period.

According to the preface of *Wakun santaishi*, because Japan and China have different natural environments, even poems about scenery will naturally have different content. If a Japanese poet went to Lake Xihu in China and composed a poem, it would likely be similar to a Tang-period poem. And if a Chinese poet went to Suma or Akashi in Japan and composed a poem, it would likely be similar to a *waka*. Therefore, it is only natural that Chinese people are not able to understand *kanshi* composed by Japanese poets in Japan. "In Japanese *kanshi* and other Sinitic forms of writing," Kyoriku writes, "the particles *te*, *ni*, *o*, and *wa* are inserted in between characters, creating something close to *waka*."[11]

In other words, Kyoriku asserts that it is a physical impossibility for Japanese poets to compose *kanshi* on the same level as Chinese poets. If a Japanese poet composed a verse on Lake Xihu, it would end up infused with Japanese poetic sentiment and would be completely different from that composed by a Chinese poet. Something similar occurs when *kanshi* are translated into Japanese. As a way to experience more directly the world of *kanshi*, Kyoriku advocates creating translations that take into account the rhythms of the original verse and in which Chinese place names, plants, customs, and historical references are replaced by things Japanese.

Let us look at a concrete example, a poem by Zhang Ji 張継 (active early eighth century) that is well known in Japan. First is the original poem, followed by Kyoriku's translation into 7-5 syllabic verse, which functions as a kind of poetic explication.

楓橋夜泊

月落烏啼霜満天　　江楓漁火対愁眠
姑蘇城外寒山寺　　夜半鐘声到客船[12]

"Moored at Night by Maple Bridge"

Crows caw, and frost fills the sky under a sinking moon.
Downcast I doze by the riverside maples, across from fishermen's fires.
Outside the walls of Suzhou City, in Cold Mountain Temple,
The sound of a bell rung for midnight reaches as far as my boat.[13]

Kyoriku's translation:

鞆の夜泊の梶枕。室の浮き寝の波の床。汐馴衣ひと夜妻。かさねて寝んと漕よせて。上りくだりの舟懸り。近付ぶりにかいま見の。空約束に待侘る。門のじやらつき階子の轟き。胸つぶるゝ折からに。田舎渡りのわけ知らず。まかれて人に囉はるゝ。

只独寝の床寒く。月落かゝる淡路島。生田の森の村烏。秋の霜夜の明けかねて。海士のあさり火行違ひ。寝覚の多葉粉くゆらせて。すこし晴行うき眠り。松の嵐の一の谷。須磨寺につく鐘の声。波の枕に伝ひ来て。舟は湊を押出しける。[14]

Moored at night, I sleep among the waves of Muro with my oar for a pillow. A "wife for one night," her robes accustomed to the tides, rows in pursuit of her next customer, tying her boat to those moving upriver and downriver. I wait impatiently for the fulfillment of false promises glimpsed while she pretends to approach. The clattering of a gate, the scraping of a ladder: my heart racing, I feel like a country bumpkin, ignorant of the world. She leaves, laughing at me.

Alone on the cold deck, the moon dips down past Awaji Island. The crows of Ikuta Forest, the autumn

11 Morikawa Kyoriku, *Wakun santaishi*, vol. 1, fol. 1b.
12 Ibid., fol. 7b.
13 Translation by Peter Harris. Harris, *Three Hundred Tang Poems*, p. 259. Slight typographic changes have been made for the sake of consistency.
14 Morikawa Kyoriku, *Wakun santaishi*, vol. 1, fol. 8a. For ease of reading, Kyoriku's translation has been divided into two paragraphs.

frost of an endless night. Fishermen's fires flicker, the tobacco of wakefulness smolders. The weather clears up a bit and I doze on the deck. The storm of pine trees at Ichinotani, the sound of the bell being struck at Sumadera: they resound atop this pillow of waves. The boat departs from the harbor.

The site of the original poem has been replaced by Murotsu, on the Inland Sea, and the content transformed into a particularly Japanese situation: a fleeting tryst with a "female entertainer from Muro."

Next is another famous poem, Wang Wei's 王維 composition about a friend's departure.

送元二使安西

渭城朝雨浥軽塵　　客舎青々柳色新
勧君更尽一盃酒　　西出陽関無故人[15]

"Seeing off Yuan Er on His Mission to Anxi"

A morning rain at the city clears up the light dust,
At the guesthouse, the new willow stand, lush and green.
How about take another cup of wine, my lord?
Once out of the Yangguan Pass, no old friend will be seen.[16]

Kyoriku's translation:

落花の雨に踏迷ふ。旅の別の都出で。鄙の遠山渺々と。霞渡れる磯づたひ。柳の空に麦の風。春の旅寝や寒からん。懇に別を送つて。こしかた行末をかたらふうちに。土器干かねて畳にすえたり。今はやる宮古の時行ぶし。宿の出女。道の馬士。五十里までは諷ふとかや。箱根の関のその先きは。必ず吾妻の歌なるべし。今諷ふ一ふしに。更に一盃を尽すべしと。鞍馬の木の芽漬に。にしめ辛皮をぞ挟みける。[17]

Rain like falling leaves obscures the path. You set out from the capital, departing on your journey. The countryside's distant mountains stretch on and on. Along the rocky shore thick with mist, wheat-stirring wind plays in the willow-green sky. How cold the traveler's lodgings in spring. I send you off warmly: while you talk of your itinerary, the drinking cups are ceaselessly filled and remain out on the tatami. And now a popular song from the buzzing capital: women waiting at the inns, packhorse drivers on the road—I hear you can keep singing for fifty *ri*. Once past Hakone Barrier, you're sure to hear the songs of the East. But since we're still singing the songs of the capital, stay for just one more drink. The simmered bark of young stalks placed between pickled buds from Kurama.

Unfortunately, the translation does not quite capture the fresh atmosphere of "the morning of parting" expressed so concisely in the original. But in the second half of the translation, Kyoriku skillfully transposes "Yangguan Pass" as Hakone Barrier and has the speaker sing one more song from the capital for his friend who is about to depart for the eastern countries.

In ancient Japan a unique method of reading Chinese texts called *kakikudashibun* 書き下し文 was developed, in which diacritic marks and Japanese glosses were added to the original to enable reading according to Japanese word order. Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) criticized this tradition, advocating in *Yakubun sentei* 訳文筌蹄 (Translating with Nets and Snares, 1715) that Chinese texts be read according to their original word order, from top to bottom. He furthermore thought translations should make use of vernacular language and capture the meaning of the original without adding or subtracting anything.[18] *Yakubun sentei* was written in 1711, just before *Wakun santaishi*, though both texts were published in 1715. So it is interesting that right when Sorai was developing his thesis Kyoriku was experimenting with vernacular translation for an entirely different reason. And in fact, Kyoriku's vernacular interpretation of *kanshi*—especially his attempt to structure it as verse with a 7-5 syllabic rhythm—bore a striking similarity to the *kana-shi* that Shikō would compile just a few decades later. The next section will focus on this development.

15 Morikawa Kyoriku, *Wakun santaishi*, vol. 4, fol. 14a.
16 Translation by Ye Yang. Luo, *A Concise History of Chinese Literature*, p. 289.
17 Morikawa Kyoriku, *Wakun santaishi*, vol. 4, fol. 14b.
18 Ogyū Sorai, *Yakubun sentei*, pp. 1–16.

Wa-kan Conflicts

The origins of *kana-shi* can be traced back to the medieval period, when both monk and layman alike composed *gishi* 戯詩 (parodic poetry) and *kyōshi* 狂詩 (humorous poetry), and more recently to the early modern period with the Japanese-style Chinese poetry (*washū* 和習) written by the Hayashi 林 family of Confucian scholars. But it makes more sense to think of *kana-shi* as emerging directly from the efforts to establish *haibun* 俳文 (*haikai* writing) as equal to the more traditional *wabun* 和文.

Wabun signifies Japanese prose writings in contrast to verse forms like *waka* and *renga* 連歌 (linked verse). Representative works include *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji, ca. 1010) and *Sagoromo monogatari* 狭衣物語 (The Tale of Sagoromo, ca. 1069–1077). On the other hand, there was initially no corresponding prose equivalent of *haikai* poetry. So Bashō and his contemporaries launched a movement to create one, and they were in the end drawn to the polar opposite of *wabun*: *kanbun* 漢文 (Chinese writing).

Kanbun consists not only of famous anthologies like *Wenxuan* 文選 (Jp. *Monzen*, Selections of Refined Literature, early sixth century) and *Guwen zhenbao houji* 古文真宝後集 (Jp. *Kobun shinpō kōshū*, Later Collection of True Treasures of Ancient Writing, late thirteenth century) but also works of literary analysis like *Wenzhang guifan* 文章軌範 (Jp. *Bunshō kihan*, Models of Composition, ca. mid-thirteenth century). The *haikai* poets took as their models the different styles codified by these texts—for example, records and accounts (*ki* 記), inscriptions (*mei* 銘), encomia (*san* 賛), prefaces (*jo* 序), and sayings (*setsu* 説)—and created a new, playful literary style that mixed high and low, *wa* 和 and *kan* 漢. The results are archived in the *haibun* collections of the time, including Kyoriku's *Honchō monzen* 本朝文選 (The *Wenxuan* of Japan, 1706, also called *Fūzoku monzen* 風俗文選) and Shikō's *Honchō bunkan* and *Wakan bunsō* (see above). These poets did not stop at stylistic imitation, cultivating a Chinese style in the poems themselves as a way to develop a new form of *haikai*. This was *kana-shi*.

It is important to point out that *kana-shi* was not thought of as simply an "imitation" of Chinese poetry, but seems to have been produced out of a desire to reevaluate the Japanese language and transcend Chinese poetry. In the Chinese-language preface to volume 1 of *Wakan bunsō*, Shikō (using the name Renjibō 蓮二房) writes:

> Savoring writing in a Chinese style is the shame of our country. As a result, from the Hōei era [1704–1711] on, poets have experimented with writing Chinese poems in hiragana, introducing kana words into Chinese poems, and making use of Chinese verse in *kana-shi*. Our country's poetry will help us surpass the Chinese.[19]

In volume 2 of the same text, in a piece entitled "Preface to Writing Chinese Verse in Kana," Rokuandō 鹿安道 (dates unknown) comments:

> Even if words have Chinese and Japanese pronunciations, why should the content of poems be separated in the same way? . . . It was perhaps six years ago when Tōkasen [Shikō], who lives in eastern Mino Province, asked why we should disregard our country's easy-to-read kana script and study the difficult script of another country. He went on to create Chinese poetry in hiragana, and indeed a whole new method of composing Chinese poetry. This should truly be adopted as our country's model writing.[20]

The first passage criticizes the inclination of the Japanese to revere Sinographic culture by stating, "savoring writing in a Chinese style is the shame of our country." And the second passage praises the ease of kana by asking, "why should we disregard our country's easy-to-read kana script and study the difficult script of another country?" What is expressed here is not the conventional, fundamentally passive attitude toward Sinographic culture, but rather one that both reevaluates kana culture and actively engages with and transforms Sinographic culture. This is why the poems of *Wakun santaishi* occupy a position similar to Shikō's *kana-shi*: they are united by a common mentality due to their shared open approach to Chinese poetry. In other words, with *Wakun santaishi* abandoning the interpretive restrictions of reading by gloss (*kundoku* 訓読) and *kana-shi* abandoning the lexical restrictions of Chinese words (*kango* 漢語), there was an attempt to create a literary terrain in which *kanshi* was realized *in Japanese*.

This attitude was anticipated by a fundamental shift, along the lines of a kind of nationalism, in how the Japanese perceived Chinese poetry and writing. The no-

19 Kagami Shikō, *Wakan bunsō*, p. 504.
20 Ibid., p. 525.

tion that Japanese poetry and prose and Chinese poetry and prose are to be treated equally can be traced back to ancient times. For example, *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern, 905) has both kana and *mana* 真名 (Chinese) prefaces, while works such as *Wakan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 (Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing, ca. 1013) arrange Japanese and Chinese poetry to be enjoyed together, and forms such as *wakan renku* 和漢聯句 consist of sequences of alternating Japanese and Chinese verses. Such activity was supported by the idea that while "language" might change, "content" was still the same—in other words, the idea of a mutual Japanese-Chinese sensibility.

But by the seventeenth century it was apparent that this notion of "equality" was being supplanted by a discourse of the superiority of Japanese poetry and prose. Various factors can be offered in explanation, including the relative decline in the status of China (and Chinese culture) brought about by the shifting international situation triggered by the Ming-Qing transition,[21] or the spread of simple and practical kana literacy prompted by the domestic expansion of the literate class.[22] Instead of pursuing the details of these sociohistorical explanations, I will limit myself to introducing several examples of the theory that Japanese poetry and prose was superior.

The first example comes from *Kōshi ben'inshō* 紅紫弁引抄 (On Distinguishing Orthodoxy from Heresy, 1662), a text written by Itō Eiji 伊藤栄治 (d. 1685), the Shimabara-domain scholar of Ise Shinto and Yoshida Shinto. Eiji develops the following argument about the "Japanese language" (*wago* 和語) (that is, Japanese before the introduction of kanji):

> The Japanese language consists of true words from the age of the gods. It fulfills the will of the gods and guides human endeavor. As such, long ago humans were able to use the language of the gods unaltered, but as time passed Chinese words gradually worked their way in. Growing accustomed to this, we lost our Japanese language and began to despise it as though it were a foreign language. It reached the foolish point where it was more venerable to speak with Chinese words. This is the primary expression of our contemptible situation of having forgotten all obligation to the country.[23]

According to Eiji, Japanese is a "god's language" passed down from the age of the gods, but the later influx of Chinese words led to a tendency to revere Chinese and look down on Japanese, and this was a grave mistake. As a Shinto scholar, Eiji's use of a discourse that relativized Chinese is hardly surprising, but even Confucian scholars such as Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行 (1622–1685) undertook a radical reevaluation of Chinese civilization. For example, in the "China" section of *Chūchō jijitsu* 中朝事実 (Facts about the Central Realm, 1669), he wrote:

> It is a matter of natural topography that Japan is the center of the world. The gods were born, the blood of the imperial line was passed down, and we achieved excellence in the ways of the sword and the brush and indeed in all things. Truly it would be appropriate to refer to Japan as the "Middle Kingdom.[24]

And in the "Teachings of the Gods" section he continued:

> Imagine someone who voices the following misgiving. "China does not know much about Japan, but its civilization flourishes. Japan has relied on Chinese civilization and made frequent use of it. In that case, does China not surpass Japan?" Reflecting on this, I find it mistaken. From its founding, Japan has been endowed with the gods' lofty deeds and wise teachings, and even without the knowledge of Chinese texts not a single thing was missing. Fortunately, Japan learned much from China, using

21 For example, in the second volume of "Chōnin bukuro sokobarai" 町人嚢底払 (Emptying the Merchant's Bag, 1719), Nishikawa Joken 西川如見 (1648–1724) writes, "It is deeply troubling that the Ming dynasty, despite its tremendous expansion of knowledge, has now become the domain of the 'northern barbarians'. . . . Should it then be said that countries where knowledge thrives are also full of disorder? There were few texts to consult in ancient Japan; Shinto and Buddhist teachings spread, the country was wealthy, and the people were obedient." Nishikawa Joken, "Chōnin bukuro sokobarai," pp. 140–41.

22 For example, Konta Yōzō has observed that during the Genroku 元禄 era (1688–1704) wealthy farmers in the rural areas around Osaka purchased and consumed large quantities of kana texts, for both educational and entertainment purposes, including *ukiyozōshi* 浮世草子 fiction, *terakoya* 寺子屋 textbooks, practical handbooks (*chōhōki* 重宝記), and encyclopedic dictionaries (*setsuyōshū* 節用集). Konta, *Edo no hon'ya san*, pp. 55–58.

23 Itō Eiji, "Kōshi ben'inshō," vol. 1, fols. 2b–3a.

24 Yamaga Sokō, *Chūchō jijitsu*, p. 19.

> the strong points to aid in the administration of imperial rule, but this has more to do with Japan's tolerant attitude.[25]

In this way, Sokō situated Japan at the center of the world and espoused a kind of Japanese Sinocentrism. That he would go so far as to say "even without the knowledge of Chinese texts not a single thing was missing" demonstrates, I think, Sokō's precarious position as a Confucian scholar.

These expressions of Japanese supremacy in the second half of the seventeenth century eventually developed into the nativist ideologies of *kokugaku* 国学 and *mitogaku* 水戸学 in the first half of the eighteenth century. *Kana-shi* reached peak popularity in the early eighteenth century, right in between these two phenomena. As we will see below, it was widely accepted during this period that Japanese poetry and prose (kana writing) was superior to Chinese poetry and prose, a fact that must be acknowledged if the history of *kana-shi* is to be properly understood.

The Suika Shinto scholar Tomobe Yasutaka 伴部安崇 (1667–1740) discussed the differences between Japanese and Chinese in *Wakan mondō* 和漢問答 (A Dialogue on Japan and China, copied in 1710). He declares:

> It is foolish to look down on Japanese readings in kana and venerate Chinese writing. Language is a flower that blooms from the heart. If one's heart is clear, one's words will have elegance. Writing takes shape according to the country in which it develops. Furthermore, with kanji it is always the case that not enough can be said, and unless there is a large number of annotations the meaning will be unclear. When reading by gloss [*kundoku*] immediate understanding is possible with only a single character or perhaps a few words. Let it be known that if you compare composing a Chinese poem to composing a Japanese poem, the meaning of the latter is transmitted and understood more easily than that of the former.[26]

In other words, language is a representation of the thoughts of a people from a particular nation, and the form of writing also reflects the character of the nation. So for the language of the Japanese people, it is Japanese words and not Chinese words, kana and not kanji, that can communicate thoughts more completely. The thinking here is not that Chinese words and kanji are essentially inferior to Japanese words and kana, but rather that the latter occupy a position of superiority within the territory of Japan.

Furthermore, the Yoshida Shinto scholar Masuho Zankō 増穂残口 (1655–1742), in a discussion of *Wakan rōeishū* in his *Suguji no tokoyogusa* 直路乃常世草 (Notes on the Direct Path to the Eternal Land, 1717), makes the following argument:

> As early as *Wakan rōeishū*, there was the idea of organizing a text around recitations of Japanese and Chinese poetry. Japan occupied the higher position and Japanese readings softened the scrap-metal characters [i.e., kanji] of that other country, demonstrating the straightforward way. Comparing the two educates all people about the superior feelings of the country of the gods.[27]

Zankō then writes, borrowing the words of Kenkō 兼好 (active fourteenth century) and Gensei 元政 (1623–1668), "It is regrettable that compared to Japanese poetry, Chinese poetry has no deep emotion." In this passage Zankō develops the idea that Japanese poetry and prose can express straightforward feelings and deep emotions, while Chinese poetry and prose cannot. This is close to a theory of absolute Japanese supremacy, far removed from the theory of Japan's relative superiority or the idea of mutual Japanese-Chinese feeling.

It seems that similar ideas influenced the Nagasaki astronomer Nishikawa Joken 西川如見 (1648–1724). In the first volume of "Chōnin bukuro sokobarai" 町人嚢底払 (Emptying the Merchant's Bag, 1719), he refers to the Japanese mentality as the "Yamato heart" and its expression as the "Yamato form," and criticizes the tendency to look down on these while extolling the "Chinese form." He writes:

> [Japanese writing] is thoroughly pure and mild because it took shape amid the natural environment [of Japan], greatly benefitting the Japanese people. It is the same with Chinese poetry: originally transmitted from China, it has now developed into

25 Ibid., pp. 265–66.
26 Tomobe Yasutaka, "Wakan mondō," fol. 6a–6b.
27 Masuho Zankō, *Suguji no tokoyogusa*, p. 253.

different forms in Japan and China. The Chinese heart, however, is moved only by elegant forms of Chinese origin, while the Yamato heart is softened and made peaceful by not only Japanese poetry but also Chinese poetry, since both forms are created in this country. It follows, then, that reading and reciting a Chinese poem in a Japanese manner should be considered wrong.[28]

The Chinese poetic style was of course formed in China, but because Chinese poetry composed by Japanese poets was inevitably influenced by the "Yamato heart," it was naturally different from that composed by Chinese poets. According to Joken, the imbuing of Chinese poetry with a so-called Japanese style (*washū*) was inevitable, and in reality poems created in Japan were better able to achieve the goal of composition: the cultivation of a peaceful mind.

This is the opposite of Kyoriku and Sorai, who for precisely the same reasons criticized the practice of reading by gloss (*kundoku*) and thought the true meaning of the original text could be reproduced through translation. But both groups shared a manner of thinking that did not treat Chinese poetry and prose as absolute, and actively affirmed techniques of naturalization like reading by gloss and translation.

In the end *kana-shi* was by no means unrelated to the appearance, during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, of this notion of the contingency of Chinese poetry and prose, and the accompanying superiority of Japanese poetry and kana prose. Longer than *waka* and *hokku* 発句 (the opening stanza of a *renga* poem) but shorter than *chōka* 長歌 (long poems of alternating 5-7 syllabic phrases) and *renga* sequences, *kana-shi* marks the creation of a new kind of Japanese fixed-pattern poetry. In terms of form it can be thought of as a fusion of *wa* and *kan*, but from the viewpoint of intellectual history it should be seen as a literary art that came into being under the particularly strong influence of *wa*.

The Evolution of *Kana-shi*

In this way, *kana-shi* developed as a literary form that had a uniquely tense relationship with both domestic forms like *waka* and *renga* and the foreign form of Chinese poetry. Having given only one example of *kana-shi* thus far, I would now like to analyze several more from the Kyōhō era. The first is by Tōkasen 桃花仙, an alias of Shikō.

和漢に花を賞す

花はよし花ながら　見る人おなじからず
ぼたんには蝶ねむり　さくらには鳥あそぶ
たのしさを鼓にさき　さびしさを鐘にちる
唐にいざ芳野あらば　詩をつくり歌よまむ[29]

"Japanese and Chinese Praise for Flowers"

Flowers are always flowers,
but the people who look at them are different.

A butterfly sleeps on a peony,
a bird plays amid the cherry blossoms.

Peonies bloom happily to the sound of the drum,
cherry blossoms scatter with sadness to the sound of the bell.

If there were indeed a Yoshino in China,
we could compose both Chinese and Japanese poems.

Since this poem consists of four couplets, with each line made up of two five-syllable phrases, it takes the basic form of five-character regulated verse (*gogon risshi*). The even-numbered lines rhyme, ending with the sounds *zu*, *bu*, *ru*, and *mu*. The gist of the poem is that while there may be disagreements about which flower is best, Japanese and Chinese poetry display a similar admiration for flowers. The poem sets up skillful oppositions between *wa* and *kan*—for example, "peony" (*kan*) and "cherry blossom" (*wa*) in the second couplet—and

28 Nishikawa Joken, "Chōnin bukuro sokoharai," pp. 105–106.

29 Kagami Shikō, *Honchō bunkan*, pp. 247–58.

ends with an expression of their affinity for one another. This takes the form of an allusion to a *haikai*[30] by Fujiwara no Tokihira 藤原時平 (871–909) from the "Miscellaneous" section of *Kokin wakashū*: "although you retreat / deep within the Yoshino / Mountains distant as / far Cathay I am not one / who will be left behind here"[31] (唐土の吉野の山に籠もるとも遅れむと思ふわれならなくに).[32] The poem makes expert use of contrasting lines and it is a work that truly deserves the title of *hiragana no kanshi*.

Next is a poem by Seki Kakaku 石過角 (dates unknown) from Naoetsu in Echigo Province:

雪に寄する恋

笠に越路の雪踏みわけて
　　とはぬ心を君はしらずも
あだなりし名の風も吹ねば
　　変らぬ色を松にたぐへよ
人は臂さへたちあかせしに
　　我も船には乗りおくれじと
実に見渡せば月の夜すがら
　　木にも茅にもつもる思ひを[33]

"Love Visited by Snow"

Beneath this sedge hat I walk the snow-covered
　　Echigo road,
though you do not know I have no intention to visit.

If only no one had caught wind of my rumored bad
　　reputation,
then you might still think me everlasting as the
　　color of pines.

Like the one who cut off his own arm in pursuit,
I too pledge not to miss the boat.

Casting out a glance at the moon-drenched night,
my thoughts accumulate like snow on the trees and
　　the thatch.

Since this poem consists of four couplets, with each line made up of two seven-syllable phrases, it takes the basic form of seven-character regulated verse (*shichigon risshi*). The even-numbered lines rhyme, ending with the sounds *mo*, *yo*, *to*, and *o*. The poem encapsulates the heartbreak of wanting to visit one's beloved but not being able to because of the snow. The first two couplets declare the speaker's unwavering love using thoroughly *waka*-like imagery, while the last two couplets use two allusions to express how the speaker's desire to immediately be with his beloved compounds like all-pervading snow. "Cut off his own arm" alludes to the story of how Huike 慧可 cut off his own arm on a snowy day and offered it to Bodhidharma to show his dedication as a disciple. "I too pledge not to miss the boat" alludes to the story of the Eastern Jin (317–420) literatus Wang Huizhi 王徽之 (courtesy name Ziyou 子猷, d. 388), who on a snowy night took a boat to the residence of his friend Tai Kui 戴逵 (courtesy name Andao 安道, d. 395?) so that they could enjoy the moon together. Coursing with elegant language (words used in *waka* and *renga*), the poem feels like a sustained *waka* and yet it is not a *chōka*, which shares the same 7-5 syllabic rhythm. It instead forms its own coherent world.

And lastly a poem by Kō Saha 高左把 (1714–1799) from Owari Province:

梅を詠ず

梅よ　先ひらけ　　みんなみのえだ
雪の　降とても　　春めきながら
闇は　あやなしと　たれかいふらむ
窓に　香をおくる　あかつきのはな

"On Plum Blossoms"

O plum blossoms!　First, bloom　branches facing
　　south.
Snow　though it falls　it is springlike.
Darkness　how foolish it is.　Who said that?
Through the window　drifts a scent　the flowers
　　at dawn.

30 The "Miscellaneous" section contains a total of fifty-eight *haikai*, a term that in the context of *Kokin wakashū* signifies a humorous poem that uses language otherwise considered unfit for *waka*. Rodd and Henkenius, *Kokinshū*, p. 348.
31 Ibid., p. 359.
32 *Kokin wakashū*, p. 390.
33 Kagami Shikō, *Honchō bunkan*, p. 264.

This poem about the scent of early spring plum blossoms is modeled on Li Bai's 李白 (701–762) "three-five-seven-character poems" (unorthodox poems made up of lines consisting of three, five, and seven characters) found in volume seven of *Guwen zhenbao houji*.[34] Here a combination of three, five, and seven characters forms each line, which repeated four times makes up a quatrain. The lines end on an "a" rhyme: *da*, *ra*, and *na*. The third line is clearly based on a poem by Ōshikōchi no Mitsune 凡河内躬恒 (fl. ca. 900) from *Kokin wakashū*: "how foolish is the / darkness on this spring night— / though it conceals the / plum blossoms' charm and color / it cannot hide their perfume"[35] (春の夜の闇はあやなし梅の花色こそ見えね香やはかくるゝ).[36] Variations like this, quite distant from the established form, were attempted.

The poems I have discussed so far are all what we might call "pure" *kana-shi*. But there are actually more than a few *haibun* that contain *shi*-like elements even if they do not take the form of *shi*. Examples include Ranran's 嵐蘭 (1647–1693) "Ka o yaku no ji" 蚊を焼くの辞 (Song of Burning a Mosquito)[37] and Sodō's 素堂 (1642–1716) "Minomushi no setsu" 蓑虫の説 (On a Bagworm),[38] which with no fixed rhyme scheme or syllable count can be described as free-verse poetry written in classical language. A particularly good example is Shikō's "Shōkon no fu" 招魂の賦 (Rhapsody on the Return of a Spirit, in volume 3 of *Honchō monzen*). Since it is a long piece I will analyze only the opening section:

> 西方に吾翁の魂あり。行ていづこにか帰ざらむ。たましゐ速に帰来れ。
>
> ことし神無月十日あまり。湖南の旧草に、門人あそむでたましゐをまつ。またばなどか帰り来ざらむ。たましゐ、それかへり来れ。
>
> 柴門に春の花ちれば、鳥驚て別をうらむ。蓬窓に秋の月落れば、人荒て住ずなりぬ。
>
> されば、すみれ草の住よき世中に、何に卯の花の垣ねとはよみけむ。時鳥の行衛なからむにも、春の雁の終にかへらずやあらむ。
>
> しからばたましゐ、いづこに行としてか、還るに道なからむ。還来れ〳〵。[39]
>
> The old man's spirit is in the west. Has he gone somewhere, never to return? Come back quickly, spirit!
>
> Around the tenth day of the tenth month of this year, the disciples will gather in his old residence and wait for the spirit. How could it not return when we're waiting? Spirit, come back!
>
> When blossoms scatter on the brushwood gate, startled birds will cry out in lament. When the autumn moon descends over the mugwort hut, people will panic and stop visiting.
>
> So why would he write about "a hedge of deutzias"[40] in a comfortable world full of wild violets? Even if the cuckoo has lost its way, how could the spring geese not return in the end?
>
> And so, spirit, regardless of where you've gone, there must be a way to return home. Come back, come back!

Shikō wrote this on the sixth anniversary of his teacher Bashō's death. "Old man" here refers to Bashō, and the poem speaks of an attempt to bring back his spirit. What makes it unique is the refrain, immediately evident upon an initial reading: "Spirit, come back!" It repeats three times in the passage I have quoted, and the word *kaeru* ("return" or "come back") appears eight times.

As mentioned, this is not a pure *kana-shi*, though the refrain "Spirit, come back!" endows it with a poetic rhythm and the piece certainly gives the overall impression of a Chinese poem. Furthermore, its structure is

34 Kagami Shikō, *Wakan bunsō*, p. 528.
35 Rodd and Henkenius, *Kokinshū*, p. 60.
36 *Kokin wakashū*, p. 75.
37 Morikawa Kyoriku, *Honchō monzen*, pp. 389–90.
38 Ibid., pp. 423–24.
39 Ibid., pp. 411–12. Line breaks have been added for readability.
40 The "u" in *u no hana* (deutzia) simultaneously denotes the word *u* 憂 (sorrow). In *waka* poetics, deutzias are often associated with the cuckoo.

similar to Buson's "Mourning the Old Sage Hokuju," discussed above. There are several theories about how Buson's poem came into being,[41] but if we pay close attention to its poetic form we see that instead of being a pure *kana-shi* it was in fact largely influenced by poetic *haibun* such as those written by Shikō. Furthermore, the basic content of "Rhapsody on the Return of a Spirit"—the feeling of anguish that comes with mourning the deceased—is also shared by "Morning the Old Sage Hokuju."

Another *Kana-shi*

The *kana-shi* theorized by Shikō and his contemporaries during the Kyōhō era continued to be composed by their disciples, but unlike *waka* and *haiku* it never achieved popularity among a more general audience. Buson's "Morning the Old Sage Hokuju" is deemed a miracle because in actuality most of his *kana-shi* (or works similar to *kana-shi*) do not remain. It is astounding that it is one of the few pieces that have survived.

In this way, by the second half of the eighteenth century *kana-shi* had mostly fallen out of fashion, and I would next like to introduce a text from this time period that has rarely been discussed. Entitled *Shibun seishiki* 詩文製式 (Model Poetry and Prose, preface dated 1770), it was written by a man named Hori Seijun 堀正純 (courtesy name Shūan 修安, art name Tōsen 東川, dates unknown). Not much is known about Hori, but considering the contents of the text he seems to have been a scholar of the Chinese classics with a particular interest in poetry. It also appears that Hori inherited the text after it was left unfinished by his grandfather Hakusui 栢翠 (familiar name Seiku 正矩, art name Ketsuho 絜甫, dates unknown). Ōe Genbō 大江玄圃 (1729–1794), known for works like *Maniai hayagakumon* 間合早学問 (Makeshift Easy Learning, 1766), contributed the preface. The text states:

> Poetry and composition are originally vocal literary arts, so sound and rhythm occupy an important position. As such, Chinese poetry and composition created by contemporary Japanese has little meaning. The reason is that prosody is influenced by a country's language and natural features. As non-native speakers of Chinese, Japanese poets cannot produce anything of quality, even if they imitate Chinese works. Doing so is no different from reciting a spell. Japan and China are utterly alike in terms of rationality, but when it comes to language and natural features there is a decisive difference.[42]

For example, the famous poem by Wang Wei discussed above along with Kyoriku's translation would have been read with Chinese-style pronunciations as follows:

渭 城 朝 雨 浥 軽 塵
oi jin chau iu ii kin jin
客 舎 青 々 柳 色 新
ke sei tsuin tsuin riu sue suin
勧 君 更 尽 一 盃 酒
gen kyun ken tsuin i poi chiu
西 出 陽 関 無 故 人
sui chiu yan kuwan ū kū jin[43]

What makes the original a poem is its prosody and melody; simply reading it with Chinese pronunciations made it as unintelligible as the wording of a sutra. On the other hand, adding reading glosses (*kunten* 訓点) would have distorted the meter, causing it to lose its poetic quality.

Hori's suggestion was to translate the poem in the following way:

よどのあしたにむら雨(さめ)ふりて
　みちもきよらに軒端(のきば)のやなぎ
いともうつくしみどりのころも
　つねはめさずとかはらけまいれ
須磨(すま)の関路(せきぢ)を過(すぎ)こしかたは
　けゝらしる人(ひと)あらざらめ[44]

41 According to Ebara Taizō, Buson was not influenced by *kana-shi* but instead by the popular poetic works created by the Edo school 江戸座 of *haikai* poets. See Ebara, "Shunpū batei kyoku no genryū." Shimizu Takayuki critiqued this view, pointing out that *kana-shi* were popular among the Edo-*za* poets and situating Buson's poem within the development of *kana-shi*. See Shimizu, "Haishi to sono kanshō." Other scholars have argued similarly (see Matsumoto, "Haishi (Jō)" and "Haishi (Ge)," and Horikiri, "Buson no haishi"). Hino Tatsuo further notes that climbing a hill to mourn the dead was a conventional theme in Chinese poetry, and so Buson's poem can also be understood as an adaptation into Japanese of this sort of elegy. See Hino, "Shintaishi no ichi genryū."

42 Hori Seijun, *Shibun seishiki*, vol. 1, fols. 1a–4b.
43 Ibid., vol. 1, fols. 2b–3a.
44 Ibid., fol. 2b.

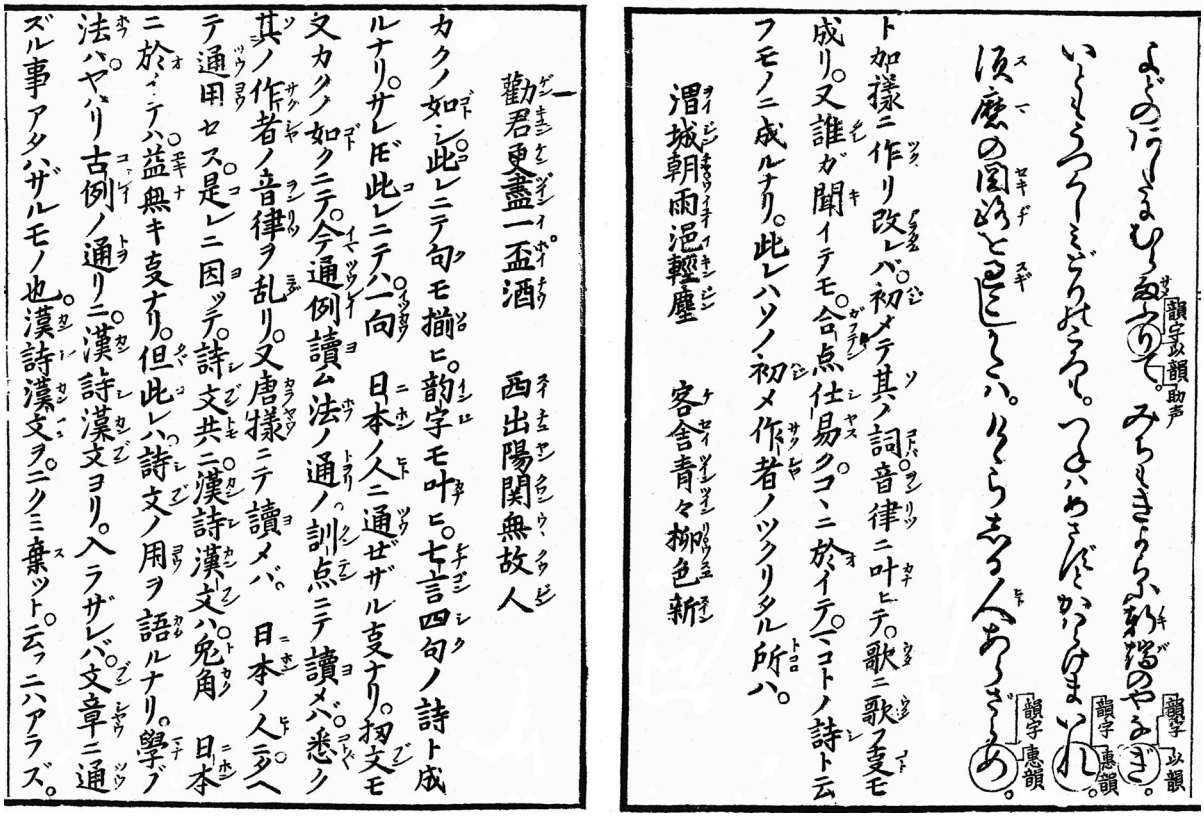

Figure 2. Hori Seijun. *Shibun seishiki*. 1770, Edo period. Kyoto. Permission of the National Diet Library.

> Passing showers fall this morning at Yodo,
> cleansing the road. A willow tree by the eaves,
> exceptionally beautiful clothed in green.
> You don't usually drink but go ahead and have a cupful.
> If you've passed the barrier at Suma,
> no one is likely to know your thoughts.

Hori translates the original poem using lines made up of two seven-syllable phrases, while also remaining conscious of rhyme. In this way he is able to transfer the meaning and meter of the original poem into Japanese (figure 2).

This first half of Hori's argument seems mostly aligned with the problems that Kyoriku and Shikō tackled in the early eighteenth century. Hori does not, however, comment on these and instead claims that the argument is solely his own. On the other hand, it is possible that the *kana-shi* composed by Shikō and his contemporaries had become such an obscure current that by the Meiwa 明和 era (1764–1772) it had mostly lost the attention of those beyond *haikai* circles.

In line six of his translation Hori uses the word *kekera* ("thoughts"), which is found in the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves, compiled ca. 759) and seems to have been eastern dialect for *kokoro*. Also, in the original manuscript the rhyming characters are circled; in my transcription, rhyme is indicated by a small dot placed above the character (the same method is used below). In lines one and two *furite* rhymes with *yanagi*, while in lines four and six *maire* rhymes with *arazarame*.

Hori referred to this kind of *kana-shi* as *washi* (Japanese Chinese-style poetry), so I will use the same term from here on. It seems that Hori's aim in composing *washi* was somewhat different from that of the *haikai* poets in composing *kana-shi*. This takes us into the second half of his argument:

> It might be said that the experimental *washi* I compose are without skill. But they are a necessary step in the eventual appearance of a writer of Japanese

who can create literature equal to the hymns and eulogies from the *Shijing* 詩経 [Book of Songs] and the canons and consultations from the *Shujing* 書経 [Book of Documents]. Then enlightenment will spread, even to women and fools, and we will say, "China is not a civilized country. *Zuo zhuan* 佐伝 [Commentary of Zuo], *Guoyu* 国語 [Discourses of the States], *Chu ci* 楚辞 [Songs of Chu], and the *Zhuangzi*—these are not exceptional works of literature. Shun 舜, who is that? How is he any different from me?" Our country will expand the light of knowledge ever more, "and won't it be the kind of pleasure that comes once every thousand years?"[45]

In sum, in terms of the general framework of poetry and prose—for example, structure and rhyme for poetry, the major and lesser hymns for prose—the "form" was borrowed from China while the "content" was supplied by Japan. Continuing like this Japan would close in on the poetic level attained by China and one day *surpass* it. Hence compared to the *kana-shi* of Shikō and his contemporaries, the unique feature of Hori's poetics was its lack of a belletristic, playful orientation in favor of one more didactic and practical.

What were *washi* composed according to these concepts actually like? Let us first examine a work classified by Hori as a *kuniburi uta* 国風 (Ch. *guofeng*). The term was originally the name of a section in the *Shijing* and it refers to folk songs and popular songs.

高槻川

いさやむかしのをとづれたへて。思ひかへなんね
　たくはあろと。
まめにたへなばまかるもよしな。これもいましの
　ひとはなごゝろ。
高槻川のせゞのみづ。すまばなれぎぬあらはまし。
高槻川のせゞのみづ。にごらばあとをあらはまし。[46]

"Takatsuki River"

And so the visits of old have ceased.
Reflecting on it, she must've been envious.
Had she been able to bear it admirably, it would
　have been foolish to leave.
This too is merely a moment's fleeting affection.
The shallows of the Takatsuki River:
if they're clear, I'll wash my well-worn robe.
The shallows of the Takatsuki River:
if they're muddied, I'll wash my feet.

The poem consists of eight lines. Each of the first four lines contains two seven-syllable phrases, while each of the last four contains one seven-syllable phrase and one five-syllable phrase. The rhyming schema is somewhat complex, with *ro* repeating in the second and fourth lines, *tzu* repeating in the fifth and seventh, and *shi* repeating in the sixth and eighth. The poem seems to tell of a man who is considering whether or not he should call on a woman who has not visited in a long time. The meaning is slightly unclear, but in any case it indeed has the feel of a *kuniburi uta* and is firmly a part of the limitless world of folk song. The second half is clearly an adaptation of "Yufu ci" 漁父辞 (The Fisherman's Song), attributed to Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340–278 BCE).[47]

Next I will turn to one of the poems that Hori calls a *sunai masauta* 小雅 (Ch. *xiaoya*, "lesser hymns").

花の月

秋の最中や花の月。てりそふみきのすがむしろ。
今宵思ひはたがふかい。恋の波うつきぬのをと。[48]

"Moon Flowers"

A mid-autumn moon shines on the blossoms,
illuminating the sedge mats placed around the trees.
Which feelings run deeper tonight?
The sound of fulling clothes brings swells of love.

Hori annotates this poem as "corresponding to a Chinese five-character quatrain";[49] each of the four lines consists of one seven-syllable phrase and one five-syllable phrase. The rhyme occurs at the end of the second and fourth lines with *ro* and *to*. This poem is impossible to distinguish from a folk love ballad and would be

45 Hori Seijun, *Shibun seishiki*, vol. 2, fol. 15b.
46 Ibid., fol. 16b. In Hori's original poem there are no "forced" line breaks, but they are added both here and in the next poem for ease of reading.
47 *Kobun shinpō: Kōshū*, p. 12.
48 Hori Seijun, *Shibun seishiki*, vol. 2, fols. 16b–17a.
49 Ibid.

at home in *Kanginshū* 閑吟集 (Collection of Intoned Songs, 1518) or *Matsu no ha* 松の葉 (Pine Needles, 1703).

In the end Hori's experiments with *washi*, despite having the lofty goal of surpassing the literary achievements of China, hardly appear to have achieved their ambitions. If his intention was to incite national pride, advocating the direct study of Japanese poetry and prose in opposition to China, as contemporary native studies scholars did, would have been more effective. Even in terms of content, Hori's poems are inferior to the *haikai* poets' imaginative and wide-ranging *kana-shi* discussed above. Hori's *washi* lacks appeal in multiple senses of the word, and his declarations ended in a misfire. Nonetheless, it does show that the idea of Chinese poetry providing the "form" and Japanese expression providing the "content" was employed in contexts other than *haikai*, and thus deserves more attention than it has received.

Conclusion

Kana-shi was a new kind of poetry, distinct from *kanshi*, *waka*, and *haikai*. As stated above, in this sense it shared a deep conceptual similarity with Meiji-period *shintaishi*. So why is it that *kana-shi* declined and *shintaishi* flourished? This is a fascinating problem that is beyond the scope of this essay. What I can say is that in the end *kana-shi* was essentially derivative of *kanshi*, *waka*, and *haikai*. Of course, *kana-shi* has its own particular points of interest and seems to have attained literary significance, and my decision to write this essay was motivated by a desire to engage with it more actively. But in the Edo period it was for the most part treated simply as an eccentric and pedantic experiment. In his text *Fumyōja* 不猫蛇 (An Enemy Neither Cat Nor Snake, 1725), Shikō's intellectual rival Etsujin 越人 (ca. 1656–1730) of Nagoya wrote that "Chinese poetry is being composed in kana but we already have *waka*. These poets must simply like making imitations that mislead people."[50] And the mid-Edo *haikai* poet Kasaya Saren 笠屋左簾 (1714–1779) wrote the following in *Kojiki bukuro* 乞食袋 (Beggar's Bag, date unknown):

> Lately a type of *kyōshi* [humorous poetry] called *kana-shi* is being composed. It seems to consist of four lines of seven kana characters, a vowel-based rhyme scheme, and the four-part structure of a Chinese poem (introduction, development, turn, conclusion). The best works of Chinese poetry delight in subtext and disdain practical utility, and it goes without saying that the poems of Li Bai and Du Fu 杜甫 [712 – 770] exemplify this. One could say that *haikai* poems endowed with this same spirit are also exemplary works, but I would like to know what is so interesting about *kana-shi*. It should not even be called *kyōshi*.[51]

From Saren's perspective, *kana-shi* lacked the deeper meaning that characterized Chinese poetry and *kyōshi*.

On the other hand, Meiji-period *shintaishi* is thought to have been modeled on Western poetry, but since actual Western poetry does not seem to have been widely recognized at the time, *shintaishi* could not have been regarded as simply an "imitation." Furthermore, in both form and content *shintaishi* displayed an extremely high degree of freedom and informality that overturned the conventional poetics that had persisted throughout the Edo period, meaning writers active at the time must have sensed the possibility of creating an entirely new kind of poetry.[52] This development hence has implications for understanding the rapid shift in aesthetic sensibility from high to low[53] that took place during the transition from Edo to Meiji, but that is a matter for another essay.

50 Etsujin, *Fumyōja*, pp. 319–20.

51 Kasaya Saren, "Kojiki bukuro," vol. 2, fol. 8a.

52 Hino, "Shintaishi no ichi genryū"; Ibi, *Kinsei bungaku no kyōkai*, pp. 439–64; Aoyama, "Kinsei inbun to shite no shintaishi."

53 Nakano, *Jū-hachi seiki no Edo bungei*, pp. 2–65.

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