After "Mountain Doves": Two Tanka Strings by Yaichi Aizu "Kannondō Temple" and "Brushwood Sellers"

Sanford Goldstein and Fujisato Kitajima

Kannondō Temple

#1
I spread sheets of paper
on the temple's wooden floor—
I do it alone now
trying to dry the mold
off the *udon* noodles

#2
absorbed in writing my poem
and yet how this sunlight
shifts to shadow
on these drying rows
of *udon* noodles on the temple floor

#3
I go down
and squat on a stone
before the stream by the temple gate,
and with the day crawling to its close
I scrape soot from the bottom of a pan

#4
should you look down
from somewhere in the other-world,
how you would grieve to see
clumsy hands cooking for myself
these days in the kitchen

#5
under these eaves
where the overgrown weeds
stand at a remarkable height
and begin to flower—
oh now I am living alone

#6
my garden gone to seed,
the green stems of the *yamabuki* rose plants
spreading tall like overgrown branches,
the white lespedeza
flowering above these tangled vines

#7
already the autumn lespedeza
are blooming white
though the one
who planted them
has long been gone from this world

#8
late in autumn
from hives in the temple eaves
a circle of bees is seen
beating their wings
against the thatch

#9
who was it
came in secret
late at night
to strike the altar bell
at that time when even the Buddha himself lies dreaming?

#10
this sadness I feel
when behind the temple
and beneath trees thick with leaves,
I see the sun's rays
scattering over the wild weeds

Notes to Poems:

Writes Aizu in his explanatory notes in his tanka collection *Kantōshū* (*Cold Lights*, 1947): "In the Kannondō, the wooden Kannon statues are enshrined according to the suggested route of the thirty-three places of pilgrimage in Shikoku. On the other side of the Kannondō, beyond the narrow courtyard is the living quarters of the temple, separated by a narrow corridor. It was in the living quarters that I lived. These quarters had another name, the Fumonan [the hermitage of the Kannon's virtue], but it is commonly known as Kannondō." "Kannondō Temple" was composed in August, 1945.

The Kannondō was a Buddhist temple built by the second founder of the Tango family in the fourth year of Meiwa (1767). It contained one hundred small statuettes of the Goddess of Mercy (the Kannon in Buddhism). The founder of the temple shaved his head and became a bonze and lived there for the rest of his days.

In the social reform after Japan's defeat in World War II, the Tango family could not maintain the temple with its needed repairs. Both the temple and the Fumonan were dismantled in 1953, and only the pillars and its one hundred figurines of the Kannon were preserved at Taisōji Temple

close by.

The translators visited the site on July 10, 1994, fifty years after the death of Kiiko, Aizu's adopted daughter. Weeds were rampant. The only reminder of the early days was the stone bridge over a stream on which Kiiko, only once, was carried in a cart from the Tango residence to the Kannondo on July 3, 1945. Nowadays songs of the cuckoo and mountain doves can still be heard.

#1

What is happening here may be surprising not only to Western readers but to modern Japanese as well. Aizu is trying to save the *udon* noodles from becoming stale and inedible. *Udon* in this tanka is of the dry variety and resembles spaghetti. The *udon* one finds nowadays in supermarkets cannot be stored, but the type of *udon* in this tanka can be stored like rice. Yet in storing it, care must be taken to "air" the *udon* at intervals, especially in summer. In this tanka Aizu is trying to save the *udon* from becoming stale due to neglect. After drying it by spreading it on the temple floor, the "mold" is blown off or brushed off. By this process the *udon* is saved and becomes edible again, though the taste is somewhat harmed.

During and immediately after World War II, *udon* was a precious food next only to rice. Even before the war, it was a staple in poor mountainous districts unsuitable for rice farming. So the *udon*, though somewhat moldy, was precious to Aizu. Kiiko, who was an able housekeeper, had stored it with care, but owing to her illness and subsequent death, the *udon* was left without care and became moldy.

Aizu made this discovery when he decided to prepare some to eat. He tried to save the precious food by drying it.

While clumsily spreading it on papers on the floor to air it, he must have remembered Kiiko, realizing at that moment how much loving care she had taken to enable him to concentrate on his studies and tanka-making and calligraphy without being troubled about how to get enough food during the war. This, in its turn, deepened Aizu's sorrow and loneliness all the more. Though the tanka itself is Aizu's objective description of drying the moldy *udon*, he was trying indirectly to describe his own lonely mind.

#2

Aizu had spread the *udon* on the floor so that it could fully receive the sunlight, but while he was absorbed in writing his tanka by the rows of *udon*, the sun had shifted so that the *udon* was in the shade. (The words *mono kaki oreba* may be translated as "writing something," so Aizu might have been writing a letter or even practicing his calligraphy. We prefer to translate the words as related to writing a tanka.) The transience of life is suggested by the sudden shift from sunlight to shade. Thus the drying *udon* is closely associated with Kiiko in the poet's mind. That he had not noticed the shifting of the sunny spot on the floor, which nearly foiled his aim of drying out the mold on the noodles, causes Aizu to remember Kiiko and thus agains deepens his loneliness. Life is transient in the same way that the sun shifts imperceptibly and is gone.

#3

From the Taishō period and on, faggots were used in cooking. Thus soot accumulates at the bottom of a pan and forms a layer of dirt. Since a thick layer of soot disturbs the conduction of heat in a pan, it has to be scraped off with an old knife. Any man doing this kind of work must have looked pathetic. This woeful image of Aizu deepens our feelings of his misery and loneliness after Kiiko's

death.

#6

In a well-tended garden, the *hagi* or lespedeza is shortened after the flowers have scattered so that the plant will not become too high. If not, the plant will become as tall as a small tree, and flowers of the *hagi* in their next blooming will be seen only at the top of this "tree." The *yamabuki* plant, a kind of yellow rose, is also clipped short each year so that it will not grow too tall. In the untended garden of the Kannondō, both plants were overgrown, and the flowers of the *hagi*, which are supposed to appear much closer to the ground, opened above the overgrown *yamabuki* stems. The *hagi* flowers in autumn, at which time the *yamabuki* are bare, slender stems. These tangled vines, their flowering over, above which the white flowers of the *hagi* are growing, perhaps suggest to us the state of Aizu's mind after the death of Kiiko.

#7

Usually the flowers of the *hagi* are reddish purple, but a variety of *hagi* flowers exists which is white. White *hagi* are more quiet and are often associated with lonely or dead women. Called an autumn flower, it begins to bloom from the end of summer. The flowers are seen from the top to the lower half of a long thin elastic stem. The purple variety are often compared to graceful women, especially ladies in sorrow. The person who planted these white *hagi* was not Kiiko, yet Aizu's note on the poem recalls the woman who had planted these flowers and thus by indirection recalls Kiiko with her love of nature. Aizu in the *Kantōshu* says that possibly the mother of the venerable Shunjō Ichishima (1860-1944) had lived at the Kannondō in her declining years. Perhaps she had planted these flowers at that time.

Japanese readers may remember the close association between the color white and death, between white and funerals. Most formal wear at a traditional Japanese funeral is white.

Shunjō Ichishima was born in the famous Kadoichi Ichishima family in Suibara-machi in Niigata Prefecture. Later he became the first director of the library of Waseda University, and at the same time he used his considerable administrative skills for the university. For fourteen years (1922-1935) Aizu lived rent-free in Shimo-ochiai Shūsōdō, the villa of Shunjō. These fourteen years were Aizu's prime years as a scholar. Seijirō, related to this Ichishima family, married Iku Aizu (the mother of Aizu) and took the Aizu family name. Seijirō was brought up by the Tango family until sometime in his twenties.

#8

Various kinds of bees build hives under eaves. They build hives under the sunny eaves so that their eggs and larvae can survive the winter. Aizu is watching this scene, possibly thinking of the bees' warm hives for wintering, a contrast to his own lonely existence now that Kiiko is gone. On the other hand, the bees are active—all Aizu could do was remain at the Kannondō, a retreat from life, and brood over the death of Kiiko.

#9

This large bell painted black is called *keisu* and the wooden bell-hammer *bai*, both of which are larger than those in a typical Buddhist household.

The bell referred to is an altar bell placed on a stand before the altar. This bell is struck at times during the reciting of sutras. It emits a clear tinkling sound. Japanese houses

with a god-shelf or *butsudan* have such bells. The altar bell at the Kannondō, however, was a large one.

The question is open as to who struck the bell? It was probably struck by an aged mother who had secretly come to offer prayers for the safe return of her son from a battlefield in World War II. Usually this was done at the time of *ushinokoku* (the time of the ox)—the hours from two to four in the morning, the visit to a temple at this time called *ushinokokumairi*. Perhaps an aged mother came to the Kannondō at this late hour because no one would be around to disturb her. Moto'o Iwatsu in his *Aizu Yaichi* (Ōfūsha, 1988, p. 159) has suggested that the newly departed soul of Kiiko has come to ring the bell. A Japanese who has just died is a "Hotoke" (a new Buddha). We prefer that the ringer of the altar bell be ambiguous. Aizu wonders who it is, but he himself asks by framing the tanka in the form of a question.

On the other hand, our imagined old woman might have taken a vow to the Kannon that she would abstain from drinking tea for life if her prayers for the safety of a son on a battlefield were answered. Possibly she would give up sweets or tea for only a period of time, for the more hardship she shouldered, the greater the possibility that her son would return safely from war.

A Buddhist often went at this early hour to place on an enemy a curse, a curse of death. To enact the curse, the petitioner uses a straw doll that bears resemblance to whomever the petitioner wishes to curse, the straw doll nailed either to a gate of the shrine or to a tree for seven days in succession, the person cursed to die after experiencing pain in that part of his body corresponding to where the nail pierced the doll. Of course nowadays this practice is quite rare.

Brushwood Sellers

#1
can winter's snow
be close at hand?
before the gate of the Kannondō where I live alone,
piles of brush
carried in each day by the village woodcutters

#2
before my temple gate
from the piles of brushwood
carried in for days by the woodcutters,
how often those dragonflies
rise in the air

#3
how red in their turning
are the low-hanging leaves
of the cherry trees
beside my temple gate
where the woodcutters have piled high the brush

#4
from the garden of the temple
where I continue to live alone,
I hear the noisy voices of villagers,
haggling perhaps
over the purchase of wood

#5
how warm
this image
of purchased brush
piled under the eaves
of each village household

#6
once the woodcutters' carts have left,
I gather brush
scattered here and there
from the clusters of grass in my yard
and begin the day's cooking

Notes to Poems:

#1

A difference in the term "firewood" and "brushwood" is called for in this series. In America, one uses big trees cut up in handy form. In Japan, big trees are used for building houses. Formerly, near every village was a forest which was systematically felled bit by bit so that trees grew too big to use only as fuel. Such a forest was composed of oak and other broad-leafed trees. Oak, for example, can grow big, but in mountainous Japan big oaks were found only deep in the mountains. Near villages they were regularly cut when young to make charcoal. Small branches and various bushy growths were cut to use as firewood. In America, "firewood" is bigger than that used in Japan, where only bushes and small branches are used. So in this tanka series brush is probably the valid term. The piled-up brush in this instance, however, would be thicker wood for daily use for warmth and cooking. In this series we have for "Shibauri" (literally "brushsellers") used the term "brushwood" or "brush" or "wood" wherever appropriate. Note that comparatively big deciduous trees were used to make charcoal. In Japan, charcoal was used in towns and cities for cooking and heating. "Brushwood Sellers" was composed in October, 1945.

#3

Note that the coloring of cherry trees begins at the lower leaves, their color bright red.

#5

In snow country, and Niigata Prefecture is that, sufficient supply of fuel is the most important preparation against winter—food is equally important. In this instance the "brush" is firewood. The piled up firewood shows that preparation against the oncoming cold weather has been completed—that is, winter is nearing.

Romaji Renderings

Kannondō

1. kannon no/dō no itama ni/kami shikite/udon no kabi o/hitori hoshi ori

2. katawara ni/mono kaki oreba/hoshi nameshi/udon no hikage/utsuroi ni keri

3. kadogawa no/ishi ni ori ite/nabezoko no/sumi kezuru hi wa/kuren to suru mo

4. konogoro no/waga kuriyabe no/tsutanasa o/nare izuku ni ka/mi tsutsu nagekan

5. nokishita ni/tachitaru kusa no/takadakato/hana saki idenu/hitori sumereba

6. niwa arete/hae hirogoreru/yamabuki no/eda sashi shinogu/hagi no hanabusa

7. ue okite/hito wa sugi nishi/akihagi no/hanabusa shiroku/saki ide ni keri

8. aki fukaki/midō no noki ni/sugomoru to/kaya ni hane utsu/hachi no mure miyu

9. hisomi kite/ta ga utsu kane zo/sayo fukete/hotoke mo yume ni/iri tamou koro

10. uraniwa no/shigeki ga moto no/aragusa ni/koboruru hikage/mi tsutsu kanashi mo

Shibauri

1. miyuki furu/fuyu o chikami ka/waga kado ni/hi ni hakobi koshi/ somabito no shiba

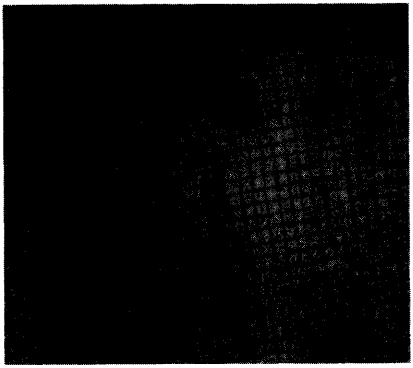
2. waga kado ni/ikuhi hakobite somabito ga/tsumitaru shiba ni/akitsu tachi tatsu

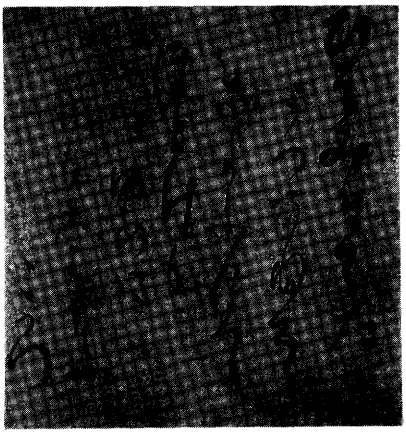
3. somabito no/tsumitaru shiba ni/waga kado no/sakura no shitaba/ irozuki ni keri

4. hitori sumu/midō no niwa ni/tsudoi kite/murabito sawagu/shiba kau rashi mo

5. murabito wa/onomo omomoni/shiba kaite/tsumitaru noki no/atatakani miyu

6. somabito no/kuruma initaru/kusamura ni/shiba hiroi kite/kashigu kyō kamo





Above: Yaichi Aizu's calligraphy of the title *Kannondō*.

Below: Tanka #9 in *Kannondo*: hisomi kite/ta ga utsu kane zo/sayo fukete/hotoke mo yume ni/iri tamou koro. Reprinted from Kitajima Shoten, Nagano, 1966.

柴　賣

昭和二十年十月

1　みゆき　ふる　ふゆ　を　ちかみ　か　わが　かど　に　ひ　に　はこび　こし　そまびと　の　しば

2　わが　かど　に　いくひ　はこびて　そまびと　が　つみたる　しば　に　あきつ　たち　たつ

3　そまびと　の　つみたる　しば　に　わが　かど　の　さくら　の　したば　いろづき　に　けり

4　ひとり　すむ　みだう　の　には　に　つどひ　きて　むらびと　さわぐ　しば　かふ　らし　も

5　むらびと　は　おのも　おのもに　しば　かひて　つみたる　のきの　あたたかに　みゆ

6　そまびと　の　くるま　いにたる　くさむら　に　しば　ひろひ　きて　かしぐ　けふ　かも

（中央公論社版『會津八一全集』第四巻（昭和五十七年発刊）二六二～二六六頁より転載）

観音堂

昭和二十年八月

1 くわんおん の だう の いたま に かみ しきて うどん の かび を ひとり ほし をり
2 かたはら に もの かき をれば ほし なめし うどん の ひかげ うつろひ に けり
3 かどがは の いし に おり ゐて なべぞこ の すみ けづる ひ は くれむ と する も
4 このごろ の わが くりやべ の つたなさ を なれ いづく に かみ つつ なげかむ
5 のきした に たちたる くさ の たかだかと はな さき いでぬ ひとり すめれば
6 には あれて はえ ひろごれる やまぶき の えだ さし しのぐ はぎ の はなぶさ
7 うゑ おきて ひと は すぎ にし あきはぎ の はなぶさ しろく さき いで に けり
8 あき ふかき みだう の のき に すごもる と かや に はね うつ はち の むれ みゆ
9 ひそみ きて たが うつ かね ぞ さよ ふけて ほとけ も ゆめ に いり たまふ ころ
10 うらには の しげき が もと の あらぐさ に こぼるる ひかげ み つつ かなし も

The Short Happy Life of Kiiko Takahashi

Fujisato Kitajima

At the end of March 1932, Kiiko Takahashi, youthful at twenty, entered Shūsōdō in Shimo-ochiai in Tokyo, having been asked by Yaichi Aizu to be his housekeeper. His pen name Shūsō Dōjin, Aizu was fifty-two years old.

Aizu was then a professor of Waseda University, a famous tanka poet, and an outstanding calligrapher. As a tanka poet, he never belonged to any association and never created his own poetry group. As a calligrapher, he did not cling to orthodox rules in this traditional Japanese art form, but followed his own stylistic pursuits. His marvelous command of the brush not only attracted amateurs but experts as well. Yaichi was multi-talented, an excellent educator, a scholar of English literature and oriental art history, a poet in his own right, and a singular calligrapher.

At first Aizu focused on writing haiku, as early as his middle school days. And a year after he graduated from middle school, he became the haiku selector for the local newspaper in Niigata City and assumed a leading role in its literary activities.

Although his *Study of the Haiku Poet Issa Kobayashi* remains one of Aizu's achievements in haiku scholarship, he found the form unsuitable to his sensibility and imagination and around 1910 gradually turned to the tanka, the longer poetic form with its thirty-one syllables.

While at Waseda University, he was quite impressed by the lectures of Lafcadio Hearn, so much so that his graduation thesis was a study on John Keats. Another of Aizu's respected teachers was Shōyō Tsubouchi, the Shakespearean scholar. He was to remain Aizu's lifelong mentor.

As soon as Aizu graduated from Waseda in July 1906, the twenty-six-year-old graduate returned to Niigata Prefecture to teach English at Yūkōgakusha Middle School. He had left his fiancée Fumiko Watanabe in Tokyo. He found her beautiful and

talented in painting, but he had somehow failed to win her heart. Aizu never married.

In August 1908, he made his first trip to Nara and at once was bewitched by this ancient city. There he composed one of his earliest tanka poems:

you late-autumn rains,
do not fall with such force
lest this pillar'd red
stain the stark-white walls
of the temple's main hall*

In September 1910, Tsubouchi invited Aizu to teach at Waseda Middle School, and from 1913 he began teaching English literature at Waseda University. Later, in 1916, he became the assistant-principal of the middle school. Aizu was a popular figure at the school. One of the students Aizu taught ethics to, then a part of the curriculum, wrote years after he graduated the novel entitled *Hato no Hashi* (*Bridge of Doves*, 1965). The novel was based on Aizu's unique teaching methods, and it was nominated for the prestigious Akutagawa Prize.

In 1914, Aizu began living on Toyokawa-chō in Koishigawa, Tokyo. There three students from Niigata were permitted to lodge in his house. Aizu wrote three handwritten *gakki*, horizontal placards usually hung on a wall, on them his rules by which they should study. He gave one to each student to attach to a wall in his room:

Love life profoundly.
Know yourself and reflect on that.
Cultivate your character by studying the arts and sciences.
Each day immerse yourself in new aspects of life.

Eventually Aizu published several tanka collections, including *Nankyōshinshō* (1924), which lyrically celebrates Buddhist

architecture and art in the ancient capital of Nara. Aizu's tanka were influenced by the *Manyōshū*, the poet-calligrapher priest Ryōkan in Niigata Prefecture, and the famous haiku-tankaist Shiki Masaoka. Aizu's serene and solemn tanka eluded all attempts at imitation. They were highly praised by the famous tanka poet Mokichi Saitō.

When Kiiko began to live with Aizu as his housekeeper, he was busy writing his doctoral dissertation, *A Study on the Architectural Epochs of Hōryūji, Hokkiji, and Hōrinji Temples*. He challenged the traditional doctrines on art history, and his study brought new insights into the academic world at that time.

Among Waseda students, Aizu remained popular. Now and then he had fits of rage in the classroom, yet it was not rare to find several students, sometimes more than ten, following him wherever he went on the campus. Aizu was 167 centimeters tall and weighed 84 kilograms, his voice too commanding attention. It sounded like a rumble of thunder when he was angry.

Kiiko Takahashi also came from a Niigata background. Born on March 31, 1912, she was the sixth daughter of Kizō and Mina Takahashi. Her father was a rich rice commission merchant who had a thriving large-scale business. In addition to a splendid income from real estate, Kizō was one of the founders of the electric company Niigata Denki (now Tōhoku Denryoku), and he later became its executive director. Consequently, Kiiko was to be raised with the material comforts a wealthy family provides. Yet her mother died of tuberculosis when Kiiko was three. A year or so later her father passed away as if following a beloved wife. Soon after these unhappy family events, Kiiko's eldest sister Kimi, nineteen then, married. The name of the twenty-three-year-old bridegroom who was adopted by his wife's family was Kaizō Aizu. Kaizō was Yaichi Aizu's brother, eleven years younger than Yaichi.

Kaizō Takahashi was an energetic man, but he soon

depleted the large fortune left by his adopted father. Kaizō found he could not remain as executive director of Niigata Denki for too long a period, and he started one enterprise after another, failing in all of them. At last in 1928, he had to move from Nuttari to Kamikido where he found some land on which to raise chickens.

Kiiko, it seemed, was destined for more difficulties. She had lost her parents in childhood; when she was an adolescent, the family fortunes declined. However, in March 1924, when she graduated in the second graduation of the new Bandai Primary School, Kiiko was the best of all the students in the school, and she received an official commendation from Niigata City.

According to the official document, the primary school had graduated fifty-five boys and fifty-three girls in 1924. When Kiiko was in the sixth grade, she had taken eleven subjects: ethics, Japanese language, mathematics, natural science, social science, history, music, physical education, behavior, handwriting, and needlework. With ten the best grade, she had averaged well above nine. She was 133 centimeters tall and weighed 27.6 kilograms. As for her conduct, the document cited two words: *kibin* and *nesshin*, the first meaning agile in movement, the second enthusiastic.

In April 1924, she entered the Niigata Prefectural Upper Women's School, the motto for discipline by its sixth principal Toshimaro Hanabusa "pure, right-minded, and graceful." At the school's twenty-sixth commencement in March 1928, two hundred and thirty-three girls participated. Kiiko had taken during her fourth year the required thirteen subjects, some of which included English, mathematics, natural science, home economics, music, physical education, and education. Needless to say, she was quite good in ethics, Japanese language, history, geography, drawing, and needlework. At this time her height was 153.4 centimeters, and she weighed 45.2 kilograms.

It is understandable why Kiiko, brought up under a strict

family code of ethics, was popular at the school because of her attractive personality, beauty, intelligence, agility, and enthusiasm. In Aizu's household, which she joined at the age of twenty, she was surrounded by books, many of them in the hall and corridors. Aizu, then fifty-two, had had smooth sailing as a scholar, tanka poet, and calligrapher. The effect of Aizu's popularity was that many visitors, disciples, and editors frequented his house so that Kiiko was fully engaged receiving them. Kiiko herself was well-liked by everyone who came to Aizu's house. Even the taste of the green tea she made for them remained memorable, as Aizu tells us in one of the poems in his *Yamabato* ("Mountain Doves"):

in the way
you poured and served
even a single cup of tea,
your entire mind, entire spirit,
given to the task

The more famous Aizu was, the busier Kiiko became. Managing the household of a scholar whose income was not great was by no means easy, what with the cooking and other family chores. It seems that Aizu and Kiiko worked together to overcome a great many difficulties.

In his book *Aizu Yaichi no Bokugi* (*Aizu Yaichi's Monochrome Painting in India Ink*), Ryōji Kumata writes: "Kiiko was a woman with a fair complexion, clear eyes, a beautiful voice. After she made her appearance at rustic Shūsōdō, it seemed to me that the young people who gathered there discovered their own will-power."

As for the aloof Yaichi, he must have been given added incentives on hearing Kiiko's beautiful voice and seeing the graceful manner of a young woman serving him.

An anecdote in May 1935 remains memorable. At that time Aizu moved from the Shūsōdō in Shimo-ochiai to Mejiro

Culture Village not too far away. He had lived in Shimo-ochiai Shūsōdō for fourteen years, the home of Shunjō Ichishima (1860-1944), a distant relative who rented his villa to Yaichi rent-free. In those fourteen years, Aizu had planted many flowers and shrubs—lespedeza, roses, bamboo, lilies, columbines, daffodils, chrysanthemums, to cite only a few. From his early childhood days Aizu also liked raising small birds, Japanese white-eyes, willow tits, white Java sparrows, society finches, rufous turtledoves, collared turtledoves, and, among others, a hill-mynah able to mimic only Kiiko's high-pitched voice, not Yaichi's. Among Aizu's greatest pleasures was to sit on the sunny corridor of Shūsōdō and prepare feed for these birds as he listened to them while observing the plants and flowers he had cultivated with so much care.

Many students gathered that May day to help their teacher move, some loading books and furniture into carts and others digging up roses, lilies, columbines, and various plants. Perhaps some had to take care of the birds. All of Yaichi's belongings were being moved, the entire enterprise lively and energetic. One of Aizu's disciples said to him, "This looks just like Noah's ark." Aizu was in a festive mood and wanted to keep it that way. Along the route to his new residence, a precious scroll dropped off a moving cart, and one of Aizu's disciples picked it up at once and brought it to his teacher. His good mood dominant, Aizu said, "Oh, well, this now belongs to you."

It is not clear if Kiiko, who was secretly called "Kannonsama" by the adoring students frequenting Aizu's house those many years, was among the moving party at that time. Perhaps she had remained in the kitchen at Shūsōdō and was busy in her white apron preparing their meal.

Ever since Kiiko had joined the Shūsōdō household, everyone recognized how much she had done to enable Yaichi to concentrate on his studies. Every so often she had an offer of marriage and no one tried to deter her, but it seems she was

occupied daily with her mundane duties. Time went on in its normal rapid course. Often Aizu was seriously ill, and she tended him. Possibly Aizu's health was more precious to her than life itself. But from her earliest days her own health had been delicate, and fatigue was one of the symptoms of her precarious health. Probably in 1941 she spat blood for the first time as she lay ill in bed. At that time there was no real cure for tuberculosis. While there was a slight remission of her illness, she had her first attack of sciatic neuralgia in 1942. In the summer that year she went alone to the Togura hot springs in Shinshū for treatment and a change of air.

Aizu was upset by Kiiko's illness, for he himself had been suffering a long time from diabetes. He had kept his condition secret because he was reluctant to stop having his usual dinner drink. Once his brother Kaizō asked him to spend his summer vacation at Mount Hiei, but Aizu declined, saying, "With an awkward problem to handle, that is, my diabetes, I'm unable to eat just any kind of food from the kitchens of other people." Kiiko had long served diabetic meals with his illness in mind. But Aizu probably felt it was his first priority to cure Kiiko's illness, for they both seemed to be immersed in the same difficulties.

Aizu himself often had to lie in bed because of high blood-pressure, tonsillitis, and inflammation of the middle ear. In his sixties then, Aizu could not find relief from his illnesses with the aid of any skilful practitioner. Aizu became more and more fastidious, and Kiiko tended this difficult invalid and scholar with tenderness. As a result, Kiiko became more and more exhausted, the energy in her delicate frame declining even more as she continued to suffer from neuralgia and tuberculosis.

In his desire to reward Kiiko for her services over the long years, Aizu decided to have her name entered in his family register. It was in the spring of 1944 that Kiiko became Yaichi's adopted daughter.

With Japan's role in the war becoming increasingly

difficult due to the air raids, Aizu's house was destroyed in a fire from these raids on the night of April 13, 1945. A large formation of B-29 bombers flew over the Tokyo district dropping hundreds of bombs on the capital.

Kiiko and Yaichi were enveloped in flames. Aizu grasped her gaunt hand firmly, and with an umbrella used as a cane in his other, they escaped from their burning house. Aizu lost a house full of books, precious treasures, plants, and small caged birds. He had lost everything except Kiiko, who was now seriously ill:

made gaunt by illness
your hand I clasp—
oh, I cannot forget
how we fled from our burning house
during that evil conflagration!

Barely escaping death, Kiiko took the overcrowded train for Niigata on April 27. When she left the scorched earth of a Tokyo seared by bombs, she felt especially sad, having lost all her belongings, her precious kimonos, ornaments, and letters from relatives and friends. Her diaries were also lost.

During this crucial final stage of her illness and with transportation facilities unreliable, we can imagine how hopeless and difficult was her trip alone to Nakajō in Niigata Prefecture. On the afternoon of April 30, Kiiko arrived at the home of the Tango family. The young Mrs. Tango, who sensed someone approaching the house, went to the hall to find standing there a young woman in a cotton kimono with no formal *hakama* skirt. "Who are you?" Mrs. Tango asked. Then Kiiko answered in a quiet, fragile voice, "I am Aizu." The only thing Kiiko carried was a small handbag with a wooden handle. In the interview I had with Mrs. Tango, she told me that Kiiko must have been wearing Japanese sandals as there was no sound of wooden geta as Kiiko approached the house.

As for Aizu, he arrived the same day Kiiko did, but at the Matsugasaki Airport in Niigata, thanks to the plane ride offered him by the *Mainichi* newspaper. Two days later, Aizu, accompanied by an attendant, reached the Tango family. With him he carried an umbrella and a small leather trunk. No sooner had he entered the hall than he asked in his deep voice, "Has the woman already come?"

With Sanford Goldstein and the literary critic Tadanobu Wakatsuki, I visited Mrs. Shizuko Tango on the day of the fifty-first commemorative ceremony for Kiiko (July 10, 1995). Mrs. Tango had a clear memory as she recalled that scene of more than fifty years ago when Aizu arrived in that dignified but startling manner. It had been spring, and Mrs. Tango had entered the family as a new bride only two years before. She confessed that she did not understand at that time the connotation of Aizu's referring to "the woman," and she had asked her husband Kyōhei about it, but his answer was ambiguous and evasive.

In the Tango household, Yaichi and Kiiko began their new life in a ten-matted room, a small dirt floor next to the tatami-mats. This shabby room beside the gate of the house must have been used by the gatekeeper. Soon Kiiko began cooking for Yaichi and herself, but it was quite difficult to get enough food at the time. It was two kilometers from the Tango residence to the downtown area near Nakajō Station. To do the shopping there was quite difficult for Kiiko, but she made desperate efforts to carry on.

To Miss Nei Kawada, who lived in Tochio, Kiiko sent the following letter dated May 6, 1945: "Far from Tokyo with its air-raid alarms several times a day, I can hear the wind through the pine trees, the mountain doves and Japanese grosbeaks and thrushes, and the voices of frogs are heard not only at night but during the day. Certainly this is a different world. . . I hope to get better soon under this clear and beautiful air and to work energetically, but I have become so

weak that I cannot do the picking up and setting down of the bedding without stopping several times to rest... I have doubts whether I will be strong enough to work again."

And it was not long before Kiiko's illness advanced unimpeded. Due to her tuberculosis her residing in the Tango family was a source of anxiety to healthy Japanese. So Aizu decided to leave the Tango home and to move with Kiiko to the isolated Kannondō Temple at the edge of the village. Although it looked quite desolate, they moved in order to appreciate the tranquility of nature and to isolate themselves.

On July 3, 1945, they moved to the Kannondō. In a diary entry of that day, Yaichi wrote: "The sky looked threatening. Giving Kiiko a lift on a cart, we moved to the Kannondō. Going back and forth seven times with the cart until we finally finished moving. It was dusk, and there was no time to prepare supper. So we went without it. It seemed Kiiko was much more debilitated. I talked to her at length on how to spend her days here."

After coming to the Tango household, Kiiko also began a diary, dated from June 14 to July 7, 1945, three days before her death. As I looked through the twenty-four day entries written in the small diary in one of those small books for notes issued by a bank, I found she recorded changes in her illness, the environment, and her impressions. Writing in diary form, she mentioned her thoughts on facing death. Her entries on small pages 6.5 x 13.4 centimeters are brief but clear, penciled in a beautiful hand even up to the very last entry.

On July 4, 1945, she wrote: "Although the front garden of the Kannondō looks desolate, the clump of trees to the east is quite nice. Even in summertime it seems that cool breezes blow through it. But I don't know how many days are left to me. Extremely painful, and my hands and feet look pale green. It's shameful to die without repaying the Yamamotos [Dr. Yamamoto and his wife] and Mr. Giichi Tōji [the pharmacist] for their kindnesses. Looking back at my life, I find the longer

I live, the more the number of persons I owe my life to. It seems that I am almost a person of no use."

On July 5 [*sic*], Kiiko writes in her diary: "The daughter of Dr. Yahata came to examine me on behalf of her father, and she brought a big sea bream with her. At a loss on how to cook it, I asked the Tango family to. Last night there was no supper because of the moving, and today there's too much raw fish of the sea bream to eat. Our meal under the small bulb of 5 candle power is lonely. It's damp all over the house because of the rain, and the repapering of the *shōji* screens isn't finished, so the dampness creeps into the rooms quite easily...very disagreeable. Dōjin [Aizu] seems to be very tired. Awfully sorry."

Sitting upright on her bed on July 8, Kiiko begged Yaichi to send messages of gratitude to her acquaintances both near and far. It was two days before Kiiko's death. Even at these last stages of her life, she did not lose her clear, pure vision.

Her condition became critical before dawn on July 10. Yaichi ran along the dark road to Dr. Yahata's house. He paid no attention to the sounding of the air-raid alarm. He wanted only to save Kiiko's life.

The situation recalls the first two tanka in Mokichi Saitō's "Sad Tidings" in his collection entitled *Red Lights*:**

running and running
along this dark road,
and my unbearable remorse,
dark, dark,
running too

that faint
firefly glow,
of itself, out of itself,
I crush
on my dark road

Wrote Aizu in his diary entry on July 10: "Before daybreak Kiiko's condition became critical. It was during the time of an air-raid alert. In the morning Dr. Yahata came. Immediately after an injection of grape sugar, Kiiko's face changed into an agonized look. In her anguished condition, I let her lie quietly in bed. For a short while I too dozed off. When I was awakened by the noise of some visitors from Nuttari, I looked at the sick Kiiko. Lying on her back, she had already passed away. It was about 4 p.m."

Wrote Kyōhei Tango, a graduate of Waseda University whom Yaichi loved for his benevolence: "I think Kiiko did not have her own springtime of life. She had so devoted herself to the life and development of the scholastic achievements of her adopted father that she became ill. In this unfamiliar village where no friends of hers abide and with food and medicine in short supply, she. . . died alone without being watched by anyone at the time of her death, not even by her adopted father. It can be called sorrowful in the extreme. In the afternoon of that fateful day, she could not utter a single word on her deathbed because of her great pain. She must have summoned all her strength to wake up Yaichi who was dozing beside her. When he was awakened by the sounds of visitors, Kiiko had already gasped away her life, one hand outstretched in a direction close to Yaichi. In a subdued voice, Yaichi told me this account."

In his "Preface" to *Yamabato*, the elegy dedicated to his adopted daughter, Yaichi wrote: "I did all I could in my clumsy and inadequate way to nurse Kiiko and even to cook for her. But at long last in the full light of day on the tenth of July, she slept her final sleep." That afternoon the cuckoo and mountain doves were incessantly singing.

With the help of neighbors, Aizu carried Kiiko's lifeless body to the outdoor crematorium where, the ashes gathered the next morning by Aizu himself, he faced the reality of Kiiko's death. Among the ashes her beautiful facial skeletal structure

remained.

Previously the fledgling nun, Teijō Watanabe, asked in a nearby village to cite one chapter from the *Shushōgi* before Kiiko's cremation, came by bicycle in the rain. I met her for the first time on July 10, 1994. She said, "Kiiko's lifeless body lay in a room near the entrance hall. If my memory serves me correctly, she wore a cotton kimono with the flower patterns of hydrangeas. I was somewhat surprised to see her feet sticking out from both her kimono and futon. I thought she was a tall woman. While I was reciting the sutra, Aizu Sensei looked quite worn out. . . No, no, he was unable to recite the sutra with me. He was mute, his eyes looking down, and it seemed to me he was shaking, or rather weeping." Now seventy-one years old, Nun Watanabe, whom Aizu had called a fledgling nun ten or so years old, was then twenty or twenty-one years old.

Aizu selected a posthumous Buddhist name for Kiiko, Sogetsureikōshinnyo. According to a belief from the Kamakura period and beyond, it was thought that for forty-nine days after one's death, the dead passed through mountains and crossed a river before being judged by Emma, lord of the world of demons whose records of the dead showed their actions in life to determine what their reward or punishment should be. In tanka 19 in *Yamabato,* Aizu refers indirectly to this belief in the dead person's journey in the after-world:

> even at the distant end
> of fields in the other-world
> where there is no light,
> you can hear
> the songs of these mountain doves

After Kiiko's death, Aizu was to remain at the Kannondō Temple for one hundred and seven days. There he devoted himself to making handwritten copies of the Hannyashingyō and

Kannongyō sutras as he prayed for the safety of Kiiko's spirit wandering through the other world. Sometimes he spent time trying to remove mold from his precious supply of war-time noodles. Sometimes he went down to a stream by the temple to scrape soot from a pan he used for making his own food. In his clumsy and inadequate way he tried to prepare his own meals. In a tanka from his series *Kannondō Temple*, he wrote:

should you look down
from somewhere in the other-world,
how you would grieve to see
clumsy hands cooking for myself
these days in the kitchen

One day as he went out the temple for a short walk, he saw by chance the red blooms of the pomegranate among the thick temple foliage. On his walk he was filled with sadness seeing the sun's rays scattering over the overgrown weeds behind the temple and beneath the trees. One evening Kyōhei Tango came across the poet taking a walk. In the twilight he could distinctly see Yaichi's face, tears streaming down his cheeks.

On October 29, 1945, Yaichi returned to the Tango family. His one hundred days of mourning for his adopted daughter were over, but his memories of her continued.

A photograph of Kannondō Temple when it was still standing. Yaichi and Kiiko moved from the Tango house to the Kannondō on July 3, 1945. A week later Kiiko passed away, and Yaichi remained in mourning at the temple for some one hundred days. The Kannondō had been in existence for about two hundred years, but it became too old for the Tango family to maintain, and it was demolished in 1953. Reprinted from Yoshikazu Nagasaka's *Aizu Yaichi no Sho to Fūdo* (*Yaichi Aizu's Calligraphy and Its Natural Features*), Kōkodō Shoten, Niigata, 1984.

Kiiko Takahashi in the garden at Shūsōdō, Mejiro Culture Village, where Yaichi and Kiiko lived from 1935–1945. Reprinted from Kōsei Andō's *Shogō Aizu Yaichi* (*Yaichi Aizu: Calligraphy Master*), Nigensha, Tokyo, 1965.

*In this paper the translations of Aizu's poems are the collaboration of the writer and Sanford Goldstein.

**See Mokichi Saitō, *Red Lights*, translated by Sanford Goldstein and Seishi Shinoda, Purdue University Press, 1989, p. 91.

Acknowledgments:

I am indebted to Dr. Sanford Goldstein for his many helpful suggestions on my manuscript.

I am indebted to Professor Noboru Kita, author of *Aizu Yaichi no Kakyo* (*The Poetic World of Aizu Yaichi*), Shunjūsha, 1993, for his suggestive interpretations of "Mountain Doves" and "Kannondō Temple."

I thank Professor Seishi Shinoda for his many suggestions on our translations.

Aizu and I

Sanford Goldstein

I first became interested in tanka in 1962 when I read some translations of Takuboku's poems. Later in 1966 I read more translations of Takuboku's poems in Carl Sesar's *Poems to Eat*. Takuboku felt that tanka were as essential to his life as eating. When I first read those poems of Takuboku, I suddenly felt as if tanka were poems I had to pursue. At the very center of those thirty-one syllables I experienced an honesty, a discovery, a simplicity and truth. I felt something of the English poet Keats' joy when he first looked into a translation of Homer by the Elizabethan translator George Chapman.

Due to my earlier introduction to tanka, my colleague and now lifelong friend and co-translator Professor Seishi Shinoda and I began our translation of Akiko Yosano's *Tangled Hair* in 1964. Later we translated Takuboku's *Sad Toys*. And later Mokichi Saito's *Red Lights*. I myself began writing my own tanka in English in 1964 and have continued to do so for more than thirty years. Yet in all that time no one had ever mentioned to me the name of Yaichi Aizu. It might have been that in 1953, when I made the first of what turned out to be six two-year visits to Japan, I had passed Aizu on Furumachi in Niigata City without knowing that tall impressive Japanese was among Japan's greatest calligraphers and certainly among the well-known modern tankaists, and now I am saddened by my ignorance of not knowing he was living in the very city I was living in. When my wife and I spent time on what was then one of Niigata's widest sandy beaches, perhaps we might have seen Aizu on some distant sand dune making his way down down, for there is Aizu's famous poem

down down I went
to the beach in my hometown
and lo! this breeze
of early summer from the sea,
how it lifts my kimono hem!*

Aizu died in 1956, a year after I left Niigata on that first stay in Japan, and now that date of Aizu's death further saddens me.

Had it not been for my precious colleague and friend Professor Fujisato Kitajima, I might never have known specifically about Aizu. And that I was living in Niigata after the Aizu museum was established in April 1975 and had never visited it until Professor Kitajima took me there saddens me again for what I had missed. Certainly in my long years of study of tanka, I have been thoroughly impressed by Akiko Yosano's startling poems on the emancipation of women. Takuboku's down-to-earth human qualities have always stirred me. And Mokichi's complicated images of a life in which he was trying to come to grips with the revival of tanka have been quite a challenge. But I cannot remember when I was so moved by an event in the history of tanka by learning about Kiiko, the adopted daughter of Aizu, and the series of poems he wrote on her illness and death entitled *Yamabato* ("Mountain Doves").

In July 1994, when I attended the 50th anniversary of Kiiko's death, commemorated in Nishijō Village by the very same nun who read the sutras in memory of Kiiko in 1945, I was moved to write some tanka of my own on that occasion. Among those tanka were the following that I wrote early that morning and later during the day:

translating
your songs
into English,
I feel, Aizu,
all you suffered, all you endured

from some distant place
will the songs
of mountain doves
weave through
today's sutra?

journeying to the grounds
of the vanished Kannondō Temple
this Sunday afternoon,
I envision Kiiko and Aizu
holding lonely cups of tea

you passed away
in this isolated temple, Kiiko,
and still you serve
the cause
of 5-7-5-7-7

stuck in modernity,
the fast pace of even Niigata life,
I had forgotten until today at Kiiko's 50th memorial day,
that there are sutras to be chanted,
that there are temple corridors smooth as nirvana

It was on Sunday, July 10, 1994, that I participated in that 50th memorial anniversary of the death of Kiiko Takahashi, born in 1912 and dead at the early age of thirty-four. When she was twenty, she had gone up to Tokyo to serve in the busy bachelor household of Aizu, the distinguished Waseda University teacher of English and increasingly famous tanka poet and calligrapher. She helped Aizu maintain his home for fourteen years.

During the conflagration in Tokyo in 1945, Aizu and Kiiko fled the capital and went to live with the Tango family in

Nakajō. But Kiiko, always of a weak constitution, became quite ill, and Aizu decided to move her to the abandoned Kannondō Temple in Nishijō, where the quiet and isolation might make Kiiko's last days peaceful. She died on July 10, 1945. With two men from the village, Aizu carried Kiiko's body to a hand-drawn cart and transported her to an outdoor crematorium. The next morning Aizu came alone to gather Kiiko's bones. Because Niigata itself was in a state of alarm due to the fear that Niigata was on the list of cities that might experience the second horrendous bomb that would turn out to be the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Aizu decided to wait until the war's end before placing Kiiko's ashes in his family's temple in Niigata. In agony over the loss of Kiiko, whose ardent devotion to him for fourteen years, including periods of his own illness, he felt so keenly, Aizu thought that he himself was one of the causes for her premature death.

In Aizu's "Preface" to this moving elegy on Kiiko entitled "Mountain Doves," Aizu noted that the village priest had been called away from the village temple for service in the war, so the only person available to read from the *Shushōgi*, a compendium of various prayers and a summary of Buddhist teachings used in Sōtō Zen temples, was a fledgling nun, Teijō Watanabe, whose age Aizu assumed to be ten or more. Yet when I met the nun at her commemorative chanting of the sutras on that warm Sunday of July 10, 1994, and talked to her after the special lunch which she had prepared for some twenty or more guests who included Kiiko's elder sister, Kiiko's niece and nephew, Kiiko's close friend who had helped her in Tokyo by living at Aizu's house for more than a year, the President of the Aizu museum in Niigata, and the chief archivist at the museum, I was told by Nun Watanabe that she was now seventy-one years old, that she must have been twenty or twenty-one when Aizu had asked her to help him with the sutras, and that she looked much younger than she actually was. She had felt a kind of fear and pressure in having to perform this ceremony for the

intellectual and imposing Aizu, but when she realized she was doing a service for the Kannon at the Kannondō, she was able to perform a reading of at least twenty or thirty minutes.

It was with emotion that I listened as the nun chanted the sutras in memory of the departed Kiiko while family members and guests individually came before the Buddhist altar to pray with Buddhist beads and lifted hands to present the three offerings of incense over the lit incense sticks. When my turn came, I stood looking at the portrait of Kiiko on the altar, the portrait taken when she was a high school student. I thought of Kiiko's short life of thirty-four years, of her relatives, of Aizu and his loneliness and loss, and his tanka series "Mountain Doves."

During the reading of the sutras I noticed the tears of Kiiko's beloved friend who, when Kiiko was ill at the Kannondō, came by bicycle across a difficult ten-kilometer route and then by train the rest of the way to visit her. Kiiko's now eighty-nine-year old elder sister stood at one time during the meal to tell us about her sadness and that of other family members who were unable to get to Niigata from the place they lived at near Fukushima during the difficult time of the war and, consequently, who had not visited the ill Kiiko or participated in her funeral service. After the meal, the various family members remained at the table along with a few of the guests to talk about Kiiko and Aizu.

Later, Kitajima Sensei drove me to the area where the Kannondō had once stood, for the building had been taken down, its pillars and one hundred Kannon statuettes moved to the nearby Taisōji Temple. Inscribed on a dark sculpted stone in Aizu's famous calligraphy was the following Yaichi Aizu tanka poem from a series of ten poems Professor Kitajima and I were to translate, the series called "Kannondō Temple":

who was it
came in secret
late at night
to strike the temple altar bell
at that time when even the Buddha himself lies dreaming?

The implication of this moving tanka is that perhaps Kiiko herself had come to strike the bell to let Aizu know of her safety in the other world.

The story of Aizu and Kiiko seemed to have formed in my mind a wartime story of conflagration and escape, of anguish, of sacrifice, of devotion and service, of loneliness and loss. It was the songs of the mountain doves that so appealed to the ill Kiiko, and no doubt to Aizu himself. In this moving series of poems in memory of Kiiko, Aizu wonders if she can hear the mountain doves as she makes her lonely way in the after-world.

When I consider that Aizu was interested in English literature as well as oriental and Greek art, I imagine that he was trying to maintain a kind of balance between emotion and restraint in his own poems. That this imposing man whose voice seemed to carry the authority of art traditions both Western and Japanese should write this moving series of poems is the wonder of wonders. While the series is emotional, it is equally restrained. It is in the agility of tanka itself that Aizu was able to maintain this balance.

I would now like to analyze this series of poems entitled "Mountain Doves" in terms of what I call a tanka string, not a tanka sequence. Mokichi Saitō's sequence entitled "Whistling" is a very good example of tanka sequence:

#1 why these high/cheekbones?/only through touch/do I realize/she's woman

#2 somehow/this sadness/looking/at the coarseness of the girl/I'm sleeping with tonight

#3 must be dawn/I think,/and so these eyes/can open/and these legs, oh they can stretch!

#4 the sun must be/in the east—/a lad's/soft whistling/passes by

#5 this dawn's/the reason/I met/this cart/loaded with poppies!**

When the Japanese use the word "rensaku," they use it to mean any kind of arrangement of several poems. But I want to make a distinction between my own term "tanka string" and "tanka sequence." During the last several years I have been trying to introduce into tanka in English the term tanka string as opposed to the term tanka sequence when tanka sequence does not apply. A tanka sequence is an organically constructed poem. That is, it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The sequence itself is dramatic, strongly following chronological transitions, and the poet undergoes change at the end of the sequence in terms of some awareness of the world or some awareness of his own feelings.

Mokichi's sequence entitled "Whistling" has only five poems, so it is very short in contrast to Mokichi's 59-tanka sequence on the death of his mother. In "Whistling," the poet has gone to a house of prostitution to relieve his sexual desires. The sexual act over, the poet wonders about his actions, finds that the woman he has had sex with is coarse, and Mokichi even criticizes himself for his actions. After all, he was engaged at this time to his relative's daughter. The chronology in "Whistling" changes from the night of reflection after sex to the early morning hours when Mokichi awakes. He feels he is nearing the time of his release from the woman and the sordid room he is staying in. Suddenly he hears a youngster whistling on an early morning errand. Mokichi implies the difference he feels between the innocence of the boy and the sordid room and

Mokichi's actions, between the call of the early morning outside and the feelings of guilt he has inside. In the last tanka in the sequence, Mokichi has left the room and comes across a flower-cart carrying red poppies. The early morning rising sun and the red poppies give a feeling of "akarui," of brightness, of the vivid and natural and delightful call to nature. Certainly Mokichi's feelings have undergone change as a result of the experience.

The tanka sequence, then, as in "Whistling," is dramatic, is organic in having a beginning, middle, and end, moves naturally along in time and space, and the sequence concludes with some change of awareness in the character or in the universe.

But a tanka string is quite different. It is not necessarily dramatic, for the attitude of the poet in the poems does not vary that much. Furthermore, the chronology has probably been broken, though there is definite transition from one poem in the string to the next. Finally, the poet need not come to any conclusion or any awareness, though he may.

Takuboku's tanka string of fifteen tanka on the New Year in his posthumous collection *Sad Toys* is a good example of tanka string. The poems do not represent a dramatic action in terms of chronology, for in the seventh poem in the series Takuboku refers to the date of January 4, and later poems in the series refer to New Year's day. So the chronology has been broken. At the same time there is transition between poems because Takuboku is referring throughout to his attitude during this New Year period. At times he is hopeful that he may take on the New Year spirit of looking forward to a good year; at other times he feels something of the New Year outlook has disappeared from his spirit—he is depressed, lacks energy, criticizes himself for being the way he is. At the end of the poem the poet is not changed. The opening poem shows a desire by Takuboku to have some change in his personality:

#35 So relaxed this New Year's Day,/ Mind vacant/ As if all my past erased!

On the other hand, the second poem notes that Takuboku realized he could not change:

#36 This alert mind/From morning to night—/Until yesterday I tried to keep it up.

But the final poem in this New Year string contains the same attitude he had in the second poem in the string:

#49 New Year afternoon/And sad somehow/Knowing the cause of this drowsy mind...

Takuboku is sad because he knows he is too tired to discover the kind of new energy, new outlook, new hope, the New Year calls for. So it is obvious to the reader that there is no real change in the poet or in his outlook during the entire string.

I now want to assert that Aizu's "Mountain Doves" is a tanka string, and a very good one at that. I do not have the space to go into every one of the twenty-one poems in "Mountain Doves." But I think it is quite convenient for clarity to divide the poems into a series of four movements. In the first six poems Aizu talks about Kiiko's illness. There is transition from poem one through poem six. Aizu opens the series with Kiiko saying how much greater is her pain on that particular morning. To those few words of Kiiko, Aizu could not return any reply. In the first tanka Aizu kept his silence, unable to respond to Kiiko. The second tanka begins with the words "in the silence/of this temple." Aizu's own silence to Kiiko's remark makes the poet think of the silence in the temple. For the first time Aizu refers to the mountain doves whose songs echo in the temple, but he continues to refer to Kiiko's illness with the speculation

in his mind that she is about to die:

in the silence
of this temple
echoing with the songs of mountain doves,
are you so very soon about to pass away
as if going to sleep?

Quite obviously, Aizu would not directly speak these words to the dying Kiiko.

In tanka 3, Aizu picks up the transition by again referring to the "solitary songs/of mountain doves," but he also refers to the number of days Kiiko has been ill in bed. Tanka 4 seems to leap back to the first tanka, for Aizu is finally able to respond to Kiiko (in tanka 1 he couldn't respond), and now Aizu suggests that Kiiko rest quietly in bed, but the transition also occurs in terms of Aizu's fear that Kiiko will soon die: "oh how can that sleep/be perpetual,/be eternal?"—a thought the poet keeps to himself, his own anguish, his shock. Tanka 5 continues the reference to Kiiko's illness, but for the first time Aizu says he brought Kiiko back to her native province "where the winds blow/through the paddy fields." No doubt Aizu made this remark to help Kiiko feel better. In tanka 6, the illness of Kiiko is again referred to, but Aizu now goes back in time to help Kiiko remember an even worse time than the present: "how we fled from our burning house/during that evil conflagration"—a reference to their fleeing the air raids in Tokyo.

The second division of this tanka string, tanka 7 through 15, breaks the chronology, for Aizu flashes back to memories of Kiiko and the way she served Aizu all those years. Aizu sings in tanka 7:

you spent your days
waiting on me, serving me,
this me who shut myself up reading
in my house—
ah, your entire life was steeped in sadness!

Aizu's regret for Kiiko's restricted lonely life as his housekeeper is echoed in tanka 8. Kiiko never had a chance to really experience the complexity of the world. Aizu notes in tanka 9 that Kiiko served him, protected him. Aizu refers to his own pride, a pride so strong it was "as if no one else existed/in the world!" Aizu once more echoes his own regret that Kiiko spent her energies taking care of him even when he was ill: "had you not been with me,/no longer would I have been in this world." Again in tanka 11, Aizu gains the necessary transition by referring to how Kiiko cared for him when he was ill, and again he notes how Kiiko used up her limited energy through taking care of Aizu. Sings Aizu in tanka 12: "my tears cannot help/but fall/when I think of the brief/brief life/ you devoted to me." But in tanka 13 Aizu contrasts Kiiko's frailty with her strength, a strength that contrasts with those of Aizu's visitors who all feared him and spoke only out of deference to him. It was Kiiko with her candid words that Aizu found so refreshing, so stirring. That strength of Kiiko appears in tanka 14 in terms of her Zen-like focus on duty even if that duty was as simple as serving a cup of tea:

in the way
you poured and served
even a single cup of tea,
your entire mind, entire spirit,
given to the task

Yet in tanka 15 all of these positive qualities in Kiiko cannot keep Aizu from the thought that had Kiiko been born a

man, she would have devoted her energies to more serious pursuits by carving out of path only for herself.

In tanka 16 through 20, the third division in this tanka string, Aizu keeps up the transition by referring to the positive qualities of Kiiko, but we realize she is now dead, for Aizu says in tanka 16:

someday
when the young people
who knew you
gather round me,
it will be of you they will speak

In tanka 6, Kiiko was still living; in tanka 7 through 15, Aizu remembers his past life with Kiiko. Now in tanka 16, Kiiko has definitely died.

These young people are again referred to in tanka 17, and Aizu asks Kiiko in the other world to observe these young people and to look down at them as they pass on in the world to greater careers. That Kiiko is gone is referred to again in tanka 18, for the mountain doves continue their songs "even though the one who went to sleep hearing them/is no longer in this world." Aizu imagines in tanka 19 that even in the other world Kiiko can still hear the songs of the mountain doves. That Aizu wants to continue his connection to Kiiko in death is strongly emphasized in tanka 20:

as you travel alone
in that dark world
beyond death,
I hope you will say if a guardian of the other-world asks
that you were the comrade of Yaichi...

Tanka 20 showed Aizu's strength even during his sadness, for he has asked Kiiko to mention their connection in the other world beyond death. While the tanka string need not come to any conclusion, the fourth division of this tanka string, tanka 21, does. Again Aizu does not become sentimental, but offers an indirect approach to reconciliation. He refers to his grief and to his one day briefly going out of the Kannondō Temple after Kiiko's death (he was to remain there some 100 days after her death, departing from the temple on October 26, 1945). But as he leaves on this brief departure (where he is going is not stated), he accidentally happens to see under the eaves of the temple the red flowers of the pomegranate. This vivid image of red contrasts to "dark world" in tanka 20, but just as in tanka 20 where we get an image of strength, of connection to Kiiko, tanka 21 shows us the rich colors of nature. The red flowers of the pomegranate are a call to life, to acceptance of death, to the curative powers of nature:

in my grief
I went out from the temple one day
and by chance under its eaves
thick with foliage
discovered the red red blooms of the pomegranate

Professor Kitajima and I continued to pursue the death of Kiiko and its impact on Aizu in the tanka string of ten poems entitled "Kannondō Temple" and the tanka string of six poems entitled "Brushwood Sellers." That the death of Kiiko would continue to affect Aizu is apparent in all of these poems, one of which I want to single out:

should you look down
from somewhere in the other-world,
how you would grieve to see
clumsy hands cooking for myself
these days in the kitchen

Those 107 days at the Kannondō where Aizu lived on alone in his grief are another aspect of the drama between Kiiko and Aizu, but that drama will have to wait for further study and reflection.

*All translated tanka of Aizu's poems are translated by Fujisato Kitajima and Sanford Goldstein. I am indebted to Professor Fujisato Kitajima for his constant help in exploring the lives of Kiiko and Aizu.

**The translations of Mokichi Saitō's "Whistling" and Takuboku's New Year poems have all been done by Seishi Shinoda and Sanford Goldstein, the former appearing in *Red Lights*, Purdue University Press, 1989, pp. 138-39, the latter in *Romaji Diary and Sad Toys*, Charles E. Tuttle, 1985, pp.146-49.

On Translating Tanka: An Addendum to "Mountain Doves"

Sanford Goldstein

I have been a translator of Japanese tanka since 1964, and it has not been easy. First of all, I am a collaboratory translator. Though I have studied Japanese for forty years, I still do not feel confident about the nuance of Japanese words, so of course I must rely on my collaborator.

Once I see my collaborator's first draft of the poem and once I understand the meaning of each word, even then I am not ready to translate the tanka. What is crucial, then, is an understanding of the emotional content of the tanka. That is, I have to try to understand the biographical or situational content of the tanka. Once I understand the emotional autobiographical content, I then become the poet—that is, I try to feel, penetrate, duplicate, the feelings of Akiko Yosano or Takuboku Ishikawa or Mokichi Saitō.

In the translating of "Mountain Doves," I had to somehow acquire the emotional and biographical background of Yaichi Aizu and Kiiko. I was enormously moved by the flight of Aizu and Kiiko from Tokyo, by their life at the Tango estate, and by their eventual settling at the Kannondō Temple. Kiiko was deathly ill, and Aizu was suffering pangs of guilt for the long years Kiiko had served him, guilt for the energy she needed to take care of him when the poet himself was ill. He knew she was going to die, and no doubt Kiiko herself did. It was the sound of the mountain doves that Kiiko loved, and Aizu refers lovingly to them in his poems. As I was translating the twenty-one poems in "Mountain Doves," I was reliving this relationship between Aizu and Kiiko, speculating about it, feeling its enormous pathos even as I felt the violence of the war descending on these two people. So this emotional-biographical-historical

approach is crucial to me in the translating of these poems.

Even so, I suffer from the limits of my own knowledge of Japanese culture and Japanese symbolism. I am always dependent on my collaborators and others to provide me with essential information by which I can live the poems. In terms of "Mountain Doves," I am enormously grateful to my collaborator Professor Kitajima and to my long-time and beloved collaborator Professor Seishi Shinoda.

In the actual translation of the poems, I have to decide on the order of the lines and the syllables. Tanka can be translated in 31 syllables, the traditional way, though "ji-amari" (extra syllables) is possible in various lines. Some writers of tanka in English and some translators of tanka in English try to maintain the 31 syllables. Other tanka-makers in English do not, and I include myself among the latter. That is, most tanka in English are now written in free-form style. It is not syllable-count which is important but the distribution of the lines. I vividly remember that in Takuboku's essay "Various Kinds of Tanka" (December 20, 1910), he wrote about a schoolteacher who vowed to submit to Takuboku a tanka every day in an attempt to get one published in the *Asahi* newspaper, but Takuboku rejected each of the tanka and wrote that the man's tanka were "'no more than mere representations in thirty-one syllables of natural features suited to poetry. There was hardly one good enough to print.'"* All of which means that one can count out the thirty-one syllables eternally and still not come up with a good poem. Still, I do believe that one can write good tanka in English consisting of thirty-one syllables, and one can write good free-form tanka too. And yet much more is needed than syllabication differentiation.

A third problem exists, and that is that each tanka in what the Japanese call "rensaku" or "sequence" is itself a poem standing alone. Thus I feel a translator must try to discover the essence behind each tanka. It is no wonder to me that those who are looking at scores of poems, including Japanese readers,

may read them without understanding what is really behind each poem, and that is why, whenever I translate with my collaborators, I try, wherever possible, to append notes to clarify the situation. I have no space here to go into the specific meaning behind each of the twenty-one tanka in "Mountain Doves," but I will give what I hope is an example to clarify this difficult yet intensely rewarding procedure.

In tanka 21, the grieving Aizu is leaving the Kannondō:

> in my grief
> I left the temple
> and by chance under its eaves
> thick with foliage
> I discovered the red red blooms of the pomegranate

At the moment of his departure Aizu happens to look up to see some red pomegranate flowers. At first sight this seems merely a view of nature, but notice that Aizu specifies the red colors of the pomegranate flower. I deliberately translated "red red flowers" because I wanted to intensify the colors. The fourteen syllables in that fifth line in English make it the most important line in the poem, and perhaps the most important line in the entire list of poems. What did that nature image signify? The sudden image of a nature that is bright and resisting is a moment of change for Aizu. Yes, Kiiko is dead, but life itself is not. Aizu receives stimulation from a nature that persists in spite of odds, a nature that is vivid and continuing. The color becomes a symbol for Aizu to continue his life, to live fully in spite of his loss. It is for discovery, for insight then, that I feel one has to look closely at each tanka. In our speed-filled modernity we will overlook details and fail to see through to the clear meaning of memorable tanka.

But a final fourth point must be made. That is, as a translator whose knowledge of Japanese language and culture is limited, I have to be able to ask the right questions. Even the

most knowledgeable Japanese may take certain elements in the poems for granted. By asking the right questions sometimes, I am able to break through to a deeper meaning. The final poem (#21) in "Mountain Doves" will also illustrate this point. In this tanka Aizu is leaving the temple, but is he leaving permanently or is he going out just for a short while? I assumed that the first draft of the poem given me by Professor Kitajima of Aizu's "leaving the temple" meant he was returning to the Tango residence after his days of mourning at the Kannondō.

Yet after the poems and the notes to the series were published, it suddenly occurred to me to ask about the red flowers of the pomengrante trees. Aizu left the Kannondō for good on October 26, 1945. But do pomegrante trees flower in October? I asked Professor Shinoda this question several weeks after the translation had been published. No, pomegranate flowers bloom in early summer—they could never be flowering in October. I believe both Professor Kitajima and Professor Shinoda took it for granted that Aizu's departure was merely a temporary one. But I had my mind set on the date as October. Thus I realized a sudden regret because of my blunder and yet a joy at the same time that I had finally understood the poem. It had come as a revelation to me that Aizu merely had gone from the temple briefly, probably to get relief from the grief he was continually feeling now that the cremation had occurred and the sutras had been read. It was then that he happened to look up at the flowers and gained a kind of satori moment from their vivid red colors. Putting the poem in this context, I find that the series "Mountain Doves" is even more tightly organized, the moment of this tanka much closer to the events of this overwhelming period of Kiiko's illness, death, cremation, and religious observance of the sutras. It was not October when Aizu saw those flowers but shortly after July 10. My new version of tanka 21 now becomes:

in my grief
I went out from the temple one day
and by chance under its eaves
thick with foliage
discovered the red red blooms of the pomegranate

*See *Romaji Diary and Sad Toys*, Charles E. Tuttle, Tokyo, 1985, pp. 45–46.