

## Japanese 100b Poetry: Authors and Reading Questions

**Hyakunin Isshu** (A hundred poems by a hundred poets, ca. 1230s) Collection of poems compiled and edited by Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241). The preeminent medieval poet, he had an enormous influence on the development of the medieval aesthetic of austere beauty. He was one of the main editors of the *Shin Kokinshū* (1204), the most important imperial collection after the *Kokinshū* (c. 920). He also edited the versions of *Ise monogatari* and *Genji monogatari* that are considered standard today. The anthology begins with Emperor Tenchi (or Tenji) and Empress Jitō (father and daughter) and ends with Emperor Gotoba (r. 1186-1198) and his son Juntoku (r. 1211- 1221).

HI #2 持統天皇じとうてんのう [Female] Emperor Jitō (reigned 690-696). Empress Jitō, counted as the forty-first sovereign, was one of the most famous female emperors. She reigned in Nara and Ama no Kaguyama is a hill about a mile northeast of Jitō's palace. Supposedly there was a tradition in a temple on Kaguyama at the beginning of summer (after the monsoon rains) for the women to wash robes and hang them out to dry on the hill. So hearing that they are hanging robes out to dry indicates that summer must have officially arrived. The poem may well have been written for oral recitation at some kind of summer festival.

### Grammar:

- 1) Look up *keru* and *rashi* (this is NOT the “past supposition” *kerashi*). Why is *keru* in RT?
- 2) What are the possible meanings of *keru*? Which one makes the most sense here?
- 3) Note that the poem was originally given in the *Man'yōshū* (8th c. poetry anthology) and because of the use of *man'yōgana* (a complicated use of kanji to stand for both sound and meaning) it was very hard for later poets to read. This gave rise to variations, but the most common reading of the *Man'yōshū* version has *natsu kitarurashi* (summer appears to have arrived) and *koromo hoshitari* (they are drying robes) rather than *koromo hoshi tefu* (it is said that they are drying robes). Which version seems to work better with *rashi*? Why might Teika have chosen to use the *koromo hoshi tefu* version?

### Thematic Questions:

- 1) Why might Fujiwara no Teika have chosen this poem to go at the beginning of the collection?

### Technical Vocabulary

- 1) *Mushin* 無心 (no meaning, unmotivated) versus *ushin* 有心 (meaningful, motivated). The question of whether a proper names, *makura kotoba* or *jo kotoba* is meaningful or not. Can you see a logical reason why the proper name or *makura kotoba* was used (besides wordplay)? Does the literal meaning of the term add anything to the poem (to the emotional resonances, for example)? Here, would you translate Ama no Kaguyama?

**HI #3 柿本人麿 Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (dates unknown, died 708-715?)** One of the four principal poets of the *Man'yōshū*. He was a court poet for three sovereigns: Tenmu (r. 673-686); Jitō (690-697), and Monmu (697-707). In the medieval period he was deified as a poetic sage (*kasen*) and a guardian deity of poets (*kajin*), and a special memorial ceremony was developed to revere him.

**Grammar:**

- 1) Try to figure out whether the *no*s are possessive or "*ga*" *no*s.
- 2) Note that in poetry sometimes the RT of *shiku* adjectives will drop their *ki*.
- 3) Look up *ka* and *mo* (this may also be a combination of bound particles *ka* + *mo*).

**Thematic Questions:**

- 1) Why do you think Hitomaro chose 山鳥(*yamadori*) here? (Any information you can find on mountain pheasants might help! Google!)
- 2) What is the main message of the poem? How does the *jokotoba* (*ashibiki*.....*naganagashi*) support that message through imagery? Through implied emotion?
- 3) What do you think all the "o" vowels and *nos* add to the poem?

**HI #7 安部仲麿 Abe no Nakamaro [701-70].** At age 16 he was chosen to join a mission to the Tang court in China to study Chinese methods of measuring time. He stayed in China for more than thirty years. In 753 he attempted to return to Japan but was blown off course and was shipwrecked off the coast of Vietnam. He made his way back to the Tang Capital, and after a few years he was appointed governor of Northern Vietnam, at the time a protectorate of Tang China. He never managed to return to Japan. Note that before envoys such as Nakamaro set out for China, they prayed for their safe return home at Kasuga Shrine in Kasuga village in Nara.

**Grammar:**

- 1) Points to look out for: *naru*, *shi*, *kamo* (here, a combined final particle similar to *kana*).

**Thematic Questions:**

- 1) A number of different stories have developed about this poem. In what situation do you imagine Nakamaro composing it? Where is he? Where is Kasuga? How is the "*shi*" functioning here? What emotion do you think Nakamaro is feeling?

**HI #8 喜選法師 Priest Kisen (fl. 810-824).** One of the six poets singled out for comment by Ki no Tsurayuki in the preface to the *Kokinshū*. Later these six became known as the "Six Poetic Sages" (六歌仙 *rokkasen*). Very few of his poems remain. After taking orders as a Buddhist priest, he moved southeast of the capital to Uji, where he lived a life of seclusion.

**Grammar:**

- 1) How are the *kakekotoba* pivots on *shika* and *ushi/ujiyama* working in this poem?
- 2) Which *nari* is this (i.e. does it follow the SS or RT)? Can you tell?

(Verbs in RY) Poetry from <sup>ひやくにんいっしゆ</sup>百人一首・<sup>こきんしゆう</sup>古今集・<sup>いずみしきぶしゆう</sup>和泉式部集

MK= <sup>まくらことば</sup>枕詞 ★ <sup>かけことば</sup>掛詞

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <sup>ひやくにんいっしゆ</sup><br>百人一首          |   |
| (2) <sup>じとうてんのう</sup> 持統天皇 (Empress) | (645-702)   |
| <sup>はる</sup><br>春                    | spring  |
| すぎ (上二)                               | to pass   |
| <sup>なつ</sup><br>夏                    | summer  |
| <sup>く</sup><br>来 (カ変)                | to come   |
| <sup>しろたえ</sup><br>白妙 (MK)            | bright white  |
| <sup>ころも</sup><br>衣                   | robe  |
| ほし (4)                                | to dry  |
| てふ=と+いひ (4)                           | it is said  |
| <sup>あま</sup><br>天                    | heaven  |
| <sup>かぐやま</sup><br>香具山                | Mt. Kagu (Mt. Perfume)  |
|                                       |   |
| (3) <sup>かきのもとひとまる</sup> 柿本人麿         | (fl. ca. 680-700)   |
| あしびき (MK)                             | foot-dragging   |
| <sup>やまどり</sup><br>山鳥                 | mountain bird   |
| <sup>お</sup><br>しだり尾                  | drooping tail   |
| <sup>ながなが</sup><br>長々しく (adj.)        | long  |
| <sup>よ</sup><br>夜                     | night   |
| ひとり                                   | alone   |
| <sup>ね</sup><br>寝 (下二)                | sleep   |
|                                       |   |
| (7) <sup>あべのなかまる</sup> 阿部仲麿           | (701-70) Supposedly written when he was an envoy to China, the night before he was to return to Japan after 30 years. |
| <sup>あまのはら</sup><br>天の原               | plain of heaven   |

## Rhetorical Devices

### まくらことば 枕詞

ひさかたの  
distant, broad

あま (heaven) そら (sky) あめ (rain) つき (moon) ほし (star) etc.

あしびきの  
foot-dragging  
(i.e. wearying)

やま (mountain) みね (peak)

ちはやぶる  
thousand-swift-smashing  
(i.e. powerful)

かみ (deity) つち (land)

しろたえの (白妙の)  
pure hemp-white

ころも (robe) そで (sleeve) ゆき (snow) くも (clouds)

ぬばたまの うばたまの  
ink-dark, jewel black

くろ (black) よ (night) ゆめ (dream) ね (sleep) つき (moon)

くれたけの  
bamboo

よ (joint) よ (night) よ (world)

### かけことば 掛詞

まつ . まつ

まつ (to wait) . まつ (pine tree)

あ逢う . あ逢坂の関

あ逢う (to meet) . あ逢坂の関 (place name)

う憂し . う宇治 (山)

う憂し (ku adjective to be wretched) . う宇治 (place name)

し知らぬ . し白浪

し知らぬ (do not know) . し白浪 (white waves)

おも思ひ . ひ

おも思ひ (to yearn) . ひ (fire, flame)

2

春はるすぎて夏なつき来きたにらし 白しろ妙たへの

衣ころもほすてふ天あまの香かぐ具ぐ山やま

持じ統とう天てん皇わう

(女)

3

あしあしびびききの山やま鳥とりの尾おのししだだりり尾おの

長なが々がし夜よををひひととりりかかもも寝ねむむ

柿かき本の人ひと磨とまる

7

天あまの原はらふふりりととけけ見みれればば春か日すがなる

三み笠かさの山やまにい出でててしし月つきかかも

安あ部の仲なか磨まる

8

わが庵いほは都みやこのたたつみ鹿しかぞ住すむ

世よををううぢぢ山やまと人ひとははいいふふなりなり

喜き撰せん法ほう師し

10

ここれれややここの行ゆくもかかへへるも別わかれては

知しるも知あらぬも逢あ坂さかの関せき

蟬せみ丸まる