

Three Poets at Yuyama

Sōgi and *Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin*, 1491

by STEVEN D. CARTER

IN 1971, among the new slim volumes of verse to find its way to a few obscure bookstores in the English-speaking world was one entitled *Renga: A Chain of Poems*.¹ To the surprise of most Japanologists, however, the authors of the book were not scholars of Japanese literature, but four major Western poets—Octavio Paz, Jacques Roubaud, Eduardo Sanguinetti, and Charles Tomlinson—who seem to have taken an interest in a poetic genre that students of the court tradition have long neglected. One hopes, although only guardedly, that the experiments of so erudite a group of poets will spark more academic inquiry into a poetic form that is distinctive in world literature.

The *renga* is the major poetic genre of the Muromachi period, 1336–1568. Its most immediately striking characteristic is that it is the product not of one poet, but of two or more met together in a formal *renga* session—each composing stanzas of seventeen or fourteen syllables in turn. Any two such stanzas comprise a complete *tanka*; and the *renga*, first practiced as a verse-capping game by Heian courtiers, is indeed best described in the early stages of its historical development as one *tanka* composed by two poets. In its later history, however, the genre becomes distinct, at least in form, from the *tanka*, with a standard length of a hundred verses, a host of rules and conventions of its own, and a unique artistic character.

The unique character of the art is unfortunately not easy to describe. Konishi Jin'ichi has said that 'the essence of *renga* is the essentially meaningless pattern of images.'² Not accomplished by adherence to any preconceived topic or theme, progression from one verse to another in linked verse is dependent on the educated whims of its creators. And the pattern of this progression is indeed meaningless, in the sense that no one idea gives unity to all the verses of a sequence. This is not

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¹ Octavio Paz, Jacques Roubaud, Eduardo Sanguinetti & Charles Tomlinson, *Renga: A*

Chain of Poems, George Braziller, New York, 1971.

² Konishi Jin'ichi, 'The Art of Renga', tr. Karen Brazell & Lewis Cook, in *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, II: 1 (1975), p. 47.

to suggest, however, that movement in a *renga* sequence is haphazard—for progression, as mentioned above, is dependent not on the casual but on the educated whims of *renga* poets. For hundreds of years before linked verse came to be practiced as an art, *waka* poets had been creating in their work a whole array of word and sense associations—moon with autumn, autumn with lonely evenings, lonely evenings with spreading mist, spreading mist with fields, fields with travel, and so on—all of which were the poetic inheritance of serious poets of linked verse. And while progression in the art is by association, it is not free, but conventional association within the bounds set by tradition.

Perhaps because association is so conventional in the *renga*, the genre has until now received little attention from Western scholars. Without a knowledge, to begin with, of the complex formal conventions and word and sense associations which underlie the *waka* tradition, the dynamics of linking in a hundred-verse sequence are almost incomprehensible. Furthermore, the *renga* is built upon a foundation of allusions, sometimes obscure, to *tanka* from the first eight imperial anthologies and to seminal prose works of the court tradition, especially *Genji Monogatari*.

There now exist adequate English translations of the major prose classics which *renga* poets allude to with any frequency, and Brower and Miner's *Japanese Court Poetry*³ offers a good survey of the poets, poems, and formal history of the *waka* tradition. Before one can proceed to a study of the *renga*, however, there is an additional stumbling block: the rules, or *shikimoku*,⁴ of *renga* composition. Fortunately these rules, while numerous and detailed, are simple in conception and purpose. By establishing set lexical categories and then limiting occurrence, recurrence, and dispersal of words in those categories, they aim to ensure balance and variety in the development of a hundred-verse sequence. It is easy to imagine, for example, how a group of poets could proceed from a snowy scene, to winter isolation, to the sound of rain in the night, to frost in the morning, to the hardships of travel in the cold, to a chilly winter moon, and so forth—never breaking out of the pattern of winter imagery. The rules are designed to check such tendencies.

Certain images (notably the moon and cherry blossom) are held to be so basic to the nature of Japanese poetry that they comprise categories of their own and must appear at given intervals; to ensure that they do not dominate a sequence, however, they can appear only at those intervals, and at no other time. Other images (such as clouds, smoke, mist, and haze) are thought to be so alike that they are classified together in a category (in this case 'Rising Phenomena') which can appear only in a set number of verses consecutively and then must not appear again for another set number of verses. The rules thus restrict repetition, intermission, and seriation of categorized images and ideas.⁵ And while a detailed knowledge of them will permit greater appreciation of the art, a general understanding

³ Robert H. Brower & Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, Stanford U.P., 1961.

⁴ 式目

⁵ Konishi, pp. 42 & 43.

of the principles underlying the rules is all that is necessary to comprehend the kind of progression—sometimes smooth, at other times abrupt and startling—that informs a *renga* sequence.

Further treatment of the rules of *renga* composition would take more space than is permitted in a work of this scope. And we are fortunate that the responsibility of dealing with them in depth has been minimized by the recent translation of an article by Konishi Jin'ichi dealing with the art of *renga*, its conventions, and the rules of its composition.⁶ With the help of that article and the glosses and notes provided in the translation which is to follow, the reader will not find unfamiliarity with the rules a major obstacle to his appreciation of the art.

The major portions of the present article, then, will deal not with the rules or general nature of the *renga* form, but with a specific example of *renga* art—*Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin*⁷ ('One Hundred Verses by Three Poets at Yuyama'). Composed in 1491 by the famous poet-priest Sōgi⁸ and two of his foremost disciples, Shōhaku⁹ and Sōchō,¹⁰ *Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin* has long been ranked as one of the most distinctive works in the *renga* canon. This article will outline the life and work of Sōgi, the man whose genius is chiefly responsible for the sequence,¹¹ and then introduce the work in translation.

Renga before Sōgi

LINKED verse, as already noted, is the major poetic genre of the Muromachi period. But the form's origins date much further back in history, and its development into the artistic vehicle used by Sōgi was a process that can be related only in summary fashion here. Most scholars, in fact, trace the linked-verse form back to so-called precedents in the *Man'yōshū* (759) and the *Kojiki* (712); and there are scattered examples of *tanrenga*, or two-verse sequences, in early prose works such as *Yamato Monogatari* (early tenth century) and *Makura no Sōshi* (1002), as well as in the imperial *waka* anthologies of the Heian period. The following is a *tanrenga* by Kiyowara Motosuke¹² from *Shūishū* (1005?), #1,180:

Haru wa moe
Aki wa kogaruru
Kamadoyama

In spring it blazes
And in autumn it burns—
Hearth Mountain.

Kasumi mo kiri mo
Kemuri to zo miru.

The haze and the mist
Both look like smoke.

⁶ See n. 2, above.

⁷ 湯山三吟百韻

⁸ 宗祇, 1421–1502.

⁹ 肖柏, 1443–1527.

¹⁰ 宗長, 1448–1532.

¹¹ *Yuyama Sangin* is of course the work of Shōhaku and Sōchō as well as Sōgi. The focus

of the present study, however, is on Sōgi, because as the 'master' (*shi* 師) he is primarily responsible for the tone and development of the work. His disciples follow his lead and share in his basic ideals—at least in *Yuyama Sangin*.

¹² 清原元輔, d. 990.

The emphasis in Motosuke's verse is on wit and virtuosity rather than on any artistic ideals, and such is the case with most early *renga*. In the first few centuries of its existence the genre was little more than a parlor game practiced casually at the Heian court.

Poets of the eleventh and twelfth centuries expanded the length of the *renga* sequence from two to ten, twenty, and on up to thirty or more verses (the *kusari renga*),¹³ but there is little to indicate that they saw linked verse as anything but a verse-capping game. It is not until the era of the *Shinkokinshū* (1205), some five centuries after the form's beginnings, that we see the *renga* beginning to take on its eventual shape and significance.

The poets of the Shinkokin era are famous for their use of association and progression; and while it is perplexing that the *renga* could continue so long without developing artistic pretensions, it should come as no surprise that those who brought the *hyakushu-uta*, the *uta awase*,¹⁴ and the *waka* anthology to a degree of perfection should also have seen possibilities in the linked-verse form. Teika, Go-Toba, Tameie, and their contemporaries showed as much interest in the *renga* as they did in new styles of *waka*, and under their influence linked verse gained status as a genre in the *ushin*¹⁵ ('serious', or 'orthodox') tradition. Furthermore, under their influence the *renga* attained the basic form it was to maintain ever after: during the thirteenth century the length of a *renga* sequence was set at a hundred verses (a *hyakuin*), the formalities of the *renga* session (*renga kō*)¹⁶ were standardized, and certain conventions and rules—such as the obligatory inclusion of 'moon' and 'cherry blossom' verses at regular intervals in a sequence—were established.

The interest shown linked verse as an art by poets of the Shinkokin era is immediately apparent in the quality of the works extant from that period. This example by Fujiwara Tameyo,¹⁷ for instance, has a subtlety lacking in earlier *renga*:

<i>Toki no ma no</i>	Spring's brief moment
<i>Haru ya mukashi ni</i>	Soon will become
<i>Narinuramu</i>	A thing of the past.
<i>Omokage kasumu</i>	A hazy apparition—
<i>Ariake no tsuki.</i>	The fading dawn moon.

Here the link between verses is not based on a word game or a pun, but on allusion to the famous *Kokinshū* poem (#747) by Narihira (*Tsuki ya aranu. . .*) and on the traditional association of the moon with spring and of spring with ephemerality. Neither of the verses taken individually is particularly original or

¹³ 鎖連歌

¹⁴ 百首歌, 歌合せ

¹⁵ 有心

¹⁶ 連歌講

¹⁷ 藤原為世, 1250–1338. These verses are link #50 in *Tsukubashū* 菟玖波集, the first imperial anthology of linked verse. For a bibliographic reference, see n. 21, below.

praiseworthy; but in terms of vocabulary, tone, and sentiment both are in the *ushin* tradition, and the link between them is artful if conventional.

Teika and those in his circle were of course *waka* poets, and their interest in *renga* was always secondary to their concern with the main poetic tradition. They merely began the process by which linked verse came to identify itself with court ideals in aesthetics and taste. Credit as the first true *renga* poet of stature in the court tradition goes to a later figure—Nijō Yoshimoto,¹⁸ Chancellor and Regent in the Northern Court during the first years of the Ashikaga shogunate. Yoshimoto was also a *waka* poet, although of minor significance; his energies were spent as a *renga* poet, and as such history has treated him. By his time, the formal structure of the art had been firmly established, and he did little to alter it. But he, along with his tutor Gusai,¹⁹ brought the *renga* to new heights of excellence. One might say that the two men were the first to successfully capitalize on the now standardized principles of *renga* composition. And they were active in solidifying the place of *renga* in the literary world as well. Yoshimoto wrote the first important critical treatise on linked verse, *Tsukuba Mondō*;²⁰ and the two together compiled the first imperial anthology of *renga*, *Tsukubashū*²¹ and the first compendium of rules and conventions for composition, *Ōan Shinshiki*.²²

The history of linked verse after Yoshimoto and Gusai is more than anything a narration of the individual styles of a host of poets too numerous to mention. A few of these poets, however, should be introduced before we proceed to examine the life and art of Sōgi.

After the death of Yoshimoto in 1388, the art of *renga* fell into a period of decline in which only one poet, Asayama Bontō,²³ produced truly noteworthy work. But after Bontō, and largely due to his influence, the genre entered its golden age. Among the poets responsible for the florescence of the art, seven have traditionally been singled out for recognition: Chiun, Sōzei, Gyōjo, Nōa, Shinkei, Senjun, and Sōi.²⁴ Collectively they are referred to as the *shichiken*, or ‘seven sages’; the career and accomplishments of each are substantial enough to preclude even cursory treatment here. But two of the *shichiken* figure in the early development of Sōgi

¹⁸ 二条良基, 1320–88.

¹⁹ 救済, c. 1281–c. 1376.

²⁰ 菟玖波問答, 1357–72. The text, edited by Imoto Nōichi 井本農一 & Kidō Saizō 木藤才藏, is published in *Rengaronshū Haironshū* 連歌論集俳論集 (*Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikai*, 66), Iwanami Shoten, 1961.

²¹ 菟玖波集, 1357. Fukui Kyūzō 福井久藏, ed., *Kōhon Tsukubashū Shinshaku* 校本菟玖波集新釈, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2 vols., 1936–42.

²² 応安新式, 1372. This work was actually based on earlier rulebooks, notably Fujiwara Tameyo's *Kenji no Shikimoku* 建治の式目, compiled around 1275. But *Ōan Shinshiki* was

accepted by all as the standard set of rules, while earlier texts competed with each other and differed in many details. Yoshimoto and Gusai's work later became the basis for Shōhaku's definitive *Renga Shinshiki* 連歌新式, 1501. For the evolution of the rules from Yoshimoto's time to their final form in *Renga Shinshiki*, see Yamada Yoshio 山田孝雄 & Hoshika Sōichi 星加宗一, *Renga Hōshiki Kōyō* 連歌法式綱要, Iwanami Shoten, 1936.

²³ 朝山梵灯, 1349–1417.

²⁴ 智蘊, d. 1448; 宗砌, d. 1455; 行助, 1405–69; 能阿, 1397–1471; 心敬, 1406–75; 專順, 1411–76; & 宗伊, 1418–85.

as a poet and must be discussed at least briefly. The first is Shinkei, considered by many modern scholars to be the finest poet of the group. A *waka* as well as a *renga* poet, he studied under Shōtetsu,²⁵ the last important poet of the Kyōgoku-Reizei school. Probably because of his apprenticeship in the unorthodox poetics of that school, his *renga* is characterized by abstruseness and extreme ellipsis of syntax and sense. The work of his contemporary, Sōzei, who was perhaps more famous than Shinkei in his time, is noted on the other hand for its more conventional virtues—simplicity, surface attractiveness, control, and a measure of wit. Sōzei was also a student of Shōtetsu for a period, but he remained throughout his career committed to a more traditional approach to his art.

Both Shinkei and Sōzei practiced linked-verse composition much as had Yoshimoto and Gusai, and according to the same rules. Indeed, no poet since the mid-thirteenth century had been responsible for fundamental changes in the art when Sōgi, a pupil of Sōzei, began to compose *renga* in the 1450s. And Sōgi did not change the art either—except to fulfill as no one else the possibilities which had been inherent in it from the time the rules for composition had first been formulated.

Sōgi's Early Life

Most of the *shichiken* were of relatively low birth when compared to *waka* poets of their day. But the origins of none of them are so obscure as those of Sōgi. Indeed, all that can be said with certainty about the antecedents of the most famous of *renga* poets is that he was born in 1421 to humble parents in either Ōmi (modern Shiga prefecture) or Kii (modern Wakayama prefecture).²⁶

There is a persistent legend that Sōgi's father was a teacher of *sarugaku* music and his mother a member of the Iio clan, but the earliest sources say nothing about his parentage.²⁷ Moreover, little beyond conjecture can be offered about his life until his early thirties, and even then we must rely on casual remarks in his travel diaries, headnotes to poems, etc. The first record of his work as a poet is a *dokugin hyakuin*²⁸ ('One Hundred Verse Sequence by One Poet') dated 1461 and thus presumably written when he was forty years old.²⁹ *Dokugin* ('individual') se-

²⁵ 正徹, 1381–1459. Shōtetsu is considered by many modern scholars to have been the finest *waka* poet of the 15th century. He studied under the Kyōgoku-Reizei poet and scholar Imagawa Ryōshun 今川了俊, 1325–1420, and from him developed a taste for experiment. Earl Miner, *An Introduction to Japanese Court Poetry*, Stanford U.P., 1968, pp. 138–40.

²⁶ Virtually all accounts give Ōei 応永 28 (1421) as Sōgi's year of birth. As to his birthplace, the Ōmi theory, current in Sōgi's time, is substantiated by references in *Sanetakakō-ki* 実隆公記, the diary of Sanjōnishi Sanetaka 三条西実隆 from 1474 to 1533. The Kii theory

became popular in the early Tokugawa period and was prevalent until fairly recent years. In his authoritative biography, Ijichi Tetsuo suggests that Tokugawa scholars may have had evidence at their disposal which has since been lost. Ijichi Tetsuo 伊地知鉄男, *Sōgi*, Seigodō, 1943, pp. 9–16.

²⁷ The legend about Sōgi's parents is based on the same Tokugawa sources that give Kii as the poet's birthplace. Ijichi, pp. 24–28.

²⁸ 独吟百韻

²⁹ The text is included in Etō Yasusada 江藤保定, *Sōgi no Kenkyū* 宗祇の研究, Kazama Shobō, 1967, part 2, pp. 7–10.

quences were usually undertaken as practical exercises (*keiko*)³⁰ by novice poets, and this first extant *renga* by Sōgi was probably such a practice attempt. But from the quality of the work we can assume that it was far from his first experience in composition; and this assumption is supported by Sōgi's own statement, made later in his life, that he was about thirty years old when he first came to the capital and began his apprenticeship as a *renga* poet.³¹ It appears, therefore, that he began his poetic career at a rather late age, but made rapid progress and was recognized as possessing substantial talent within ten years—a short period of training for success in so complex and demanding an art.³²

Sōgi's thirties were thus spent in the study of *renga*. His most immediate motive for coming to the capital, however, was probably extra-literary. Like many poets and scholars of his day, he entered the priesthood there, apprenticing at Shōkokuji in northeast Kyoto, a temple of the Rinzaï school of Zen.³³ There is no evidence that this was merely an economic expedient; indeed, Zen is an influence in Sōgi's work as in that of so many Muromachi artists. But it is evident that from the beginning his primary allegiance was to poetry. He never attained any formal rank in the Zen hierarchy and was considered a *kojikisō*³⁴ ('rankless mendicant') by contemporaries—a fact which some have taken as a reflection of his poverty and low birth, but which is probably just as much an indication of his preference for the way of poetry over the way of the Buddha.³⁵

While Sōgi may not have spent much time studying sutras during his early years in the capital, he was nonetheless involved in study of other kinds. To contemporaries he was known equally as a scholar and a *renga* poet, and his acquaintance with both worlds began at the same time. During the ten years between his arrival in the capital and the first account of him as a poet, he studied *renga* technique with Sōzei, Senjun, Shinkei, and Nōa; at the same time he studied Shinto under the noted scholar Urabe no Kanetomo,³⁶ and *waka* history, criticism, and composition under Asukai Masachika,³⁷ the son of Asukai Masayo,³⁸ the compiler of the *Shinzoku-kokinshū* (1439).³⁹ This grounding in the classical poetic tradition was of paramount importance to his development as a *renga* poet and laid the foundation for his subsequent work. He was not, however, a practicing *waka* poet in the tradition of Shinkei and others of the *shichiken*, but from the beginning devoted his efforts to the *renga*.

It is clear that Sōgi considered himself primarily a *renga* poet, but his apprenticeship in *waka* indicates that he understood the significance—both artistic and social—of the traditional form. Through the work of poets such as Shinkei and

³⁰ 稽古

³¹ Ijichi, p. 44.

³² It is commonly considered that twenty years of study are required to master even the basics of the art.

³³ Ijichi, pp. 32–33. The temple, whose name is now read as Sōkokuji 相国寺, is located just north of the Imperial Palace compound.

³⁴ 乞食僧

³⁵ Konishi Jin'ichi 小西甚一, *Sōgi*, Chikuma Shobō, 1974, pp. 30–31.

³⁶ 卜部兼俱, 1435–1511.

³⁷ 飛鳥井雅親, d. 1490.

³⁸ 雅世, 1390–1452.

³⁹ Ijichi, p. 41.

Sōzei the reputation of linked verse had been considerably enhanced, but in the mid-fifteenth century *waka* remained the only truly legitimate form of poetic expression. It was probably for this reason that he studied with Masachika, and for this reason as well that there is some ambivalence in his attitude toward the *renga* masters of the previous generation. He learned from all of them, but called none ‘master’.⁴⁰ Konishi Jin’ichi suggests that the formal master/disciple relationship—so essential a part of the world of *waka*—did not apply in *renga* circles during Sōgi’s early years because the new form had not yet been recognized as of sufficient artistic value to warrant such formalities. For whatever reason, Sōgi looked not to *renga* poets but to *waka* poets and scholars as his ‘masters’.⁴¹

Nonetheless Sōgi had ample contact with the major *renga* poets of the time, particularly with Sōzei, who appears to have been his first teacher.⁴² And through Sōzei he was introduced to the man who was to prove his greatest friend and patron during the first half of his career—the aristocrat Ichijō Kanera.⁴³

Kanera, of the Ichijō branch of the Fujiwara, was successively Minister of the Right, Chancellor, and Regent in the Court government from 1424 to 1454 and Regent again for several years during the capital’s occupation by Ōuchi troops in the Ōnin Conflict of 1467–77.⁴⁴ But perhaps more important than his high office, for Sōgi at least, was the fact that he was a scholar, poet, and connoisseur through whom a rising poet could gain admittance to higher social circles, as well as acquaintance with ‘higher scholarship’—that is, the body of secret teachings and orthodox commentaries on the Japanese classics that had by this time become as much the property of certain noble families as were their land holdings in the provinces.⁴⁵ Kanera instructed Sōgi in the Chinese classics, *waka*, *monogatari*, and the collection of court customs and traditions known as *yūsoku kojitsu*.⁴⁶ Furthermore, through Kanera Sōgi developed social ties with aristocratic families that were to be of immense practical importance throughout his life.

Sōgi’s first years in the capital were thus spent in various apprenticeships: religious, scholarly, artistic, and social. This account would be incomplete, however, if nothing were said about his other primary activity—travel. In his thirties he lived in various places in and around the capital. Home to Sōgi, however, seems never to have been more than a centrally located base from which to organize his unending journeys. And although the prolonged trips for which he is so famous came later, even in these early years of apprenticeship he traveled extensively in the home provinces. The motives for his early travels were no doubt various, but at least one comes readily to mind, one that will be noted as a primary motive for

⁴⁰ *shi* 師

⁴¹ Konishi, *Sōgi*, pp. 46–47. Sōgi received official recognition as the foremost disciple of the Nijō poet-scholar Tō no Tsuneyori 東常縁 in 1472. Ijichi, p. 93.

⁴² Ijichi Tetsuo, *Renga no Sekai* 連歌の世界, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1967, p. 332.

⁴³ 一条兼良, d. 1481. Araki Yoshio 荒木良雄, ed., *Chūsei Bungaku Jiten* 中世文学事典, Shunjūsha, 1961, p. 157.

⁴⁴ Araki, p. 43.

⁴⁵ Brower & Miner, pp. 343–46.

⁴⁶ 有職古実

his later journeys as well: the opportunity to visit powerful provincial clans. In particular he developed a strong bond with members of the Kitabatake clan during his years as a beginning *renga* poet, often visiting them in their Ise domains. This was the first among his lifelong relationships with the warrior clans who through their patronage were beginning to eclipse the Court in matters of art as they had long before in matters of political power. Sōgi's visits with the Kitabatake and other military families can best be considered, then, as another social apprenticeship, complementing his relationships with the aristocracy and giving him additional opportunities to practice the art and share the scholarship to which he had devoted himself in the first part of his career.

Maturity

Sōgi is known in literary history as an indefatigable traveler. As noted above, he traveled a good deal throughout the home provinces in his early years as a poet, but the journeys which have earned him his reputation as a wandering poet did not begin until 1466, when, just before the outbreak of the Ōnin Conflict he set out along the Tōkaidō. Leaving the capital in late spring, he arrived in Musashi (an ancient province whose boundaries encompassed modern Saitama prefecture and Tokyo) in mid-autumn of that same year. There he participated in *renga* sessions with local poets, renewed old ties with Shinkei, then living at Shinagawa (near Edo), and met for the first time a young poet, Sōchō, who was later to become his chief disciple.⁴⁷

The reasons for this first long journey were various, but no matter what his practical concerns Sōgi was always busy as a poet. Before leaving for the east he had been involved in numerous *renga* sessions in and around the capital, and records of some of these have been preserved.⁴⁸ But it was in the east in 1466 that he first undertook to examine the art of *renga* in critical terms. The work he produced, *Chōrokubumi*,⁴⁹ is a short treatise on practical aspects of composition, intended as an aid to aspiring poets. Cast in a topical format, it deals with linking technique, the relationship of *renga* to *waka*, the uses of allusion in *renga*, the proper use of certain vocabulary items, etc. In its pedantic and orthodox nature it is representative of all Sōgi's subsequent critical writings, which show him to be primarily an artist rather than a theorist.⁵⁰

While in the east Sōgi stayed with the Nagao and Ōta clans, again making friends who were to be important throughout his life. He remained in Musashi until the late autumn of 1468 as a kind of poet in residence, and then set out for Nikkō and the Shirakawa Barrier. As a record of his journey to these famous

⁴⁷ Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 41, 56–60, & 65–75.

⁴⁸ See Etō, part 2, pp. 11–35, for a number of *renga* in which Sōgi's name appears during these years.

⁴⁹ 長六文. Details of Sōgi's critical works

may be found in Ijichi, *Renga no Sekai*, pp. 369–75, and are set out schematically on p. 130 of the present article.

⁵⁰ Etō, part 1, p. 432.

spots on what was still at that time the limit of the Japanese frontier, he wrote *Shirakawa Kikō*,⁵¹ a short, melancholy work ending with a *hyakuin* composed at the famous barrier on the 22nd day of the tenth month of 1468. By late spring of the following year he had passed through Musashi again, stopping for a short visit with friends in the Ōta stronghold at Kawagoe, and was on his way back to the capital.⁵²

Long journeys became a conspicuous feature of Sōgi's life after this first sojourn of three years in the east. According to Sōgi's modern biographer, Ijichi Tetsuo, three motives underlay Sōgi's incessant travels: (1) to take advantage of *bushi* pretensions to culture; (2) to make contact with scholars and poets who had fled the capital at the beginning of the Ōnin Conflict; and (3) to follow in the footsteps of earlier poets and visit places celebrated in poetry (*utamakura*).⁵³ Ijichi, among other scholars,⁵⁴ insists that it was the last of these motives—the desire to visit *utamakura*—which more than anything else lured Sōgi out on long excursions to distant places, and in this he is no doubt right. Sōgi was first and foremost a poet, and the places he visited in his travels were often indeed *utamakura*, the Shirakawa Barrier being an obvious example.

It should be emphasized, however, that on his first journey Sōgi spent only a few days at the Shirakawa Barrier and a number of months at the domains of feudal barons in Musashi. *Utamakura* seem always to have figured in the poet's itinerary, but the provinces boasted other allurements as well—which is to say that the first two motives on Ijichi's list should not be overlooked or their importance minimized. It was in the mid-fifteenth century that great castle towns began to appear, rivaling each other in pretensions to the culture of the capital.⁵⁵ The *bushi* class was evidently glad to receive traveling poets, artists, and monks, who, for their own part, were probably happy to escape the turmoil which engulfed the home provinces at the time of the Ōnin Conflict. Even after the fighting had subsided, provincial barons could usually offer more support to artists and scholars than could the hard-pressed Kyoto aristocracy.

Finally, warrior clans not only welcomed the artistic contributions of travelers such as Sōgi, but offered significant cultural resources of their own. Many of the libraries in the capital had been destroyed in the wars of the time, and original manuscripts sometimes survived only in the storehouses of military leaders. And human resources were not lacking in the provinces either. As mentioned above, Shinkei was in Shinagawa after the Ōnin Conflict, and Tō no Tsuneyori,⁵⁶ an important scholar and poet, was likewise in Musashi when Sōgi visited there in 1466. So the provinces boasted not only *utamakura* for Sōgi and other travelers,

⁵¹ 白河紀行. Text is given in *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 続群書類従, xviii, Book 524.

⁵² Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 85–88.

⁵³ 歌枕. Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 100–01.

⁵⁴ Konishi, for instance, says essentially the same in his *Sōgi*, p. 23.

⁵⁵ Sōgi visited the castle of Ōta Dōkan 太田道灌 at Edo, for example, in 1468, and later he stayed with Ōuchi Masahiro 大内政弘 at Suō, Yamaguchi. Both towns were thriving cultural and trade centers at the time.

⁵⁶ 東常縁, 1400–94.

but also receptive audiences, comfort and a measure of safety, material rewards, cultural resources, and, of course, the beauties of nature.⁵⁷ It should come as no surprise that much of Sōgi's best poetry and virtually all of his most important critical works were written during his visits with clans far from the capital.⁵⁸

All of the reasons noted above, then, combine to explain Sōgi's lifetime of travel—with the addition of one more, less often included in such a discussion but perhaps of equal importance. Sir George Sansom notes of *renga* masters that by this period they 'went from province to province much as the mediaeval troubadours called at one castle after another in France. At times, no doubt, they also acted as spies and gave the warlords news from other territories.'⁵⁹ Whether or not Sōgi did any actual 'spying' during his travels is not known, but it is certain that at times he served as an agent for Kyoto nobles, such as Ichijō Kanera.⁶⁰ One scholar has even said that whereas Narihira in his travels was concerned with beauty and Saigyō with religious insight, Sōgi's interest lay in the 'real world' (*genze*).⁶¹ It is at any rate undeniable that traveling *renga* poets were valued by the feudal nobility and the court aristocracy as intermediaries. Later in his life, Sōgi even acted as an agent for Emperor Go-Tsuchimikado, searching out rare texts for the Imperial Library and receiving considerable favors in return.⁶²

Sōgi was thus a busy and not an idle traveler, and the extent of his travels bears witness to the fact. No sooner had he returned from his eastern journey of 1466–69 than he was off in the same direction again. Not all of his travels can be covered in a brief biographical sketch such as this, but the journey of 1470–73 is noteworthy for two reasons: first, because it was while he was in the east on that occasion that he produced his most important critical work, *Azuma Mondō*,⁶³ and second, because it was during that journey that he received the *Kokin denju*,⁶⁴ or 'secret teachings' on the *Kokinshū*, from Tō no Tsuneyori.

Although the most famous of Sōgi's critical works, *Azuma Mondō* does not depart in character from the others. Written in response to questions about *renga* by local poets and organized in a question-and-answer format, it addresses itself to practical aspects of the art in twenty-six sections, dealing with *renga* history, linking techniques, allusion, the composition of the *hokku*, *waki* ('second verse'), and *daisan* ('third verse'), etc.—i.e., with many of the same topics discussed in *Chōrokubumi*

⁵⁷ Konishi, in *Sōgi*, p. 23, argues that the beauties of nature had little meaning for pre-modern poets, but the extent of Sōgi's travels seems to indicate the contrary in his case.

⁵⁸ *Chōrokubumi*, written at Ikago in Musashi, is addressed to Nagao Magoroku 長尾孫六, a local *bushi* poet; *Azuma Mondō*, written at Shinagawa in Musashi, is addressed to Nagao Magoshirō 長尾孫四郎; *Oi no Susabi* was written at the request of friends in the Asakura clan while Sōgi was visiting Echizen in 1479.

⁵⁹ George Sansom, *A History of Japan, 1334–1615*, Stanford U.P., 1961, p. 263.

⁶⁰ See Nagashima Fukutarō 永島福太郎, *Ichijō Kanera*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1959, pp. 114 & 115. Ijichi, *Sōgi*, p. 212, also notes a good deal about the poet's activities on behalf of a later patron, Sanjōnishi Sanetaka, 1455–1537, an important court bureaucrat with whom Sōgi developed a close relationship after Kanera's death.

⁶¹ 現世. Etō, part 1, p. 32.

⁶² Ijichi, *Sōgi*, p. 218.

⁶³ 吾妻問答, 1470.

⁶⁴ 古今伝授

Sōgi's Critical Works

1. 1466. *Chōrokubumi* 長六文 (formal title: *Moshiogusa* 藻塩草). Available in Ijichi, *Rengaronshū* (n. 98), II, pp. 21–39.
2. 1470. *Azuma Mondō* 吾妻問答 (formal title: *Sumidagawa* 角田川). In Imoto & Kidō, *Rengaronshū Haironshū* (n. 20), pp. 205–37. See p. 129 of the present article.
3. 1473. *Sōgi Shoshinshō* 宗祇初心抄. In Ijichi, *Rengaronshū*, II, pp. 41–51. A handbook of practical instruction for beginners.
4. 1476. *Renga Kokorozuke no Koto* 連歌心付之事. In Ijichi, *Rengaronshū*, II, pp. 54–58. A short work giving concrete examples of good links based on various kinds of associations.
5. 1479. *Oi no Susabi* 老のすさび. Ijichi, *Rengaronshinshū* 連歌論新集, Koten Bunko, 1963, III, pp. 61–137. See p. 132 of the present article.
6. 1481. *Sōgi Hokku Hanshi* 宗祇発句判詞. In Ijichi, *Rengaronshū*, II, pp. 59–75. In this work Sōgi discusses and compares several hundred of his own *hokku* in short critical statements.
7. 1488. *Bun'yō* 分葉. Yamaguchi Akiho 山口明穂, ed., 'Sōgi "Bun'yō" (*Honkoku*)' 宗祇「分葉」(翻刻), in Akiyama Ken 秋山虔, ed., *Chūsei Bungaku no Kenkyū* 中世文学の研究, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1972, pp. 455–99. Consists of a series of short notes on the proper usage of certain words and phrases in the context of *renga* composition.
8. 1489. *Sōgi Sode no Shita* 宗祇袖の下. In *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū*, XVII, pp. 1067–81. Another practical handbook in topicalized format. Addressed to the shogun Ashikaga Yoshihisa 足利義尚, 1465–89.
9. 1495. *Yodo no Watari* 淀の渡. In Ijichi, *Rengaronshū*, II, pp. 77–85. Verse-by-verse analysis of *Yodo no Watari Hyakuin*, a *dokugin* of Sōgi's later years.
10. Date uncertain. *Renga Hidenshō* 連歌秘伝抄. In Ijichi, *Rengaronshū*, II, pp. 87–113. Authorship uncertain, but parts at least are attributed to Sōgi. Contains examples of eight kinds of *renga* links and other practical information.
11. Date uncertain. *Asaji* 浅茅. In *Nihon Bungakushiyō* 日本文学誌要, Hōsei Daigaku, 1960, V, pp. 46–63, & VI, pp. 48–77. Stresses importance of allusion in *renga* and emphasizes the art's close relationship to *waka* and the court tradition.
12. Date uncertain. *Shichinin Tsukeku Hanshi* 七人付句判詞. In *Chūsei Bungaku Kenkyū to Shiryō* 中世文学研究と史料, Shibundō, 1957, pp. 123–42. Analyzes *tsukeku* by Shōhaku, Sōchō and others, and gives critical judgment.
13. Date uncertain. *Sōgi Shogakushō* 宗祇初学抄. No printed edition. Discusses imagery appropriate to each month of the year. Important for the concept of *hon'i* 本意.

and subsequent works. It is nonetheless a more comprehensive introduction to Sōgi's artistic approach than any of his other critical statements, and as such has long been ranked with Yoshimoto's *Tsukuba Mondō* as a classic of its kind.

Perhaps more important for Sōgi's own development than even this most basic statement of his art was his schooling under Tō no Tsuneyori in the *Kokin denju* during the spring and summer of 1471. The *denju* had been passed down through Teika's descendants in the Nijō line to Tsuneyori, who was himself of Taira lineage but whose family had long-standing ties with the Fujiwara. Their 'secret teachings' consisted primarily of obscure information about poems and poets in the first three imperial anthologies of *waka*, treasured instructions about the pronunciation of words, etc.—to us 'almost stupefyingly inconsequential bits of lore', as Donald Keene has put it when writing about a later *renga* poet, Matsunaga Teitoku.⁶⁵ But Keene is quick to remind us that Teitoku (and we would add Sōgi and his contemporaries) 'probably never questioned that this was what scholarship meant.' The *denju* comprised the only legitimate interpretation of the basic tradition of the time, and their bestowal was a virtual stamp of authority. That Tsuneyori chose Sōgi, a *renga* poet of low birth and no formal status, as the only one of his disciples worthy to receive the coveted teachings is indicative at once of the sad state of the *waka* tradition in the latter half of the fifteenth century and of the respect that Sōgi commanded as a scholar. It is apparent that even at fifty—by no means an advanced age for a recognized scholar in pre-modern Japan—Sōgi was one of the most renowned scholars and poets of his generation.

It was in Izu (modern Shizuoka prefecture) that Sōgi received the *Kokin denju* during the first seven months of 1471.⁶⁶ The next year he accompanied Tsuneyori to his home in Mino (modern Gifu prefecture), and then continued on to the capital, arriving there in the autumn of 1473. He settled down in the *Shugyokuan*, a proverbial *kusa no io*,⁶⁷ or 'grass hut' (albeit a substantial one which stood until 1500), located in the northeast part of Kyoto, near both the Hana no Goshō, the residence of the Shogun, and his own former temple, Shōkokuji. Resting from his travels, for several years he stayed near home and organized some of the poetic fruits of his experiences on the road.

While in the provinces Sōgi had participated in many *renga* sessions. Two of particular note are the famous *Kawagoe Senku*,⁶⁸ in which he, Shinkei, and Ōta Dōshin,⁶⁹ among others, had taken part at Dōshin's Kawagoe estate in 1469; and *Mishima Senku*,⁷⁰ a *dokugin* composed at Mishima in Suruga (modern Shizuoka

⁶⁵ Donald Keene, 'Matsunaga Teitoku and the Beginning of *Haikai* Poetry', in *Landscapes and Portraits*, Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1971, p. 76.

⁶⁶ Many scholars have assumed that Sōgi received these lectures on the *denju* at Tsuneyori's home in Mino (modern Gifu prefecture), but Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 91–92, has concluded that the transmission took place in Izu.

⁶⁷ 草の庵

⁶⁸ 川越千句. Included in Etō, part 2, pp. 71–103. The text with annotations from the late Muromachi period is also available in Kaneko Kinjirō 金子金治郎, *Sōgi Renga Kochū* 宗祇連歌古注, Chūsei Bungei Kenkyūkai, Hiroshima, 1965.

⁶⁹ 太田道灌, 1411–92.

⁷⁰ 三島千句; Etō, part 2, pp. 39–64.

prefecture) during the transmission of the *Kokin denju*. In 1473, to record work from these and other compositions, Sōgi began to compile his first personal anthology of linked verse, *Wasuregusa*.⁷¹ Like most personal anthologies of *renga*, it is a collection not of *hyakuin* but of individual links, or *tsukeku*,⁷² and *hokku*. In six sections, it contains 200 of Sōgi's *hokku* and 760 of his *tsukeku*, arranged like the imperial *waka* anthologies in books on the seasons, love, and miscellaneous topics. Most of the verses are from work done in the east and earlier in Ise with the Kitabatake clan.

While compiling this first anthology of his own compositions, Sōgi, now an influential authority, gave lectures on the Japanese classics and became a central figure in the literary world of the capital. In 1476 he attended his first *bakufu*-sponsored *renga* session, with the young Shogun Ashikaga Yoshihisa⁷³ in attendance, and in the following year his lectures on *Genji Monogatari* drew a number of important courtiers.

Part of the reason for Sōgi's increasing popularity during these years can be explained by his recent recognition as Tō no Tsuneyori's chief disciple and his position as 'guardian' of the *Kokin denju*. Moreover, while of embarrassingly low birth, he had studied with the most authoritative literary figures of his day and could thus boast of a good scholastic pedigree. But these facts account primarily for his popularity as a lecturer on *Genji Monogatari*, *Ise Monogatari*, and *Kokinshū*, and not as a poet. There is a more simple reason for his new recognition in *renga* circles: in 1476 Senjun died, leaving as the only surviving member of the *shichiken*, Sōi, the least important of the group in many ways. So by the late 1470s Sōgi was almost alone in authority and experience as a *renga* poet.⁷⁴

As the *renga* master who had to carry on the tradition after a great generation of poets, Sōgi became a chronicler of sorts, compiling in memory of the *shichiken* the most comprehensive single record we have of their work—*Chikurinshō*, an anthology of *tsukeku* and *hokku* in ten chapters.⁷⁵ His work on that project, coupled with his lectures, kept him near the capital until 1478, when he made a trip to Echigo (modern Niigata prefecture) to visit friends in the Uesugi clan. The journey was short, and unimportant except for the fact that on the way back to the capital in the following year, while at Asakura in Echizen (modern Fukui prefecture), he produced his third major critical statement, *Oi no Susabi*.⁷⁶ Practical in nature and topical in format, *Oi no Susabi* is of interest because its analyses of verses by the *shichiken* make it a critical companion to *Chikurinshō*.

As noted above, Sōgi's stay in the east was not a long one, and he was back in the capital by the autumn of 1479. But he was quick to set out again, this time to the west and the estate of Ōuchi Masahiro⁷⁷ at Yamaguchi in Suō (modern Yama-

⁷¹ 萱草; available in Konishi Jin'ichi, *Sōgi Rengashū* 宗祇連歌集, Koten Bunko, 1950.

⁷² 付句

⁷³ 足利義尚, 1465–89.

⁷⁴ Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 116 & 127–30.

⁷⁵ Hoshika Sōichi 星加宗一, ed., *Kōhon Chikurinshō* 校本竹林抄, Iwanami Shoten, 1945.

⁷⁶ 老のすさび

⁷⁷ 大内政弘, d. 1495.

guchi prefecture). Yamaguchi, a good example of the rising castle-towns mentioned earlier, was at the time a thriving cultural and trade center, and the Ōuchi clan was a great patron of traveling artists. Sōgi's relationship with the Ōuchi may well have begun when troops from that clan had occupied the capital during the Ōnin Conflict, and when he came west in 1480 it was probably at the special invitation of the powerful Masahiro himself.⁷⁸ While in the 'capital' of the Ōuchi domains he did very much what he always seems to have done while visiting with *bushi* families—gave lectures on the classics, held *renga* sessions, and tutored novice poets in *renga* composition.

After several months in Yamaguchi Sōgi left for a trip through Kyushu, out of which came his second major travel diary, *Tsukushi no Michi no Ki*.⁷⁹ A work less melancholy than *Shirakawa Kikō*, it is of particular importance for its remarks about the poet's early life. It was written in 1480; in 1481 Sōgi returned to Masahiro's domain for a short visit before proceeding back to the capital and new prominence.

Pre-eminence

WHEN Sōgi returned from the west in 1481, he was greeted with the news that Ichijō Kanera had died in his absence. He had known the great courtier since before Sōzei's death in 1455, studying *Genji Monogatari*, *Ise Monogatari*, and *waka* under him, and benefiting both from his scholarship and his patronage. Sōgi must have deeply mourned the loss.

Painful as Kanera's passing must have been for Sōgi, it did not leave him without friends and patrons in the higher circles of the capital. His reputation as a scholar and *renga* poet was now firmly established, and over the years since his apprenticeship as a Zen priest he had no doubt developed good relationships with many in the upper classes. One such was Sanjōnishi Sanetaka, whose diary, *Sanetakakō-ki*,⁸⁰ is one of the primary sources for information on life and culture in the capital during the years 1474–1533. Sōgi's first documented encounter with Sanetaka was in 1477, when the aristocrat attended his *Genji* lectures at the *Shu-gyokuan*. It was after Kanera's death, however, that the two became close, and from 1481 onward Sōgi's name begins to appear frequently in Sanetaka's diary.⁸¹ As is evident from entries in the diary, Sōgi acted as a courier and economic agent for Sanetaka in the travels of his later years—probably much as he had for Kanera. Furthermore, Sanetaka was himself a *renga* poet of some note, and Sōgi was his teacher. The two men, then, were friends who seem to have benefited in various practical and artistic ways from their relationship.⁸²

⁷⁸ Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 161–62.

⁷⁹ 筑紫道記. Available in *Gunsho Ruijū* 群書類從, xi, Book 336.

⁸⁰ 実隆公記. Zoku *Gunsho Ruijū* Kanseikai, ed., *Sanetakakō-ki*, 13 vols., 1931–63.

⁸¹ Ijichi, *Sōgi*, p. 209.

⁸² Sanetaka's literary name, Chōsetsu 聴雪, appears in many *renga* during Sōgi's last years and thereafter. Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 211–14.

With the support of men such as Sanetaka, his long-standing ties with provincial families, and his scholarly training, Sōgi was assured a position of importance in the literary world of the late fifteenth century. Indeed, after Kanera's death, he seems to have been quickly recognized as the foremost expert on virtually all aspects of the court tradition in literature. As noted earlier, with Senjun the last great *renga* poet of the *shichiken* age had died; and both Asukai Masachika, in seclusion in Ōmi since the beginning of the Ōnin Conflict, and Tō no Tsuneyori, long since settled in Mino, were too old to assume primary responsibility in the world of *waka* poetry and scholarship. So Sōgi, sixty years old at the time of Kanera's passing, became after 1481 the pre-eminent living authority on the *renga*, *waka*, and the Japanese prose classics.

As the central literary figure in the last part of the fifteenth century, Sōgi was kept extremely busy. His last twenty years, from 1482 until his death in 1502, coincide roughly with the Higashiyama era and are appropriately full of *renga* sessions, lectures, criticism, and travel—too full to cover adequately in a few pages. But an account of his life requires a relatively detailed discussion of certain aspects of his activities after Kanera's death.

First, of course, is Sōgi's work as a *renga* poet. Shortly after his return from Yamaguchi he began compilation of his second personal anthology, *Wakuraba*,⁸³ which reached its final form in 1485; then in 1493 he began work on a third such anthology, *Shitakusa*,⁸⁴ which likewise went through revisions before coming to final form in 1496. His last personal anthology, this one of *hokku* only, was compiled in 1449 under the title *Uraba*.⁸⁵ During these years he also produced a number of critical works, but his practical approach to the art had been recorded in previous books, and the later statements are of minor importance. It is not, in any event, for his criticism or his personal anthologies that the Sōgi of these years is remembered, but for the two *hyakuin* which symbolize the epitome of *renga* art: *Minase Sangin Hyakuin*⁸⁶ (1488) and *Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin* (1491).

Owing again to his credentials and also to his excellence as a *renga* poet, Sōgi's last years were replete with honors. Through Sanetaka his reputation became known to the emperor, Go-Tsuchimikado, although the poet never felt worthy to be received in audience.⁸⁷ In 1488 he obtained the greatest public recognition open to a *renga* poet when he was appointed *bugyō* of the Kitano Shrine *Renga* Sessions.⁸⁸ The only honor in which he seems to have taken great personal pride,

⁸³ 老葉. Available in Konishi Jin'ichi, *Sōgi Rengashū*, Koten Bunko, 1953.

⁸⁴ 下草. Available in *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū*, xvii, Book 486.

⁸⁵ 宇良葉. No printed edition is available.

⁸⁶ 水無瀬三吟百韻

⁸⁷ Sanetaka repeatedly arranged meetings

with the emperor for his friend and teacher, but Sōgi always declined the privilege. Ijichi suggests that the poet was very conscious of his low birth and thus felt unworthy of the honor.

⁸⁸ Previous *bugyō* had been Sōzei, Nōa and Sōi. Sōgi was evidently reluctant to assume the responsibility and resigned within a year.

however, did not come until 1495, when he was commissioned as chief compiler of the *Shinsen Tsukubashū*.⁸⁹

The suggestion for a second imperial anthology of linked verse—the first having been the *Tsukubashū*, compiled by Nijō Yoshimoto and Gusai in 1357—evidently originated with Ōuchi Masahiro, although Konishi Jin'ichi argues that Sōgi probably encouraged his *bushi* patron to make the proposal.⁹⁰ It was at any rate a great honor for Sōgi to be chosen as chief compiler, showing both his prestige in the literary world and the high opinion in which he was held by the emperor. He was assisted in his task by Sanetaka (who as an aristocrat had nominal charge of the project), Sōchō, and several other disciples. The anthology, composed of *tsukeku* and *hokku*, includes primarily the work of the *shichiken*, with lesser contributions by Sōgi, his disciples, and a host of minor poets.

Sōgi's final years were thus his most fulfilling as a *renga* poet. At the same time, he was active in scholarly circles. As the living repository of orthodox scholarship, he had the responsibility of ensuring its transmission to later generations, and the number of his lectures shows that he felt his obligation keenly. With Tsuneyori in retirement at Mino, he was the only authority on the *Kokin denju* in the capital; to make sure that the 'secret teachings' would always be preserved, he began lecturing Shōhaku in *waka* lore in 1482. The most authoritative version of the teachings, however, was later transmitted to Sanetaka, probably because of his exalted status. Besides the *Kokinshū*, he gave lectures on *Genji Monogatari*, *Ise Monogatari*, *Hyakunin Isshu*, *Man'yōshū*, and other works, some of which, recorded by disciples, have come down to us in manuscript form.

Finally, it should be noted that Sōgi maintained during his last years the penchant for travel which had characterized his early life. He was in the Kantō in 1483; traveled to Echigo in 1484, 1486, 1488, 1491, 1493, 1497, and 1500; went to Yamaguchi for a second time in 1489, and was, as always, involved constantly in short excursions to places in the home provinces. Contrary to the prevailing legend, he was probably of a robust constitution; sickness appears to have seldom interfered with his travels.

Sōgi's lifelong gift of health and vigor, however, seems to have left him after his completion of *Shinsen Tsukubashū* in 1495. But he was not deterred from travel, and in 1500 he set out on his ninth and last trip to Echigo. In the following year, realizing that he would never return again to the capital, he sent Sanetaka his notes and manuscripts for the *Kokin denju*. Aware of his master's failing health, Sōchō came from Suruga in the early autumn of that same year (1501), and in the second month of 1502 the two departed for Suruga by way of Edo. Sōgi died just before reaching their destination, on the 30th day of the seventh month of 1502.

⁸⁹ Yokoyama Shigeru 横山重 & Kaneko Kinjirō, ed., *Shinsen Tsukubashū* 新撰菟玖波集, Kadokawa Shoten, 1970.

⁹⁰ Ijichi, *Sōgi*, p. 272, & Konishi, *Sōgi*, pp. 48–50.

His disciples carried his body on to Momozono in Suruga, where he was buried at Jōrinji in full view of Mt Fuji, which it had been his last wish to see.⁹¹

Sōgi as a Renga Poet

AN understanding of the details of Sōgi's life is of great value in trying to appreciate him as a poet. Only when one is aware, for instance, of his extensive travels can one begin to see him as a predecessor of those who would later write what a critic has called 'the poetry of place'.⁹² And, perhaps more importantly, only when one is aware of Sōgi's substantial activities as a scholar can one begin to understand the neo-classicism which characterizes his poetry as it does that of no other poet of the age. It is unfortunately impossible to give further details concerning those activities here. But what emerges from even this brief sketch of Sōgi's life is the figure of an energetic man, busy both in *renga* poetry and in scholarship. For if Sōgi is the fifteenth century's greatest *renga* poet, he is also one of its most important scholars.

It is in fact probable that his reputation as a scholar, rather than as *renga* poet, gained him his first entree to the aristocratic houses of his time. Unlike many of his immediate predecessors, he was of low birth; and he had no secular or religious office which could bring him into contact with the higher classes. Aware of these drawbacks, he seems to have sought from the time of his first arrival in the capital a means of identifying himself with classical scholars and *waka* poets such as Masachika, Kanera, and, later, Tō no Tsuneyori, all of the orthodox Nijō school. Some have detected in his early activities a hint of opportunism,⁹³ but it is more likely, in the light of his lifelong devotion to the basic ideals of the conservative tradition, that he was simply seeking to form a solid artistic foundation for his later work as a poet. And, by winning acceptance for himself in higher circles, he probably also hoped to gain increased regard for his art.

It is important to re-emphasize that it was to the Nijō poets of his day that Sōgi looked for inspiration and support, and, furthermore, that it was toward Nijō conservatism that he inclined as both poet and critic. Even today some scholars assert that this devotion was merely a social expedient, and that his real sympathies were with the more unconventional methods and ideals of the Kyōgoku-Reizei school.⁹⁴

As a *renga* poet Sōgi undeniably inherited a good deal from men such as Shōtetsu, the Kyōgoku-Reizei poet who had tutored Shinkei, Sōzei, and others of the *shichiken*. But to say that Sōgi was influenced by his predecessors is to state the obvious. The innovations of Kyōgoku-Reizei poets had been incorporated into

⁹¹ Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 337-44.

⁹² Leon Zolbrod, tr., *Ugetsu Monogatari*, University of British Columbia Press, 1974, pp. 32-37.

⁹³ Konishi, *Sōgi*, pp. 46-48, especially sees opportunism in his early 'courting' of Tsuneyori instead of acknowledged *renga* masters; he

also sees *Shinsen Tsukubashū* as a product of Sōgi's efforts and ambitions.

⁹⁴ Araki Yoshio, in his *Sōgi*, Sōgensha, 1941, p. 123, in particular takes this view, although finally concluding that Sōgi was basically a conservative.

renga art long before Sōgi's time, and Sōgi, being of a conservative temperament, seems to have accepted the legacy of the past. The *renga* technique of integration by association of images instead of by temporal or spatial progression, for instance, was itself an outgrowth of Kyōgoku-Reizei experimentalism.⁹⁵ Likewise, the willingness of *renga* poets to incorporate new vocabulary and new syntactical patterns into their verses had its precedent in the example of those poets who had rebelled against the stringency of Nijō orthodoxy.⁹⁶ Finally, the technique of 'editorial allusion', that is, the linking of one verse to another by common allusion to a *waka* or *monogatari* episode from the classical canon, was not first developed by *renga* masters, but by Kyōgoku-Reizei anthologists.⁹⁷

As a *renga* poet, Sōgi naturally employed these methods. But all the evidence goes to show that he accepted them as factors leading only to formal differences between the *renga* and *waka*, not to differences in aesthetic ideals. 'The *renga* originated from *waka*,' he says in *Chōrokubumi*,⁹⁸ and he insists throughout his critical works that the form must retain its affiliation with its ancestor. While criticizing the *renga* poets of Yoshimoto's time for certain formal inadequacies, for example, he praises them because 'the style of these verses is lofty [*taketakaki*] and of serious intent [*ushin*], and their essence [*kokoro*] is the same as that of *waka*.'⁹⁹ Here Sōgi's conservatism becomes apparent. While acknowledging that there are fundamental differences between the *renga* and *waka*, he insists that they are differences in *kotoba*, or form, and not in *kokoro*, or content. And unlike Kyōgoku-Reizei innovators, he stresses the traditional ideals of Japanese poetry: *taketakaki*, *ushin*, and *yūgen* are words that continually emerge as standards in his *renga* criticism. Borrowed from *waka*, they express the critical ideals of the court tradition and of the conservative Nijō school of Sōgi's own time.

As Etō Yasusada puts it in his treatment of Sōgi's critical attitude, in terms of stylistic detail, his view is based on loftiness, seriousness, and mystery and depth; in terms of gross form, on the independence of each verse and the harmony of each verse with the whole sequence.¹⁰⁰ Again, *renga* cannot imitate *waka* in form, but it must do so in matters of taste. Sōgi looked to men such as Tsuneyori and Kanera as his masters because they represented the ideals of the court tradition; he regarded the *Kokinshū*, *Genji Monogatari*, and *Ise Monogatari*, rather than later works, as models of style. And even in matters of formal import he was more conservative than his predecessors, seeking particularly to ensure that the process of deviation from *waka* vocabulary should go no further. While some of the *shichiken* had increased the distance between orthodox *waka* and the *renga* by allying themselves with unconventional poets such as Shōtetsu, Sōgi tried to bridge the gap.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Brower & Miner, p. 407.

⁹⁶ See Shimazu Tadao 島津忠夫, 'Sōgi Renga no Hyōgen' 宗祇連歌の表現, in *Rengashi no Kenkyū* 連歌史の研究, Kadokawa Shoten, 1969, for an analysis of the 'new' vocabulary and syntax in *Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin*.

⁹⁷ Brower & Miner, p. 108.

⁹⁸ In Ijichi Tetsuo, *Rengaronshū* 連歌論集, Iwanami Bunko, 1957, II, p. 22.

⁹⁹ In *Azuma Mondō*, in Imoto & Kidō, p. 208.

¹⁰⁰ Etō, part 1, p. 434.

¹⁰¹ Shimazu, p. 169.

One may wonder why Sōgi, evidently so committed to the Nijō *waka* tradition, did not simply become a *waka* poet. The answer is simple: he was too humble in birth and station. He calls the way of *waka* an ‘impossible way’ for himself in *Mishima Senku*,¹⁰² and we can be sure that this was true enough in an age when *waka* had become the possession of an aristocracy which had little else to call its own. Earlier poets—Shinkei, in particular—had composed *waka* as well as *renga*, but they were of much higher birth and always composed in the unorthodox Kyōgoku-Reizei style which Sōgi did not condone. And in any case, when Shōtetsu died in 1459 that style died with him; in succeeding generations the aristocracy’s exclusive claim to *waka* was practically unquestioned. For one of Sōgi’s birth, the *renga*, a recognized art whose practice was not bound up with considerations of family and status, was the most suitable means of expressing *waka* ideals.¹⁰³

We have little indication, therefore, that Sōgi ever aspired to become a *waka* poet, although he seems to have been somewhat frustrated by his low birth.¹⁰⁴ He accepted his situation in life as a fact and concentrated on gaining a greater measure of artistic excellence for the *renga* by bringing its ideals back into conformity with the established tradition. And by doing so, he greatly affected the subsequent development of the art. Before Sōgi, *renga* poets were seldom noted for scholarship; after him, study of the classical tradition became almost a prerequisite for recognition and success.

It is by understanding that study of the classics and devotion to court ideals were essential parts of Sōgi’s preparation as a poet that one can comprehend his sensibility and appreciate his artistry. He realized, as Brower and Miner note in another context, that an art based on complex patterns of association for its effect ‘is dependent upon a high regard for a tradition that is thoroughly studied and known.’¹⁰⁵ He encouraged *renga* poets to study *Genji Monogatari*, *Ise Monogatari*, *Yamato Monogatari*, *Utsubo Monogatari*, *Takekoto Monogatari*, and particularly the *waka* of Hitomaro, Akahito, Narihira, Ise, Komachi, Tsurayuki, Tadamine, Shunzei, Go-Kyōgoku Dono (Fujiwara Yoshitsune), Jichin, Jakuren, Teika, and Ietaka. ‘If one concentrates one’s efforts,’ he wrote, ‘always keeping in mind the *ushin waka* of these poets, then one should gradually acquire some of their essence [*kokoro sugata*].’¹⁰⁶ He evidently hoped that study of classical works would not only encourage *renga* poets to use allusion and rely on *waka* vocabulary, but also

¹⁰² Etō, part 1, p. 34.

¹⁰³ Donald Keene, p. 75, says of Matsunaga Teitoku 松永貞徳, a later *renga* and then *haikai* poet, ‘. . . he could never be recognized as a master of *waka*, no matter how skillful he became. This art was considered to be the privilege of the nobility, and a samurai of modest means could not hope to acquire the aura that birth alone conferred.’ Although this is said of a poet who lived a hundred years after Sōgi’s death, the process by which the

nobility gained exclusive control of *waka* had begun when they were shorn of political power in the Kamakura period; by Sōgi’s time, the *waka no michi* was more or less closed to one of humble birth.

¹⁰⁴ *Yuyama Sangin*, #51, is often taken as an indication of such frustration; other examples are cited in Etō, part 1, pp. 33 & 34.

¹⁰⁵ Brower & Miner, p. 410.

¹⁰⁶ In *Azuma Mondō*, in Imoto & Kidō, pp. 215, 226 & 227.

give them an opportunity to absorb the spirit of the orthodox style. Even in his day *haikai renga* (comic linked verse) was becoming popular.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, his insistence on the Nijō line as a model can to an extent be viewed as a reaction to the incursion of *mushin* tendencies into serious linked verse. Rather than a poetry of ‘vulgar’ subjects and common values, he sought an art based on *waka* ideals of beauty and charm, characterized by depth, virtuosity within established bounds of subject and method, and classical control. And his own poetry is the best witness to his belief that by grounding oneself well in an old tradition one could make its ideals live again in a new form.

Sōgi’s linked verse is characterized above all by its allusive power. This means, of course, that he used ‘editorial allusion’ as a linking technique. For example:

<i>Tazunuru hana o</i>	The mountain ridge hides
<i>Kakusu yama no ha</i>	The flowers I have come to see.
<i>Ume ga ka ni</i>	The scent of plum blossoms
<i>Okizuru yo no</i>	Brings me out into the night
<i>Tsuki ochite.</i> ¹⁰⁸	As the moon sets in the west.

The link between these two verses is based on an allusion to a well-known poem by Ōshikōchi no Mitsune:

<i>Haru no yo no</i>	How vain is the darkness
<i>Yami wa ayanashi</i>	Of this spring night.
<i>Ume no hana</i>	We cannot see
<i>Iro koso miene</i>	The color of the blossoms,
<i>Ka ya wa kakururu.</i> ¹⁰⁹	But can it hide their scent?

But such allusion is only one aspect of Sōgi’s use of the tradition to give his work depth and resonance.

<i>Yuki nagara</i>	Though the snows yet remain,
<i>Yamamoto kasumu</i>	Haze surrounds the mountain’s base
<i>Yūbe kana.</i>	On this spring evening.

This famous opening *hokku* from *Minase Sangin Hyakuin* alludes to an equally well-known poem by Go-Toba:

<i>Miwataseba</i>	As I look out
<i>Yamamoto kasumu</i>	On the hazy mountain slopes
<i>Minase gawa</i>	Along the Minase river,
<i>Yūbe wa aki to</i>	I wonder how I could have thought
<i>Nani omoiken.</i> ¹¹⁰	Autumn the season for dusk.

¹⁰⁷ There is even some evidence that Sōgi met Yamazaki Sōkan 山崎宗鑑, ?1465–?1553, the so-called father of *haikai*. Ijichi, *Sōgi*, pp. 234 & 235.

¹⁰⁸ *Wakuraba*, #16.

¹⁰⁹ 凡河内躬恒, fl. c. 900; *Kokinshū*, #41.

¹¹⁰ *Shinkokinshū*, #36.

Here the purpose of the allusion is not to establish a link,¹¹¹ but rather to add depth and expanse to the general scene by conjuring up the elegant world of Go-Toba, Teika, and the other great poets of the Shinkokin era.

The use of allusion to fill out the necessarily elliptical scenes of a *renga* sequence, a most conspicuous feature of Sōgi's style, extends as well to general word associations and metaphors from the tradition. 'All linked verse,' Sōgi said, 'is based on words taken from the classics.'¹¹²

8 *Kumo o shirube no*
Mine no harukesa

So distant is the peak—
I take the clouds as guides.
SŌCHŌ

9 *Uki wa tada*
Tori o urayamu
Hana nare ya.

My sadness is due
To the sight of those flowers:
How we envy the birds!
SŌGI

The foundation for the link between these two verses from *Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin* is not a single poem, but rather the metaphorical relationship between clouds and blossoms that figured in so many of the poems that Sōgi had studied. A whole array of such conventional associations forms the basis of his art, giving it the aura of the court tradition.

When Sōgi alludes to Go-Toba's poem in the *hokku* of *Minase Sangin*, he does not create any variation on it—except to include snow, a requirement of the occasion.¹¹³ Allusion, then, plays a part in Sōgi's poetry, but not the kind of allusive variation popular in Go-Toba's own era. Sōgi adheres, conversely, to the concept of *hon'i*,¹¹⁴ 'the essence of things'—which is to say that he treats topics and scenes conventionally, departing from established norms only to further refine them. In *waka*, for instance, the topic 'love' is almost always treated in melancholy tones, with the emphasis on separation and frustration rather than on fulfillment. It is similarly treated in Sōgi's *renga*:

57 *Nenu yowa no*
Kokoro mo shirazu
*Tsuki sumite.*¹¹⁵

Sleepless at midnight:
Oblivious to my thoughts,
The moon shines clear.
SŌGI

¹¹¹ It is of course used in linking by Shōhaku in the following verse; but as it occurs in the *hokku*, or opening verse, it cannot form an allusive link with a previous verse.

¹¹² In *Asaji* 浅茅, quoted in Ijichi, *Renga no Sekai*, p. 374.

¹¹³ It was required that the *hokku* include a reference to the season in which the sequence was actually being composed, in this case winter.

¹¹⁴ 本意

¹¹⁵ *Yuyama Sangin*, # 57.

Jōha, a later *renga* poet, sums up the concept of *hon'i* in these terms:

In spring, great winds may blow and rainstorms arise, but to make the winds calm and the rainfall gentle—this is to adhere to the essential nature of things. Again, spring days may on occasion be short, but in *renga* it is the rule to call them long and langorous. Likewise the essential nature of the word blossom, unless otherwise qualified, is always *cherry* blossom. . . .¹¹⁶

This is of course an idealistic notion. And Sōgi is in fact an idealist in that he believes the Heian court to have created fixed standards in taste and aesthetics which can be improved upon only by elucidation; his is a classical temperament, seeking to fulfill itself within the bounds set by tradition. Thus he tries to capture the essence of things as they appear in set norms and categories deduced from his reading of classical literature:

Aki to iwaba
Asatsuyu nabiku
*Susuki kana.*¹¹⁷

What is autumn?
Miscanthus burdened
Under morning dew.

Haru wa tada
Hanazono naranu
*Yama mo nashi.*¹¹⁸

This is spring—
Not a mountain but is now
A garden of flowers.

For Sōgi the *hon'i* of *hana* is unquestionably cherry blossoms:

Kagiri sae
Nitaru hana naki
*Sakura kana.*¹¹⁹

Even at their end
None compares with them—
The cherry blossoms.

While not offending against the essence of things as they appear in the tradition, Sōgi does, as intimated earlier, refine concepts through his own artistry. On the topic of 'the first day of the year', for example, he creates a verse of depth and originality:

Tsuki no aki
Hana no haru tatsu
*Ashita kana.*¹²⁰

Autumn, season of the moon,
And spring, season of blossoms:
Both begin today.

¹¹⁶ Satomura Jōha (or Shōha) 里村紹巴 [1527–1602], *Shihōshō* 至宝抄, in Ijichi, *Rengaronshū*, II, p. 233.

¹¹⁷ *Wakuraba*, #900.

¹¹⁸ *Jinensai Hokkushū* 自然齋発句集, #299, an anthology of Sōgi's *hokku* compiled by Shōhaku in 1506. See Hoshika Sōichi, *Sōgi Hokkushū*

宗祇発句集, 1953.

¹¹⁹ The *hokku* from *Sōgi Dokugin Nanihito Hyakuin* 宗祇独吟何人百韻; see Kaneko Kinjirō *et al.*, *Renga Haikai Shū* 連歌俳諧集 (*Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū* [NKBZ], 32), Shōgakukan, 1974, p. 190.

¹²⁰ *Wasuregusa*, #1.

Finally, he creates in the following verses a comparison that seems to have defined for him the nature of the fragile cherry blossom:

<i>Hakana no haru ya</i> <i>Nani ni tatoen</i>	To what can one compare The fleeting spring?
<i>Asatsuyu no</i> <i>Kienu kaze ni mo</i> <i>Hana chirite.</i> ¹²¹	The blossoms drop Before a wind that fails Even to melt the morning dew.
<i>Sakura to ieba</i> <i>Yamakaze no fuku</i>	‘Cherry blossoms’—no sooner said Than blows the mountain wind. SŌCHŌ
<i>Asatsuyu mo</i> <i>Nao nodoka nite</i> <i>Kasumu no ni.</i> ¹²²	Even the morning dew Remains in the tranquility Of the misty fields. SŌGI

The comparison is the same in both of Sōgi’s verses, written at least twenty years apart, and so seems to be basic for him. Yet, although it is his own creation, it deals with the topic in images suitable in terms of traditional restrictions on vocabulary and is in keeping with the general concept of blossoms as defined by previous generations.

One naturally wonders how great poetry can be wrought out of conventions so stringent, how creativity can help but be stifled by a concept such as *hon’i*. The idea of refining established topics and concepts with one’s own artistry, however, allows some margin for originality. Many *waka* poets deal with the topic of ‘the first day of the year’, for instance, but only Sōgi conceives of that day as the beginning of both spring *and* autumn. And as a *renga* poet Sōgi is able not only to treat old topics in new ways, but also to introduce some entirely new subjects into his compositions. The following lines, for example, contain two things which one does not find in orthodox *waka* anthologies—a dog and a rooster:

<i>Tabi no kadode o</i> <i>Isogu koegoe.</i>	Travelers’ voices Hurry out the gate.
<i>Yowa no yado</i> <i>Niwatori nakeba</i> <i>Inu hoete.</i> ¹²³	Midnight at an inn: A cock crowing in the garden And a dog barking.

Many *renga* poets, especially those who leaned toward *mushin* experimentalism, relied solely on the introduction of such vulgar subjects in order to give their compositions freshness and originality. But as already emphasized, Sōgi was not

¹²¹ *Wakuraba*, #79.

¹²² *Yuyama Sangin*, #38 & 39.

¹²³ *Wasuregusa*, #652.

usually among them. Verses such as the ones above, which are quoted from his first personal anthology, *Wasuregusa* (1473), seldom occur in his later work. And even *Wasuregusa* is dominated not by dogs and roosters, but by images such as these:

<i>Kōri no ue o</i>	Over the ice
<i>Kaze wa yuku nari</i>	A cold wind blows.
<i>Kumo hayaki</i>	In the sky's expanse
<i>Tsuki no ōzora</i>	Clouds speed past the moon
<i>Sayuru yo ni.</i> ¹²⁴	On a clear night.

This is a fresh and striking scene, introducing images (*kōri* and *kumo hayaki tsuki*) which, while not found in orthodox *waka*, are nonetheless compatible with basic *waka* ideals. And throughout his life Sōgi incorporated into his poetry such new conceptions, images, and ideas as would make for originality but not offend against decorum.

For many *renga* poets originality stops with the refinement of old concepts and the introduction of a few new ones. But Sōgi, while basically a conservative, is also a very creative and original artist, and it is to him that the art of *renga* owes not only its highest but its most innovative attainments. For he capitalized on the one of its features which for several hundred years had been virtually ignored by his predecessors—its length. And the question of how creativity can be maintained amidst the *renga*'s restrictions is best answered in his case by reference to his realization of the possibilities inherent in the *hyakuin* form.

The rules of *renga* composition, with their emphasis on requirements and restrictions to ensure harmonious and balanced development, presuppose a standard form of considerable length. And the *hyakuin* had been the set vehicle of the art for at least three hundred years before Sōgi became active as a poet. Few poets before his time, however, had regarded the *hyakuin* as the basic unit of composition. Concentrating on each verse and its link to the previous verse rather than on the whole, they had created individual verses and links of great excellence. Shinkei, for instance, is probably unequalled for the suggestive charm and beauty of his *tsukeku*. But whereas Shinkei mastered a two-verse form, Sōgi mastered the *hyakuin*.

To say that Sōgi is a master of the *hyakuin* is not to suggest that he could not create outstanding individual verses and links, but merely to emphasize that in his work the single unit is always subordinated to the best interests of the sequence as a balanced whole. Konishi Jin'ichi has compared his compositions to symphonies, and the simile is more apt than it might at first seem.¹²⁵ Sōgi is above all an arranger of classical elements, an orchestrator whose genius is in organizing conventional themes and images in a running sequence. His emphasis is on the constant change that makes for variety. This emphasis is most evident in his *dokugin* works, where he has complete control; but it is also a dominant characteristic in the later

¹²⁴ *Wasuregusa*, #444.

¹²⁵ Konishi, *Sōgi*, pp. 100 & 101.

hyakuin, such as *Minase Sangin* and *Yuyama Sangin*, in which he is the acknowledged master and his disciples follow his lead and share in his ideals.

The organizational principles by which Sōgi controls the development of his *hyakuin* are borrowed from the *waka* tradition. The first is based on the concept of *ji* and *mon*,¹²⁶ or ‘background’ and ‘pattern’ verses, which Konishi explains in the following terms:

Ji and *mon* have their origins in the terminology of weaving; *ji* refers to the ground and *mon* to the pattern of a piece of cloth. The term *jiuta* (ground song) appears in the poetics of the 13th century to designate poems that are without striking imagery. . . .

Verses that present striking and vivid images (*mon*) become the focal point of aesthetic interest in *renga*. . . .¹²⁷

Konishi goes on to note that too many *mon* verses in a sequence make it overpowering, while too many *ji* verses produce a dull effect. The aim is balance. Taking this as a basic principle, Sōgi creates in his *hyakuin* a backdrop against which to contrast a few well-placed *mon* verses. Thus, *ji* verses predominate in both *Yuyama Sangin* and *Minase Sangin*.¹²⁸ The following examples from the former, for instance, contain no striking images or sentiments, no grand scenes or vistas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 53 <i>Suteraruru</i>
<i>Kataware obune</i>
<i>Kuchiyarade</i> | Abandoned and broken,
The small boat
Is not yet rotted out.
SŌCHŌ |
| 54 <i>Ko no shita momiji</i>
<i>Tazunuru mo nashi</i> | For the leaves under the trees
There are no more visitors.
SŌGI |
| 55 <i>Tsuyu mo haya</i>
<i>Okiwaburu niwa no</i>
<i>Aki no kure</i> | At autumn’s close
The dewdrops scarcely form
In the garden.
SHŌHAKU |
| 56 <i>Mushi no ne hososhi</i>
<i>Shimo o matsu koro</i> | The insect’s voice grows thin—
Time’s come to await the frost.
SŌCHŌ |

But the next verses, because of their strong emotion, the presence of the moon, the general pathos of the imagined scene of a lover unable to control his longing, and the repetition of emphatic particles, are striking enough to be classified as *mon*:

¹²⁶ 地, 文

¹²⁷ Konishi, ‘The Art of Renga’, p. 51.

¹²⁸ Konishi, *Sōgi*, p. 53.

- 57 *Nenu yowa no*
Kokoro mo shirazu
Tsuki sumite
 Sleepless at midnight:
 Oblivious to my thoughts,
 The moon shines clear.
 SŌGI
- 58 *Ayaniku nare ya*
Omoi taebaya
 Oh, what a harsh fate—
 Oh, that my longing might cease!
 SHŌHAKU

Many other *ji* and *mon* verses could be quoted to clarify Sōgi's use of both for best effect. The four below—all *hokku* and, as such, *mon* in varying degrees—show him in his highest form as a creator of striking effects:

- Shirayuki ni*
Someiro no yama ka
*Fuji no mine.*¹²⁹
 Is this a mountain
 Dyed by the white snows?
 Fuji's peak.
- Akebono o*
Hana ni arasou
*Kasumi kana.*¹³⁰
 As dawn breaks
 The mists fight to conceal
 The blossoms.
- Kane tōku*
Kasumu hayashi ya
*Yuki no kure.*¹³¹
 A distant bell
 Sounds through the misty grove—
 The snows will soon end.
- Yanagi fuku*
Kaze ni aki tatsu
*Miyako kana.*¹³²
 In the capital
 Fall begins with a breeze
 Blowing in the willows.

As a master of the *hyakuin*, however, Sōgi is above all an expert at creating the plain verses without which lines like those above cannot have full effect. Perhaps for this reason he is renowned for his ability to break the pace of a sequence of *mon* verses by composing an unexpected *ji* verse, or *yariku*.¹³³ The following sequence from *Yuyama Sangin* ends with an excellent example of his technique:

- 80 *Fuyu no hayashi ni*
Mizu kōru koe.
 In a winter grove,
 The sound of water freezing.
 SŌCHŌ
- 81 *Yūgarasu*
Ne ni yuku yama wa
Yuki harete.
 At dusk a crow
 Heads out to roost in snowy hills
 Now clear of clouds.
 SŌGI

¹²⁹ *Wakuraba*, #964.

¹³⁰ The *hokku* from a *nanihito hyakuin* composed in 1499; see Etō, part 2, p. 325.

¹³¹ *Jinensai Hokkushū*, #78.

¹³² The *hokku* from a *nanihone hyakuin* composed in 1499; see Etō, part 2, p. 335.

¹³³ 遣句. Konishi, *Sōgi*, p. 119.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 82 <i>Iraka no ue no</i>
<i>Tsuki no samukesa.</i> | The chill of the moon
Rising over roof-tiles.
SHŌHAKU |
| 83 <i>Dare to naku</i>
<i>Kane no oto shite</i>
<i>Fukuru yo ni.</i> | Someone makes a noise
Just as the bell sounds
In the deepening night.
SŌCHŌ |
| 84 <i>Furuhito mekite</i>
<i>Uchi zo shiwabuku.</i> | It sounds just like
An old woman coughing.
SŌGI |

The overall effect of verses 80–83 is striking: first we see the harsh scene of a winter grove and hear the cold sound of water freezing up on a nearby pond; then appears a broad vista of snowy mountains, toward which a lone black crow is flying to roost; then we feel a chill as the moon—almost always considered a *mon* image—rises over the roof of a temple; finally we hear a strange sound just as the temple bell sounds, and are left wondering what it might be. To break the pace of this sequence of vivid and rather grand images, Sōgi interprets the mysterious sound as the coughing of an old woman. The effect of this sudden shift in tone and perspective can be called striking in itself; but as an individual unit, verse 84 is characterized by the prosaic image of an old woman coughing—not a *mon* scene, at least in terms of the *waka* tradition.¹³⁴

By creating a strong background against which to offset the effects of striking verses, Sōgi assures variety and balance in the hundred verses of a *hyakuin*. But a *hyakuin* comprises not only a hundred individual verses, but also the ninety-nine links between them. And here too control must be maintained if the whole is to have precedence over its parts. To exercise this control, Sōgi again makes an organizational principle of something from the *waka* tradition: the concept of *shinku* and *soku*,¹³⁵ or closely and distantly related verses. In *waka*, when upper and lower hemistiches are joined by related imagery, word associations, and other rhetorical means, they are considered closely related; when related primarily by suggestion, sense, obscure allusion, etc., they are considered distantly related. Historically, Nijō poets favored close links and innovative Kyōgoku-Reizei poets distant ones. Not surprisingly, then, close links dominate in Sōgi's *hyakuin*, just as distant links do in the work of a poet such as Shinkei. This is not, however, only because Sōgi was allied with the Nijō school and Shinkei with the innovators. As Konishi notes, ' . . . Shinkei placed special emphasis on *soku* or distant

¹³⁴ The concept of *ji/mon* is difficult to deal with because at times classification of a verse as one or the other seems to be based more on convention than on reason. To put it simply, objects that appears plain, common or vulgar to the eye of a courtier are *ji*, while those which

seem striking beautiful, elegant or moving are *mon*. For a discussion of this problem, see Robert H. Brower, 'Fujiwara Teika's *Hundred-Poem Sequence of the Shōji Era*', in *MN*, xxxi:3 (1976), pp. 244–45.

¹³⁵ 親句, 疎句

links, but he was basically concerned with pairs of verses considered as units. In looking at renga as a whole, the question is not which type of link is more important, but rather which type is more appropriate at any particular point. It is a matter of balance. . . .'¹³⁶

Just as an overabundance of *mon* verses can destroy the variety and pace of a *hyakuin*, too many distant links can create a disjointed effect and destroy continuity. Sōgi therefore emphasizes close linking. The following is a simple example from *Yuyama Sangin*:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 29 <i>Fujigoromo</i>
<i>Nagori ōku mo</i>
<i>Kyō nugite.</i> | These wisteria robes
Today I must lay aside—
Though with regrets.
SŌCHŌ |
| 30 <i>Iden mo kanashi</i>
<i>Aki no yamadera.</i> | To think of leaving grieves me—
Mountain temple in autumn.
SŌGI |

These verses are linked by the association of wisteria ('mourning') robes with a mountain temple, where one mourns a family member until the forty-ninth day after his passing; by the association of the act of laying robes aside with leaving a temple; and by the association of the kind of regret a mourner feels with the traditionally sad autumn season. The link, then, is very close, based on word association, related imagery, and the general idea of mourning.

When necessary, Sōgi can create links as distant as the one above is close. But in his *hyakuin* distant links are employed with restraint and usually signal a needed change in the direction of the sequence, as in the following, again from *Yuyama Sangin*:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 11 <i>Furusato mo</i>
<i>Nokorazu kiyuru</i>
<i>Yuki o mite.</i> | Even in my remote village
I see the snow has melted away
Without a trace.
SŌCHŌ |
| 12 <i>Yo ni koso michi wa</i>
<i>Aramahoshikere.</i> | Would that in this world as well
The true path would appear.
SŌGI |

Here the verses are related only by the fact that Sōgi, imagining the snow melting in a mountain village, mentally envisions the appearance of a path (*michi*), and then creates a verse around another meaning of *michi*—the religious 'way'. The link, based on a hidden word association, is distant by any standards. And in its context it is very effective. As will be seen in the translation of the complete sequence, verses 6–11 are closely linked, especially the last three, which all deal

¹³⁶ Konishi, 'The Art of the Renga', p. 52.

with the topic of 'Spring'. Sōgi changes the topic to 'Lamentation', and thereafter the sequence moves to Buddhism, developing both new imagery and new themes.

It should be noted in passing that even the above *soku* is based on a word, *michi*. It is typical of Sōgi that, schooled as he was in the rhetorical techniques of the *Kokinshū*, he relies on word associations even in his distant links. He seldom produces a link such as the following one by Shinkei, in which there are no word associations and the verses are linked by atmosphere and suggestion alone.

<i>Yume utsutsu to mo</i> <i>Wakanu akebono.</i>	Dawn—when one cannot Distinguish dream from reality.
<i>Tsuki ni chiru</i> <i>Hana wa kono yo no</i> <i>Mono narade.</i> ¹³⁷	Blossoms falling In the light of the moon Are not of this world.

Rather, Sōgi prefers the less abstruse links that allow for some continuity in the development of topics and themes within a sequence. Even when he does create a distant link without word associations, it is usually a reasoning extension of an idea or scene presented in the previous verse—as in the following example, where one can easily see the speaker staring at a burning taper after waking in the night:

<i>Kumo kaze mo</i> <i>Mihatenu yume to</i> <i>Samuru yo ni.</i>	Waking in the night, I leave unfinished my dream Of clouds and wind.
<i>Waga kage nare ya</i> <i>Fukuru tomoshibi.</i> ¹³⁸	How like a shadow of myself— A taper, slowly burning down.

Sōgi did not create the concepts of *ji/mon* and *shinku/soku*. Nor did he create the *hyakuin*. But by emphasizing the former as principles of organization with which to make the latter a balanced whole, he brought the *renga* to what most scholars consider its highest point of excellence. It is not surprising to find that, alone among poets until his time, Sōgi wrote a full analysis of a *hyakuin*, *Yodo no Watari*.¹³⁹ He alone seems to have recognized the possibilities inherent in the *hyakuin* form; and by realizing those possibilities in his own art he produced the last and probably the greatest innovation in the *renga*.

For almost a hundred years after Sōgi's death, *renga* poets continued to produce *hyakuin* of distinction, based on the conventions and ideals of the tradition he had encouraged young poets to study, and utilizing the principles of organization he had elucidated in his own work. The chief *ushin* poets of the sixteenth century were his disciples—Sōchō, Shōhaku, Sanetaka, Sōseki,¹⁴⁰ and, in turn, their disciples, Sōboku, his son Sōyō,¹⁴¹ and finally, Jōha. But even during Sōgi's lifetime

¹³⁷ Quoted in Ijichi, *Renga no Sekai*, p. 391.

¹³⁸ *Sōgi Dokugin Hyakuin*, #99 & 100.

¹³⁹ 淀の渡. For *Yodo no Watari*, see Shimazu Tadao 島津忠夫, '*Hyakuin no Katachi*' 百韻の形,

in *Renga no Kenkyū*, 連歌の研究, Kadokawa Shoten, 1973.

¹⁴⁰ 宗頌, 1474–1533.

¹⁴¹ 宗牧, d. 1545; 宗養, 1526–62.

haikai renga had gained popularity. And the compilation of the first *haikai* anthology, *Inu Tsukubashū*, by Yamazaki Sōkan¹⁴² in the mid-sixteenth century marked the beginning of the end for the serious tradition and the coming ascendance of *mushin* as the predominant aesthetic ideal.

Thus within a hundred years after Sōgi's death, his style and, one might add, the entire court tradition were dead. Paradoxically, he is as often mentioned as the harbinger of the new tradition as he is as the last guard of the old. It seems clear, however, that he at least considered himself the latter. His emphasis on *ji* over *mon* can be and often is taken as a forerunner of Bashō's *mumon*.¹⁴³ But Sōgi, devoted to classical poetics, undoubtedly thought of all his work as an attempt to preserve old standards, not to create new ones. Maturing as he did in the last age of classical culture, the Higashiyama era, he was able to look back on more than seven centuries of court civilization and, through his studies, to see and appreciate that civilization's extraordinary achievements in the definition and elucidation of beauty. It seems only natural that one standing before such a vista of past glory should be hesitant to turn toward the future.

The second part of this article, to be published in the next issue, will describe the circumstances in which Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin was composed and will include a complete translation of the poetic sequence.

¹⁴² 犬菟玖波集; 山崎宗鑑, ?1465–?1553. The exact date of the compilation of this work is not known; the anthology probably achieved more or less final form before Sōkan's death

(exact date unknown), but possibly was revised during the first few decades after it left his hands.

¹⁴³ 無文