

Waka in the Age of Renga

by STEVEN D. CARTER

. . . the composition of *uta* is like the siege of a castle: one reaches the steep earthbanks below the walls only to fall back, put up an enclosure of fence-stakes, and then, armor and weapons laid aside, wait for an opportunity to attack. But to compose *renga* is to come out of the castle and do active battle. SŌCHŌ

I must begin with a defense of the title of this article. By the age of linked verse, I mean primarily the fifteenth century. It is not my intention, however, to argue that poets of that century would have recognized their own time as one dominated by the *renga* 連歌 genre. On the contrary, even *renga* masters such as Shinkei 心敬, 1402–1475, and Sōgi 宗祇, 1421–1502, would probably have insisted that their age was in every way an extension of the great *waka* 和歌 ages of the past. Records make it clear that even at the height of its popularity at court *renga* was regarded with some condescension by those whose inborn concern was with the preservation of the aristocratic heritage in an age of political, social, and military turmoil. To such men *renga* remained always a second-class genre, and it was of course the opinions of such men that molded the artistic disposition of the times.

Thus it was not linked verse but the more venerable *waka* form that represented the artistic claims of the court tradition to the Muromachi world. Even a cursory look at the poetic activity of the 1400s bears out this easily forgotten historical fact. As Inoue Muneo has so painstakingly shown, the poetic coteries and cliques of the capital were as active during the fifteenth century as they had been during the thirteenth. Even after the demise of the great Kamakura houses in the early Muromachi period there were new families and institutions to take their places: the Asukai 飛鳥井 clan and the poets of the Jōkō-In 常光院 carrying on the Nijō 二条 line; the Upper and Lower Reizei 冷泉 houses and the disciples of Imagawa Ryōshun 今川了俊, 1325–1420, continuing the innovative style of *Gyokuyōshū* 玉葉集, 1314, and *Fūgashū* 風雅集, 1346; and families such as the Ichijō 一条, the

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The quotation at the beginning of the

article is taken from Sōchō 宗長, *Renga Hikkyōshū* 連歌比況集, in Ijichi Tetsuo 伊知地鉄男, ed., *Renga Ronshū* 連歌論集, Iwanami Bunko, 1956, II, p. 181.

Kanroji 甘露寺, and the Sanjōnishi 三条西, perpetuating a long tradition of dedication to poetry. And in addition there were the salons of three emperors whose conveniently long lives seem to have been almost totally devoted to *uta no michi*: Go-Komatsu 後小松, d. 1433; Go-Hanazono 後花園, 1419–71; and Go-Tsuchimikado 後土御門, 1442–1500. Finally, one must add to this list the names of a number of military clans that were likewise committed to the *waka* ethos: the Ashikaga 足利, the Hosokawa 細川, the Kitabatake 北畠, the Ōuchi 大内, the Saitō 濟藤, and the Hatakeyama 畠山, to name only a few. All of these families, within the capital and without, supported a constant bustle of activity in the *waka* form, holding *uta awase* 歌合, commissioning *hyakushu uta* 百首歌, and even sponsoring several abortive attempts to compile imperial anthologies. And in less public contexts the poets of the time produced criticism and scholarship that attest to the great vitality of the *waka* world throughout what many have come to perceive as a dark century.¹

So to refer to the fifteenth century as ‘the age of linked verse’ is to admit a particular point of view—a purely retrospective point of view. What we are saying (and I say ‘we’ here because most Japanese and virtually all Western students of the Muromachi period also refer to the 1400s as the age of linked verse) is that *artistically* this was the age of *renga*, that as poetic art it was *renga* that represented the creative genius of the time. Socially and institutionally *waka* ruled the world of letters in the days of Shinkei and Sōgi as certainly as it had in the days of Teika 定家, 1162–1241; this was a fact nearly all *renga* masters would have been ready to admit. But as we review the period now we see little reason for delight in the legacy of fifteenth-century court poetry. There is Shōtetsu 正徹, 1381–1459, of course, but he is a lonely figure who himself seems to have acknowledged the poverty of *waka* poetics in the ‘degenerate houses’ of his own day.² The other important poets of the orthodox tradition—Asukai Masayo 飛鳥井雅世, 1390–1452, and his son Masachika 雅親, d. 1490; Gyōkō 堯孝, 1391–1455; Ichijō Kanera 一条兼良, 1402–1481; Sanjōnishi Sanetaka 三条西実隆, 1455–1537—have left us little that engages the intellect or excites the sensibility. It is an ironic but revealing fact that Earl Miner, in his *Introduction to Japanese Court Poetry*, should feel obliged to turn to the *waka* of linked-verse poets in order to give a satisfying conclusion to his survey of *waka* history.³

In a way, however, Professor Miner’s conclusion represents an accurate appraisal of the final fate of the *waka* tradition, for it is true that most *renga* poets

¹ Inoue Muneo 井上宗雄, *Chūsei Kadan-shi no Kenkyū* 中世歌壇史の研究, Kazama Shobō, 1961, II.

² Shinkei, one of Shōtetsu’s disciples, reports the following comments by his teacher: ‘Although I am the last descendant of Tamehide and Ryōshun, in my *uta* I seek out only the innermost intent of Teika and Jichin. For the degenerate houses—the Nijō and the

Reizei—I foster no attachments.’ See Shimazu Tadao 島津忠夫, ed., ‘*Oi no kurigoto*’ 老のくりと, in Hayashiya Tatsusaburō 林屋辰三郎, ed., *Kodai Chūsei Geijutsu Ron* 古代中世芸術論, *Nihon Shisō Taikei* 日本思想大系 23, Iwanami Shoten, 1978, p. 417.

³ Earl Miner, *An Introduction to Japanese Court Poetry*, Stanford U.P., 1968, pp. 140–43.

were *waka* poets at the same time. The greatest linked-verse masters would doubtless have refrained from making the reductive distinctions that history now makes for us in retrospect. Shinkei thus speaks for a whole generation when he remarks, ‘Without trying one’s hand at the *uta* one cannot hope to become accomplished at linked verse.’⁴ *Waka* and *renga*, while not considered identical genres, were nonetheless intimately ‘linked’ in the minds of most fifteenth-century poets. Sharing a world, the two forms existed in a complex relationship of mutual dependence and influence. It will be my purpose in this article to examine that relationship, beginning with a brief examination of the influence of *waka* aesthetics on linked verse and then turning in more detail to a less common topic—the effect of linked verse and its many practitioners on the character of *waka* in the fifteenth century.

Renri Hishō 連理秘抄, 1349, describes linked verse as one of the ‘miscellaneous styles’ of the *waka* tradition.⁵ And to late Heian and Kamakura *waka* poets the genre seems to have been precisely that—a light amusement along the order of *haikai no uta* 俳諧の歌. From the beginning of its long life at court, linked verse was regarded with ambivalence by serious poets. The practice of ‘linking’ verses, while not openly disdained, was nevertheless perceived by court poets as something less than an artistic pursuit—a fact to which the inclusion of *renga* couplets at the very end of an anthology such as *Kin’yōshū* 金葉集, 1127, attests.⁶ Whatever influence the *renga* exerted on *waka* poets in the 1100s and 1200s was therefore negligible. That Teika, Ietaka, Tameie, Tameuji, Emperor Go-Toba, and other prominent aristocrats were active in the composition of linked verse is evidenced by their substantial representation in *Tsukubashū* 菟玖波集, 1356, first of the two imperially commissioned anthologies of the genre. But there is little in the *waka* of these poets to suggest linked verse as even a remote influence.⁷ Indeed, evidence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries points rather to the influence of *waka* aesthetics on *renga* development. As early as Fujiwara Kiyosuke’s 藤原清輔 *Fukuro Sōshi* 袋草紙, a mid-twelfth-century poetic treatise, we find statements indicating that linked-verse couplets were being included in imperial anthologies disguised as *waka*.⁸ So it would seem that even before the Shinkokin period some of the lighter, more frivolous attitudes of *renga* composition were on occasion yielding to more orthodox and ‘courtly’ preoccupations. And during the Shinkokin period itself this trend toward the elevation of the *renga* as an aesthetic medium rather than a mere amusement became even more apparent, as a couplet by Teika clearly shows:

⁴ Shinkei, ‘*Hitorigoto*’ ひとりごと, in *Kodai Chūsei Geijutsu Ron*, p. 472.

⁵ Nijō Yoshimoto, ‘*Renri Hishō*’ 連理秘抄, in *Rengaronshū, Haironshū* 連歌論集, 俳論集, NKBT 66, Iwanami Shoten, 1978, p. 35.

⁶ Nineteen *renga* couplets are included in the anthology.

⁷ One possible indication of the influence

of linked verse on *waka* in even the Kamakura period is the increasing tendency for a syntactic and semantic break between upper (5–7–5) and lower (7–7) parts of the 31-syllable form.

⁸ Quoted in Ijichi Tetsuo 伊地知鉄男, *Renga no Sekai* 連歌の世界, Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1967, p. 82.

<i>Hosanu magaki no</i> <i>Fuyu no shiragiku</i>	Gloss: On the wet bamboo fence—a white winter chrysanthemum.
<i>Hatsushigure</i> <i>Haruru hikage mo</i> <i>Kurehatete</i> ⁹	The season's first rain shower clears, but soon the sunlight too has faded away.

The alternation of light (*shiragiku*) and dark (*kage*) images in these verses shows that even in Teika's hands the *renga* was partly a vehicle for word games.¹⁰ But in all other respects the verses reflect the standards of court orthodoxy. Kōun 耕雲, d. 1429, writing more than 150 years after Teika's death, remarks that no harm would result if one were to treat couplets such as this one as *waka*.¹¹ And this statement summarizes well the relationship between *waka* and *renga* during the greatest periods of court poetry. Even in Teika's day, such total identification of the two genres was no doubt rare. Linguistic play, witty repartee, and humor are mainstays of *renga* composition in all periods. But it is fair to say that throughout the early medieval period *waka* standards of beauty and decorum had a profound effect on the *renga* as a genre, at least as it was practiced within the narrow circles of the court. By nature a popular form attractive to casual poets, the *renga* achieved artistic stature and recognition only rarely in its long history, and then always through the legitimizing influence of *waka* poets.

The first important *waka* poet to lend his full efforts to the task of legitimizing linked verse as an art form was Nijō Yoshimoto 二条良基, 1320–1388, a man whose reputation as a *renga* connoisseur looms so large in literary history that one can easily forget his accomplishments as a *waka* poet and scholar. Author of the Japanese preface to *Shingoshūishū* 新後拾遺集, 1383, and contributor to that and other important Nanbokuchō collections, Yoshimoto was a Nijō poet of great social stature. Through his efforts the *renga* gained in artistic integrity and finally in reputation. The following verse by Gusai 救濟, d. 1376, Yoshimoto's tutor in *renga* composition, displays a refined sensibility worthy of the finest of *waka* poets.

<i>Tsuki samushi</i> <i>Toburai kimasu</i> <i>Tomo mogana</i>	Gloss: Such a chilling moon; how I wish a friend would come and visit!
<i>Nodera no kane no</i> <i>Tōki aki no yoru</i> ¹²	From a mountain temple a distant bell sounds through the autumn night.

⁹ *Tsukubashū* 461. I have used the text given in Fukui Kyūzō 福井久藏, ed., *Tsukubashū*, 2 vols., in *Nihon Koten Zensho* 日本古典全書, Asahi Shimbunsha, 1948 & 1951.

¹⁰ Such alternation of lexical or thematic categories was a major feature of linked-

verse composition until Yoshimoto's time. For details, see Ijichi, *Renga no Sekai*, pp. 24–41.

¹¹ Kōun, 'Kōun Kuden' 耕雲口伝, in Sasaki Nobutsuna 佐々木信綱, ed., *Nihon Kagaku Taikai* 日本歌学大系 5, Kazama Shobō, 1978, p. 158.

¹² *Tsukubashū* 631.

Again there is much in this couplet that is characteristic of linked verse. The use of the desiderative *mogana*, for example, is a common feature of *renga* diction. And the compressed syntax of the second verse—the tendency toward nominalization—is also a characteristic of linked-verse style. Even the nature of the scene that Gusai describes seems to foreshadow the pseudo-rusticity of Shinkei and Sōgi. But at the same time the idea of a lonely man hoping for a visitor as he hears the sound of a distant temple bell is in no way foreign to the *waka* tradition. The understated approach, the reliance on nuance and suggestion rather than direct statement, the refined diction—all are evidence of the influence of medieval *waka* on *renga* aesthetics.

Characterized by subtlety, elegance of vocabulary, and a relative lack of the tiresome punning so common in more informal examples of the genre, the linked verse of Yoshimoto and his circle qualifies as true court poetry. But even Yoshimoto's attempts to elevate the genre to the level of the *waka* tradition must have seemed to him a quantitative failure. His own laments make it clear that for every serious *renga* session held in his Kyoto mansion there were dozens of care-free 'linking parties' held in less stately surroundings at the direction of semi-professional poets whose popularity was more dependent on virtuosity, wit, and speed than on good taste.¹³ The historical record, concentrating as it does on the court and its life, obscures this fact by seldom mentioning the more vulgar poetic gatherings that were no doubt the rule in Yoshimoto's day. But it is nonetheless certain that 'serious' linked verse—that is, linked verse owing its character to *waka* values and precedents—had a tenuous existence outside the halls of the capital. For although the *renga* could boast a long history among the aristocratic class, its greatest popularity in the early medieval period was among the middle classes of the time—the clerics, the country bureaucrats, and even the more elite members of the warrior clans. And in the midst of such groups the refined aesthetics of men such as Yoshimoto had little place.

It was not until the fifteenth century that linked-verse poetics reached what critics characterize as a more general identification with the ideals of court poetry. And again this refinement of the genre was achieved not independently, but through the direct involvement of *waka* poets. Shōtetsu, who served as poetic tutor to a whole generation of *renga* poets, is given particular attention as the man responsible even more than Yoshimoto for the polish and overall orthodoxy of fifteenth-century linked verse. Sōzei 宗砌, d. 1455; Chiun 智蘊, d. 1448; Senjun 専順, 1411–1476; and Shinkei all studied *waka* history and composition under Shōtetsu, and it is to these four poets, along with several others, that literary history has given distinction as the precursors of the golden age of linked verse.

It is an ironic fact of their legacy, however, that rather than representing the natural development of the *renga* tradition they represent the triumph of what one might call an imposed aesthetic—the aesthetic of *waka* orthodoxy, complete

¹³ See Yoshimoto's comments in '*Renri Hishō*', pp. 40–41.

with its vocabulary restrictions, emphasis on decorum, and insistence on an essentially neo-classical conception of beauty. And an even more ironic fact is that these poets of the golden age and their descendants do not seem to reflect the real tenor of their times. Anxious, nostalgic, and melancholy, they are all conservative if not reactionary figures; one could even argue that they saw themselves as remnants of a bygone world. Thus to say that the *waka* aesthetic affected their poetry more than the poetry of any other generation—an undisputed fact—is to hint at the most conspicuous reality of literary history in the fifteenth century: namely, the relatively limited potency of court poetry as an influence in poetic development.

Sōgi, Shinkei, and many of their peers produced linked verse that shows in a marked way the influence of *waka* examples. But in subtle ways even their verses betray other influences as well: the inelegant realities of provincial life, for instance, or the less decorous features of Chinese folklore and poetry. And even if these poets do fit neatly into the world of court aesthetics in many respects, the faint, dying light of their few masterpieces cannot blind us to the colors of the more vulgar and plebeian poetic world around them. In this other world it was the *renga* itself—a genre only partially committed to traditional standards of beauty and decorum—that was becoming a dominant poetic force. By the end of the Nanbokuchō period in 1392 *waka* was in a period of decline, while linked verse was beginning a period of unprecedented ascendancy. And, as in Yoshimoto's time, *renga* as popularly produced in the days of Shinkei and Sōgi was generally somewhat less than an orthodox court genre. Embodied within its own tradition was a deep consciousness of the *waka* legacy and a strong tendency toward neo-classicism. But the effect of *waka* aesthetics on linked verse was never so total as to negate the tendency of *renga* poets, in practice if not in theory, toward less elegant forms of expression. Rhetorically and stylistically *renga* represented liberalizing influences that the *waka* establishment was at constant pains to combat.

Early Muromachi poetic criticism shows that many *waka* poets and scholars, particularly those affiliated with the conservative Nijō school, were alarmed by the vulgar challenge presented by the popular *renga* form. Imagawa Ryōshun, in his *Rakusho Roken* 落書露頭, 1412, says that during all of his adult life he has heard 'the disciples of the Nijō house' deride *waka* composed by linked-verse masters as *renga uta* 連歌歌, or 'popularized' *waka*.¹⁴ And even the semi-liberal Kōun expresses anxiety over the possible effects of *renga kotoba*—'linked-verse diction'—on court poetry. 'Linked verse of the past did not necessarily offend against *waka* standards,' he notes in *Kōun Kuden* 耕雲口伝, 1408, 'but if one were to treat today's linked verse as *waka* it would almost certainly not conform to the six principles. Only a person who uses *uta kotoba* in *waka* and *renga kotoba* in linked verse can truly be called an accomplished poet.'¹⁵ One cannot think, however, that such warnings did much to counteract the growing influence of linked verse on *waka*. By the beginning of the fifteenth century linked verse was so pervasive a pastime in

¹⁴ Imagawa Ryōshun, '*Rakusho Roken*' 落書露頭, in *Nihon Kagaku Taikei* 5, p. 196.

¹⁵ '*Kōun Kuden*', p. 158.

the poetic world that its effects were being felt even in the salons of emperors. Go-Komatsu, for instance, was a *renga* connoisseur as well as a *waka* patron and poet. And this was true of not only the other emperors of the century but also of the most creed-bound of Nijō pedants. The poets of the Asukai house, Gyōkō, Kanroji Chikanaga 甘露寺親長, 1433–1500, Sanjōnishi Sanetaka—all were practicing *renga* poets.

Given the great popularity of linked verse among even the court class of the fifteenth century, it is not surprising that the more lively and rhetorically innovative form should have influenced *waka* poetic practice. At first this influence seems to have been confined to the *waka* attempts of linked-verse masters and to Reizei sympathizers such as Shōtetsu. But by the mid-1400s even major Nijō poets were using *renga kotoba*. Finally *renga* influence came to be felt in not only diction but also in syntax, thematics, and tone, helping to make what traditionally had been a courtly poetry into a more colloquial and plebeian genre.

It is common knowledge that linked-verse poets used many words that were unacceptable in *waka* circles. As Nijō Yoshimoto states in *Renri Hishō*, ‘It is generally said that one should not depart from the vocabulary of the imperial anthologies, but in linked verse there is no harm in using new or even vulgar words.’¹⁶ This meant that linked verse, especially in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, allowed into its lexicon newly coined words, colloquialisms, and words taken from clerical, merchant, and even peasant life. *Renga Shinshiki Tsuika Narabi ni Shinshiki Kin-an Tō* 連歌新式追加並新式今案等, 1501, an important compendium of *renga* rules, lists the following words among those that may appear once in a full hundred-verse sequence. All are found rarely, if at all, in traditional *waka*.

<i>kuma</i>	熊	bear
<i>tora</i>	虎	tiger
<i>tatsu</i>	竜	dragon
<i>inoshishi</i>	猪	wild boar
<i>naruko</i>	なるこ	bird rattle
<i>hita</i>	ひた	board clapper
<i>sotomo</i>	外面	outer environs ¹⁷

Such words, attesting among other things to the example of Chinese poetry and the experience of provincial life, abound in *renga* sequences. To what extent this more liberal attitude toward poetic diction influenced *waka* of the fifteenth century is, however, difficult to determine. For while it is certain that *waka* of the early and mid-Muromachi period contain many of the new and vulgar words found in *renga* anthologies, it is equally certain, as Shimazu Tadao has argued in a study of diction in Sōgi’s linked verse, that the process of introducing new

¹⁶ ‘*Renri Hishō*’, p. 40.

¹⁷ Hoshika Muneichi 星加宗一 & Yamada | Yoshio 山田考雄, *Renga Hōshiki Kōyō* 連歌法式綱要, Iwanami Shoten, 1936, p. 40.

vocabulary into court poetry can be traced as easily to Minamoto Shunrai 源俊頼, d. 1129, and Kyōgoku Tamekane 京極為兼, 1254–1332, as to *renga* masters.¹⁸ Shimazu makes an exception for certain new compounds whose primary virtue of economy seems to indicate the direct influence of *renga* precedents: words such as *yūshiokaze* 夕しほ風 (an evening seabreeze), *araisomakura* あら磯枕 (pillow on the rocky shore), and *ikushimoyo* 幾霜夜 (how many frosty nights?).¹⁹ But his general conclusion is that this relaxation of vocabulary restrictions was an overall medieval trend in which the *renga* played a part along with Chinese poetry and the sometimes iconoclastic experiments of the Kyōgoku-Reizei school.

Even if it is doubtful whether all changes in *waka* diction in the fifteenth century are attributable solely to *renga* precedents, it is clear that linked verse was the major *perceived* influence on matters of vocabulary among *waka* poets of the time. As already noted, Kōun and Ryōshun both speak of *renga kotoba* and *uta kotoba* as if the two categories were well known to their contemporaries. Ryōshun even gives an example of a *waka*, written by the linked-verse master Gusai, that to the annoyance of Nijō poets mixed the two vocabularies.

Ikemizu ni
Migiwa no sakura
Utsurite zo
Mata futagi aru
Hana wa miekeru

Gloss: The cherry trees at the pond's edge are reflected in the water. Again the blossoms of the twin trees appear!

Inspired by the sight of two cherry trees blooming on the banks of a pond in the garden of Saihōji in western Kyoto, Gusai's poem is a simple, seemingly innocuous attempt at witty composition. *Ikemizu* 池水 (pond water), *migiwa* 汀 (pond's edge), *sakura* 桜 (cherry tree), and of course the ubiquitous *hana* 花 (blossom), are all *uta kotoba*. But *mata futagi aru* 又二木ある ('again there are two trees'), perhaps because it smacks of the colloquial, earned the censure of Nijō pedants. 'People have condemned this poem as an example of *renga uta*,' Ryōshun reports, 'but Gusai was a student of Reizei Tamesuke and his poems follow acceptable form. It is only the people of the Nijō house who criticize the poem. . . . Perhaps their complaint is that the poem's effect [*uta sugata* 歌姿] is too loose and disjointed [*kudakete haberu* くだけて侍る]. The disciples of the Nijō house cling to the use of old words in all their poems; their vocabulary is too formal, and they favor a dry,

¹⁸ Shimazu Tadao 島津忠夫, *Renga-shi no Kenkyū* 連歌史の研究, Kadokawa Shoten, 1969, pp. 152–69.

¹⁹ Shimazu, pp. 159–60. To my knowledge these particular words do not appear in *waka* of the imperial anthologies. A similar word—*yūhibari* 夕雲雀, 'an evening skylark'—does appear in *Shinzokukokinshū* 新続古今集 182 & 183 as well as in the *waka* of Shinkei and Sōgi.

Inada Toshinori, in an article discussing *renga*-type expressions in the *waka* of famous

linked-verse masters, documents a few similar examples. See Inada Toshinori 稲田利徳, 'Muromachi-ki no Waka ni okeru Rengateki Hyōgen' 室町期の和歌に於ける連歌的表現, in his *Renga to Chūsei Bungei* 連歌と中世文芸, Kadokawa Shoten, 1977, pp. 155–57.

The numbering of poems from *Shinzokukokinshū* and other imperial anthologies is based on Matsushita Daisaburō 松下大三郎 & Watanabe Fumio 渡辺文雄, ed., *Kokka Taikan* 国家大観, 6th ed., Kadokawa Shoten, 1973.

tasteless style [*kokoro fuzei wa itaku naki o utasugata nari*]. Since they praise only poems whose style conforms to the example of former imperial anthologies, they have no use for the phrase *meta futagi aru*.²⁰

Another revealing indication that Muromachi poets made a distinction between *waka* and *renga* diction is found in a brief comment from the *Saki no Sesshō-ke uta-awase* 前撰政家歌合 of 1443. In the contest, Shōtetsu, himself a teacher of *waka* to *renga* poets and a frequent participant in linked-verse sessions, is criticized for departing from standard word usage in the following poem.

<i>Noki no kusa</i>	Gloss: The grass under the eaves and the sweet-flag both have the fragrant luster of dew; through the reed-blinds the evening breeze blows on my drenched sleeves.
<i>Ayame mo tsuyu no</i>	
<i>Nioi nite</i>	
<i>Sode makihosanu</i>	
<i>Kosu no yūkaze</i>	

This is an ordinary poem by any estimation; certainly it does not provide much support for Shōtetsu's reputation as an innovator. But the poem seems to have offended one of the contest disputants as an example of the vulgarizing influence of linked verse on *waka* diction.²¹ 'To begin with,' the disputant contends, 'the phrase *noki no kusa* has a clumsy ring to it. Isn't this the kind of thing one finds in genres like linked verse?'²² One suspects that the real complaint is simply that *noki no kusa*, a plain but by no means vulgar image, is not an *uta kotoba*, that is, it is not a word with ample precedents in *waka* canons.²³ One can only imagine what a contest judge would have said of later poems such as this one by Sōchō 宗長, 1448–1532:

<i>Mimiyasuki</i>	Gloss: This is easy on the ears: listening this evening to the voices of village children singing rice-husking songs.
<i>Koto to wa koyoi</i>	
<i>Sato no ko ga</i>	
<i>Inetsuki utau</i>	
<i>Koe kikoyu nari</i> ²⁴	

Just as Sōchō is arguably an extreme example of the Muromachi popularization of high culture, this poem is probably best described as an extreme example of *renga* influence on *waka* diction. One critic even wants to label it *haikai*.²⁵ But the following poems by Shinkei and Sōgi show that the trend toward colloquial and prosaic vocabulary is apparent in other Muromachi poets as well.

²⁰ 'Rakusho Roken', pp. 196–97.

²¹ Winners in the 1443 contest were decided by the vote of all participants, but some rounds also include comments by disputants, principally Kanera and Gyōkō. The criticism of Shōtetsu's poem seems to be by Gyōkō. See Inoue, pp. 138–41.

²² Quoted in Shimazu, p. 155.

²³ An almost identical expression, *nokiba*

no kusa, is in fact a well-precedented *uta kotoba*.

²⁴ Sōchō, 'Sōchō Shuki' 宗長手記, in Shimazu Tadao 島津忠夫, ed., *Sōchō Nikki* 宗長日記, Iwanami Shoten, 1975, p. 102.

²⁵ Harada Yoshioki 原田芳起, *Tankyū Nihon Bungaku* 探究日本文学, Kazama Shobō, 1979, pp. 372–73.

Kyo wa kite
Te ni toru bakari
Kasumu ni mo
Fude o zo naguru
*Waka no uranami*²⁶

Gloss: The waves of Waka Bay: even on a day like today, when the haze is thick enough to touch, I must put aside my writing brush, unable to describe them.

Chirase tada
Kaze no sasowanu
Yo naredomo
Hana ni ikanaru
*Kagiri o ka min*²⁷

Gloss: Scatter the blossoms, wind! What fate would await them even if this were a world where breezes did not entice them away?

Compared to Sōchō's highly unorthodox poem these *waka* display only minor departures from traditional standards of court diction. But the phrases *te ni toru bakari* ('... enough to take in the hand') and *fude o zo naguru* ('to toss aside one's writing brush') in Shinkei's poem have a colloquial flavor that is foreign to the imperial anthologies. And Sōgi's use of the blunt command form *chirase* ('scatter!') is so common in *renga* (and uncommon in *waka*) that it actually fits into a rhetorical category, referred to as *imashime teniha* 戒めてには, in linked-verse handbooks.²⁸ Nor is this use of colloquial diction limited solely to the *waka* of *renga* poets. Much the same can be said of the following poems by mid-Muromachi aristocrats. All contain expressions that attest more to *renga* influence than to *waka* precedent.

Nigoru to mo
Sumu to mo miezu
Hasu no ha no
Ukite hima naki
*Niwa no ikemizu*²⁹

Gloss: One cannot tell whether it is muddied or clear—the water of the garden pond covered over with lotus leaves.

ASUKAI MASACHIKA

Yoshino yama
Hana no sekimori
Sakura to wa
Hito zo tomuru
*Haru wa tomarazu*³⁰

Gloss: Yoshino's blossoms are a Barrier Gate—people they stop, but spring they cannot.

ICHIJŌ KANERA

²⁶ Shinkei, 'Hyakushu Waka' 百首和歌, in *Shinkeishū: Ronshū* 心敬集: 論集, Kisshōsha, 1946, p. 346.

²⁷ Sōgi, 'Sōgi Hōshi Shū' 宗祇法師集, in *Gunsho Ruijū* 郡書類従 15, p. 482.

²⁸ The rubric *imashime teniha* appears in Sōzei's *Mitsudenshō* 密伝抄 (pre-1455) and probably refers to usage of command forms in *waka* as well as in *renga*. Shimazu, however,

identifies use of the blunt command forms as one of the characteristics of *renga* expression. See Shimazu Tadao, *Renga Shū* 連歌集, *Shinchō Nihon Koten Shūsei* 新潮日本古典集成 33, Shinchōsha, 1979, pp. 378–79.

²⁹ *Shinzokukokinshū* 1684.

³⁰ Ichijō Kanera, 'Nanto Hyakushu' 南都百首, in *Gunsho Ruijū* 15, p. 396.

Tani fukami
Tatsuru kemuri no
Hitosuji ni
Omoihanaruru
*Ukiyo to o shire*³¹

Gloss: Know this—that this is a sad world in which one's thoughts drift away like a single column of smoke from a deep valley.

AKAMATSU MITSUMOTO

Hito no ue ni
Nashite wa ika ni
Nikukaramu
Ware dani oi wa
*Akihatenikeri*³²

Gloss: How could I despise in someone else what I see in myself. I too tire of growing old!

SANJŌNISHI SANETAKA

Once more it is impossible to argue that these poems owe their loose diction to the example of linked verse alone. But, as Shimazu himself points out, the use of conversational forms (*nigoru to mo/sumu to mo miezu*; *hito zo tomuru/haru wa tomarazu*; *ukiyo to o shire*; and virtually all of Sanetaka's poem) is a major characteristic of linked verse.³³ It therefore seems certain that the perceived influence of *renga kotoba* on *waka* diction among poets such as Kōun and Gyōkō had a basis in reality. One can only think, for example, that it was the *renga* poet in Sanetaka that produced the following declaration of Amidist devotion.

Oi no nochi
Onaji koto tote
Iu beku wa
Namu Amida Butsu
*Namu Amida Butsu*³⁴

Gloss: Even in old age there is one thing we must continue to repeat: Hail Amida Buddha, Hail Amida Buddha!

The use of vernacular forms here may conform well to what is a simple statement of devotion to a popular faith, but it also testifies to a minor revolution in *waka* diction. That a court poet of Sanetaka's stature could use such a style in even an informal poem is evidence that by the end of the Muromachi period the use of expressions once considered base and common had become natural and accepted.

Even if linked verse was not the only liberalizing influence on *waka* diction in the fifteenth century, it must still be judged the most important one. The rediscovery of *Man'yōshū* 万葉集, 759, and its archaic vocabulary, the innovative tradition of Shōtetsu, the rich heritage of Chinese poetry—these too were major influences on Muromachi *waka*. But the *renga*, by virtue of its popularity at all levels of society, was more pervasive and powerful than any of these in its effect. It was in the nature of linked verse to allow colloquial expressions that arose naturally from the often semi-conversational interplay of the typical linked-verse session. And it was also natural for the short *renga* stanza to favor plain statement (*noki no kusa*, etc.) over the elaborate circumlocutions of *waka* poets.

³¹ *Shinzokukokinshū* 1846.

³² Quoted in 'Sōchō Shuki', p. 99.

³³ Shimazu, *Renga-shi no Kenkyū*, pp.

161–67.

³⁴ Quoted in 'Sōchō Shuki', p. 99.

Some *renga* poets opposed this abandonment of traditional diction. Sōgi, one of the greatest of *renga* masters but also an adherent of Nijō orthodoxy, lists, for instance, a number of *renga kotoba* that he would eliminate from even the *renga* lexicon.³⁵ But the appearance of one of these supposedly expurgated words—*nozato* 野里, a village in the fields—in *Chikurinshō* 竹林抄, 1476, one of the greatest of orthodox *renga* collections and the product of Sōgi's own compilation efforts, is ample proof of the futility of such protests.³⁶ By the mid-1400s *renga kotoba* were an inevitable part of *renga* and *waka* composition alike.

It is in matters of diction that the influence of *renga* practice on the *waka* of men such as Kanera and Sanetaka is most obvious. But the looser attitude of *renga* poets also had its effect on the formal features of Muromachi *waka*, most notably on syntax. The frequent semantic and syntactic parsing of medieval *waka* into upper (5–7–5) and lower (7–7) units, for example, is one clear evidence of *renga* influence that can be traced back to the Shinkokin period. And another sign of *renga* precedent is the tendency toward noun-ending lines, an understandable characteristic of the short linked-verse stanza.³⁷ But the more general effect of *renga* syntax on fifteenth-century *waka* was to produce a dense, compressed, and often elliptical style. Shimazu notes, for instance, that in *renga* stanzas verbal forms are often contracted to nominals: (*koma*) *yuki fumiwakete* ('a horse treads through the snow'), a common *waka* construction, becoming *yuki fumu koma* ('a snow-treading horse'), and so on.³⁸ Since this trend toward nominalization is so widespread a trait of medieval poetic syntax, one cannot claim *renga* as its only source. But the phenomenon apparent in the following poems from Kanera's *Nanto Hyakushū* 南都百首, 1473, and Sōgi's personal anthology, *Sōgi Hōshi Shū* 宗祇法師集, is at least partially attributable to the penchant of *renga* poets for tight, imagistic expressions.

³⁵ In *Azuma Mondō* 吾妻問答, 1470, Sōgi lists the following words as 'particularly unsuitable' (*motte no hoka yoroshikarazu*) in linked verse: *mizu oto* 水音, 'the sound of water'; *tamori* 田守, 'paddy-guard'; *hanamori* 花守, 'blossom-guard'; *kaeshibumi* 返し文, 'return-letter'; *tokeshimo* 解け霜, 'melting frost'; *sutebito* 捨人, 'recluse'; *nozato* 野里, 'village in the fields'; *urazato* 浦里, 'bayside village' (in *Rengaronshū*, *Haironshū*, pp. 230–31).

Shimazu assumes that Sōgi's criticism of the words is that all represent extreme examples of contraction (see Shimazu, *Renga Shū*, p. 381), an interpretation that would also seem to explain earlier reservations about *noki no kusa*.

It should be noted, however, that Sōzei, Sōgi's teacher, voices a more fundamental objection to at least one of the words on the

list. 'The word *mizu oto*', he says in *Zeijinshō* 砌塵抄, 'is crude [*iyashiki*]. Words like *kawa no oto* ['the sound of the river'] are more suitable.' Ijichi, *Renga Ronshū*, 1953, 1, p. 269.

³⁶ *Chikurinshō* 677. I have used the text as found in Hoshika Muneichi 星加宗一, ed., *Kōhon Chikurinshō* 校本竹林抄, Iwanami Shoten, 1937.

³⁷ Although some *renga* poets do not show such a tendency toward noun-ending lines, it is still true that as a genre the *renga* favors nominal expressions, and this fact is reflected in the *waka* of many *renga* poets. In *Shinkei Hyakushū Waka*, for instance, fully 59% of the poems end in nouns. See '*Hyakushū Waka*', pp. 317–47.

³⁸ Shimazu, *Renga-shi no Kenkyū*, pp. 156–57.

Tsukikage no
Kiyoki kawara ni
Sayo fukete
Chidori tomo yobu
Saho no ura kana³⁹

Gloss: Night deepens over a riverside bright with moonlight—Saho Bay, where plovers call out for their companions.

Makimoku no
Hihara kumorite
Mine fukaki
Tsuki ni wa utoki
Yama no shitaio⁴⁰

Gloss: Clouds cover the cypress groves at Makimoku; far from the moon shining back among the peaks is my hut at the mountain's edge.

Kamome uku
Irie ni mizu ya
Ashigamo no
Sawagu naka ni mo
Shizuka naru yo o⁴¹

Gloss: Can't one see it among the gulls floating in the inlet?—a calm world amidst the clamor of the wild ducks in the reeds.

Utsuru rashi
Haru o mo shiranu
Matsu ga e ni
Iso utsu nami no
Hana zo utsurou⁴²

Gloss: The change has come, it seems: under the pine boughs, which know no spring, waves break against the beach, their white-capped flowers now fading in color.

The economy of expression evident in these poems would seem to contradict the trend in *waka* diction toward more colloquial forms. Sanetaka's devotional poem, for instance, is more remarkable for its loose, almost redundant quality than for any kind of rhetorical or syntactic ellipsis. The unifying factor in these antithetical tendencies is that both have a source in *renga* poetic practice. Any linked-verse sequence is characterized by alternating sections of pseudo-dramatic dialogue and sections of packed, image-laden description. Not surprisingly, the collections of many Muromachi *waka* poets exhibit the same mix of styles.

Another syntactic feature of linked verse that finds its way into fifteenth-century *waka* is illustrated by a group of poems from *Shinzokukokinshū* 新続古今集, 1439, the last of the imperial anthologies of *waka*. Shimazu describes this feature as another form of 'compression' (*asshuku* 圧縮).⁴³

³⁹ 'Nanto Hyakushu', p. 395.

⁴⁰ 'Nanto Hyakushu', p. 396.

⁴¹ 'Sōgi Hōshi Shū', p. 486.

⁴² 'Sōgi Hōshi Shū', p. 490. For other examples of such 'nominalized' expressions in

waka by *renga* poets, see Inada, pp. 154–55.

⁴³ Shimazu, *Renga-shi no Kenkyū*, pp. 157–59.

Nuretsutsu mo
Ware ya yukamu no
Yoi no ame ni
Yasurau hodo o
*Tou hito mogana*⁴⁴

Gloss: On this rainy night when I would gladly venture out even if it did mean getting wet, would that someone would come to visit me while I wait!

ICHIJŌ KANERA

Omowazu yo
Hana o katami ni
Saga no yama
Yuki ni ato tou
*Chiyo no furumichi*⁴⁵

Gloss: Who could have predicted this? Here in the Saga hills, remembered for cherry blossoms, I search out a grave through the snow on an ancient pathway.

AKAMATSU MITSUMOTO

Hitori nomi
Nuru o narai no
Tamakura ni
Sukima no kaze wa
*Itou yo mo nashi*⁴⁶

Gloss: Sleeping alone has lately become a habit, yet not a single night does the wind blowing through a crack in the wall show any aversion to my pillowed arm.

GYŌJIN

The use here of the genitive particle *no* to bind two phrases in an essentially forced syntactic relationship can be found in *renga* sequences dating from as early as Yoshimoto's time.⁴⁷ And such compressed syntax is common in linked verse of later years as well. Two examples from *Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin* 湯山三吟百韻, 1491, display the same phenomenon.

10 *Mi o nasabaya no*
Asayū no haru

Gloss: Would that I could change myself into the spring, which morning and evening never fails to excite.

SHŌHAKU

73 *Kage shiroki*
Tsuki o makura no
*Murasusuki*⁴⁸

Gloss: Under a clump of miscanthus I bed down, taking the white-rayed moon as my pillow.

SHŌHAKU

The effect of this structure, in *waka* and *renga* alike, is again one of density and compactness—indeed, of the kind of compressed meaning one finds in Bashō's *haikai*. And if this impression is less striking in the *waka* form, it is only because the *no*-linked expressions are typically embedded within more conventional syntactic patterns.

⁴⁴ *Shinzokukokinshū* 1231.

⁴⁵ *Shinzokukokinshū* 1562. Headnote: 'Written while watching the snow fall in the Saga Hills while on a visit to the grave of Minamoto Yoriyuki.'

⁴⁶ *Shinzokukokinshū* 1471.

⁴⁷ Shimazu, *Renga Shū*, pp. 22–23 (notes to verses 12 & 14).

⁴⁸ *Yuyama Sangin Hyakuin* 湯山三吟百韻, in Kaneko Kinjirō 金子金治郎, ed., *Renga Haikai Shū* 連歌俳諧集, NKZ 32, Shōgakusan, 1974, pp. 153 & 176.

One historical fact that complicates the study of *renga* influence on Muromachi *waka* is the presence of another innovating force, the Kyōgoku-Reizei school, in the medieval period. It is for this reason that one cannot attribute the often compressed syntax or unorthodox diction of a Shōtetsu solely to *renga* example. Shōtetsu's teachers were as unconventional as *renga* poets in their approach to *waka* aesthetics. But by the middle of the fifteenth century the experimentalism of the Kyōgoku-Reizei tradition existed only in a highly attenuated form within the *waka* establishment itself. Shimazu even argues that it is *renga* poets such as Shinkei and Sōgi who should be regarded as the inheritors of the innovative tradition.⁴⁹ Be that as it may, there are several areas besides diction and syntax in which linked verse outstripped the contributions of Kyōgoku-Reizei poetics to the development of fifteenth-century *waka*. The first of these is thematics. The country scenes, the ruins, the lonely mountain huts, the forlorn fields and hills of Muromachi *waka* owe less to the court tradition—reactionary or experimental—than to the example of wandering *renga* masters. Just as it tolerated unorthodox vocabulary, *renga* as a genre also treated topics seldom entertained in the *waka* establishment. Thus Shinkei, even in his *waka*, feels free to depart from conventional *dai* 題 ('fixed topics') in a poem such as the following from *Shinkei Sōzu Hyakushū* 心敬僧都百集, 1471.

Katana mote
Hito o kiru mi no
Hate ya tada
Shide no yamaji ni
*Somagi naramashi*⁵⁰

Gloss: This is the end of those who
 cut down men with the sword—to stand
 as firewood along the path over the
 Mountain of Death.

Such poems can be found in the work of Imagawa Ryōshun, perhaps, but not in the quantity evidenced by the personal collections of fifteenth-century poets. And even in Ryōshun's poetry one will seldom find strictly 'occasional' poems—that is, poems which depart from the strict definitions of classical topics—such as the following written by Shinkei under the title 'Moon on the River'.

During recent battles in this province many people drowned in this river. Among them were some whom I saw regularly, so I have often come out to the riverbank to gaze up at the moon.

Tsuki nomi zo
Katami ni ukabu
Ki no kawa ya
Shizumishi hito no
*Ato no shiranami*⁵¹

Gloss: At the River Ki only the moon
 now floats in their remembrance—
 white-crested waves over the remains
 of those who drowned.

⁴⁹ Shimazu, *Renga-shi no Kenkyū*, pp. 166–68.

⁵⁰ Shinkei, '*Shinkei Sōzu Hyakushū*' 心敬

僧都百首, in *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 続群書類従 18, p. 915.

⁵¹ '*Hyakushū Waka*', p. 331.

Any contest judge could attack this poem as an example of incorrect handling of a topic (*bōdai* 傍題). It is too personal a statement, too far removed from the essence (*hon'i* 本意) of the idea of a moonlit night on a riverbank. And as such it serves well the purpose of showing the increased thematic flexibility of fifteenth-century poets. To an extent this flexibility is articulated in a simple multiplication of acceptable topics. But even within those topics the *waka* of Muromachi poets often show a willingness to dispense with traditional expectations. Sōgi, for instance, feels free to include a vulgar, realistic element in a poem on a common topic: *haru no koma* 春の駒, 'a horse in spring'.

<i>Hana chikau</i>	Gloss: As I look out over the spring fields that promise blossoms soon, a traveler's horse whinnies as it begins its morning journey.
<i>Haruno o mireba</i>	
<i>Tabibito no</i>	
<i>Asatatsu koma no</i>	
<i>Ibaete zo yuku</i> ⁵²	

Such realistic treatment of a topic is not unknown even in imperial anthologies: one remembers, for instance, Emperor Hanazono's 花園 description of a dog barking from behind a bamboo fence (*Fūgashū* 1764). But Sōgi's whinnying horse reminds one more of a couplet by the great *renga* master's own teacher, Sōzei.

<i>Koegoe kawasu</i>	Gloss: Exchanging words, people emerging from their various inns.
<i>Hito no yadoyado</i>	
<i>Tabi no kure</i>	A day of travel ends—the horse I ride whinnies and a dog barks in return.
<i>Noru koma ibae</i>	
<i>Inu hoete</i> ⁵³	

The thematic range of Muromachi *waka* brings with it a plebeian freshness that bears witness not only to the influence of *renga kotoba*, but also to the resurgence of *haikai* as an important force in the poetic world. *Waka* such as the following one by Sōchō, to offer but one among many examples, convey a raucous attitude all but unknown in earlier centuries. Here diction, theme, and tone unite to create a statement that is as unlike anything in the court tradition as it is like the typical provincial setting from which it springs.

<i>Oinureba</i>	Gloss: In my old age I have a request—to slurp the sweet <i>sake</i> as I drink it down.
<i>Negaimono zo yo</i>	
<i>Amazake</i>	
<i>Nominagara kuchi ni</i>	
<i>Susuri irebaya</i> ⁵⁴	

It is an undeniable fact of literary history that the thematic range of *waka* written by men such as Sōchō finds few correlatives in the *waka* of true court poets. Kanera, Sanetaka, Asukai Masachika, and their aristocratic contemporaries depart from strict precedents only in very safe and limited ways: in poems about

⁵² 'Sōgi Hōshi Shū', p. 481. ⁵³ *Chikurinshō* 1905 & 1906. ⁵⁴ 'Sōchō Shuki', p. 105.

kagura 神樂 dances, perhaps, or about new but harmless topics such as rainbows.⁵⁵ Indeed, in most cases Muromachi-court poets show less thematic variety than even their counterparts in the era of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満, 1358–1408. It is for this reason more than for any other that the fifteenth century is generally characterized as a period of stagnation and decline. Always fixed on the validity of classical topics, even the more prosaic or rhetorically unorthodox poems of Muromachi courtiers deserve the adjectives applied to Nijō poetry by Ryōshun in an earlier time. ‘Dry and tasteless’ in style, they send the reader back to the more interesting, albeit less refined, *waka* of *renga* poets. But in one other area—namely, tone—the *waka* of even court poets of the 1400s represents a final development in post-Shinkokin poetic practice. Nijō and Kyōgoku-Reizei poets, for all their famous disagreements, seem to have sought the same objective stance toward their material. Thus the dryness of Ton’*a* 頓阿, 1289–1372, has a companion in the impressionistic realism that makes Kyōgoku Tamekane’s poems read more like studies than experiences. The following description of a garden hailshower, one of Tamekane’s best-known poetic attempts, is a good example of abundant detail lacking in sentiment.

<p><i>Furiharuru</i> <i>Niwa no arare wa</i> <i>Katayorite</i> <i>Iro naru kumo zo</i> <i>Sora ni kureyuku</i>⁵⁶</p>	<p>Gloss: Intermittent hailshowers hurry slantways through the garden while beautifully colored clouds darken in the sky.</p>
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As Professor Miner has argued, this poem is an impressive exercise in definition, but one that ‘does not leave us chilled with full darkness symbolic of man’s fate.’⁵⁷ To be more explicit (and perhaps less kind), it leaves us neither chilled nor warmed; an impressionistic tour de force, it is all the same a clinical description that denies the emotions a part in poetic experience. The *waka* of fifteenth-century poets, on the other hand, maintain a less detached rhetorical stance. Even Shinkei, heir via Shōtetsu to Tamekane’s philosophy, is careful not to neglect the ‘human’ dimensions of his poetic subject, as the following poem attests.

<p><i>Shiba no to ni</i> <i>Furuki kakehi no</i> <i>Oto kiku mo</i> <i>Inochi no mizu no</i> <i>Sue zo kanashiki</i>⁵⁸</p>	<p>Gloss: From my brush hut I hear the sound of an old bamboo water pipe. How sad to hear the water of life reduced to just a trickle!</p>
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The first lines of this *waka* present a neutral description. The word *kiku* (‘to listen or hear’), however, introduces the human subject; and the rest of the poem is an explicitly human reaction to a rustic scene that Tamekane, or even Shōtetsu, would doubtless have treated in more narrowly aesthetic terms.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., Kanera’s *Nanto Hyakushu*.

⁵⁶ *Fūgashū* 794.

⁵⁷ Miner, p. 130.

⁵⁸ ‘*Hyakushu Waka*’, p. 343.

Again, this turn away from the aloof style of the Nanbokuchō period is less noticeable in the *waka* of court aristocrats than in the *waka* of linked-verse masters and their provincial students. In the last imperial anthology, *Shinzokukokinshū*, for instance, one confronts poems that are for the most part reminiscent of fourteenth-century impressionistic realism. This poem by Reizei Tamemasa 冷泉為尹, 1360–1417, would in fact fit easily into either *Fūgashū* or *Shingoshūishū*.

<i>Ukigusa no</i>	Gloss: Over the marsh water where
<i>Kaze ni tadayou</i>	floating grasses drift with the wind,
<i>Numamizu ni</i>	fly the fireflies, uncertain rays of light.
<i>Kage sadamarade</i>	
<i>Tobu hotaru kana</i> ⁵⁹	

While such scenes dominate *Shinzokukokinshū*, however, the anthology also contains some poems that insist on the human element. Emperor Go-Komatsu, for instance, sees fit in one of his contributions to the collection to evoke the tactile side of a traveler's night without shelter. In most ways an unremarkable poem, it nonetheless serves the purpose of highlighting the contrasts between Go-Komatsu's style and that of his earlier counterparts, Emperors Fushimi 伏見, 1265–1317, and Hanazono, 1297–1348. And at the same time it shows the influence of *renga* syntactical patterns in its clear division into semantically complete upper and lower units.

<i>Karishiku mo</i>	Gloss: I spread out miscanthus for my
<i>Usuki obana no</i>	traveler's bed, but how thin a sleeve it
<i>Tamoto kana</i>	makes! Here under the pines it is cold
<i>Matsu ga ne samuki</i>	with only the dew for a pillow.
<i>Tsuyu no makura ni</i> ⁶⁰	

In his study of *renga kotoba*, Shimazu notes that the word *samushi* ('cold') was favored by *renga* masters over other synonyms because it communicates a human feeling rather than a blunt meteorological fact.⁶¹ And reading through Go-Komatsu's description one indeed senses the feeling of travel. The situation is conventional—for who can conceive of poetic expression without the mediation of convention? But in its insistence on the 'man' in the poem, Go-Komatsu's *waka* is typical of the broad tonal orientation of fifteenth-century poetry. There is little of Tamekane's naive optimism in the collections of men such as Kanera and Sanetaka. Less certain of the world and their place in it than courtiers of the past, they express above all a sense of personal melancholy and nostalgia. And the *waka* they compose center around new categories of meaning that unite the thematic and tonal changes discussed above—categories such as Reminiscence (*kaikyū* 懐旧), Lamentation (*jukkai* 述懐), and Evanescence (*mujō* 無常). The unifying factor in all the searching for new material is a new (or perhaps regained) appreciation for the plight of man in an uncertain world.

⁵⁹ *Shinzokukokinshū* 1677.

⁶⁰ *Shinzokukokinshū* 923.

⁶¹ Shimazu, *Renga-shi no Kenkyū*, pp. 168–69.

The broader thematic and tonal range of fifteenth-century *waka* must be attributed at least partially to changes in the life-styles of the literary classes. The wars and dislocations of the times brought poets into contact with new varieties of human experience—with the rustic life of woodcutters and fishermen, the uncultured, rude life of country barons, and so on. Kanera, Asukai Masachika, and Sanetaka, among many other aristocrats, spent time away from the capital during the Ōnin War, 1467–1477, experiencing things that earlier generations of court poets had been spared. One need only look at Kanera’s travel diary, *Fujikawa no Ki* 藤河の記, 1473, with its accounts of battles, robbers, brigands, and country life, to understand why his travel poetry communicates a sense of immediate, felt experience.⁶² But in all of this Kanera was preceded by *renga* masters. From its beginnings as a plebeian genre in the late Heian period, linked verse was part of provincial life, and the genre reflects its social context. Moreover, perhaps because early *renga* poets were relatively unfettered by the tradition of clinical realism, their poetry tended to express a straightforward reaction to life. There is none of the coldness of a Tamekane in the typical linked-verse sequence. And if there is a similar resurgence of sentiment in the *waka* of the 1400s it is probably due in large part to the influence of habits formed in *renga* composition. Thus when Shinkei composes a *waka* such as the following, he is borrowing not only *renga kotoba* but a typical *renga* theme and approach as well.

Waga ue ni
Kaeru narai no
Haru mogana
Oi no namiji ni
*Tōki karigane*⁶³

Gloss: Would that the spring of youth
could likewise return to me! To one on
the teary path of old age—the call of a
distant goose.

Kōun was quoted above as remarking that many *renga* couplets of the late Heian and Kamakura periods could be evaluated as *waka*; in the case of Shinkei’s poem, the opposite is true.

To say that fifteenth-century *waka* owes its vocabulary, diction, syntactical predilections, thematics, and even tone to the influence of linked verse is an overstatement. As mentioned above, other influences also played a part in the development of *waka* in the Muromachi period. But in broad terms none of these other influences can compete with linked verse in its profound effect on the final stage of the court tradition in poetry. *Renga* poets, who in the fifteenth century were almost always travelers, participated in all levels of Muromachi cultural life. In a way this made them the emissaries of the court heritage—or at least of their considerably rusticated version of it. Among other things, this meant that what provincial poets knew of the *waka* and its history they knew through *renga* poets.⁶⁴

⁶² Ichijō Kanera, ‘*Fujikawa no Ki*’ 藤河の記, in Kōda Rohan 幸田露伴, ed., *Kikōbunshū* 紀行文集, in *Bungei Sōshō* 文芸叢書, Haku-

bunkan, 1914, pp. 353–68.

⁶³ ‘*Hyakushu Waka*’, p. 320.

⁶⁴ Inoue, p. 222.

Thus the final irony of *waka* evolution is that it came to owe its preservation to the very force that most directly threatened its own sense of style and decorum.

The fifteenth century can fairly be described as one of unparalleled activity in the *waka* genre, for it was during this period that the *waka* became a part of life for not only great military clans such as the Ashikaga, but also for provincial warriors. Always eager to imitate their artistic betters, these families held monthly *waka* contests at both their domainal estates and at their mansions in the capital, sponsoring in fact much of the scholarly activity of the period while organizing anthologies and in general continuing the tradition of the renowned poetic houses of the Shinkokin era. Less like the work of Teika than the work of Shinkei, however, their poetry represents the final triumph of *renga kotoba*. And much the same can be said for even the most conservative of linked-verse masters. The *waka* of Shinkei, Sōgi, Sōchō, and their disciples can boast virtues, but they are not the virtues for which the court tradition prides itself. And this is not to suggest that their work is unworthy of study; instead it is simply to argue that the *waka* of these men provide one more indication of the inability of the narrow court aesthetic to remain viable in an increasingly vulgar world.