

Fujiwara Teika's Hundred-Poem Sequence of the Shoji Era, 1200: A Complete Translation, with Introduction and Commentary.



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*Tanaka no tuma wa otto ni koibito o uti e kosas(ar)ete,
kosas(ar)eta no de, hungai sita.

“Tanaka’s wife was furious, for much to her chagrin, her husband had his girl-friend come and visit their house.”

Several major factors contribute to the strength of the book: Martin has read other researcher’s works quite extensively and often compares and contrasts his own analysis with theirs; he has collected an enormous number of extremely valuable examples from a wide variety of sources; while the main focus of the book is on standard Japanese, there are many contrastive analyses of representative regional dialects; historical perspective is sometimes adopted to illuminate the nature of the data.

Despite its shortcomings, there is no doubt in my mind that this book is one of the best reference grammars ever written about any language.

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Fujiwara Teika’s *Hundred-Poem Sequence of the Shōji Era, 1200: A Complete Translation, with Introduction and Commentary*. By ROBERT H. BROWER. Tokyo: Sophia University (*Monumenta Nipponica* Monograph No. 55), 1978. 120 pp. Illustrations, Footnotes, Appendix, Works Cited or Quoted in the Text, Index. \$11.00.

This most recent addition to Professor Brower’s ongoing investigation into Japanese court poetry of the Mid-Classical Period, especially that of its outstanding representative, Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241), also makes available for the first time in English a prime example of the hundred-poem sequence (*hyakushu*). In 1200, former emperor Go-Toba commissioned two sets of hundred-poem sequences. Each of the twenty-three participants in the first set, which included Teika, submitted his own composition of a hundred *waka*. (A later, and lesser, set of sequences was composed by eleven poets, among whom was the critic and recluse, Kamo no Chōmei.) Teika’s contribution to this first composite, known as *Go-Toba no In shodo hyakushu*, or simply, *Shōji hyakushu* (Hundred-poem sequence of the Shōji era), is translated in its entirety and carefully introduced to readers who may not be acquainted with Professor Brower’s earlier work on the Age of the *Shinkokinshū*.

As “Fujiwara Teika’s *Hundred-Poem Sequence of the Shōji Era*” (parts one and two), the introductory essay first appeared in *Monumenta Nipponica*, 31:3 (Autumn 1976), followed by the annotated translations in the following issue, *MN*, 31:4 (Winter 1976). Texts of the book and the two-part article would have been identical but for the discovery, in summer 1977, of a holograph fragment of the sequence on birds (poems 91 through 95) in Teika’s handwriting and that of his father, Fujiwara Shunzei (1114–1204). The fragment, which includes comments and replies by the two poets, is reproduced, transcribed, translated, and explained in the monograph’s appendix. The book has the elegant format we expect in *Monumenta Nipponica* publications: the pages are 18 cm × 25 cm on quality paper, with ample margins, clear type, and Japanese characters in the footnotes.

The general organization of poems in the *Shōji hyakushu* varies slightly from the classic structure of such sequences since the first, by Minamoto Shigeyuki (d. ?1000),

itself reflecting the divisions of the Imperial Anthologies. The hundred *waka* are grouped as follows: Spring (twenty poems), Summer (fifteen poems), Autumn (twenty poems), Winter (fifteen poems), Love (ten poems), Travel (five poems), Mountain Dwelling (five poems), Birds (five poems), and Celebrations (five poems). Within these general topics Teika integrates the sequence with the principles of "association and progression" first noted by Professor Jinichi Konishi, and described in Brower and Miner's early collaborative article on the subject (*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 21 [1958]). In addition to temporal progressions within the larger groupings, and such associative techniques as common imagery, diction, and phrasing (p. 28), Teika enhances the effect of the sequence as a unified composition by carefully contrasting striking "design poems" (*mon no uta*) with neutral "background poems" (*ji no uta*). In his translation Professor Brower indicates the probable role of each verse as "design" (*mon*), "background" (*ji*), "predominantly design" (*yaya mon*), and "predominantly background" (*yaya ji*). Underlying all these technical devices is a pervasive tone that unites the sequence as a harmonious whole: "Teika's tone is one of beauty and sadness—no unique effect in Japanese classical poetry, to be sure, but in this case a special mood which Teika creates by the overtones of love and of *jukkai*, or 'personal grievance,' running like leitmotifs through his sequence" (p. 30).

Those who are impatient with poetic elucidations, who feel that commentaries often distract us from the immediacy of the poetic experience, must make an exception for a poetry so dependent on its literary context as to appear almost trivial without it. As the culmination of a long inbred tradition, the poetry of the age of the *Shinkokinshū* is almost inaccessible to the modern reader, Western or Japanese, without immersion in the shared ideas, moods, and ideals of the era. Characteristic of this sequence, for example, is Teika's frequent use of "allusive variation" (*honkadōri*), with which the poet consciously reminds his audience of an earlier poem or prose context (*honzetsu*) for additional resonance. In this set of a hundred short *waka*, Professor Brower finds possible allusions to no less than fifty-five earlier poetic sources, beyond which is that vague world of suggestiveness which was no less real to Teika for being difficult or impossible for us to intuit today. It is this context of literary source and suggestion which Professor Brower skillfully recreates for us in spite of the added difficulties of working from an unannotated text.

The *Hundred-Poem Sequence* bears some resemblance to Teika's *Kindai shuka* (1209), eighty-three *waka* by a variety of poets which Teika compiled using the same principles of integration, and which Brower and Miner translated as *Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time: A Thirteenth-Century Poetic Treatise and Sequence* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1967). In the *Kindai shuka*, Teika's purpose is didactic: to show from a selection of specific examples the proper way to go about writing poetry, with a man who had cleared the initial hurdles and was on his way to becoming the leading poet of the day as guide. The *Shōji hyakushū*, on the other hand, was written by a younger man who had yet to make his mark, and who wished to ingratiate himself with former emperor Go-Toba. This meant moving from youthful experimentation to a "more traditional, balanced neo-classicism" (p. 19). His purpose was not to instruct but to impress, to demonstrate to his critics that he could compose with the best of them. (The sequence in the context of Teika's uneven relationship with his sovereign is further discussed by Professor Brower in his article, "Ex-Emperor Go-Toba's Secret Teachings: *Go-Toba no in Gokuden*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 32 [1972], pp. 14 ff.) The following year (1201) Go-Toba

commissioned Teika to help with the compilation of the eighth Imperial Anthology, the *Shinkokinshū*, in which three of his poems from the *Hundred-Poem Sequence* were included, “each typical of a different major style” (p. 20). One is poem 67, “a masterpiece of *yūgen*, mystery and depth” (p. 20), a “design” (*mon*) poem with an “allusive variation” (on a poem in the *Manyōshū* explained in the commentary). The example also shows Professor Brower’s technique of translation, with short and long lines in English suggesting the 5/7 syllable pattern of the Japanese:

<i>Koma tomete</i>	There is no shelter
<i>Sode uchibarō</i>	Where I can rest my weary horse
<i>Kage mo nashi</i>	And brush my laden sleeves:
<i>Sano no watari no</i>	The Sano ford and its adjoining fields
<i>Yuki no yūgure.</i>	Spread over with twilight in the snow.

In short, the *Hundred-Poem Sequence* is rich, rewarding work, in spite of its brevity. The introduction and commentary recapitulate many of the concerns which have engaged Professor Brower in his earlier research. While the specialist will welcome this book as another special fragment in the intricate mosaic of Fujiwara Teika which Brower is painstakingly constructing for us, the novice will find it useful as a compact guide to the issues and problems of the courtly tradition in Japanese poetry.

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Mirror for the Moon. A Selection of Poems by Saigyō. Translated by WILLIAM LAFLEUR. New York: New Directions, 1978. xxvi, 100 pp. Bibliography, Index of First Lines. \$10.95 (cloth); \$2.95 (paper).

Despite the literary fame of the poet-priest Saigyō (1118–1190), one of the great practitioners of Japanese *waka* thirty-one-syllable verse and an inspiration to so many later poets and artists, little serious work has been published in English concerning him and his work. Professor William LaFleur of Princeton University has published several rather technical but very interesting articles in the journal *History of Religions* on the relationship between religion and aesthetics in Saigyō’s writing. Now he has supplemented these with a more popular collection of *waka* translations in *Mirror for the Moon*. Roughly one hundred and eighty English translations (plus *rōmaji* texts) are included. While this selection represents only a small sampling of the poet’s work (Saigyō’s own collection, the *Sankashū*, contains about fifteen hundred and fifty *waka*), Professor LaFleur’s book does give a selection generous enough to indicate both the range and the accomplishments of this greatest of the late Heian poets.

Saigyō was not only a poet much admired by later generations, but a potent cultural figure in his own right. By the fourteenth century he had received a kind of spiritual canonization in the popular mind, and his various pilgrimages were seen as paradigms for a poetic vocation leading to enlightenment. It is this Saigyō who