Celebrating *Kyō*: The Eccentricity of Bashō and Nampo

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Kyō (madness or eccentricity) has been a notable aesthetic paradigm in Japanese literature since the medieval period, but the concept of *kyō* has never been monolithic. In fact, the term in existing Japanese texts represents highly diverse authorial intentions and stances, including political resistance, religious nonconformity, aesthetic preference, social criticism, ethical concerns, and the construction of a literary identity. *Kyō* as an aesthetic paradigm is fundamentally established on the reversal of literary conventions. It played a very important role in Edo literature when the writers sought novel creative spaces beyond the classical canons to develop popular genres.

This paper examines how *kyō* or eccentricity constituted an important part of the creativity of both Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), the greatest *haikai* (comic linked verse) poet, and Ōta Nampo (1749–1823), the best *kyōshikyōbun* (Chinese-style eccentric poem and prose) writer. It demonstrates that while both of them excelled at what Haruo Shirane has called "the literature of reversal",[1] Bashō's *kyō* often works effectively in turning the earthy and the aberrant to the lofty and the spiritual, and Nampo's tends to bring the refined and the classical down to the vulgar, funny, even crude meaning in claiming a distinctive poetic world of his own.

Kyō, literally meaning madness or insanity, implies behavior or thought that so radically transcends worldly concerns that it appears eccentric. In Japanese literary texts before Bashō, *kyō* has always been used to refer to the popular or comic genres that are distinct from their orthodox counterparts, such as *kyōka* (eccentric *tanka* or short Japanese poem), *kyōshi* (eccentric *kanshi* or poem in Chinese style), *kyōbun* (eccentric prose), and *kyōgen* (eccentric drama). *Haikai* as the humorous and aberrant counterpart to the serious classical linked verse (*ushin no renga*) was also called *kyōku*.[2] In this tradition, to maintain the identity of a comic/popular literary genre means, to a great extent, to maintain its eccentric stance. When Yamazaki Sōkan (dates unknown) and Arakida Moritake (1473–1549) attempted to make comic linked verse an autonomous poetic form in the early sixteenth century, *kyō* became a key element in *haikai* poetics. However, the *kyō* of early *haikai* was centered on vulgar parody and wildness; it was used merely for the sake of creating humour. The Danrin School that had influenced the early work of Bashō also contributed to the development of the eccentric stance in *haikai* by promoting a style that emphasized exaggerations and falsehoods. Although the Danrin School breathed life into comic linked verse, its formalistic novelty failed to create profound poetry. In order to transform *haikai* into poetry of profound meaning, Bashō and his followers reinvented the *kyō* of *haikai* by creating the personae of unworldly recluse and carefree wanderer. Through this effort, Bashō transformed the nature of *kyō* in *haikai* poetics fundamentally, making it a cornerstone of Shōmon (Bashō School) poetics.

The celebration of eccentricity was a prominent theme of Bashō's poetry since the early stage of his haikai school. In a *hokku* (opening verse) written on his journey in 1684, Bashō introduces himself as an eccentric poet:

> With a crazy verse (*kyōku*)
> and the wintry winds—I must look
> much like Chikusai.
>
> *Kyōku kogarashi no / mi wa chikusai ni / nitaru kana*[3]

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[1] Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 12.

[2] My discussion here owes much to Shirane's observation in *Traces of Dreams*, p. 73.

[3] Imoto Nōichi, Yayoshi Kanichi, Yokozawa Saburō, Ogata Tsutomu, eds., *Kōhon Bashō zenshū* (Henceforth abbreviated *KBZ*) (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1962–1969), 6: 59. Translation is from Peipei Qiu, *Bashō and the Dao: The Zhuangzi and the Transformation of Haikai* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), p. 74. My translation owes much to Donald Keene's translation in *Landscape and*

The same poem also appears as the first verse of a *haikai* sequence in *Fuyu no hi* (The winter days), a collection of five *kasen*[4] sequences Bashō produced with a group of poets in Nagoya in 1684. In *Fuyu no hi,* there is a prose passage before the poem, which says:

> My bamboo hat had worn out in the rains of the long journey, and my paper jacket had become crumpled in the storms. A poor man utterly destitute, even I felt pity for myself. Suddenly I remembered that a gifted man of eccentric poetry had visited this province in the past, and I uttered: "With a crazy verse / and the wintry winds—I must look / much like Chikusai."[5]

Bashō's verse is a greeting to show his modesty to the hosts and to introduce his new poetic ideal of *fūkyō* (poetic eccentricity). The "gifted man of eccentric poetry" refers to Chikusai portrayed in Toyama Dōya's (1634) comic tale. According to the tale, Chikusai, a charlatan who was crazy about eccentric *tanka* (*kyōka)*, once traveled to Nagoya on his journey from Kyōto to Edo. By comparing himself to Chikusai and associating his eccentric *haikai* verse (*kyōku*) with Chikusai's *kyōka*, Bashō advocates his *fūkyō* ideal through the eccentric poetic persona.

The poem and prose above show that during that period Bashō deliberately reinvented his poetic identity through the image of an eccentric. In fact, not only did Bashō celebrate the eccentric taste in his writings, but he also led the life of an eccentric recluse and perpetual traveler. In 1680, he left the city where he had a successful career teaching *haikai* and moved to a cottage on the banks of the Fukagawa River at the outskirts of Edo. Four years after the move, he abandoned this temporary shelter to become a constant wayfarer. In "*Genjūan no ki*," ("On the Unreal Dwelling," 1690), a *haikai* prose text written in his later years, Bashō describes his unique way of life as "my eccentric ways":

> But I should not have it thought from what I have said that I am devoted to solitude and seek only to hide my traces in the wilderness. Rather, I am like a sick man weary of people, or someone who is tired of the world. What is there to say? I have not led a clerical life, nor have I served in normal pursuits. Ever since I was very young I have been fond of my eccentric ways, and once I had come to make them the source of a livelihood, temporarily I thought, I discovered myself bound for life to the one line of my art, incapable and talentless as I am.[6]

Bashō claims that he was "fond of [his] eccentric ways" ever since he was very young and that this eccentricity led him to his art, but we know little about his childhood. Existing evidence only tells us that Bashō had been teaching *haikai* before he moved to Fukagawa, which could hardly be described as eccentric. Nonetheless, what is significant about this passage is that Bashō draws a direct connection between his "eccentric ways" of life and his art. This emphasis on the integration of his poetic ideals and his way of life reflected Bashō's belief in the "sincerity of poetry" (*fūga no makoto*).[7] Bashō's choice to be a hut-dweller and wayfarer was a genuine effort to pursue *fūryū*, which, as he saw, were embodied in the aesthetic recluse traditions of China and Japan and were highlighted by the Daoist ideal of *shōyōyū* (C. *xiaoyaoyou*). The word *fūryū* is polysemous in both Chinese and Japanese. In Bashō's poetry it implies an aesthetic ideal that rejects worldly values and reveres the recluse tradition, seeking beauty in a lifestyle or mental-

Portraits (Tokyo and Palo Alto: Kōdansha International, 1971), p. 102.

[4] *Kasen* is a genre of linked verse that consists of 36 links.

[5] *KBZ*, 3: 254–255. Translation is from Qiu, *Bashō and the Dao,* p. 74. Cf. Makoto Ueda, comp., trans., and with an introduction, *Bashō and His Interpreters: Selected Hokku with Commentary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 120; and Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams*, p. 123.

[6] Translation is from Donald Keene, *Anthology of Japanese Literature* (New York: Grove Press, 1955), pp. 376. The account in Japanese can be found in *KBZ*, 6: 470–471.

[7] Hattori Dōhō, *Sanzōshi,* in *KBZ*, 7: 174.

ity that is free of material burdens and devoted to arts. *Shōyōyū/xiaoyaoyou* is variously translated as free-and-easy wandering, carefree wandering, and carefree meandering. The Daoist classic *Zhuangzi* advocates it as a spiritual, ethical, and aesthetic ideal. Fundamentally emphasizing the physical and mental freedom of the individual, it highlights a quality or state resulting from being *ziran* (natural and spontaneous) and *wuwei* (inaction or noninterference), which the *Zhuangzi* reiterates as the perfect beauty and the manifestation of the *Dao.* The *xiaoyaoyou* ideal had a profound impact on the themes and theories of Chinese literature and arts and was adapted by many Japanese writers, including Bashō. Bashō's pursuit for the poetic eccentricity and unconventionality was clearly seen in the poems written after his move to Fukagawa. *Minashiguri* (Empty Chestnuts), a collection of *haikai* published in 1683, contains the following poem:

> Ice—bitter-tasting—
> just enough to moisten
> the throat of the mole.
>
> *Kōri nigaku / enso ga nodo o / uruoseri*[8]

This verse can be viewed to be a humorous portrayal of the hardship of a recluse's life. The peculiar word "*enso*" (mole) written in two Chinese characters that are not commonly used, however, suggests that this image is not simply an animal present at the scene, but a word from Chinese sources.

As has been frequently pointed out, "*enso*" (C. *yanshu*) is from the Daoist classic *Zhuangzi* and hence it introduces an important intertextual link. According to the *Zhuangzi*, Yao, the legendary monarch, wants to cede the empire to a recluse called Xu You. Xu rejected the offer, using the mole as a metaphor in his reply: "When the tailorbird builds her nest in the deep wood, she uses no more than one branch. When the mole drinks at the river, he takes no more than a bellyful. Go home and forget the matter, my lord. I have no use for the rulership of the world."[9] Evidently, the metaphor of the mole evokes a preference for simplicity and spiritual freedom, which embodies the profound meaning with which Bashō seeks to imbue his poem. The mole, therefore, functions as an allusion to the *Zhuangzi* and through this allusion an intertextual structure is formed between Bashō's verse and the Daoist classic. In this context it becomes clear that the mole is part of a self-portrait of the speaker as an eccentric who follows the aesthetic recluse tradition and finds perfect happiness in solitude. In a *haikai* prose on the occasion of the rebuilding of *Bashō-an* (Plantain Hut), the hut in which he dwells, Bashō makes this aesthetic stance even more explicit:

> I regard a mind that has no material concern as venerable, and a person who lacks talent and knowledge as perfect. A shelterless perpetual wanderer is next to them. A man of strong free spirit can withstand the attack of the little quail's wings…Shaken by the wind, the plantain leaves wave like a phoenix's tail. Torn in the rain, they look like a green dragon's ears. Their new leaves grow each day, as what Zhang Hengqu has wished for his learning, and as if they are waiting to unroll under Master Huaisu's writing brush. Nonetheless, I am not following these two great models. I simply spend my carefree days in the shade, admiring these plantain leaves for their serenity as they are torn in the wind and the rain.[10]

While this passage is written in acknowledgement of Bashō's disciples and friends who built a new hut for him, it is interspersed with references to many Chinese texts. The opening statement, which in many ways follows the depiction of the Perfect Man in the *Zhuangzi*, declares the

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[8] *KBZ*, 1: 74. The poem is a *hokku* in the collection. Translation is from Qiu, *Bashō and the Dao,* p. 48.

[9] Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 32–33.

[10] "Bashō o utsusu kotoba," in *KBZ*, 6: 504–505; translation is from Peipei Qiu, *Bashō and the Dao*, pp. 65–66. Cf. Makoto, Ueda trans., *Bashō* (Tokyo and New York: Kōdansha International, 1970), p. 118.

essence of the poetic eccentricity in Bashō's work. "The attack of the little quail's wings," which is a metaphor for the prejudice of small-minded people to the lofty eccentric, is based on the depiction of the little quail's laughing at the great Peng bird in the *Zhuangzi*. Bashō contrasts the idleness of the eccentric with the diligence of two famous figures in Chinese history. Zhang Hengqu (1020–1077) was a celebrated Song Confucian scholar and Huaisu (725–785) was a priest and calligrapher of the Tang dynasty; both were known for having achieved success through hard work. It is said that when seeing the rapid growth of the plantain leaves, Zhang wrote a poem to express his wish that his knowledge would grow equally quickly. Huaisu used plantain leaves on which to practice writing skills. Bashō, whose name literally means "plantain", announces that he follows the example of neither of the model scholars. What he prefers is to spend his carefree days[11] in the shade of the plantain leaves, like a Daoist recluse indulging in untroubled wandering.

Bashō's eccentric self-portrayal associates the reclusive life—either that of the poet himself or that of recluse in general—with the Chinese philosophical and aesthetic recluse tradition, making the humorous verse *haikai* simultaneously profound. As seen in the examples above, Bashō's "eccentric way" of life seems to be a carefully structured aesthetic context for writing poems, and the unique quality of Bashō's poetry owes much to his eccentric way of life as a hut-dweller and wayfarer. In other words, the eccentric reclusive life provided a context by which Bashō successfully transformed the comic linked verse to a profound art form.

Celebration of the eccentric persona continued to be an important theme and aesthetic value in Edo literature even after the death of Bashō in 1694, though it developed new characteristics. One of its most important proponents was Ōta Nampo who was regarded as the most talented writer of *kyōshi* and *kyōbun* that became popular among the literati from around the 1750s.[12] Born about a century after Bashō, Ōta Nampo served the Tokugawa government diligently as an official for over fifty years. Yet, in his poems Nampo deliberately and confidently portrayed himself as an eccentric recluse, or, in his own word, *riin,* "a recluse in government." Well-versed in Chinese poetry and classics, Nampo frequently cited Chinese texts in his writings, and he also drew upon the same Daoist sources to which Bashō had referred in creating an eccentric persona. In his *Neboke sensei bunshū* (The Master Sleepy Head's collection, 1767), he portrays himself as follows:

> The Master is a Chinese beast. His ancestry traces back to Mr. Lu of Handan, who had a wild dream of becoming a high official; a character derived from him is no doubt also a Chinese beast. Hence, the master named himself Sleepy Head. …A late riser who falls asleep early in the evening, he never stays up till midnight or gets up before dawn. In his sleep he would talk nonsense. He particularly loves the story in which Zhuangzi dreamt he was a butterfly alighting upon a vegetable leaf. . .[13]

This prose piece typically represents the style of kyōbun that has humor and parody as its core. Yet, the eccentric self-portrayal of Master Sleepy Head goes beyond a superficial caricature. The prose contains a number of allusions that give the comic depiction deeper implications. Mr. Lu of Handan is a poor scholar in a Tang (618–907) tale. He failed the imperial examinations and, on his way home, lodged at Handan, where the Daoist immortal Lü Dongbin lent him a magic pillow. Mr. Lu fell asleep on the pillow and dreamt that he had become the Prime Minister of the state, but awoke only to find the pot of millet still cooking on the fire. Mr. Lu was awakened to the

[11] *Asobite*, the word Bashō uses here, literally means "play." The word is often written in a character that is the same as the last character of the word *shōyōyū*.

[12] Itō Sei, et al., *Shinchō Nihon bungaku shōjiten* (Tokyō: Shinchōsha, 1981), p. 332.

[13] *Neboke sensei bunshū,* in Nakano Mitsutoshi, Hino Tatsuo, and Ibi Takashi, annot. and ed. *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1993. Henceforth abbreviated *SNKBT*), 84: 34–35.

illusory nature of life by the dream, and eventually became a Daoist recluse. The golden millet dream became a well-known idiom for delusions of grandeur in Chinese literature. By calling himself "a descendent of Mr. Lu," Nampo simultaneously makes a mockery of his career as an official and expresses his preference for retreat. In this *kyōbun,* the authorial interest in the Daoist values is further revealed by the overt allusion to the famous parable of the butterfly's dream in the *Zhuangzi,* which puts the nature of reality and dream in a relativistic perspective.[14] By skillfully stringing together a group of intertexts and images associated with sleep and dream, Nampo cleverly imparts funny meaning into the recluse persona Master Sleepy Head.

While in Master Sleepy Head he creates a self-image as one with the propensity toward becoming a recluse, Nampo never actually physically lived the life of a hermit as had Bashō previously. To Nampo and his contemporaries, a mental preference and an aesthetic taste for solitude were enough to qualify one to be a lofty recluse. The practice of reclusion became a matter of mentality and aesthetic paradigm in China as early as the Wei-Jin period (220–420). In *Jin shu* (Book of the Jin), a history book compiled in the seventh century, reclusion is already defined as existing fundamentally in one's own mind instead of the external environment. The Wei-Jin literati enthusiastically celebrated deliberate eccentricity as *fengliu* (J. *fūryū*), and their tendency toward reclusion played an important part in promoting that aesthetic in Chinese literature. From the Wei-Jin period onward, it became a generally accepted, even deeply admired, concept that one could achieve lofty reclusion amid the bustle in a city, at the marketplace, or even when serving as an official, as long as one's mind transcended worldly pursuits and remained solely devoted to art.

Early models of such aesthetic reclusion appeared in medieval Japan, as seen in the work of Yoshida Kenkō (ca. 1283–ca. 1352), and this type of "reclusion" was widely favored by the early modern Japanese literati, particularly when the *bunjin* (literati) movement flourished in Japan from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. It was in this context that Nampo celebrated *riin* (recluse in government). *Ri* means "official" and *in* means "to retreat." By *riin* he meant one who has maintained mental solitude while serving as a government official. *Shiin* is another term used popularly by the literati of Nampo's time; in a similar vein it referred to someone who is able to attain a solitary mental state even within a city or marketplace. Both *riin* and *shiin* can also be used as verbs. Being termed a *riin* or *shiin* did not imply that one was insincere. Rather, such people were considered highly admirable for being able to uphold the recluse spirit within corrupting environments.

Although reclusive in different ways, Nampo's description of "Master Sleepy Head" shares the same carefree attitude as that of the poetic persona of Bashō. Like Bashō who prefers to spend his days idly in the shade of the plantain leaves, Master Sleepy Head never cares to stay up late or get up early. The similarity between Master Sleepy Head and the *haikai* master in the Plantain Hut is deliberately created. Evidence shows that Nampo was clearly aware of Bashō's tradition and consciously included Bashō's works in his intertextual sources. *Yomo no aka* (Filth left by Yomo, 1787),[15] the earliest collection of Nampo's *kyōbun,* contains a short "Eulogy on Bashō." The eulogy says:

> He dwells amid broad plantain leaves, and wanders on the narrow road of *fūryū.* His mind encapsulates the sentiments of winds and clouds, and his heart stays with the flow-

[14] The parable in the *Zhuangzi* relates the following story: "Once Zhuang Zhou [Zhuangzi] dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he didn't know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou." See Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968.), p. 49.

[15] It has been noted that the comic title of collection is derived from one of Nampo's pennames, Yomo no Akara.

> ers and birds. Is he a priest, a layman, or simply a recluse? He is the singular *haikai* master.[16]

Readers who are familiar with Bashō's writings immediately notice that each sentence of the *kyōbun* alludes to a work or works by Bashō. The first sentence refers to Bashō's prose on rebuilding the Plantain Hut cited earlier and to his best-known travel account *Oku no hosomichi* (Narrow road to the depths, 1694). The "narrow road of *fūryū*" concisely captures Bashō's pursuit of his poetic ideal as depicted in *Oku no hosomichi*. The second sentence of Nampo's text draws upon a phrase in one of Bashō's *haikai* prose, "*Genjūan no ki*" (On the Unreal Dwelling, 1690): "My body stays with the winds and clouds that have no destination, and my feelings are with flowers and birds."[17] The third sentence is based on a statement Bashō makes in his travel account "*Nozarashi kikō*" (A weather-beaten journey, 1685): "While resembling a priest, I am full of secular dust; appearing like a layman, my hair is shaven."[18] Clearly, Nampo was both extremely familiar with Bashō's writings as well as consciously seeking inspiration from this singular *haikai* master.

Indeed, by the time Nampo was composing, Bashō's *haikai* had become part of the canonical poetic tradition. Before popular literary genres such as *haikai, kyōshi,* and *kyōbun* became mainstream during the Edo period, *waka*, *kanshi*, and *kanbun* were first-class literature and characterized as *ga* (refined and elegant). *Haikai, kyōshi,* and *kyōka* were regarded as *zoku,* or vulgar subgenres. As demonstrated earlier, Bashō successfully used eccentricity based on Daoist ideals to elevate the popular linked verse from the status of *zoku* to profound poetry, *ga*. *Ga* and *zoku* are pair of concepts initially used in Chinese literary criticism. Their characters in Chinese are identical to those in Japanese and are pronounced as *ya* and *su. Ya* refers to classical and refined literature whose qualities are considered lofty and superior, while *su* refers to the popular and common tastes of ordinary people. In early modern Japan these concepts were widely applied in instructions on literary writing. Although Bashō rarely used the terms *ga* and *zoku* directly, his teaching on *haikai* emphasized a thorough knowledge of the distinction between the high-class literature and vulgar vocabulary and expressions, requiring his disciples to convey lofty values through the language of common people.

Like Bashō Nampo also used the aesthetic of eccentricity to establish his literary world. His eccentric persona helped bring his *kanshibun* (Chinese-style poems and prose) in line with "*ga*" and associate his *kyōka* with the lofty recluse tradition celebrated by his Chinese and Japanese forerunners. However, while Nampo's reference to the eccentric tradition sometimes also functions to elevate *zoku*, as Bashō's *kyō* does aptly, he more frequently uses it as a parody of the canonized tradition to bring the lofty down to the mundane. For example, his *kyōbun Nezumi o semuru kotoba* (Denouncing the rat, circa 1774–1781) starts with an allusion to *enso,* the mole that appears in the *Zhuangzi* as well as in Bashō's verse. However, instead of borrowing the classical image to glorify recluse values, the narrative immediately shifts to a humorous depiction of a rat in an ordinary household: "When the mole drinks at the river, he takes no more than a bellyful. Why did you lick up my inkpad, taking away the color of my seal stone? Would that you will be grazed by a cat at the daybreak, or caught by a trap at sunset. . ."[19] The traditional Japanese inkpad for seal stones contains oil and, therefore, becomes the target of hungry household rats. Nampo deliberately substitutes the greedy rat for the modest mole, presenting a funny twist to the classical recluse signifier.

This kind of parody of the lofty recluse tradition is essential for Nampo who does not dwell in a hut like Bashō and who wants to maintain the iconoclastic nature of the *kyōshibun* as popular literature. The literature of *kyō* is fundamentally literature of reversal; it turns the vulgar and profane into the elegant and spiritual on one hand, and gives the earthy, funny, even crude meaning to the refined and the classical on the other. In order to make the popular linked verse a legitimate literary form, Bashō's *kyō* places more

[16] "Bashō-an Tōsei ō san," in *SNKBT*, 84: 268.
[17] *KBZ*, 6: 463.
[18] *KBZ,* 6: 55.
[19] *SNKBT*, 84: 262.

emphasis on the former in order to seek out *ga* or the poetic in the humble and the ordinary. Nampo, however, wants to be considered new and popular and knows that he must distinguish himself from Bashō and earlier poets. Nampo's "On Viewing the Snow" (*Yukimi no kotoba*, around 1774–1781) states:

> Going astray into the world of popular poems, I scribbled what *kanshi, waka, renga,* and *haikai* didn't even know, neither *fūga* nor *share.* As such, I didn't care if the Second Month snow failed to fall.
>
> Now, then, let's do it—
> making this body of mine
> a rounded snow ball
> and let me toss it about
> in this fleeting world.
>
> *Iza saraba / maromeshi yuki to /*
> *mi o nashite / ukiyo no naka o /*
> *korogearikan*[20]

In order make his poetry distinctively different from the earlier poetic genres, Nampo particularly distinguishes what he writes from *fūga* and *share,* two terms used in the *haikai* theories of the Bashō School. *Fūga* is written with two Chinese characters. *Fū* literally means "wind," "style," and "view". *Ga* is the same character as the *ga* in the dichotomic terms *ga* and *zoku.* Broadly implying literary elegance and refinement, *fūga* is also used to mean specifically refined poetic art. *Share* in Japanese normally means "witty" or "witticism," but the word is used by the Bashō School of *haikai* poets to characterize the great Tang poet Du Fu (712–770) in the sense of "natural and unrestrained." Evidently, both *fūga* and *share* designate *ga* or refined poetry in Bashō's *haikai* theories. In Japanese literary tradition, viewing snow (*yukimi)* in the Second Month while composing poems is an important seasonal activity and an expression of *ga.* Nampo, however, tells us that "going astray into the world of popular poems," he doesn't care if the early spring snow fails to fall.

Nampo's *kyōka* appended to the prose is an explicit parody of Bashō's following verse on snow-viewing:

> Now then, let's go out
> to enjoy the snow…until
> I slip and fall!
>
> *Iza saraba / yukimi ni korobu / tokoro made*[21]

This poem was an opening verse written when Bashō was invited to a snow-viewing party hosted by a book dealer in Nagoya. The combination of the earthy word *korobu,* to "slip and fall," with the poetic activity *yukimi,* snow-viewing, has been considered by some commentators as Bashō's expression of *fūkyō.*[22] Yet, the eccentric gesture here works effectively toward achieving *ga,* for the eccentric persona demonstrates that he "would risk anything for the sake of *fūga."*[23] Parodying Bashō's verse of *fūga*, Nampo's poem creates a double-faceted structure of significance through his skillful use of two pivotal words in the second half of the poem. In addition to meaning "fleeting world," "*ukiyo"* is also frequently used to refer to the brothel districts in the Edo period. "*Koroge"* can also mean "*korogemawaru,*" to toss about in bed. Thus, Nampo's poem is open to two completely different interpretations, pivoting between *ga* and *zoku:* the world of an eccentric poet who pokes fun at the fleeting world, and that of an erotic speaker who indulges in sexual pleasures.

Indeed, Nampo's eccentricity was established on pivoting the *ga* and the *zoku* and, like other popular genres such as *haikai,* bringing the *ga* down to the *zoku* no doubt met the taste of the popular audiences of the time. Different from the culture of Genroku (1688–1704), which was generated mainly by elite townsmen, the early eighteenth century witnessed the growth of middle-class urban culture. The gradual spread of wealth led to the boom of popular culture by the

[20] In *SNKBT*, 84: 253.

[21] Translation of the verse is from Ueda, *Bashō and His Interpreters*, p. 177.

[22] See Shūson's comments quoted in Ueda, *Bashō and His Interpreters,* p. 177.

[23] Ueda, p. 177.

Tenmei period (1781–1789) when Nampo gained his fame. Clearly aware of the popular interests of the times, Nampo characterizes his poetry as a contrast to the classical poetry defined by the canonical preface to the *Kokin waka shū* (Anthology of Japanese poetry: Ancient and present, ca. 905. Also known as *Kokinshū*),[24] saying that "Popular poems spread the seeds of people's laughter; they are doggerels for people of all trades."[25] Bashō's *haikai* at times also twists the *Kokinshū* canons. The following poem, for example, creates an unforgettable image of an eccentric traveler by combining the *ga* and *zoku.*

Let's go to
the market shoppers, and sell
the snow on my sedge hat.

Ichibito ni / ide kore uran/kasa no yuki[26]

In classical Japanese poetry since the *Kokinshū,* snow has always been portrayed as an elegant touch on mountains or in gardens. Bashō's verse, however, introduces an eccentric traveler who sells a handful of snow that is worthless at the marketplace, mockingly contrasting the wanderer's values with those of the commercial world. This example shows how, by reworking the canonical image, Bashō's poetic eccentricity or *fūkyō* highlights the lofty through the mundane, and in final analysis the image of *zoku* in Bashō's verse often serves to recapture the *ga* in transforming *haikai* to a high art form.

With the popular audiences in mind, Nampo creates eccentric personae that are somewhat different from those in Bashō's poem. The following poem is reminiscent of the *kyōku* poet in Bashō's poem cited at the beginning of this paper, but the *kyōka* masters Nampo portrays are clearly representing a different world:

Kyōka masters
in sloppy dresses are going,
one after another,
over the Emon Slope—
the Central Avenue at noon.

Kyōkashi no / hikitsukurowanu / emonzaka / uchitsureteyuku / hirunaka no chō[27]

The names of the two places, "*emonzaka*" (Emon Slope) and "*naka no chō*" (Central Avenue) are both puns in the poem. When read in connection with the preceding words, "*hikitsukurowanu emon*" also means "sloppily dressed" and "*hirunaka* also means "noon." In the topography of Edo popular culture, these place names are significant in that they imply the path towards the brothels: *Emonzaka* is the slope in front of Yoshiwara, the famous licensed-quarter in Edo, and *Naka no chō* is the central avenue in the district. Although Yoshiwara lost much of its prestige during the latter half of the eighteenth century, it remained the center of Edo popular culture. In contrast with Bashō's *kyōku* master who traveled through austere environs amid the wintry gusts, Nampo's *kyōka* masters are wandering toward the licensed quarters. Nampo appears to have no intention of imparting a lofty spirit into the *kyōka* masters in his poem, or, perhaps he considers the total subversion of the *ga* with *zoku* to be the true spirit of *kyō* of his time. Characteristic of their poetry, the eccentricity of Bashō and Nampo mirrors the distinct literary identities of the two remarkable poets from different periods.

[24] The first anthology of Japanese poems compiled by imperial command, organized according to various themes, including the four seasons, love, travel, laments, and miscellaneous topics. It is also known as *Kokinshū.*

[25] *Yomo no aka,* in *SNKBT,* 84: 286.

[26] Kagami Shikō (1665–1731), ed., *Oi nikki* (Diary in my Pannier), in *KBZ,* 3: 276.

[27] *KBZ,* 3: 276.