

THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE TANKA POETRY IN AMERICA

A THESIS PRESENTED TO

The Faculty of the Department of History  
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

By

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August 1985

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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### Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the late Lucille Mary Nixon who wished to tell about Japanese tanka poetry to all American people who may have lost touch with nature. She found that Japanese tanka poetry was a unique human expression in short-poem form and she felt that Americans could surely compose it if they understood its spirit and its method.

### Acknowledgement

The author would like to express her most sincere appreciation and deep gratitude to Dr. Harris I. Martin, who has painstakingly provided special guidance and encouragement and has given generously of his time to read this thesis.

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## I INTRODUCTION

As a Japanese, I always feel proud that my country has a unique cultural feature which has existed from ancient times to the present, and I feel certain that this feature will exist far into the future, perhaps to the end of the human world. This unique feature is Tanka Poetry.

Japanese culture in ancient times was strongly influenced by surrounding countries. The oldest shrines in Izumo<sup>1</sup> and Ise<sup>2</sup> show the architectural style of the South Pacific. Many of the earliest Buddhist temples in Japan, dating from the seventh and eighth centuries, are influenced by Korean and Chinese architecture. The Japanese writing system also came from China. Among these foreign influences on Japanese culture, however, there stands conspicuously one indigenous Japanese achievement: tanka poetry with its roots in ancient Japanese history.

Why is tanka poetry a pure and original Japanese cultural feature? Because it was probably born in Japan before Chinese culture made its impact on Japanese life.

After Japan learned and accepted the Chinese writing system (kanji), the Japanese Empress Gemmei (r. 701-715) ordered the compilation of Japanese historical traditions and events, data on Japanese geographical characteristics and poems. This was the second such imperial order. Emperor Temmu (r. 672-686) had ordered Hieda-no-Are to compile an historical record of Japan, but before its completion, Emperor Temmu died and no one carried it on until Empress Gemmei's reign. Finally, by the

Empress's order, the following important documents were compiled: the Kojiki<sup>3</sup>, the Nihonshoki<sup>4</sup>, the Fudoki<sup>5</sup>, and the Manyōshū. While the first three were about ancient Japanese legends and the history and geography of Japan, the Manyōshū was a collection of Japanese short and long songs, or poems, which expressed the thoughts and feelings of the ancient Japanese people. Manyōshū means "Collection of ten thousand leaves," a really poetic name showing how the ancient Japanese, at least those of the upper classes, loved nature. It included almost 5,000 poems by 200 poets, from the emperors and courtiers to unknown poets. Some of the poems were composed a long time before Japan adopted the Chinese written system, but they were written down in Chinese characters adapted to express Japanese sounds. Many of the poems in the Manyōshū are tanka.

Tanka means "short song": it is a small verse in a special form which is rigid, having been used from its origin to the present, a period possibly as long as 2000 years and certainly over 1500. A tanka poem consists of five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second, five in the third and seven each in the fourth and fifth lines. These 31 syllables separated into five lines are a strict form for the tanka. If the composer or translator does not think the form is important and does not follow it but writes in two, three, four or six lines, the poem can never be called a "tanka," but rather only a short poem or short phrase. Also, these five lines with 31 syllables should be written with the first letters of the lines vertically aligned so the form of the poem may be clearly discerned, as follows:

Suddenly quiet.  
What has happened in the night?  
Is everyone dead?  
No. Only snow is falling.  
Snow is the speech of silence.<sup>6</sup>

Since the Manyōshū was published, there have been untold numbers of tanka poetry collections published in each period of Japanese history. The Japanese people in each period wanted to express their poetic thoughts and feelings about their own lives following those of their ancestors, a tendency shared by most Japanese. It was a special and natural outgrowth in the life of Japanese people, showing their respect for their ancestor's activities.

The Japanese have taken their love of tanka poetry and their custom of writing and publishing tanka collections with them throughout the world wherever they have gone. Thus, tanka has been reborn wherever the Japanese people have settled; it was part of their nature. Many tanka poetry circles with many tanka poets were established in the first 100 years of Japanese settlement in the United States and Canada. These circles have their own leaders, and these leaders have taught (and still teach) tanka poetry, its history and composition, in monthly meetings and through publications. These circles also publish their members' works in the local Japanese newspapers, criticize poems by leaders and members, and sometimes send their works to tanka circles in Japan. They sometimes publish their poems in books to commemorate their achievements. This studying and writing of tanka poetry by the Japanese people in the United States and Canada (and also in South America) has continued for a long time. However, the neighbors of these poets in their American and



Canadian communities usually did not know about this special feature in the lives of the Japanese people. Not until Japanese tanka poets living in America won the highest positions at the Annual Palace Poetry Party in Japan after World War II did American journalists report about Japanese tanka poetry and its history.<sup>7</sup> This American interest showed a desire to learn about tanka poetry within the United States, where it was heretofore hardly known. Because of this interest, I want to tell some of the details of the Japanese people's studies and activities carried on during the long history of writing Japanese tanka poetry. Teaching tanka poetry to Americans occurred to me when I was honored for my own tanka at the Palace in 1949. I would like tanka poetry to spread among the American people and indeed among the people of all countries.

The reason I chose to write on the history of Japanese tanka poetry in America is to provide information about Japanese tanka poetry in the United States and Canada, and thereby to open a new world to Americans and to inspire them with a great wish to write tanka poetry in English. Tanka poetry is an expression of human thoughts and feelings with which all Americans are as naturally gifted as the Japanese. Such concepts all derive from the same source, Mother Earth.

As a practising tanka poet with over 50 years of experience, most of it in America, and as the winner from America in the Imperial Palace Poetry Party contest of 1949, I have a particular interest in describing tanka activity as it has developed over the years in America. I should also like to see tanka composition develop further as a naturalized part of American life.

## II TANKA POETRY AND ITS ORIGIN

According to old Japanese tradition, tanka started nearly 3,000 years ago. The first tanka we know about was recorded in two of the oldest Japanese books, the Kojiki and the Nihonshoki. The Kojiki is known as a book of legends, but the Nihonshoki is known as the first history book of Japan, although it also includes the myths and legends of Japan's origin. Consequently, tanka is believed to be the first poetry form of Japan. Most stories in the Kojiki were legends which evolved from the ancient Japanese people's imagination, from legends or myths transmitted from the mainland, or from the early experiences of the proto-Japanese at the dawn of their history. The Kojiki was ordered to be compiled by Emperor Temmu and was completed in 712 at the beginning of the Nara period (710-785). Emperor Temmu wanted to have a record of history for the future. He ordered that the legends and histories of all the aristocratic families be told to Hieda-no-Are, a wise man with a phenomenal memory, in order to form an extensive record of Japanese court history. However, Emperor Temmu died before the task was completed. For the time being, this research of Japanese history stopped, but the first ruler of the Nara period, Empress Gemmei, issued an order to have Hieda-no-Are pass on his stories to Ōe-no-Yasumaro who finished the work in September of 712. This book was the Kojiki, or Record of Ancient Things, and it was presented to Empress Gemmei on January 28th of the following year, some 30 years after Emperor Temmu ordered Hieda-no-Are's

memorization of the imperial genealogy and the court record. The Kojiki is in three volumes: the first volume has stories about events between the age of the gods and the end of the reign of the first (legendary) emperor, Jimmu. The second volume tells stories of events between Emperor Jimmu's era and that of Emperor Ōjin, the 15th emperor in the traditional order, but a verifiably historic one who reigned c. 390-410. The third volume has stories of the period between Emperor Nintoku, the 16th emperor (r.c. 410-425), and Empress Suiko, the 33rd ruler, who died in 628. So the three volumes of the Kojiki can be said to be a history of ancient Japan, even though the first volume and part of the second are about mythological events. The first known Japanese song, a form of tanka, was reputedly written by Susa-no-wo-no-mikoto, the youngest brother of the Sun Goddess who was, according to legend, the ancestor of Japan's imperial family. It appears in both the Kojiki and Nihonshoki.

The following is the account in the Kojiki:

Hereupon PAYA-SUSANO-WO-NO-MIKOTO sought for a place in the land of IDUMO to build his palace.

Arriving at SUGA, he said: "Coming here, my heart is refreshed."

In that place he built his palace and dwelt there. Therefore, that place is still called SUGA.

When this great deity first built the palace of SUGA, clouds rose from that palace. He made a song, which said:

The many-fenced palace of IDUMO  
Of the many clouds rising--  
To dwell there with my spouse  
Do I build a many-fenced palace:  
Ah, that many-fenced palace!<sup>8</sup>

Susano-no-wo-no-mikoto's song was recited for his new wife, Kushinadahime, who was the daughter of the governor of Izumo, when he built the palace of Suga. In Japanese, it reads as follows:

Yagumo tatsu  
Izumo yaegaki  
Tsumagomi ni  
Yaegaki tsukuru  
Sono yaegaki wo.<sup>9</sup>

This song was the first song in both the Kojiki and the Nihonshoki and is the oldest Japanese poem. This was indeed a ritual blessing for a new house in Izumo which is still chanted at the Suga shrine; it is a sample of Japanese tanka which have continued to be written from the earliest times in Japanese history down to the present day.

This original Japanese tanka, a short song or poem, shows the tanka as having five lines. The first tanka appearing in the Manyōshū, however, shows the written form of this poem to be one continuous line. But the syllables are always arranged in groups of 5,7,5,7, and 7. Tanka in Japanese means "short song," a song, or uta, being metered verse that may be sung melodically or simply chanted. When the verse is to be read or spoken, it may best be described in English as a "tanka poem." This form of poetry has been written for at least 1,300 years and probably much longer, since Susa-no-wo-no-mikoto's song in the Kojiki and the Nihonshoki was probably already ancient when it was recorded in 712. Most Japanese people know what tanka poetry is and can compose this short poetic form, as it seems to be a national tradition.

There have been many kinds of poetry in Japan. Tanka poetry's form has never changed from ancient times to the present. But during Japan's Tokugawa period (1600-1867), other kinds of poetry were popular and spread widely: renga, haiku, senryū and kyōka. Haiku and senryū follow the 5,7,5 form, while renga and kyōka use the same form as tanka poetry: 5,7,5,7,7 syllables in five lines. But unlike haiku, the renga and kyōka never grew in later periods, though senryū have continued to be written up to the present time. During the Meiji period (1869-1911), haiku became very popular along with another new style of poetry, shintaiishi, which is a "poem in new form" repeated in many lines or stanzas, with a 5,7,5,7 pattern of syllables. Shintaiishi have remained popular down to the present.

During the Meiji period (1868-1911), many tanka poetry circles were established. They have continued to increase and prosper up to the present time. When Emperor Meiji established the outa-dokoro (the Palace Poetry Office) in the second year of his reign and declared the monthly Palace Poetry Party open to all citizens once a year in January, leaders of Japanese tanka societies wanted to organize their own poetry circles to teach tanka poetry and to extend the Emperor Meiji's love of tanka poetry to all his subjects. The whole nation took up Emperor Meiji's democratic idea and Japanese daily newspapers and monthly magazines set aside special sections for tanka poetry. This national movement gave Japanese tanka poetry a completely new way to prosper. Although tanka poetry had been studied in earlier periods, there was no special or central focus for tanka societies in Japan, except among the upper classes. However, the Meiji Restoration changed the tanka poetry world,

and Emperor Meiji is now respected as the patron saint of tanka poets, having left over 10,000 of his own tanka in his collection, together with his Empress's tanka.<sup>10</sup>

The most widely known form of Japanese poetry to Americans is haiku. Haiku poetry was created during the Edo Period (1600-1868) initially by Matsuo Bashō. This poetry form was introduced to America after World War II. Kenneth Yasuda, who taught at Indiana University, published a book, A Pepper Pod, to introduce haiku, in 1947.<sup>11</sup> In 1958, Harold Henderson published a book titled Haiku, which was so popular that 90,000 copies were sold.<sup>12</sup> The American people adopted haiku as the only form of Japanese poetry; from elementary schools to universities, throughout all American society, everyone who wanted to write poetry in the Japanese style composed haiku. Nevertheless, none of these Americans knew that tanka poetry was the mother of haiku and no American had tried to compose tanka poetry except Frances Burnett; but she learned and composed tanka in Japan.<sup>13</sup> The late Lucille Nixon, an American much interested in Japanese poetic form, was surprised when I first told her about tanka poetry and its many thousand-year-old history. Then she and I together tried to break the singular popularity of haiku in America. The history of American tanka poetry is still unknown, but it is important to tell about it, for tanka have existed almost 100 years in the United States.

### III THE HISTORY OF TANKA POETRY IN JAPANESE COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Tanka poetry has been studied and composed over the years in every century since that ancient song attributed to Susa-no-wo-no-mikoto was written. In the Nara period, the first tanka were published in the Manyōshū. Thereafter, numerous tanka collections were published in each period in Japanese history. Tanka poetry is a unique national poetry of a type seen nowhere else in the entire world. Its writing is a kind of national custom. This national custom has been taken every place where Japanese people have settled in Asia, Australia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Wherever Japanese people live, tanka poetry circles have been established.

The history of the Japanese people in the United States exceeds one century, and for all this long period, tanka poets and circles have existed continuously, a matter of some pride. However, this activity has been observed only in the Japanese communities; very few others in the United States have known about this special Japanese feature existing in their midst.

Japanese in America, who settled mostly in the state of California, established residence in a country with a different culture. This led to many tanka poets relating only to Japanese tanka poetry groups in Japan, a regrettable fact which did nothing for the American people who were their closest neighbors. Many of these poets did not even tell their own

children, who were American citizens, of this tanka-writing activity. One reason was that they did not believe they could pass on the tradition of tanka poetry to their descendants because of language difficulties. Another reason was the difficulty of translating Japanese tanka into the English their children could understand. Nevertheless, Japanese tanka poetry has been studied in America for almost 100 years and the many compositions of tanka and the tanka poetry collections that have been published must surely constitute an historic record. These works of tanka groups should be shared by the poets with their own children and their neighbors. It is my wish for tanka poetry history in the United States of America to be appreciated by present and future generations of Americans.

Among the Japanese in the United States, there have been many study groups that have thrived: classical Japanese dancing groups, which have been very active, Japanese language groups, haiku circles, senryū circles, Japanese singing groups, Japanese musical instrumental schools, tea ceremony schools, flower arrangement schools, calligraphy schools, jūdō and kendō schools, and Japanese cooking schools. Tanka poetry circles are another example of such avocational groups, but most of them have had to rely on Japan for their inspiration and materials. Most of the teachers of these study groups came from Japan and organized their circles or schools to teach interested students who were not experienced in tanka studies.

Tanka groups in the United States have been established in many cities: San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Redwood City, Seattle, Denver, Chicago, and New York. Canada has a tanka circle in Toronto.



The city of Honolulu has three tanka groups and Hilo on the Island of Hawaii has a tanka circle. Each of these tanka circles has a teacher who is called "Sensei" and who usually belongs to a circle in Japan. So through their teachers, most of the tanka poets in the United States belong to a tanka circle in Japan. This means that the tanka poets outside Japan are not often concerned about the future of tanka poetry in their country of residence. For example, Mr. Yoshihiko Tomari of Los Angeles, a pioneer tanka teacher in America, belonged to "Kokumin Bungaku" in Tokyo; thus, all his students were members of "Kokumin Bungaku."<sup>14</sup> Also, the Canadian tanka circle, "Kisaragi tankaika," and its members belong to Japan's "Chōon" tanka circle in Kamakura.<sup>15</sup> The reason for this affiliation is that teachers outside of Japan are not regarded as the equal of tanka masters in Japan, so direct connection with practitioners of the art of tanka writing in Japan became the norm and, indeed, has probably helped to maintain traditionally high standards of tanka composition.

When the late Lucille Nixon was honored at the Palace Poetry Party in 1957, Mr. Tomari was surprised and wanted to translate tanka into English. Mr. Tomari's idea was that Japanese tanka collections published in America should include English translations; accordingly, the tanka collections Ryojin (A traveler)<sup>16</sup> and Ishokurin (Transplanted forest) had English translations along with Japanese poems.<sup>17</sup> This was an historic change in the development of tanka poetry in America. The translations were done by Lucille Nixon, who, with my cooperation, also completed Sounds from the Unknown, published by the Swallow Press in Denver, Colorado, in 1964.

Sounds from the Unknown had a special significance because it was the idea of some American people who discovered tanka poetry when Miss Nixon's tanka was honored. They wondered if there were more tanka works in America, besides the honored one by Lucille Nixon, which could be translated for the English-reading public. Understanding the importance of this significant question, I collected poems from all over the United States and Canada, translated them into English, and then published them.

After Lucille Nixon's sudden death in December, 1963, seven years of her poetry work and study were revealed in Tomoshihi which I published in 1978.<sup>18</sup> This publication had great historical significance for tanka poetry in the United States.

When I attended the World Poetry Congress in San Francisco in 1982, I heard Dr. Wesley Dunn's presentation of the main speech at this conference, "What is poetry?" and came to understand that English poetry had the same idea Japanese tanka poetry had. So after his speech, I talked about Japanese tanka poetry with him and then presented my two books, Sounds from the Unknown and Tomoshihi, to him so he might understand tanka poetry better. One year later, Dr. Dunn telephoned from Arkansas and told me about his course teaching Japanese tanka poetry for which he needed more copies of Tomoshihi. An American poet and college professor, Dr. Wesley Dunn of Arkansas had organized a course to teach Japanese tanka poetry in his class, using Tomoshihi as the text. This was in 1983. Over 100 years of Japanese tanka poetry in America is now beginning to be known.

The first tanka poetry circle in the United States, the "Kayōkai," was established in Seattle in June, 1926, according to Renia no yuki (The snow of Mt. Rainier), a tanka poetry collection by the Seattle tanka group, but it was only active around Seattle, and while it is supposed to have published a poetry collection in 1927, not all its activities have remained on record.<sup>19</sup>

The next tanka circle in the United States, the "Nan'eikai" (tanka circle of the South), was established by Yoshihiko Tomari in Los Angeles in 1927. Mr. Tomari's idea in establishing this circle was "to sing songs in Southern California," by which he meant that life in Southern California might be made happy by composing tanka. In other words, if Japanese were not happy living in the United States, they could still enjoy writing tanka poetry as a way of coping with the alienation in which they lived, despite unsatisfactory conditions.<sup>20</sup>

Mr. Tomari was educated during the Meiji period when there was a revival of interest in tanka under the Meiji Emperor's leadership. Born in Kagoshima prefecture in 1884, he first landed at Seattle in 1905, then in the same year moved to Los Angeles. He had a true Japanese spirit and deeply respected the emperor. He wanted to encourage Japanese tanka poetic spirit and activity in the United States.

"Nan'eikai" had 15 men and seven women. The leader of this circle, Mr. Tomari, was a gardener, according to Takachiho<sup>21</sup>, which was published by his wife Kumiye when he died in Japan in 1967. While he was in Los Angeles, he found many Japanese tanka poets in the city through the Japanese newspapers and started to organize a tanka study group with them in 1927. These poets' works were published in the Japanese newspapers in

San Francisco and Los Angeles. Mr. Tomari wanted to publish a tanka poetry collection on the first anniversary of the "Nan'eikai," but his plan was to include the work, not only of members of the "Nan'eikai," but also that of other Japanese poets in the United States whose poems he had read in Japanese newspapers published in big cities throughout the United States. His idea was successful: the first tanka poetry collection published in America was in 1927. It was titled Seiun (Blue Cloud). There is a phrase in Japan, Seiun no kokorozashi, which means "Youth's aspiration should be toward the clouds." Most of the Japanese youths who came over to the United States came with great hope, the title of the first tanka collection in the United States suggested this youthful spirit. There were 71 tanka poets represented in the first collection, 20 women and 51 men. Although their addresses were not written in the book, one can see they were from many cities and states in the nation. Some of their names are still seen in publications of tanka poetry circles in various parts of the country. But in the past 50 years, most of the contributors to the first tanka poetry collection have died.

During World War II, all Japanese people in the three west coast states of California, Oregon, and Washington were uprooted from their homes and sent to many relocation centers or "free zones" farther east. Hysteria had developed over the fear that Japanese troops would attack the west coast and Japanese people living there would spy for them; these fears led to President Franklin Roosevelt's "Executive Order 9066" which was announced on February 19, 1942. By this order, all Japanese people and their children, whether or not they were American citizens, were evacuated from California, Oregon, and Washington, and moved far

inland. Japanese and Japanese-Americans did not know the whereabouts of their friends for awhile. Nevertheless, some understanding American people did not react hysterically or consider the Japanese in America to constitute a threat. After evacuation, the evacuees learned that the governor of Colorado declared his state would accept Japanese people as residents. This announcement encouraged all Japanese communities; moreover, publication of a Japanese newspaper in Colorado was continued as before the war, which kept the several Japanese tanka poetry circles' activities in progress as well as those of others like haiku and senryū groups. The teachers collected tanka works through the mail and selected the best of two tanka from each poet, then published them in the newspaper.

This activity was popularized mostly by Mr. Tomari. After he moved into the free zone in the state of Utah and before he was moved into Tule Lake War Relocation Center in Northern California because he wanted to return to Japan, his contact with most of the tanka poets in America, both in and out of the relocation camps, was begun through the Kakushū Jiji (The Colorado Times), the Japanese newspaper in Colorado. He organized a tanka poetry circle in the Tule Lake War Relocation Center after he moved there in 1943. Naming his new circle "Kōgen" (Meadow), he opened monthly meetings in his quarters and published a monthly tanka magazine by cutting his own stencils. This work was continued until the center was closed in 1945. Besides this monthly activity, he also published the circle's poetry collections for two years: his private collection, and two textbooks. Because most evacuees could not have reference books according to a special war-time law, all this published

material was printed from his own stencils. His love of tanka poetry helped all tanka poets in many relocation centers during the war.

Mr. Tomari's effort and leadership developed Japanese tanka poetry in the United States and his dream came true: after World War II, tanka circles were established in many cities. Most of the leaders of these new circles were taught by Mr. Tomari through the Japanese newspaper in Colorado. They organized their own tanka groups in their cities: in Los Angeles, "Hokubei tanka" (Tanka in North America) was led by Shasui Takayanagi (pen name, Shasui); in Seattle, "Shiatoru tankakai" (Seattle tanka circle) led by Ijō Tanaka and Tomiko Niguma; in Colorado, "Santō kadan" (Tanka circle East of the Rocky Mountains) led by Kōgai Ikenouye; in Chicago, "Hokuyōkai" (Northern sun tanka circle) led by Haruye Katō; and in Los Angeles, Mr. Tomari himself reorganized "Totsukuni tankakai" (Tanka circle in a foreign land). His first tanka circle, "Nan'eikai," changed its name to "Totsukuni" in early 1935 because many poets across the nation joined it.

When Mr. Tomari returned to Japan in 1958, more new tanka circles were established: "Pasadena tankakai" in Pasadena, led by Tsuyuji Takeda; "Rokki tankakai" (Rocky tanka circle) in Los Angeles, led by Takayuki Hattori; and "Hokka totsukuni tankakai" (Northern California totsukuni tanka circle) in San Francisco, led by Isamu Nagase. Recently, still more tanka poetry circles have been established: "California tankakai" in Los Angeles in 1981, led by Hisashi Matsue; "Paionia tankakai" in Los Angeles in 1981, led by Michimasa Inouye; "Shiera tankakai" (Sierra tanka circle) in Redwood City in 1981; "Kokumin bungaku hokka shibukakai" (Kokumin bungaku Northern California branch tanka

circle) in San Francisco in 1981, led by Yoshio Yao; "Sekoia tankakai" (Sequoia tanka circle) in Los Angeles in 1982, led by community members. As recently as 1983, a new tanka circle was established in Chicago. Mrs. Haruye Katō reported that she closed her tanka circle, "Hokuyōkai," three years ago because of her advanced age, but because many residents in her apartment building wanted to study tanka, she organized "Kohan tanka benkyōkai" (The lakeside tanka study circle).<sup>22</sup>

These tanka poetry groups have studied the composition of poems and have also published collections of tanka by their own members. Some individuals, as well, have published private collections. The publication of a tanka poetry collection, privately or by a circle or community, shows the poets' achievements in composition. Before World War II, there were only three community collections, but after the war, many circles were organized, a phenomenon which led to a substantial increase in the number of publications. Thus, the Japanese people's life in the United States became richer and more settled. For these reasons, the poetry collections and their authors need to be recorded.

Before World War II, the first tanka poetry collection published in America was Seiun, edited by Yoshihiko Tomari, but the Seattle tanka circle, "Kayōkai," also published a collection about the same time which, however, was never seen in the United States because its publication was in Japan and before it could be sent to the United States, war broke out. No copy is available as far as I can determine. Seiun was published by Mr. Tomari in 1927. The next collection was Nankō (Southern Sunlight) published also by Mr. Tomari and his tanka circle, "Nan'eikai," in 1930. There were two tanka poets on the island of Maui, Mr. and



Mrs. Yasui, who published their own tanka collections, Ginkensō (Silver sword grass) by Shōshū Yasui in 1950, and Yashi no kage (Under the coconut tree) by Matsuno Yasui in 1951. These two tanka poets had been members of the "Maki" (White oak) tanka circle in Japan, but had never been members of Hawaiian circles. Ariake (the name of the author's birthplace) was published by Haruko Ōzono of Campbell, California, in 1954. Renia no yuki (The snow of Mt. Rainier) was published by the Seattle tanka circle in 1955. Santō kashū (Collection of tanka east of the Rocky Mountains No. 3) was published in 1956;<sup>23</sup> Ryojin (A traveler), by Yoshihiko Tomari in 1958; Ishokurin (The transplanted forest), by Totsukuni tanka circle in 1958; and Yume no hana (Flowers in a dream), by Misao Hosaka in Reedley, California, 1959. A tanka poetry leader in Honolulu, Yoshiko Matsuda, published her own collections, Ki naru kao (A yellow face) in 1969, and Kurosango (Black coral) in 1979. Chigiregumo (Scattered clouds) was published by Toyoko Kazato of Fresno, California in 1965; Shirobara (White rose), by Tatsuye Iwata of Montebello, California in 1969; Taiko no hibiki (Echoes from the great lake), by Haruye Katō of Chicago, in 1970; Takeda Tsuyuji kashū (Tanka collection of Tsuyuji Takeda), by Tsuyuji Takeda of Pasadena, in 1975; Tankashō (Selected tanka collection), by the Sequoia tanka circle in Los Angeles in 1975; Yashi no hazure (Sounds of coconut leaves), by Hideo and Chiyo Yamaguchi of Los Angeles in 1977; Mishigankohan (Michigan lakeside), by Gennosuke and Tomiko Matsumoto of Chicago in 1979; Hyōryū (Wandering), by Keiseki Hirotsu of Redwood City, California in 1980; and Akatsuchi or Sekido (Red Soil) was published by Ryokuyō Matsumoto of Fresno, California in 1979. The last two collections by Mr. Hirotsu and



Mr. Matsumoto included English translations, together with Japanese tanka, according to the Nichi Bei Jiji (Japanese American Times) published in San Francisco).<sup>24</sup> Hanagoyomi (A calendar of flowers) and Shōsekai (A small world) were published by Hisashi Matsue of Los Angeles in 1979 and 1983, and Shunjitsu chichi (Spring approaching) was published by Amy Takase of Minneapolis in 1984.

Publications in Canada did not appear in such rapid succession because there is only one circle in Canada, the "Kisaragi tankakai" (The circle of February), and it was started only 20 years ago. This tanka group was organized when the first winner at the Annual Palace Poetry Party from Canada returned from Tokyo, inspiring the tanka poets in Canada to organize their own circle. On this occasion in 1964, the "Kisaragi tankakai" was born. Since then, three community tanka collections and one private collection have been published: three volumes of Kaede (Maple) in 1972, 1975, and 1981, and Sensei (The oath), by Takeo Nakano, in 1970.

All these collections are important examples of personal or group publication. Such activity in the publication of tanka collections was not seen before World War II; altogether, it has been a great achievement in the history of tanka poetry in the Japanese community in the United States and Canada.

IV ZAI BEI DŌBŌ HYAKUNIN ISSHU (ONE HUNDRED  
TANKA BY OUR COUNTRYMEN IN AMERICA)

Zaibei dōbō hyakunin isshu (One hundred tanka by our countrymen in America) is a collection of Japanese tanka poets' tanka in America. This collection was published in many Japanese newspapers in Japan and the United States. In 1951, it was also published in Japanese magazines in Japan. The late Dr. Kimura Ki of Shōin Women's College in Kōbe, Japan, visited the United States many times before the Pacific War and found that many tanka were published in Japanese newspapers across the country, but he did not think the poems were as good as the ones published in Japan. When he visited the United States after World War II, he realized the quality of Japanese tanka in the country had improved since the prewar period and that there were many able tanka writers throughout the United States. Dr. Kimura proposed the unique idea of collecting the tanka into a single volume like the Hyakunin isshu (One poem each by a hundred people) published during the Kamakura period (1185-1333).<sup>25</sup> He took this idea to one of the Japanese newspaper publishers whom he knew in the United States, Mr. Kenzō Ogasawara in Denver, Colorado, who published Kakushū Jiji (The Colorado Times).

Mr. Ogasawara published Dr. Kimura's idea in his newspaper, asking all Japanese poets in Canada, Hawaii, South America, and the United States to contribute to this collection. The poets were asked to submit five poems each. Altogether, 5,000 tanka were submitted from all the

places where they were solicited. Dr. Kimura was surprised at this huge number of submissions. Four tanka masters in Japan judged these poems and selected 100 of them, one each from 100 poets, as the best among the 5,000 entries. These 100 tanka were then published in Japanese newspapers in both the United States and Japan and also in some Japanese magazines in Japan. Some of them were sung on the Japanese musical stage. However, they were never translated into English, although Dr. Kimura had dreamed of publishing a collection of them in English before his death in 1981.<sup>26</sup>

This collection of 100 tanka from America appeared as a significant development in the history of Japanese tanka. Because the judges were top tanka poetry masters and this kind of event had never taken place except when Hyakunin isshu was originally published long ago, the appearance of this collection was a great event in Japan.

When the late Lucille Nixon was asked "Are there more tanka poets besides yourself in America?" by many American people in the San Francisco Bay area, I suggested the translation of this group of tanka into English. However, they were too old, having been composed over 10 years earlier, and fresh poets in America were needed to contribute in Lucille Nixon's opinion. Nevertheless, when I read of the late Dr. Kimura's dream and achievement of Zaibei dōbō hyakunin isshu, I wanted to publish it in English to honor Dr. Kimura's special love for Japanese tanka poetry in America. Fortunately, the late Miss Nixon had already translated most of the poems, so I completed the remaining materials, including each judge's critique of the top poems, as well as Dr. Kimura's article on why he made the collection. Because this kind of

tanka collection probably will not be repeated in the foreseeable future, it is a kind of historic treasure that should be available in English. It is attached to this study as Appendix I.

One comment must be added regarding the form of translation. This was the first experience translating from Japanese into English for both Lucille Nixon and Tomoe Tana, so the translations into English do not always follow the correct form of 5,7,5,7,7 syllables, but they do conform to the five-line stanza.

V THE HISTORY OF TANKA POETRY IN AMERICA  
AMONG PEOPLE NOT OF JAPANESE DESCENT

This chapter discusses the role in tanka poetry history that Americans, other than those of Japanese descent, have played and how they learned about tanka.

In 1957, for the first time, a tanka by a Caucasian American was selected as one of the best 15 tanka from over 30,000 entries by the master poets in Japan at the Annual Palace Poetry Party. It was written by a women, Lucille Mary Nixon, who, with her honored tanka, was invited to the imperial palace in Tokyo to meet with the Emperor and Empress of Japan where she was given the Emperor's sincere and valuable words of commendation on January 11, 1957. On this occasion, many American people were surprised to learn about Japanese tanka poetry and its 1,000 years of history. However, the history of Japanese tanka poetry in the United States had its beginning in 1856, according to the scholar-diplomat Dr. Kimura Ki. In an article published in Bunrin (Literary forest) in 1977, Dr. Kimura stated that the first tanka to be introduced in America appeared in Richard Hildreth's Japan As It Was And Is, published in 1855 in America, where there was sudden interest in Japan because of Commodore Perry's Black Ships expedition to that country in 1853-1854.<sup>27</sup>

In the Appendix of his book, Hildreth quoted a simple Japanese poem as part of his introduction to Japanese literature:

"Wakete fuku, kaye kosa ukere, fana tomoni  
Tsirade kono fawa, nado no kururon." [sic]<sup>28</sup>

In contemporary romanized form, this reads:

Wakete fuku	I am so saddened
Kaze koso ukere	By this wind that blows both ways.
Hana tomo ni	It tears off blossoms
Chirade ko no ha wa	While leaving leaves behind.
Nado nokoruran	But both should fall together.

This tanka was picked from Rodriguez's Japanese grammar, published in Japan in 1604. This poem exemplifies the profundity, humor, and sadness of tanka which Japan had taken as a national literature and was the Japanese people's common style of composition.

In the Meiji period, Japanese tanka poetry was again presented to American readers by Mrs. Townsend Harris, who translated tanka by Japan's Emperor Meiji, according to Dr. Kimura's article in Bunrin. Dr. Kimura also states that an American, Arthur Lloyd, translated many of Emperor Meiji's tanka. One of them follows:

Yomo no umi	To me we are brothers
Mina harakara to	Separated by the sea.
omou yo ni	But how sad it is!
Nado namikaze no	That there are rough waves rising
Tachisawaguran	To roll across our land. Why?

This tanka was published in the Literary Digest according to Dr. Kimura,

who states that it was enjoyed by President Theodore Roosevelt who hung it in his private room and loved to read it.<sup>29</sup>

Also, according to Kimura, most interesting in the history of Japanese tanka poetry in America was a poetry form created by an American woman, Adelaide Crapsey, called a "Cinquain," which was a five-line English verse with lines of two, four, six, eight and two syllables. The inspiration for her "Cinquains" was Japanese tanka poetry. According to Dr. Hazel Durnell, when Adelaide Crapsey went to Europe to study English poetry, she found an English translation of Hyakunin isshu. She got a hint from this tanka collection and created a new form of English poetry. She chose this style of poem, tanka, because it did not need so much energy and time to express poetic feelings or thoughts. But she could not announce her discovery to the poetry world because of her sudden death at the age of 35 in 1913. However, from her notes, a friend, also a poet, gave her creation to the English poetry world. Her "Cinquains" were published posthumously as a collection, Verses, in 1915. Described as "immortal," her collection was accepted for publication in an American poetry anthology. Dr. Durnell selected the following verse as an example of Adelaide Crapsey's poetry:

Shadow

A-sway  
On red rose,  
A golden butterfly...  
And on my heart a butterfly  
Night-wing'd.<sup>30</sup>



How wonderfully historic an event that an American poetry style should have been derived from Japanese poetry and become a part of the American poetic tradition. This should be recognized by Japanese as well as by Americans.

Dr. Kimura also described Mrs. Shio Sakanishi's English translation of Japanese tanka poetry in his article in Bunrin. In 1934, Mrs. Sakanishi, who was the director of the East Asian Department of the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., wrote a book, A Handful of Sand, a translation of a collection of Ishikawa Takuboku's work, published by Marshal Jones Company in the series Modern Japanese Poets. Dr. Kimura then picked one of Ishikawa's tanka, which Mrs. Sakanishi translated:

Ōumi ni  
Mukaite hitohi  
Nanuka yōka  
Nakinan to shite  
Ie wo idetari

Alone facing the ocean  
For seven-eight days  
I wished to weep  
And departed from home<sup>31</sup>

The translation is not in the correct tanka form, but this book was welcomed by several colleges in the United States and used as a text. Carl Serar, author of Takuboku: Poems to Eat, an English translation of tanka, said in his preface, "Mrs. Sakanishi's translation of poem of Ishikawa was the best."<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Sakanishi also published a second collection of poems, Tangled Hair, from Yosano Akiko's tanka collection, Midaregami.<sup>33</sup> She planned a third translation of Japanese tanka from Sachio Zenshū, a collection by Itō Sachio, but it did not appear because of World War II.<sup>34</sup>



These collections introduced tanka poetry from Japan to America, but there was never any mention of Japanese living in America or of their tanka poetry activities or collections. Because of that, it may have been mistakenly thought that tanka poetry was written only by Japanese in Japan. This kind of misunderstanding had to be corrected. If not, tanka poetry would never progress among the American people who, as human beings, are surely the same as the Japanese people and therefore just as surely have the talent for writing tanka poetry. It is an important point in tanka poetry development in America that English translations should be made of the tanka compositions of Japanese poets living in America because the materials and inspiration come from surroundings familiar to all Americans. Japanese tanka should be known by Americans, but the motivating idea behind this study is that the history of tanka poetry in America should become an open window through which Americans may see themselves in the same positions as the Japanese.

This important idea was formed when the late Lucille Nixon won the highest honor for a tanka poet at the Imperial Palace in Japan in 1957, for Americans could then understand that tanka poetry was not only for Japanese people. This understanding progressed when Miss Nixon's tanka collection, Sounds from the Unknown, was published in 1964. As a result, another American tanka poet, Miss Joyce Lobner, was born and her English tanka were written after studying Sounds from the Unknown. Lobner's tanka, published in Tomoshihi, a collection primarily of the late Lucille Nixon's poems, showed that Americans can be tanka poets without using the Japanese language. Joyce Lobner and her tanka works are pure examples that tanka poetry does not need the Japanese language. This

concept made another historic advance when the American English poet and college professor, Dr. Wesley Dunn, undertook to teach a course in tanka poetry at a college in Arkansas in 1983. This action by Dr. Dunn was more powerful than that taken 20 years ago by five high school English instructors in the San Francisco Bay Area who selected tanka poetry for inclusion in an English high school text book, English 11, in 1970.<sup>35</sup>

The history of tanka poetry in America was revealed when the tanka poems of Japanese in America were introduced to the American people. Tanka poetry activities in the United States, including tanka written in English, have more meaning for ordinary Americans than translations of tanka from Japan.

## VI THE ANNUAL PALACE POETRY PARTY AND THE WINNING TANKA FROM AMERICA

Imperial tanka poetry parties were originally organized in the Heian period (794-1185) over 1,000 years ago in Japan. Emperor Meiji (r. 1868-1912) continued the tradition. He loved tanka poetry and he loved his people. He wanted to give a higher experience and better education to his subjects in every field to raise the educational standard of the country to a new high level. To help realize this idea, he announced that the Palace Poetry Party competition would be opened to all Japanese subjects in the twelfth year of his reign (1879).<sup>36</sup>

The subject of the tanka poetry party is announced at the tanka poetry party held the previous year, and it is selected by four or five judges who have been appointed for that year by a palace committee. Each year, new judges are selected from among the great tanka masters in the poetry world of Japan. Poems are submitted usually between September 1 and October 11 and all poems submitted are reviewed by the judges during a 3-month period from October to December. The final decision is announced on December 26th, approximately two weeks before the award ceremony held in January.

There was no winning tanka from the United States, Canada, or South America at Japan's Annual Palace Poetry Party until 1947, although Japanese tanka poetry circles had been organized in America for years. The first winning tanka from the United States was Shōhei Takayanagi's, which was selected and read at the 1947 New Year's party at the Imperial

Palace in Tokyo. The subject for that year was Akebono (Dawn), and it was very suitable for the nation's steps toward building a new country. So, Mr. Takayanagi's winning at the Palace was symbolic for the future of tanka poetry in America.

Since 1947, during the last 28 years, many winners have been selected from America. A great opportunity came to the winner in 1957, for in that year an invitation to attend the Palace Poetry Party was given to each winning poet. This invitation to attend the party was a historic innovation in the Palace Poetry Party. Until 1957, the announcement of winners had been published in the newspapers in the nation only after the ceremony was over. In that year, two winners from the United States had this glorious opportunity and were honored by hearing their own compositions read before the Emperor and Empress. Usually only one winner is selected from among contestants in America, but in both 1955 and 1957, two winners from America were selected. One of those selected in 1957 was Lucille Mary Nixon who made great history in the 1,000 years of tanka poetry, for she was the first tanka poet who was not of Japanese descent to be selected as a winner and who attended the Palace Poetry Party in Japan.

The names of the many winning poets from America and their tanka are recorded below.

The subject for 1947 was Akebono (Dawn), and the winner was Shōhei Takayanagi of Los Angeles. His tanka was:

Akebono no  
Daichi shikka to  
Fumishimete  
Tōku ware wa yobu  
Sokoku yo tate to.

I cry from far,  
"Please rise up, my home country."  
As I now set forth  
On the great earth in the dawn.  
This my single heartfelt wish.

In 1949, the subject was Asayuki (Morning snow), and the winner from America was Tomoe Tana from Richmond, California:

Furusato no  
Asatsumu yuki no  
Sugashisa wo  
Kashū ni totose  
Koite yamazumo.

I have longed, in these  
Ten years in California,  
For the morning snow  
Drifted in white purity  
In my beloved homeland.

In 1950, the subject was Wakakusa (Young grass), and Sōhei Yoshihashi from San Francisco was honored as a winner. His tanka was:

Furusato no  
Tsuuyu wo fukumeru  
Wakakusa wo  
Miru wa itsu zo mo  
Kashū ni oite.

When can I see that  
Dewy young grass I haven't seen  
For many years  
After I left my homeland?  
I'm old in California.

In 1951, the subject was Asazora (Morning sky), and the winner was Satsuki Abe of Los Angeles. The winning tanka was:

Ametsuchi no  
Teriwataritaru  
Asazora no  
Fukaki shijima ni  
Kokoro yoriyuku.

My heart is tranquil  
In the complete purity  
Of the morning sky.  
My heart follows quietly,  
No trace of sound within.

Aiko Butsuyen from Georgia was the winner in 1952 with the subject  
Funade (Setting sail). Her tanka was:

Funade shite  
Misotose amari  
Amerika ni  
Kuni wo omowanu  
Hi tote nakariki.

Not a day has passed  
That here in America  
I've not thought about  
My Country, whence I set sail  
Over thirty years ago.

In 1954, the subject was Hayashi (Forest), and the winner was  
Michimasa Inouye from Los Angeles. His poem was:

Kotokuni no  
Hayashi kanashi mo  
Ochiba fumeba  
Kasuka ni kikoyu  
Furusato no oto.

How sad the forest  
In this distant foreign land.  
When I tread upon  
Fallen leaves I faintly hear  
The sound of my old homeland.

In 1955, two tanka poets were selected as the winners. The subject  
was Izumi (Spring water), and the winners were Shōhei Takayanagi from Los  
Angeles and Tomiko Matsumoto from Chicago. Mr. Takayanagi's winning poem  
was his second and it was:

Sakimori no  
Uta omoitsutsu  
Rokki no  
Eki no izumi wo  
Hitori musubinu.

Recalling clearly  
A tanka poem composed  
By a border guard,  
I scooped for spring water  
In the high Rocky Mountains.

Tomiko Matsumoto's tanka was:

Konomagakure ni  
Waku mashimizu ni  
Tsukikage no  
Sugashiki sama wa  
Kono kuni ni mizu.

Never have I seen,  
In my adopted country,  
Reflecting moonlight  
Beautifully through the trees,  
A view where spring water glows.

In 1956, the subject was Sōshun (Early spring), and the winner was  
Miye Takeuchi from Los Angeles. Her tanka was:

Sōshun no  
Niwa no tsubaki ni  
Mukaitsutsu  
Kikasen to suru  
Kokoro sabishimu.

I feel deep sadness  
Becoming American,  
Turning from Japan,  
But these camellia buds  
Remind me new life must start.

In 1957, two tanka poets were again selected, but this time the  
winners were both American citizens: Lucille Mary Nixon from Palo Alto,  
California, and Fumiko Ogawa, who was a naturalized American citizen,  
from Los Angeles. Their tanka were written on the subject of Tomoshihi  
(Light). Fumiko Ogawa's tanka was:

Nippon ni  
Mukō fune no hi  
Nami ni teri  
Koishiki mono ka  
Todomari oreba.

I feel deep longing  
When I see the reflections  
Of the ships' lights  
On the waves in the harbor.  
They are going to Japan.

Lucille Nixon's tanka was:

Akogare no  
Uruwashiki Nippon  
Hōryūji  
Hiru no miakashi  
Itsu mata towan.

Deep in longing  
For lovely Japan  
And Hōryūji Temple  
Where the sanctuary light  
Glows with daylight constantly.

In 1957, a new tradition was established by the Palace Poetry Party: the winners of the contest were to be invited to attend the award ceremony presided over by the Emperor of Japan. Fumiko Ogawa and Lucille Nixon listened to their own tanka recited at the Emperor's Palace. Lucille Nixon was honored to receive the Emperor's words, "Be a cultural bridge between Japan and America."<sup>37</sup>

In 1958, the winner at the Palace Poetry Party came from Seattle, Washington. The subject was Kumo (Clouds). Genji Mihara was honored by the selection of his composition. He was the third winner from the United States to attend the ceremony at the Palace. His winning tanka was:

Yagumo tatsu  
Izumo no kuni wo  
Ideshi yori  
Gojuyonen wo  
Waga koyamazuru.

I have kept longing  
For Izumo, where rising  
Clouds billow, ever  
Since I left that distant land  
Over fifty years ago.

In 1959, the subject was Mado (Window), and there were two winners from the Americas: Yoshigorō Komatsu of São Paulo, Brazil and Miyoko Tada of Los Angeles. Yoshigorō Komatsu's tanka was:

Kaeru naki  
Nippon koishiku  
Yoru mado no  
Abokado aoba  
Yūkageri shite.

The evening shadows  
Glow on avocado leaves  
And near the window  
I come longing for Japan.  
I can never return there.



Miyoko Tada's tanka was:

Omowazu mo  
Ayumi todometsu  
Nippongo no  
Koe kikitomeshi  
Madobe miagete.

Not even thinking  
And stopping in my tracks  
I looked up beneath  
A window where Japanese  
Conversation could be heard.

In 1961, the winner came from San Francisco. Chino Koga's tanka was selected and she was invited to attend the Palace ceremony. The subject was Waka (Youth), and her tanka was:

Urawakaku  
Watarikitarishi  
Amerika ni  
Itsushika futari no  
Sobo to waga naru.

Before knowing it  
I've become the grandmother  
Of two children  
Since I came as a young bride  
To America from Japan.

There were two tanka poets from Canada whose compositions won at the Annual Palace Poetry Party in 1964 and in 1967. Both winners, Takeo Nakano in 1964 and Toyoshi Hiramatsu in 1967, were invited to be present before the Emperor and Empress to hear their honored tanka. The subject for 1964 was Kami (Paper), and for 1967 was Sakana (Fish).

Takeo Nakano's tanka was:

Funbo no chi  
Kanada to kimete  
Senseishi ni  
Shomei suru waga  
Te ga furuetari.

I have decided  
That the earth of Canada  
Will be my burial place.  
But signing the oath paper,  
My hand trembled all the way.

Toyoshi Hiramatsu's tanka was:

Harubaru to  
Hakobarete kishi  
Kingyo no mure  
Kanada no mizu ni  
Shitashimi oyogu.

Brought to Canada  
From Japan so far away,  
The school of gold fish  
Is now swimming happily  
In Canadian water.

In 1972, Minoru Fujita of Rosemead, California was a winner. His poem was on the subject Hikari (Light) and he attended the Palace Poetry Party. His poem was:

Kōkō to  
Issei hōmu ni  
Hi wa tomori  
Uchū keiyū no  
Ekisupo wo matsu.

The light shines brightly  
At the Japanese Issei's home.  
The aged people  
Are waiting for the broadcast:  
Expo by space satellite.

Kazuko Higaki was honored with a prize at the Palace Poetry Party in 1975 for her tanka on Saka (Slope), which was the subject for that year, when she was invited to attend the ceremony from Watsonville, California. Her poem was:

Hiatari no  
Yoki saka no hata  
Nippon ni  
Kūyu no ichigo  
Tannen ni tsumu.

I pick strawberries  
Carefully on the hillside,  
Where the sun shines warm.  
They are sent to my homeland  
Carried there swiftly by air.

In 1976, the subject was Kawa (River), and Shizuye Iwatsuki from Hood River, Oregon was a winner. She attended the ceremony with her winning poem. It was:

Asahi sasu  
Koronbiyagawa wo  
Mugi tsumite  
Nippon e yuku  
Tagubōto miyu.

Tugboats floating on  
The Columbia River  
In the morning sun;  
The wheat is loaded on them  
To be sent to Japan.

In 1977, when the subject for the Palace Poetry Party was Haha (Mother), the winner in America was Minoru Fujita of Rosemead, California. He was invited to hear his poem recited before the Emperor and Empress. This was his second attendance. His poem was:

Arasuka e  
Kaeru kujira no  
Oyako to yū  
Shio fukiagete  
Haru no umi yuku.

They're returning to  
Alaska in the Spring sea--  
A big school of whales,  
The mothers and their children  
Blowing brine at each other.

The winning tanka poet Kuniiji Tada from Brazil was announced on December 26, 1983. He was invited to hear his poem before the Emperor and Empress at the Palace Poetry Party on January 11, 1984. The subject for this year was Midori (Green), and his honored poem was:

Sukōru no  
Hareshi midori no  
Oka no michi  
Nippongo gakkō no  
Kora kaerikuru.

Children on the way,  
Now returning to their home  
Along fresh green hills  
Where a squall is just passing--  
They're from the Japanese school.

## VII TANKA POETRY IN CANADA AND SOUTH AMERICA

While I was reading the tanka poetry collection Renia no yuki (The snow of Mt. Rainier) in 1982, I realized for the first time that there were tanka poets in Canada, so I decided to study these poets and their circles, if any existed. I have a friend there whom I asked about these poets and I found that a tanka poetry circle was organized in Canada after a Canadian winner was honored at Japan's Annual Palace Poetry Party in 1964. Since then, this tanka circle has continued the study of tanka poetry and its members have already published three tanka poetry collections. I realized this was a great achievement when compared with the United States' progress in over 80 years because the history of organized tanka poetry activities in Canada is only 19 years old.

Its history was begun when Takeo Nakano became the first imperial contest winner from Canada and was presented at the Palace Poetry Party in 1964. Until then he had been a member of the Seattle Tanka Circle, for there was no circle in Canada. As a memorial to his honor, tanka poets all over Canada organized their own circle, the "Kisaragi tankakai" (The circle of February) in February 1964.<sup>38</sup> Since then there has been continued tanka study and composing under Mr. Nakano's instruction. The winning poem at the Palace Poetry Party in 1967 by Toyoshi Hiramatsu, a member of Kisaragi tankakai, solidified the Canadian circle and encouraged its members to progress toward publishing their own tanka poetry collection quickly.

There is no mention of Canadian people starting to write English or French language tanka poetry, but the first winning tanka was put into a

high school textbook after Mr. Nakano's honor.<sup>39</sup> The second winning tanka from Canada was immortalized when Mr. Hiramatsu's honored tanka was placed on permanent display in the author's home town in Ontario.<sup>40</sup> This kind of event related to Japanese tanka poetry activities has never happened in the United States even though there have been many honored tanka poets in many cities. It was an historic honor for the Japanese tanka poets living in Canada.

The Palace Poetry Party announced the winners who would attend the ceremony in 1984 on December 26, 1983. Of the nine winners, one was Kuniuji Tada of São Paulo, Brazil. This news reminded me of Japanese tanka poets in Brazil who had won the same award before, and I believe that many Japanese tanka poets are also studying tanka poetry in South America. However, it is difficult to get information about these groups. I wrote to this year's winner, Kuniuji Tada, when the newspaper published his address, but the letter was returned undelivered. I sent another letter to Mr. Tada through the Buddhist Church's Headquarters in São Paulo, Brazil, but there has been no response as of February, 1985. It takes a long time; the difficulty is in communication.

The newspapers reported that when Mr. Tada met the Emperor of Japan at the honors ceremony he said, "I received this great honor unexpectedly. My experience in tanka studies covers only five years since I have moved to Brazil. With this opportunity, I have determined to try even harder to compose tanka poetry."<sup>41</sup> He is a member of a tanka circle in Japan as are most Japanese tanka poets outside of Japan. His victory was a historic honor for Brazilian tanka poetry and will be important for its further development. He was the third winner at the Palace Poetry Party from Brazil, although I could not find either of the names of the other poets or their tanka.

## VIII CONCLUSION

I chose the history of Japanese tanka poetry in America for my research because that history, though almost 100 years old, is very little known to Americans. For example, when the first foreign winner at the Palace Poetry Party became known, many American newspapers and magazines told about the history of tanka poetry, and many American poetry societies wanted to know the history of tanka poetry in Japan and the United States. When the first winner from Canada at the same Palace contest was announced, the Canadian government decided the winner's tanka should be published in a school text. However, after these news stories had faded, people stopped talking about Japanese tanka poetry although none of the Japanese tanka poets had stopped writing their tanka.

Tanka poetry is not just for one special occasion but is one's lifetime work because tanka arise always with one's feelings or thoughts. This means that one's tanka poetry work represents a lifetime of effort to express one's own true feelings from the heart. The tanka form is short, as the name shows: tanka means short song, a kind of poem.

The Japanese people in the United States, Canada and South America have been practicing tanka composition now for nearly 100 years. The tanka societies and their activities have occasionally been recognized in their communities, but most people do not know the circumstances in detail. Most American people, including Japanese descendants, have known

Japanese people as hard-working laborers, or sharp businessmen, or engineers, or industrialists, or military men. But they do not have any knowledge of these same people's other faces as poets or artists. For example, the pioneer in Japanese tanka in the United States, the late Yoshihiko Tomari, was a gardener for 50 years of his life in the United States. But he had a great secondary life as a tanka poet. As another example, among Caucasian Americans, Lucille Nixon was a busy educator, but she enjoyed writing Japanese tanka poetry away from her busy public life. Tanka poets live with their own pleasure in composing tanka. Even though surrounded by suffering or darkness, tanka poets change them into pleasure by writing tanka. Tanka poetry composition reveals a person's other side, the spare-time world of private peace and joy.

I want to tell about these real examples of people with independent minds to those Americans who surely have the seed of poetry within them but have never nourished it. This may be understood by considering Lucille Nixon and her composition of Japanese tanka poetry. I hope that my research into the spare-time tanka activities of Japanese in America will help unknown poets of every ethnic origin to elevate their lives to be beautiful in truth. I hope that these unknown poets will want to accept Japanese activities in the tanka poetry world as their own and emulate them. If I could expand my research further into these writing matters and could have the opportunity to publish it, I surely believe it would help to reveal the unknown faces of many American people; perhaps even this preliminary study will constitute an effective beginning.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Izumo is the oldest name for the area that is presently Shimane Prefecture.

<sup>2</sup> Ise is a city in Mie Prefecture. Izumo and Ise are most important ancient ritual places because of their relation to Japan and its ancient myths.

<sup>3</sup> The Kojiki is the oldest Japanese book extant. It was published in 712 at the beginning of the Nara period (710-784), an early period in Japanese history, which was characterized by strong Chinese influence in government, religion (Buddhism), and language.

<sup>4</sup> The Nihonshoki is one of the oldest Japanese books and was published in 720 in the Nara period.

<sup>5</sup> Fudoki are Japanese geographical histories or gazettiers which were published in the Nara period. Empress Gemmei ordered them one year after the Kojiki was compiled. There were many Fudoki for different provinces, but some of them were lost. At present, the whole of the Izumo Fudoki, and parts of the Hitachi Fudoki, the Harima Fudoki, the Hizen Fudoki, and the Bungo Fudoki remain.

<sup>6</sup> Joyce Lobner in Tomoe Tana, Tomoshihi (Palo Alto: 1978) p. 270. In Japanese, tanka are usually written in one continuous line, but the 5,7,5,7,7 syllabic division is semantically clear.

<sup>7</sup> When Lucille Mary Nixon won the Palace contest, the Palo Alto Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, Time, the U.S. News and World Report, and other newspapers and magazines reported about Japan's Annual Palace Tanka Party. Since then, each time the winner was from the United States, local newspapers included the history of the tanka contest in their reports.

<sup>8</sup> Kojiki. Donald L. Philippi, trans. (Tokyo: Princeton University Press and University of Tokyo Press, 1969), pp. 90-93.

<sup>9</sup> Maeda Akira, Nippon koten monogatari (The classical tales of Japan) (Tokyo: Chikura shobo, 1936), pp. 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> Meiji tennō gyoshū, kōtaigō onkashū (The collection of Emperor Meiji and his Empress's tanka), (Tokyo: Meiji shrine 1971), p. 49.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth Yasuda, A Pepper Pod (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947).



<sup>12</sup> Harold G. Henderson, trans., Haiku (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1958.) This book was a best seller that was big news in all Japanese newspapers in California in 1958.

<sup>13</sup> Hazel Durnell, Japanese Cultural Influences on American Poetry and Drama (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1983), pp. 92-93. Dr. Durnell of Ohio was a former English professor in Tokyo.

<sup>14</sup> "Kokumin bungaku" is a tanka circle in Japan. This circle has a history of about 80 years. The founder of the circle was the late Dr. Kubota Utsubo. After his retirement, his successor was Matsumura Hidekazu. Mr. Yoshihiko Tomari, who was the pioneer of American tanka poetry, studied tanka poetry under these two teachers.

<sup>15</sup> "Chōon" is one of the oldest tanka circles in Japan. The founder of this circle was the late Mizuho Ōta. Many American tanka circles belong to this circle.

<sup>16</sup> Ryojin is the late Yoshihiko Tomari's own tanka collection which was published in Tokyo when he returned to his native land in 1958 after living in the United States for 50 years. It was published by the "Kokumin bungaku" association as one in its series on December 25, 1958.

<sup>17</sup> Ishokurin is a community tanka poetry collection published by members of the "Totsukuni tankakai," a tanka circle in San Francisco, California, on September 1, 1958.

<sup>18</sup> Tomoshibi is a tanka poetry collection, published in Palo Alto, California in 1978, which includes the late Lucille Nixon's tanka and a biographical summary. The idea of this publication was that Americans would learn tanka poetry through her tanka and start to compose tanka in English. Included also are many tanka poems in English by Joyce Lobner. This should encourage Americans who want to compose tanka in their own language.

<sup>19</sup> Renia no yuki (The snow of Mt. Rainier), Seattle tanka circle's community tanka collection, was published in Japan, Chōonsha: 1926.

<sup>20</sup> The National Origins Act (Exclusion Act) of 1924 excluded all East Asians from immigration to the United States, as well as limiting the immigration of Europeans. This law cast a shadow over Japanese-American relations and was very discouraging for the Japanese who lived in America.

21 Takachiho was a tanka poetry magazine which was published in Kagoshima, Japan in January 1968 by Mrs. Tomari as the last issue of the Nichibei Tanka, a tanka magazine which had been published every other month in Kagoshima, Japan. The contributions to this magazine were from both Japan and America. Nichibei Tanka had a special color, in that the poems of Lucille Nixon, the only American tanka poet since Frances Burnett to write in Japanese, were published in each issue. Two English translations of tanka by many members were made by Nixon and published before her sudden death. Then her friend, Mrs. Janet Winters did the translating. This magazine ended with Mr. Tomari's death and Mrs. Tomari formally concluded Nichibei Tanka with Takachiho as a memorial issue in his honor. Takachiho is a mountain in Miyazaki Prefecture near Mrs. Tomari's birthplace where Mrs. Tomari has lived since Mr. Tomari's death. It is where the mythological grandson of the Goddess descended to Japan to establish divine imperial rule in the archipelago.

22 Mrs. Haruye Katō's letter came on November 14, 1983.

23 The Santō kashu was published in three issues by the leader of Santō kadan (a circle). I was unable to obtain the first and second issues and I am unable to find their dates of publication.

24 Nichibei Jiji, May 5, 1981

25 Hyakunin isshu (one poem each by a hundred people) is a group of 100 different poems. There are many variations of the Hyakunin isshu in Japan, but the Ogura hyakunin isshu is the most famous. Fujiwara Teika, who was one of the editors of the Shinkokinshū, the third historic collection of poems, selected 100 tanka written between the reigns of Emperor Tenchi and Emperor Juntoku (660-1221) and had them inscribed on a sliding door in his villa on Ogura Mountain Kyoto. Ogura hyakunin isshu is very popular; written on cards, it has been played as a special New Year's game, "Karutatori" (card talking game).

26 Kimura Ki, "Japanese literature has now sprouted in the United States," a review of Sounds from the Unknown in Bunrin, No. 11 (March 1977), p. 13.

27 Ibid. He also mentioned Hildreth, Japan as It Was and Is which introduced Japanese tanka poetry to America (pp. 18, 19). He said in its conclusion, "Tanka poetry by Takuboku and Akiko Yosano are like cutting flowers, but the tanka in this book have roots which will grow and spread all over the land in eternal beauty, although they would not be good materials for flower arrangement." (p. 22)

28 Richard Hildreth, Japan As It Was and Is (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc. 1973). Reprint of original 1855 edition, published by Phillips, Sampson and Company, Boston.

- 29 Kimura, op. cit., p. 19 provides the interesting information that a copy of the Literary Digest carrying this poem was sent to Russia whose great author Tolstoy also liked this tanka by Emperor Meiji.
- 30 Durnell, op. cit., p. 91.
- 31 Ishikawa Takuboku was a famous tanka poet in the Meiji period. Mrs. Sakanshi chose this tanka from Takuboku's tanka collection, Takuboku zenshu, Tokyo, Kaizōsha, 1927.
- 32 Cited in Kimura, op. cit., p. 20.
- 33 Yosano Akiko was a famous tanka poet in the Meiji period. Midaregami was the first of her many tanka collections. Midaregami means tangled hair. She was famous as a romantic tanka poet.
- 34 Itō Sachio was one of the Meiji period's great tanka poets. He practiced many kinds of Japanese cultural skills, but became a leader and the best tanka poetry teacher in the period. Many of his students became tanka poetry teachers in the late Taishō and Shōwa period.
- 35 Barnard R. Tanner, Frank S. Zepezaner, Craig Vittetor, Robert E. Shute, and James Gray, English 11: Composition Language, and Selected Skills in Reasoning and in Reading Literature, (Menlo Park, California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1970).
- 36 Mori Michitarō, ed., Eishin no shiori (Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 1931), p. 1.
- 37 Palo Alto Times, January 22, 1957.
- 38 Kisaragi tankakai, Kaede [Maple] (Canada: 1972), p.????.
- 39 Ujō Nakano, Sensei [Oath] (Tokyo: Kashiwaba shoin, 1969), p. 246.
- 40 Letter from Toyoshi Hiramatsu to author in 1984.
- 41 Nichi Bei Times, San Francisco, January 12, 1984.

APPENDIX I

ZAIBEI DŌBŌ HYAKUNIN ISSHU\*

(One poem each from 100 of our countrymen in America)

Winning Tanka\*\*

Amerika no  
Kokka utaitte  
Sodatsu ko ni  
Shitagai yukan  
Haha ware no michi

My growing children  
Sing the National Anthem  
In America  
And their mother goes  
Following right along.

Tomoe Tana  
Honolulu

A feeling of intelligent gentle obedience flows quietly throughout. This is a good poem (Kubota Utsubo).

This is a poignant composition in which the sentiment comes out clearly in the last two lines. The mother of the children who sing the American National Anthem is hoping for their happiness (Saitō Mokichi).

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\*This collection is taken from Nippon no mado (May, 1951), pp. 146-151, except for the winning tanka by Takayanagi Shasui and the comments on it, infra, p. 50. The latter appeared in Nippon shimbun (Tokyo), January 10, 1951.

\*\*The poems are listed in the order of their quality, with the top seven, or "winning works" (nyūsensaku being accompanied by critical commentary offered by three 20th century masters of tanka, Kubota Utsubo, Saitō Mokichi, and Shaku Chokū. The following seven merit designation as "excellent works" (kasaku), while the remainder were selected from the many hundreds of tanka submitted for consideration.

It is gratifying that in this poetic reflection the gentle spirit of Japanese womanhood can be seen to transcend the vicissitudes of life. Seeing her children singing a song at the present time, this woman is thinking ahead from their present situation to their future. It is a mother's nature that she should live the life of her children: I propose that this is the very profound meaning carried by this poem which at first glance seems quite ordinary (Shaku Chōkū).

Tairiku no  
Irihi wa kanashi  
Akaaka to  
Rokkī no ne ni  
Otsuru hitotoki

How beautiful  
The setting sun in this vast land  
The moment it rests  
On the Rocky Mountain peaks,  
Bright red, on its downward path.

Kogai Ikenouye  
Denver, Colorado

The scene in this tanka is the great continent of America, not to be seen in Japan. The tone of the poem truly swells with grandeur in its expression. The word "kanashi" does not necessarily mean only "sad." This is a superior composition (Mokichi).

This tanka is especially deep and emotional because it is written on the great American continent in the Rocky Mountains. However, this poem has a weak point because these lines could have been composed anywhere, not only in the Rocky Mountains. To avoid this weakness, the poet must reveal his own personality. Perhaps if the poet used a different word than "kanashi", this tanka's value would increase (Chōkū).



Amerika ni  
Sabetsu uketsutsu  
Sumioredō  
Hifu no ki naru wo  
Hajishi koto nashi

While I am living  
Discriminated against  
In America,  
Still I have never felt shame  
Because my skin is yellow.

Yoshihiko Tomari  
Los Angeles, California

This tanka was written very simply about the core of the poet's feeling about life. It is an outstanding poem with character (Utsubo).

An awareness of being discriminated against comes out, but it is good that the poet enjoys life without self-deprecation because of that awareness (Mokichi).

In my opinion, this tanka is very revealing and honest. But it is regrettable one feels its profound content might have been more profoundly expressed (Chōkū).

Machimachi wo  
Toki ni mihokete  
Yume wo ou  
Jūsangai no  
Kōjō no mado

I follow my dreams  
When sometimes I look idly  
At the streets below  
From the factory window  
On the thirteenth floor.

Yuriko Naganuma  
Chicago, Illinois

Telling about a thirteen story factory that overlooks the streets among the skyscrapers of Chicago, this poem's characteristic qualities are its heroic scale and its complexity. A whole new mood emerges just from the fact that the theme (location) is Chicago (Mokichi).

A poem like this communicates the tone of poems of contemporary women poets in Japan to the degree that one forgets the distance that separates America and Japan. The reality of "Jūsangai no kōjō [a thirteen story factory], while remote from Japan, does not particularly connote a feeling of American life, so I think it is better to savor this poem by emphasizing the romantic notion of "following dreams while looking idly" out the factory window (Chōkū).

Shūkyō mo  
Tsui ni ko no mono  
Chi ni heiwa  
Kozorite tatsubeki  
Sakebi wo kikazu

The world now cries out  
For religious leadership  
In one great regard  
Nowhere can a voice be heard  
To lead us to lasting peace.

Shasui Takayanagi  
Los Angeles, California

This tanka was composed sensitively, based on the poet's spiritual judgment of very deep complexity and passionate feeling. This tanka also gives a sense of the high quality of the poet's character (Utsubo).

This tanka might be called an intellectual tanka in the modern-day sense. I find something like a harmony of thought expressed in the last two lines (Mokichi).

This tanka rises to a very elevated tone. Although it expresses a deep thought (inner spirit), it is barely stated, leaving the vital spirit not expressed concretely. With some changes, this tanka would be much improved (Chōkū).

Akikaze wa  
Kimura fukisugu  
Kono kuni ni  
Kite mizu no yuku  
Oto wo kikazu mo

In America  
I hear autumn wind blowing  
In between the trees  
But never, since coming here,  
The sound of running water.

Masanori Ishioka  
Los Angeles, California

The best and most creative point in this tanka is the view that there is no great difference between America, where the poet presently lives, and his homeland. He says almost casually, however, "I have not heard the sound of running water here," and his point touches the reader's deepest senses. Perhaps most immigrants feel the same

sensations as the poet when they listen to the autumn wind passing through treetops in the forest. The poet may not intend this, but there appears to be a new poetic flavor in this tanka. It offers the reader a fresh and natural approach (Chōkū).

Na ga shisheshi\*  
Kyassuru Bogī wa  
Itari no  
Hokubu to kikite  
Chizu hirogemitsu

Hearing that my son  
Had died on a battlefield  
At Castle Boggi  
In northern Italy,  
I spread wide the map to see.

Masuye Ōba  
Portland, Oregon

This tanka makes a special impression when first read. There is a break in syllabication, but there is a real continuity expressed in the veteran tanka poet's creative technique. We deeply appreciate the distinguished service on the battlefields of Italy by the Nisei soldiers during the last great war (Utsubo).

Excellent Tanka

Ko wo kuni ni  
Okurimanabasu  
Chichi ware ga  
Iki no inochi no  
Orosoka narazu

Though I sent my son  
To my homeland to study  
And I am alone,  
The living of my own life  
Cannot be neglected.

Seishū Osada  
Denver, Colorado

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\*The written text is "Nanji ga senshi seshi," but informed tanka readers will know that it must be read "Na ga shisheshi" in order to preserve the meter.



Fukisuguru  
Kaze ni midarite  
Nakasu naru  
Kareashimura wa  
Sabisabi to miyu

Blown this way and that  
By the too persistent wind  
On the lake's sand bank,  
All the withered clumps of reeds  
Appear lonesome and forlorn.

Nao Kodama  
Los Angeles, California

Hatsumogi no  
Edamame tabetsutsu  
Furusato no  
Tsukimi no sama wo  
Kora ni kataru mo

While we are eating  
The tender beans harvested  
At first bean-picking,  
I tell my kids what it's like  
Moon viewing in old Japan.

Nagisa Kubo  
Torrington, Wyoming

Kunibito no  
Sama wo shi omoeba  
Amerika ni  
Mazushiki ware mo  
Ogoreru ni nite

Thinking of the way  
My countrymen are living,  
In America  
Although I am also poor  
I'm living in luxury.

Hanaye Nakagawa  
Farmington, Michigan

Tsuma mo ware mo  
Tada ko wo sodatsuru  
Koto nomi ni  
Kokoro kudakite  
Gojūji hetsu

Both my wife and I  
Have devoted fifty years  
Of selfless effort  
In the sole activity  
Of bringing up our children

Sunao Koike  
Brazil

Omoide no  
Mori mo oka wo mo  
Naki made ni  
Moete kowareshi  
Kyōri Okinawa

The woods and the hills  
In my fond recollections  
Of my native place,  
Okinawa, are no more--  
Burned and totally destroyed.

Hitoshi Higa  
Toronto, Canada

Hachi mururu  
Koe no shigeki ni  
Miagureba  
Mango no hana no  
Sakisakaritari

Noticing the sound  
Of a swarm of buzzing bees  
And looking upward,  
I saw the mango flowers  
In the fullest of full bloom.

Kōji Yokogawa  
Brazil

Hadosan no  
Kohan ni aki no  
Tsuki mireba  
Kokoku koishiku  
Sachi negimatsuru

When I first noticed  
The beautiful autumn moon  
Along the Hudson,  
With deep emotion I wished  
For my homeland's good fortune.

Baigaku Matsumoto  
New York

Shunran to  
Nippon negi to wo  
Kizo makeba  
Tsuchi shimerashite  
Haru no ame furu

Only yesterday  
I sowed Japanese scallions  
And Japan orchids;  
To moisten the earth today  
The soft spring rain now falls.

Naoko Ebihara  
Los Angeles, California

Manatsubi wo  
Saegiru mono naki  
Densen ni  
Tsubame no hina no  
Tomaru ayausa

Uninterrupted,  
It looks very dangerous  
For the young swallows  
To sit on the power line  
In this hot midsummer sun.

Kō Nakatsu  
Seattle, Washington

No ni idete  
Waga hatarakeba  
Kenkō no  
Mi ni wakiizuru  
Chikara mada ari

As I go out to  
The fields to do farm labor  
I find there a strength  
Still welling up from within  
My sound and healthy body.

Midori Miyoshi  
North Platte, Nebraska

Kozo no goto  
Kokoku wa nukuki  
Fuyu nare to  
Hieshikiru yo wo  
Hisoka ni inoru

Secretly I pray  
On this cold and bitter night  
That just like last year  
There will be a warm winter  
Back home in the old country.

Mayumi Kumagai  
North Platte, Nebraska

Hikōki no  
Oto wo miagete  
Yami no yo wo  
Omoi wa tōki  
Sokoku no sorabe

Looking straight upward  
At the sound of an airplane  
In the dark of night,  
I pictured in my mind's eye  
The skies over far Japan.

Sengaku Horiuchi  
Brighton, Colorado

Nagayama yori  
Tachite ayumeba  
Sugaritsutsu  
Shimijimi tsuma ni  
Yoru omoinari

After long illness  
When I first got up and walked  
Clinging close to him,  
I realized how greatly  
I rely on my husband.

Tomiko Niguma  
Seattle, Washington

Hakujuin to  
Kokujuin no ko ga  
Mutsumiai  
Hataraku onshitsu ni  
Yuri no akarusa

How bright the lilies  
In the greenhouse where children  
Of both blacks and whites  
All work harmoniously  
Together in one accord!

Kimiko Ono  
Seattle, Washington

Hazama yori  
Tachinoboriyuku  
Asagiri ni  
Miyama no momiji  
Hitotoki hayuru

In the morning mist  
Gently rising from the gorge,  
The red maple leaves  
Glisten for a brief moment  
In deep mountain recesses.

Masuko Nakagawa  
Seattle, Washington

Umi koete  
Totsugikinikeru  
Waga tsuma no  
Fune yori agariku  
Kyoso tsutsumashiku

Ever so polite  
Is the manner of movement  
Of my intended  
As she steps off the steamship  
That brought her across the sea.

Himechika Yamashita  
Arbada, Colorado

Raburī mōningu to  
Mado hirakikuru  
Kangofu no  
Akaruki koe ni  
Ware wa unazuku

I nod to the nurse  
With her happy voice and smile;  
Brightly she comes in,  
Opens the window and says,  
"A lovely morning!"

Takeko Ujimoto  
Salmon Arm, Canada

Kuni yabure  
Ukara uuru wo  
Senshō ni  
Kuni ni ware arite  
Shiroki meshi hamu

My homeland beaten,  
My relatives now starving--  
And here I am in  
The victorious country,  
Eating my fill of white rice.

Shizu Uchida  
Long Beach, California

Isogashiki  
Yō wo tsuzumete  
Kyō mo kinu  
Furugi tsukurō  
Kyūsaisagyōjo

Having thus cut short  
My busy workaday work,  
Today too I came  
To mend old clothes here at the  
Overseas relief center.

Katsuno Mihara  
Seattle, Washington

Shinayaka ni  
Odo ru kono yo no  
Otometachi  
Koko ni kokoku no  
Sama wo sanagara

Lissome dancing girls  
In this place where I now live  
Move as gracefully  
As the ones who dance like this  
Back home in the old country.

Hakuei Kosuga  
Denver, Colorado

Akisuzushi  
Kohan no shiba ni  
Uta yomeba  
Kokujin sōjifu  
Emitsutsu tōru

As I read poems  
In the chilly autumn air  
On the lakeside lawn,  
The black custodian smiles  
As he passes before me.

Tomiko Matsumoto  
Chicago, Illinois

Oyagokoro  
Ikanika aran  
Kyō tsui ni  
Tsumi wo kishi to zo  
Tōkyō Rōzu

Deep within their hearts  
Whatever must they feel now  
That, at last, today  
She has acknowledged her crime--  
The parents of Tokyo Rose?

Ryokuyō Matsumoto  
Chicago, Illinois

Yurusareshi  
Kokki wo tatezu  
Kimigayo mo  
Utawanu tayori  
Kanashiku omou

I think it is sad  
To hear that, although allowed  
Finally, Japan's  
National Anthem's not sung  
And her flag no longer hung.

Hina Wada  
North Platte, Nebraska

Demokurashī no  
Rinen wa yokere  
Hinomoto no  
Yoki dentō wa  
Mochitsuzukubeshi

While the ideal  
Of democracy is fine,  
Japan should always  
Continue to hold its own  
Best traditions and customs.

Kaoru Nakada  
Scotch Bluff, Nebraska

Yubisaki no  
Ugoki komakani  
Koromo nuu  
Ako no wakasa  
Tsukuzuku to miru

While nimble fingers  
Move deftly as she stitches  
The dress she's making,  
My daughter's youthfulness  
Makes her appear so earnest.

Yukiko Nakada  
Scotch Bluff, Nebraska

Issei no  
Shinku ima koso  
Mi wo musubu  
Nisei yōyaku  
Yo ni tachisomete

Now reaping the yield  
Of the privations of the  
First generation,  
The second generation  
Is beginning to move up.

Hideo Kurata  
Los Angeles, California

Awayuki no  
Tokete wa kiyuru  
Ike mizu ni  
Shizumeru koi no  
Ugoku to mo sezu

Below the surface  
Of the pond whose water melts  
Lightly falling snow,  
The deeply submerged koi  
Cannot even move at all.

Tarō Hata  
Denver, Colorado

Nani yue ni  
Rokusenyomairu no  
Totsukuni ni  
Kimi to hanarete  
Kaku mo nayamuya

For what good reason  
Did I give myself such grief  
By parting from you  
To travel six thousand miles  
Into this foreign country?

Kōsui  
Benland, Ontario

Yume naruya  
Yume narazaruya  
Mite wo tori  
Hō wo suritsukete  
Mata minaosu

Can this be a dream,  
Or perhaps it's not a dream,  
That I take her hand  
And stroke it against my cheek  
Only to do it again?

Kōraishi Kusuda  
Los Angeles, California

Ako ari to  
Omou Itaria  
Sensen no  
Hageshisa tsuguru  
Rajio kyū nari

Very urgent is  
The radio's report of  
War's intensity  
On the Italian front lines  
Where I fear my son now fights.

Akino Abe  
Fresno, California

Aganaishi  
Bakari no terebi wo  
Hanarezaru  
Kora sekitatete  
Nekasu koyoi mo

Tonight once again  
I must hurry off to bed  
My transfixed children  
Who will not be moved away  
From the TV I just bought.

Sumiko Kuwahara  
Los Angeles, California

Amerika no  
Kora wo oshiura  
Ko no oya to  
Ware mo minzoku no  
Hokori wo motan

Though the parent of  
A son who teaches children  
In America,  
I also take great pride in  
Our national origin.

Suzuran Yamashita  
Los Angeles, California

Hanadayori  
Tōzakarisumu  
Kōyū yori  
Ukeshi ashita wa  
Yuki no furitsugu

News of blossoming  
Cherry trees comes from my friend  
Who lives far away,  
While here on the very next day  
The snow continues to fall.

Aiko Iwata  
Russell, Colorado

Sukoyaka ni  
Hatarakiuru wo  
Sachi to shite  
Kono mazushisa wa  
Nagekazu aran

Fortunate enough  
To be able to labor  
In sturdy good health,  
I have no cause to regret  
This poverty I live in.

Sueko Nakagawa  
Seattle, Washington

Ōumi no  
Ushio no hate no  
Yamato naru  
Utsukushiki kuni zo  
Wasuregatashimo

Oh how hard it is  
For me to forget that land--  
Beautiful Japan  
Lying at the further shore  
Of the great wide ocean sea.

Ichirō Taki  
Denver, Colorado



Kokuzoku to  
Kenasareshi fubo  
Ima wa tada  
Kansha no koe to  
Kawari ureshimo

How nice for a change  
That parents who were denounced  
As traitors now hear  
Voices that speak only of  
Praise and appreciation.

Akie Todo  
Seattle, Washington

Ijinshu no  
Naka ni majirite  
Mishin fumu  
Tazuki mo tanoshi  
Mitose wo narete

After three whole years,  
Making a living treading  
A sewing machine  
Among alien people  
Has now become quite pleasant.

Yukari Tomita  
Seattle, Washington

Yamu yue ni  
Senji no kashū ni  
Inokorinu  
Kibishiki mono wo  
Ishiki shinagara

Staying behind in  
Wartime California  
Because of illness,  
I felt such an awareness  
Of severe hostility.

Hisō Fujikura  
Hondo, California

Hatsuharu to  
Nareba yōji no  
Shinobarete  
Oibane tsukishi  
Kokyō natsukashi

The recollection  
Of New Year's in my childhood  
And playing the game  
Battledore and shuttlecock  
Make me long for my homeland.

Kōrō Koyama  
Montreal, Canada

Miharukasu  
Shimo no ashita no  
No no hate ni  
Asahi kagayaku  
Dai Mishishippi

I look far beyond  
The end of the field tipped with  
Winter morning frost  
To the early sun bright'ning  
The deep wide Mississippi.

Jafui Suzuki  
Missouri



Waga senshu  
Ayaushi to mishi  
Sono setsuna  
Omowazu hōgo de  
Ganbare to sakebu

The very moment  
That the Japanese athlete  
Was close to defeat,  
Without thinking I shouted  
In Japanese, "Don't give up!"

Tetsugo Kurume  
Los Angeles, California

Yuku fune mo  
Nakute nagamuru  
Koronbiya  
Kawabata hiroschi  
Haruhi no shita ni

Under the spring sun,  
Not even a ship in sight,  
I stood on the bank  
Of the wide Columbia  
And stared across the river.

Shizue Iwatsuki  
Hood River, Oregon

Sugatami no  
Mae ni tachitsutsu  
Naki haha no  
Omokage ni nishi  
Ware ni miirinu

Standing there before  
My image in the mirror  
I looked intently  
And saw myself reflected  
As my late mother's likeness.

Takako Hotta  
Seattle, Washington

Asazuke no  
Nasu shioaji no  
Yoki wo ete  
Oodoroku hodo ni  
Shoku wa susuminu

The light saltiness  
Of the fresh eggplant pickles  
Was so delicious  
That I kept on eating them  
In surprising quantity.

Tetsuryō Wakimoto  
North Platte, Nebraska

(A farewell for my first son when he left for war)

Itsu no hi ka  
Ware mata toran  
Waga kora no  
Nigireru kono te  
Hanashigatakari

Perhaps once some day  
I will take again the hands  
Of all my children  
In these hands to which they clung--  
How hard it was to let them go.

Jō Tanaka  
Bloomfield, Michigan

Imonhin wo  
Uke (tori) te yorokobu\*  
Harakara no  
Tayori wo yomu wa  
Tanoshikiroka mo

Oh, great is my joy  
To read my mail from Japan  
Where my family  
Tells of the great happiness  
At receiving my presents.

Mitsuki Hagiwara  
Alliance, Nebraska

The tanka below, whose composer is unknown, won a prize from the magazine Shinjoen [New women's garden] in Japan. When Keiko Echigo read it in Seattle, she was moved to write the tanka which follows it.

Asu wa naki  
Kome niwa furezu  
Hitotsu hi ni  
Koyoi mo fukaku  
Haha to yagō su

We never mention  
Not having one grain of rice  
But by late lamplight  
Side by side, mother and I  
Work long hours into each night.

Asu wa kome  
Naki kunibito no  
Ue omoi  
Yūbe shizuka ni  
Ware wa kome togu

I quietly wash  
Rice for our family's meal  
As I am thinking  
Of our many countrymen  
Who tomorrow will have none.

Keiko Echigo  
Seattle, Washington

Tokotowa ni  
Inochi to kayou  
Tannishō\*\*  
Mokusō suru mo  
Karisome narazu

Nothing trivial  
And nothing transitory  
Do I find reading  
The book of Tannishō with  
Its message: eternal life.

Kaoru Urano  
Eon, Colorado

---

\*The "tori" is not sounded in reading the poem.

\*\*The Tannishō is an essay purported to be the teachings of Shinran, founder of the Jōdo Shin sect of Buddhism.

Fukuro no mama  
Kashi wo tēburu ni  
Mottekitsu  
Hitorizumai no  
Tomo wa motenashi

It's living alone,  
I suppose, that allows one  
To serve refreshments  
Simply, occasionally,  
From out of a paper bag.

Tomoko Hosaka  
Mitchell, Nebraska

Shizen no  
Yūdai no fūkō ni  
Mitoreite  
Omowazu orabu  
Ware kowadaka ni

Fascinated by  
The vast grandeur of nature,  
Inadvertantly  
And in a very loud voice  
I shouted out to praise it.

Hatsumi Murata  
Fort Lupton, Colorado

Komagoma to  
Tsuma to itawaru  
Ako mireba  
Issei no yo towa  
Hedatari no ari

Observing the warmth  
Between my son and his wife,  
I notice the gap  
Between their generation  
And ours--such a great distance.

En Watada  
Fort Lupton, Colorado

Kawaru yo ni  
Mukashi no mama ni  
Furusato wo  
Ako ni katereba  
Omoi no haruru

I tell my daughter  
About my old home village,  
And though the world's changed,  
Telling her the way it was  
Has cleared my mind completely.

Toshiko Kawamoto  
Montreal, Canada

Haisengo  
Warera wa hone wo  
Amerika ni  
Uzumuru kakugo  
Sayuragi mo nashi

Since Japan's defeat  
There has been no wavering  
In our intention  
To lay our bodies to rest,  
Buried in America.

Tokai Yoshihashi  
San Francisco, California

Dōkyō no  
Namari natsukashiku  
Tachigikeru  
Ware wo ibukashimi  
Mimukitamaeri

Questioningly,  
He turned and gave me a look  
As I eavesdropped,  
Nostalgically list'ning  
To my native dialect.

Naozumi Mizoguchi  
Los Angeles, California

Muishiki ni  
Shoki to tatakaeru  
Shōnenra ni  
Jūdō oshiete  
Umazu yūbe wo

Mindless of the heat  
The young boys can still fight on  
Singlemindedly,  
So I don't tire teaching the  
Evening judo class.

Tasuka Hagio  
Los Angeles, California

Hi no hoteri  
Nao nokoritaru  
Hanazono no  
Yarimizu ni shiroku  
Tsuki no kage sasu

The moon's reflection  
Shines white in the water course  
Bringing water to  
Flower beds where the sun's warmth  
Still lingers in the garden.

Shizuye Umemoto  
Los Angeles, California

Watabatake  
Shiroku narikite  
Kōgai no  
Kokujinburaku  
Nigiwaidashinu

Now the cotton fields  
Have become completely white,  
The village of blacks  
In the suburbs of the town  
Has started to thrive again.

Kensuke Ayaori  
Anberry, California

Yū hayaku  
Niwa no doko yorika  
Nioikuru  
Jazumin ni tsukara  
Iyuru ga gotoshi

In early evening  
From somewhere in the garden  
Comes the fragrance of  
Jasmine, and it is as if  
All my fatigue has left me.

Kaneko Murayama  
Los Angeles, California

Usugumori  
Usurasamusa ga  
Mi ni shimite  
Furusato koeba  
Kyō mo nakunari

Again the grey skies  
And the cold bite in the air  
Chill me to the bone;  
Again I cry with longing  
For my homeland in Japan.

Kinoko Kamigama  
Summerland [B.C.] Canada

Futo kizuku  
Shizuka ni narishi  
Ko no shisen  
Hekiga no akaki  
Hana ni arurashi

I guess that by chance  
My baby's line of vision  
Found the red flower  
On the wall so suddenly--  
He became very quiet.

(Fifth month after my child was born)

Tamiko Abe  
Caldwell, Idaho

Sankyō ni  
Hito to naru ware  
Amerika no  
Sanya ni tateba  
Sabishikarikeri

When I who grew up  
In a small mountain valley  
Found myself here in  
America's vast terrain,  
I felt so lost and alone.

Saburō Omatsu  
Chicago, Illinois

Kotoage no  
Toki wa sugitari  
Waga tami no  
Susumu yukute wa  
Nagaki me ni miyo.

The time has passed now  
For all recriminations.  
Take the long-range view  
To see where the future lies  
For our Japanese people.

Yōzō Takayama  
San Francisco, California

Waga mi ni wa  
Kiru koto mo naki  
Hanayageru  
Doresu nuitsugu  
Naishoku nareba

It being my lot  
To sew for extra income,  
I never may wear  
Them--the colorful dresses  
I make for other people.

Miye Takeuchi  
Los Angeles, California

Ochiba taku  
Kemuri no sue ni  
Miidetari  
Kinmonwan ni  
Shizumu yū hi wo

It was at the end  
Of the smoke which curled away  
From dead leaves burning  
That I saw the setting sun  
Sink beyond the Golden Gate.

Shinobu Matsuura  
Berkeley, California

Kakkoku no  
Ijinshu no naka ni  
Majiriite  
Yuki ni okureshi  
Yogisha machiori

Waiting for my train,  
Late tonight because of snow,  
I stood there among  
Races from every country,  
Mixing with all the people.

Rinko Kashima  
Chicago, Illinois

Ametsuchi wa  
Yuragedo sara ni  
Kawari naki  
Yamatoshimane no  
Kimi no ishizue

If the universe  
Should suddenly change its course,  
Still Japan's firm base,  
Its Emperor's dignity,  
Would remain eternally.

Hakudō Furuyama  
Chicago, Illinois

Moro no te ni  
Amaru ni wo sage  
Onomo onomo  
Kanshihei no shisen ni  
Osara norikomu

Carrying too much  
Baggage for our hands to hold,  
Ev'ry one of us  
Is herded in, observed by  
Watchful military guards.

(Entering a War Relocation Camp)

Nogiku Itoi  
Seattle, Washington

Ono ga te ni  
Hoseru budō wa  
Umi koete  
Amami ni ueshi  
Kora ni okuran

These raisins I dried  
With my hands will I send  
Across the ocean  
To hungry little children  
Who are still starving for sweets.

Rison Kurihara  
Livingston, California

Hātone no  
Mifuyu no samusa  
Kataru beki  
Waga tsuma wa haya  
Kono yo ni masazu

The cold of winter  
At Heart Mountain is something  
I'd like to discuss  
With my husband, but, alas,  
He died a long time ago.

Fumiye Okada  
Los Angeles, California

Terebijyon ni  
Mimaerasuru  
Ryōheika  
Hogaraka ni emeba  
Tadana ureshiki

I am simply fill'd  
With joy: on television  
There is a scene of  
Their majesties cheerfully  
Smiling to the whole nation.

Takako Kanbe  
Los Angeles, California

Mada mizaru  
Yome yori no fumi  
Yomiitsutsu  
Hajimete oboyu  
Yome no itoshisa

Reading the letter  
From the new daughter-in-law  
I have never met,  
I feel it for the first time--  
Affection for the new bride.

Takako Iino  
Oakland, California

Atarashiki  
Jidōsha sumai  
Sonawarite  
Kekkon no hi wo  
Matsu futari nari

Equipped already  
With a new car and new house,  
The two young people  
Are waiting now only for  
The imminent wedding day.

Kiyoko Niedo  
San Leandro, California

Taiheiyō  
Ōdanhiko wa  
Itsu no hi to  
Katarifurishi ga  
Ako koeyukeri

Trans-Pacific flight--  
We talked about how we might  
Do it some fine day;  
And now my son really has  
Crossed the ocean to Japan.

Kinko Yanamoto  
Los Angeles, California



Sewādo Pāku no  
Nipponzakura  
Mimu to koish:  
Kuruma obitadashi  
Nichihakujin no

Many cars of both  
Japanese and Caucasians  
Visit Seward Park  
To see the cherry blossoms  
From Japan, now in full bloom.

Sueko Ujimoto  
Seattle, Washington

Komichino ni  
Ako majiwarite  
Bokin suru  
Dōbō shiminken  
Kakutoku no tame

Our children, mixing  
In with the community,  
Are collecting funds  
To secure civil rights for  
Japanese in this country.

Yoshiko Nishizaka  
Brooklyn, New York

Nihonbochi  
Seisōgyō ni  
Shitagaishi  
Kyō ichinichi no  
Tsukare sugashimo

The tired feeling  
One gets from working all day  
Sweeping and cleaning  
The Japan cemetery  
Is a refreshing feeling.

Yoshio Yao  
San Francisco, California

Rosu anzerusu  
Kiri koredemo  
Sanshyain kyahorunia  
Ka to kiku tōbu  
Yori kitaru mono

The person visiting  
From eastern United States  
Asked regarding  
The fog of Los Angeles,  
"Can this be sunny California?"

Osamu Kada  
Fresno, California

Michi mo naki  
Yama no susobe ni  
Ie arite  
Hadakauma ni noru  
Indean no kora

In the trackless hills,  
At the foot of the mountain  
A house can be seen,  
And Indian children ride  
Bareback on the horses there.

Sadaichi Kawawaki  
Los Angeles, California



Murayama no  
Kaguroki naka ni  
Taki nomi ga  
Shiroku kasuka ni  
Yureotsuru miyu

Deep within the range  
Of surrounding dark mountains,  
Just the waterfall  
Can be dimly seen, whitish,  
Swinging out, cascading down.

(On the way to Yosemite)

Yaeko Kawahara  
Los Angeles, California

Hyakugodo no  
Shonetsu ni aegi  
Mishin fumu  
Waga dochi no kao  
Ikarerugotoshi

Panting in this heat  
Of one hundred five degrees,  
Treading their machines,  
My friends have angry faces--  
Or so it seems to me.

Fumiko Seiji  
Los Angeles, California

Itatsuki no  
Ko wo shinobitsutsu  
Ineyaranu  
Mimi ni sabishiku  
Mushi ga ne kikoyu

I cannot sleep well,  
Anxious about my sick child.  
And while I worry  
The cries of many insects  
Sound so forlorn to my ears.

Sato Akahoshi  
Santa Fe, California

Tennō no  
Tami omowaruru  
Mikokoro wo  
Shinobite ware wa  
Sode nurasu kana

When I contemplate  
The clear consideration  
Of the Emperor  
For all his country's people,  
How wet with tears are my sleeves!

T. Akita  
Cleveland, Ohio

Ichoku no  
Tami no naka yori  
Yukawa ide(te)  
Waga kunibito wo  
Nagusamenikeri

Rising from among  
His hundred million fellows,  
Yukawa brings pride  
To all Japan's citizens,  
The first Nobel Prize winner.

Midori Yano  
Los Angeles, California

Hanseiki no  
Nagaki tsukihi wo  
Arifurite  
Shikagoshi ima wa  
Kimi ni fumi kaku

A half century  
Of long days and months I've been  
Around here and there,  
But now I'm in Chicago  
Writing a letter to you.

Noboru Murakami  
Chicago, Illinois

Ta ga fuka ka  
Tsuki no kono yo wo  
Nagarekuru  
Shirabe yukashiki  
Fue no ne no iro

Who can be playing  
On this lovely moonlit night?  
The flute's sound is sweet  
And the melody tender  
Flowing this way in the air.

Tokuzō Watanabe  
Brazil

Kaze no oto  
Futo shi yamitaru  
Tamayura wa  
Hata utsu ware no  
Kuwa no oto nomi

In the brief moment  
The sighing of the spring wind  
Suddenly ceases,  
I hear only the sound of  
My hoe scratching the furrow.

Shūichi Taki  
Brazil

Sentaku wo  
Oete shibaraku  
Iwa no ue ni  
Inete nagamuru  
Aoki ōzora

At last I've finished  
Washing my load of laundry  
And can take some time  
To lie down upon a rock  
And gaze up at the blue sky.

Hiromu Ide  
Brazil

Kashizukite  
Ikutabime ka no  
Tomo no fumi  
Haha ni naru hi  
Chikashi to naru

Since her marriage  
She's written many letters,  
But today's letter  
Brings especially good news  
That she'll soon be a mother.

Angetsu Satake  
Brazil

Usugasumu  
Tōsanmyaku wo  
Nagamureba  
Nyūshoku tōji no  
Omoide arata

As I gazed afar  
And saw a thin fog moving  
On the mountain range,  
I recalled again the view  
Entering the plantation.

Misao Shimada  
Brazil

Shimaiyu ni  
Hitarite oreba  
Shito-shito to  
Oto shimeyaka ni  
Ame wa furitsuku

Sounds of falling rain  
Are so gentle and quiet,  
Lulling me softly  
As I'm soaking in the tub,  
Last one in this evening's bath.

Saneyoshi Murakami  
Brazil

Kanbatsu ni  
Futaba no suika  
Shioretari  
Chikaki ido yori  
Mizu hakobiyaru

I brought water to  
The stunted watermelons  
From the well nearby  
Because they had been withered  
By this year's terrible drought.

Junji Kaneko  
Brazil

Fuku kaze ni  
Shirayuri no hana  
Nioikuru  
Kono yamazato no  
Asa no sugashisa

On the blowing wind  
Comes fragrance of white lilies  
Carrying with it  
The early morning freshness  
Of this small mountain village.

Tamigorō Itō  
Brazil

Karenan to  
Omou hachi (no) ki ni  
Me wo mitsuke  
Kokoku no nyūsu  
Chikara shite kiku

I listen to news  
Of my native land, Japan,  
With renewed vigor--  
I found a sprout on the tree  
I thought was dying in its pot.

Heijirō Sonoda  
Montana, Washington

APPENDIX II  
(TANKA IN ENGLISH)

American poets other than the late Miss Lucille Nixon have significantly contributed to tanka poetry's progress. After Adelaide Crapsey, whose "Cinquains" was published in 1915, an American woman, Mrs. Frances Burnett, wife of the military attache to the American Embassy in Tokyo, submitted a tanka written in Japanese to the 1931 Palace Poetry Party for which she received the honor of special recognition.\* Since Miss Nixon's winning tanka poem in 1957, two American poets have produced tanka poems. Their works were not in Japanese, but instead were written in English. The poets were Joyce Lobner from Palo Alto, California and Father Neal Henry Lawrence in Tokyo, Japan. Joyce Lobner learned about composing tanka poetry by reading Sounds from the Unknown. When she read the book, she had so much interest and understood tanka so well that she was able to compose tanka by herself. She sent her works to Tomoe Tana and they were published in Tomoshihi. After publishing Sounds from the Unknown, Lucille Nixon and Tamoe Tana had dreamed of producing a work which included American poets and their English tanka poems as well as translated Japanese poems. With Tomoshihi, that dream came true.

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\* Frances H.C. Burnett, Nisseichō (A Note of Sun and Stars) (Tokyo: Kokufūga kyōkai, 1921), "Preface."

Father Neal Lawrence found tanka poetry in Japan. While he was translating poems of the late Dr. Nambara Shigeru, who was President of Tokyo University, he learned about tanka poetry and started to compose his own which he published in two volumes.

Before Father Lawrence published his first volume of poetry in Tokyo, he visited Palo Alto and read Tomoshihi. Consequently, two American poets have been influenced by the tanka of the late Miss Nixon and by Tomoe Tana's conviction that tanka poetry must be known by the American people so that tanka poems would be composed in a language other than Japanese. Together with Lucille Nixon and Joyce Lobner, then, Father Lawrence has contributed significantly to the great progress of tanka poetry in English. Their activities have made history in the tanka poetry world in the United States. Furthermore, Dr. Wesley Dunn is teaching Japanese tanka poetry to his classes in Arkansas. The growth of American Japanese poetry has made a great rainbow over the entire nation. These three American poets' activities writing English tanka poetry add a new chapter to the history of the tanka poetry world in the United States.

The tanka works by these three American poets must be added in this chapter. They follow.\*

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\*Lucille Nixon's and Joyce Lobner's poems are taken from Tomoshihi (passim). Neal Henry Lawrence's poems are from Rushing Amid Tears and Soul's Inner Sparkle (see Bibliography).

Above a coral isle  
There floats a mushroom cloud.  
Is this a bilious dream?  
Awake, I know it must remain  
Mirage upon an inner sea.

Oh, the sinking feeling  
That came to me  
In the lobby of the hotel  
When a man ran in  
Shouting, "The President is dead."

Arresting on canvas  
Places, persons and things.  
Van Gogh preserved  
Each in its own  
And for always its immortality.

By Lucille Nixon

The rhythmic ching, ching,  
Ching, ching of the tambourine  
Of the park cricket  
Slowed as autumn's chill approached,  
Yet defiant of life's end.

As I walked under  
The golden ginkgo tree,  
Plop! Upon my head  
Came down a ripe ginko nut,  
A surprise gift of fall.

The roofs of Japan  
Float in the evening sky  
As the sun goes down:  
In the space beneath, they sit,  
The family are gathering.

By Neal Henry Lawrence

Poor body, worn out,  
Broken, dying--no longer  
Beautiful: my pride.  
Its occupant grows in grace,  
Spirit alive, aspiring.

The birds sing all night,  
They warble, chirp and twitter  
Is it concert,  
Or only giving notices  
Of joy in possession?

Suddenly: quiet.  
What has happened in the night?  
Is everyone dead?  
No. Only snow falling.  
Snow is the speech of silence.

By Joyce Lobner

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