

- Sheppard, Richard. "The Crisis of Language." *Modernism*. Ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976. 323-36.
- Stevens, Wallace. *Letters of Wallace Stevens*. Ed. Holly Stevens. New York: Knopf, 1981.
- Stevens, Wallace. *Opus Posthumous*. Ed. Milton J. Bates. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.
- Tyrell, John. *Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano*. New York: Anchor P, 1987.
- Upward, Allen. *Scented Leaves*. Devon: Interim, 1987.
- Waley, Arthur. *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems*. New York: Knopf, 1919.
- Watson, Burton. *Chinese Lyricism: Shih Poetry from the Second to the Twelfth Century*. New York: Columbia UP, 1971.
- Williams, W.C. *Selected Essays*. New York: New Directions Book, 1954.
- Williams, W.C. *Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams*. Ed. John C. Thirlwall. New York: New Directions, 1957.
- Yeats, W.B. *The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.
- Yeats, W.B. *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*. London: Macmillan, 1950.
- Yeats, W.B. *Letters on Poetry from W.B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley*. London: Oxford UP, 1964.
- Yeats, W.B. *Yeats's Vision Papers Vol. 3*. Ed. R.A. Martinoch and M.M. Harper. London: Macmillan, 1992.
- Yip, Wai-Lim. *Ezra Pound's Cathay*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969.
- Yip, Wai-Lim. *Chinese Poetry: Major Modes and Genres*. Berkeley: California: U of California P, 1976.
- Zach, Natan. "Imagism and Vorticism." *Modernism*. Ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976. 228-42.

NORIKO TAKEDA

The Modern *Tanka* and Yosano Akiko

THE BIRTH OF THE *TANKA*

For more than a thousand years in Japan, the *Waka* (song) served as an archetypal model of poetry, a compressed unity with its restricted frame of 31 syllables. Often written even now in the continuous one-line style, the *Waka* asserts itself as the fundamental poetic form to embody the minimal element of language of an artifact, i.e., a word. The unifying short poem, whose modernized version is called *Tanka* (short song), foregrounded and established Japanese symbols such as Mt. Fuji or cherry blossoms. The short form of iterative 5 and 7 syllables in rhythmic expression and musicality, the simple pattern of 5-7-5-7-7, allowed for a limitless possibility of poetic expression. Over time, poets solidified the *Waka*'s generality into a homogenized voice constituting a closely knitted network of intertextuality. The *Waka* may be viewed as an omnipresent iconic representation of the country of its origin: a slender string of islands surrounded by the ocean.

The elitist literary community that formed around the imperial court in the Heian period (794-1192) organized and supported the tradition of the short, reticent poetic form of the *Waka* for its aesthetic elegance. The standard for selection, or the purification as self-effacement legitimated by Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241), was required for the *Waka*'s organic pattern for "everyone" (Thwaite xxxvii); i.e., that which can be easily poetized, defamiliarizing itself as the short, prototypical mode of verbal composition. The *Waka* further served as the matrix of the 17-syllable *Haiku* which appeared in the early Edo period (1603-1867). The *Waka*'s aesthetics of conservativeness, implicitly criticized by the parodic *Haiku* for elevating everyday sensations with its syllabic structure 5-7-5, was firmly codified by the successive compilation of court anthologies. The authorization began with *Kokin Waka shū* (*The Collected Waka-Poems of Past and Present*) in the early tenth century. By that time, the longer verse forms found in *Manyō-shū* (*The Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*) — which is the oldest anthology of Japanese poetry, compiled in the eighth century — had become totally neglected. Thus authenticated internally and externally, the 31-syllable short poem was successful in inculcating poets with its conventional aristocratic requirements, which imposed limitations both on the themes and terms. As it is indicated by Anthony Thwaite, "unrequited or fading love, the

sad lessons of transience which nature teaches us, the quiet pleasures of solitude" (xxxviii) were to be enveloped by the "gentle melancholy" or *mono no aware* in Japanese. The pathetic fusion was expressed in the selected vocabulary which followed "strong restrictions for the combination of words" (Kawamoto 85-87). One of the peaks of the symbolic *Waka* is represented by the work of Princess Shokushi in the late twelfth century:

Even in the evening
Should we wait?
In the deserted field, Adashi-no,
From a dewdrop on the grass,
I hear a storm rise.¹

The speaker's frustrated passion toward her insincere partner is sublimated by the incantatory correspondence with a tempest in the outer world. The desired union is realized by "Enge," a suite of words in a conventional relation, i.e., "field" ("Adashi-no"), "dewdrop," "grass," and "storm," in addition to "Kake-kotoba," a major noun with specific images and meanings. Originally a proper noun for a graveyard in Kyoto, "Adashi-no" designates the deserted speaker, as well as the unreliable lover and reality, including the negative adjective, "adashi," meaning "vain." "Dewdrop" is also connected to tears flooding the flowering field, "hana-no." The contrasting major noun, "Adashi-no," is glorified by the endless absorption of negativity and positivity.

The *Waka* survived and continued to flourish on the basis of its ability to create extreme tension and thus preserving the refined poetics of anonymity for ambivalent, lyrical verse. In Japanese poetry the short poem shared prestige with works written in classical Chinese called *Kanshi*, which aimed at intellectualism through verbalization. Until the era of reformation which officially began with the Meiji restoration in 1868, the term "song" had designated the *Waka*, "poem" the *Kanshi* (Seki 8).

The processes of modernization — especially urbanism, individualization, and commercial and capitalist alienation — were markedly under way from the Genroku period (1688-1704) with the rise of the mercantile class. This is reflected in contemporary Kabuki theatre which used splashes of colour to highlight its mimetic diversification. The Tokugawa Shōgunate, however, persisted in closing the country to the outside world in order to retain the social system based on feudalism throughout the Edo period. After Restoration, the imperial government started to promote Westernization in every cultural domain

1 My translation is based on Sasaki, *Shin-kokin Waka shū*. A Japanese *nō* play called *Teika* designates the poet as a partner of Fujiwara no Teika. When not indicated otherwise, all translations from the Japanese are mine.

in order to accelerate the restructuring of society. Starting with the arrival of the American M.C. Perry and his man-of-war in 1853 for a commercial treaty, the waves of "developing capitalism from the West in search of its enlarged market" (Ishii 1) had occupied the country in order to dissipate the time lag caused by the old policy. Thus, in response to pressures to join global movements in economy and politics, Japan's new regime strove for centralization and the depersonalization of the autonomy represented by its segmented agricultural communities.

Japan's modernist reformation of poetic language converges on the reconsideration of the formality and convention of the dominant *Waka*. This dominance was viewed as suppressing the spontaneous, lyrical flow of the individual self, in turn seen as the key element in the new-born and industrial society. The reformers were divided among themselves, according to their desire to maintain or to abandon the syllabic frame. Through the latter option, the long, "modern-style" poem modelled on Western works was inaugurated. Creative guidelines were represented by the translated corpus of Western authors such as Shakespeare, Thomas Gray, Tennyson, and Longfellow.

The line of development of those influential reformers who retained the classical 31-syllable structure to reform the modern *Tanka* originated in the middle of the Meiji era (1868-1912) with Ochiai Naobumi, who advocated the elimination of the limits on "the materials, expression, diction and thought" and encouraged a creation of poetry with originality (Keene 14, 15). His major follower was Yosano Tekkan (1873-1935) who propagated "the self's poem" as one of the 13 tenets manifested in his organ he named *Myōjō* (*Morning Star*). In its sixth issue in 1900, he presented the guideline for the creation of a new poetry which would reflect the inventiveness of the individual author. Old poems are to be respected but not to be imitated (the second and third tenets). The first five tenets as well as the ninth and tenth begin with the morpheme meaning "self." His early essay in a newspaper, "Bōkoku no ne" ("On the Waka Poems destroying Our Country," 1894-95), elevating "Masuraoburi" (manliness) — the aesthetics of the ancestral *Manyō-shū* — as a starting point for a new poetry, had already broken ground to introduce the *Myōjō* school's idealistic odes. The romantic group had the pseudonym, "Seikin" ("Star and Violet," see Hinatsu 1953b, 367), that symbolizes the pre-feminist works of Yosano Akiko (1878-1942), Yamakawa Tomiko, and Chino Masako. The accumulation of Tekkan's self-portraits in the following piece advances his claim to embody the limited self in an inversion of kaleidoscopic images:

I am a male child,
A child of temper, a child of pride,
A child of the sword,
A child of poetry, a child of love,
And ah! a child of anguish. (Keene 20)

Representing itself as an aporia in Tekkan's manifesto, the word "self" may be viewed as designating the avant-gardist expression of Japanese nationalism which led to the war with China (1894-95), Russia (1904-05), and World War II. As a teacher of language, Tekkan himself first visited Korea in April 1895 (Keene 16; Shinma 1981, 403). His fourth tenet, he proclaims his intention to create "new national poems." From another perspective, his foregrounded word reflects the collective anxiety persisting in the "constructive Meiji" era (Hinatsu 1953b, 348) threatened by the aggression of difference (the sweeping societal change) and otherness (the international advancement). As the minimized, controllable kingdom of Japan is developing into an Otherness, "self" corresponds to "a word" as the threshold of communication. In the tenet, Tekkan assimilates "self" (*jiga*) with "poem" (*shi*) by the shortest, one-syllable linkage for apposition, *no* (of). For the romantic poet, writing is supposed to equal the self. Tekkan inaugurated the Shinshi-sha (New Poetry Society) in November 1899 and proceeded with the publication of the magazine *Myōjō* in April of the following year. The magazine reveals its modernist ambition by the publication of both new *Tanka* pieces and "modern-style" poetry. In addition, it contained Western decorative *art nouveau* paintings to mark the rejuvenation of the century.²

As indicated by the sixth tenet in the 1900 issue, Tekkan intended a *Tanka* piece as an authentically artistic, autonomous whole, calling it *Tanshi* (short poem). The independent poetic unit must be a symbol of the foregrounded self so that it can reach the heavenly apogee on wings of romantic imagination. Following C.S. Peirce's idea of ontological growth by notional-physical language through the translating sequence of emerging interpreters,³ the communicable short poem can be seen as a revelation of the hidden cosmos secluded by the delineated self. Tekkan borrowed poetic ideas in a Promethean way, thus embodying himself in art, through the editing of his partner's first collection. (However, according to Okina Kumi [Itsumi], the assistance of Tekkan may have involved the ordering of the poems as well as the selection of titles [23].) And following Tekkan, in the pathetic constellation of Seikin School poetry and with expressions such as "starry child," "rainbow," "finger in blood," or "peach blossoms," Yosano Akiko's *Tangled Hair* (1901) occupies the universal throne, identifying the efflorescent blackness of hair with the centric female body of crystallization.

2 The eighth issue was banned owing to the publication of the "sensational" nude modelled on a French original (Itsumi 310).

3 Peirce defines his "interpretant" as follows: "A sign ... is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign..." (qtd. in Savan 15).

THE FEMININE VOICE OF YOSANO AKIKO

Yosano Akiko's collected *Tanka* poems, entitled *Midaregami* (*Tangled Hair*), were published in Tokyo in August 1901. The painting on the cover represents the profile of a girl with heart-shaped hair (see the picture in the Appendix). The way crown is shot through by Cupid's arrow, manifesting the feminine pride in the author-speaker's privileged talent. Causing "an immediate sensation" (Keene 24), the work was favourably received by many Japanese readers who had been waiting for artful representation embellishing the drastic change in their society. The opening piece is as follows:

Now, in the starlit heavens,
Sweet whispering of love has ceased
Within the tapestry of night;
Lo, in the world below,
The straying hair of the girl —

The poem creates an expanding poetic universe in an instant of time, using the terms "night," "the starlit heavens," and "the world below"; cosmic images collide with each other, striking sparks in a limited body of 31 syllables. The prescribed space is enlarged beyond all limits by a powerful explosion allowing the speaker to praise love with a resounding voice of iridescent echoes. Love is the main theme which seeks to speak for all perspectives: romantic and erotic, metaphysical and realistic, universal and individual. The original Japanese of the first piece in which the words for "star" ("hoshi") and "now" ("ima") are connected by the shortest tie of one syllable, "of" ("no"), forces the dimensions of time and space together. The following example represents a typical one-line rendition (vertical in the 1901 original): "Yo no chō ni / sasameki tsukishi / hoshi no ima wo / gekai no hito no / bin no hotsure yo." From the very beginning, the reader is compelled to read the text not only following the syntagmatic line with an ending at the thirty-first syllable, but also to grasp the entire volume as one synthesized complex whose elements are closely connected beyond the boundary of each one-line *Tanka*, a breath of catharsis connecting death to life.

In the second piece, the negative word, "sins," offers more expansion to the world, referring to Genesis and an immemorial lapse of time, while, at the same time, arousing the reader's sympathy with the ironically modest speaker-creator. S/he is solaced by the shared sense of complicity. It is relevant to keep in mind that the term "Bible" appears in later pieces of the collection's section.⁴

4 Christianity was legalized with Restoration. A translated hymnbook was first published in 1875 (Hasegawa 134).

Let poems bear witness:

Who dare deny the flower of the field

Its color red?

How moving!

Girl with sins in spring! (Goldstein and Shinoda 9)

The speaker who transforms her individual flooding of mind to the immense communal space at the beginning of the work should be expected to make use of the evocative power of all terms "cram(med)" (Keene 23) into 31 syllables to produce an ever more stimulating fetish that devours the momentary, but repeated death at the end of the poetic line. Appearance presupposes energy and meaning; and the meaning, or the Peircean interpretant, is existent, denying absence, whether it be negative or positive:

The hair, five feet long,

Combed,

Expanded softly into water,

The heart of this maiden, however,

Will be kept a secret forever!

Lo, that girl of twenty springs;

How beautiful,

Her black hair streaming through her comb

In all the brightness

Of her vanity season!

The woman's pride conveyed by the above two examples does not exhaust nor reject the reader with its imposing egoism. The speaker adopts the objective narrative voice of the third person with the limitation of her beautiful self hinted at by the third line of the first piece and the concluding parts of the second; her physical beauty, symbolized by long, black hair, must absorb energy from Nature to reach its apogee. On the other hand, the short, evanescent *Tanka* poems are relieved of a semantic surplus by diffusing sublimation. She appreciates the gift given by the supernatural referred to as "God," one of the most favoured appellations in Yosano Akiko's collection: it appears 46 times in the 399 poems.⁵ Her self remains open to become a collective self. Furthermore, in addition to "I" mingling with "we," the whirling, universal life force is identified with God by the general title, according to the Buddhist and Shintoist legacy of ontological thought. The English word, "hair" corresponds to "kami" in Japanese, a homonym for the term "Omnipotence." In the original Japanese title, "Midare-jami," the assimilation of the first consonant "k" to "g" is operative, thus

suggesting the potential of transformational energy.

The first section's title, "Enji-Murasaki" ("Crimson-Purple"), represents a compound originated by Yosano Akiko herself (Itsumi 312). The title surrounding the colour red, which vaguely suggests puberty, also evokes the maturing colour of the central cosmic body conveyed through the transparency of falling light and hair. The title image incorporates universal oneness as a self-sufficient and organic seed of sameness and otherness, just like the iterative *Tanka* poem itself. The symbol for wholeness announces the dominance of its inaugurating section, highlighting the female author-speaker at the doorway of her literary career and married life. The head is, in fact, heavy with its black and lengthening adornment. Nevertheless, the contingent arrangement does not ascribe an absolute value to the pieces foregrounded by their position at the beginning. Moreover, the mirroring *Tanka* poems are subversive in suggesting the potential of everlasting transformation, as indicated by the crown of hair, an icon of the *Tanka* itself. What is emphasised is only the delineative oneness. Just as in the Japanese reality where homogeneous territory is endlessly enlarged from "I" to "we," "we" to "land," and "land" to "nature," the identity of content tends to be blurred, which points out the fusion of self and wholeness. The first two successive titles, "Tangled Hair" and "Enji-Murasaki" work together to illustrate the speaker-poet's intention to verbalize the cosmogony of her poetic universe that is applicable to the real world. The long, black hair appropriates the cosmic night, while the evoked white face and female body emit the shafts of sunlight as the metamorphosed lines of hair. The three fundamental colours from "Enji-Murasaki," i.e., red, blue, and black, represent the sun, sky, and darkness, meaning space and time. "Enji" (crimson or deep red) is produced from the combination of the red and black, "Murasaki" (purple) from red and blue. The mating is overdetermined for the incantation of fertile creation.

The section's title is conceived from the names of the ideal lovers, Genji and Murasaki, like their cherished, mutual affection in the renowned court story, *The Tale of Genji* of Murasaki Shikibu in the early eleventh century. The representative couple is closely tied by the flaming, celestial passion like the burning sun, symbolized by the colour red. The identification of the connecting cosmic body with the speaker-creator is also suggested in the title. With the moving of the sun, the universe changes time and colour; the combination of red, black, and blue in "Enji-Murasaki" indicates the working of the sun whose light pierces the canopy of the sky. The speaker's pride, raised to its apogee, even usurps the cosmic throne as the centre of the universe, which represents the emancipated culmination of her limited self, rather than its disappearance into the anonymous absence of cosmic darkness. Filled with the sunlight-phoenix which brings the illuminated all, Yosano Akiko's cosmos, made up from the repetition and sameness of the 31-syllable poem, dynamically dissipates the invasion of absence to be qualified as a circular symbol of positive, universal presence. As

5 I owe the counting to Fujii Hisayo.

well as the speaker-poet's desire to elicit delight from every element in the world, such as "harp," "comb," "rainbow," "kimono," "lotus," "hibiscus," or "peach," under the influence of communicative love, the brightness of spring dominates the text. The term designating the season of revival after the dead of winter is used in the collection more often than any other noun, i.e., 75 times in the 399 poems.

The following poem, one of Yosano Akiko's most sensual pieces, which were all severely criticized by conservatives at the time of publication (Itsumi 307), may apparently be labelled a violation of the elegant tradition in the Japanese *Waka*:

You have yet to touch
This soft flesh,
This throbbing blood —
Are you not lonely,
Expounder of the Way? (Goldstein and Shinoda 7)

The conflict between "soft" and "throbbing," as well as the oxymoron made by the combination of the hidden "blood" and communicated "touch," produce an image matching the author's passion for breaking through old conventions. However, a literal translation of the third line of the Japanese original reads "the waves of hot blood." Still veiled in a figurative rendering with echoes of a connotation, the image of the sea — an archetype of motherly existence — renders the snare laid by the speaker more attractive: it is natural that the "lonely" man should refuse the forbidden communion with the superlative female body.

In the next piece, she manifests the potential within herself to blossom by erotic force by using a tabooed term, "breasts," which is a sign of her communicable efflorescence:⁶

Softly I pushed open
That door
We call a mystery,
These full breasts
held in both my hands. (Goldstein and Shinoda 26)

The mysterious combination of exchangeable purity and sensuality leads us to the work of Dante-Gabriel Rossetti. Tired from passion, the speaker begins to muse, taking a posture similar to that of the Blessed Damozel in heaven: "Leaning against the railing / And lost in endless thought." She then "look[s] at the autumn

wind / Passing over / The purple flowers." The translation of Rossetti's "Damoze!" by Tozawa Kosha published in the magazine *Myōjō* from September 1900 to July 1901, just before the completion of Yosano Akiko's collection, may be considered to have impacted on the spatial or paradigmatic succession of the combined *Tanka* pieces. Commanding a panoramic observation of the upper and lower worlds, Rossetti's cosmic ballad must have played a major role in the creation of Yosano Akiko's expansive poetic universe.

The dynamism within the world is presented not only by the semantic implications, but also by repetitive stylistic features. Interrogative and imperative sentences make the speaker's voice break through the text to directly reach the heart of the reader. The "ungrammatical" nominalization of complete sentences (Kojima 73) suppresses the modified words to erupt in flowerlike cornucopia-like meaning. In one piece, a "schizophrenic" tendency can be seen (Itsumi 325), causing explosions between groups of terms for ecstatic blindness. The text's "picturesque-ness" involves the superimposition of a *Haiku* work of 17 syllables on a *Tanka* piece, which intensifies the ambiguous density of the later 31-syllable text. The following example shows the self-sufficient half within one poem, leaving a semantic demarcation between the third and fourth verses: "In the evening of spring / I am crying / Over the silk cloth of dark blue — // Wearing a kimono of bright beige, / My friend has created a poem of maturity." The doubled textualization is actualized by the poet's keen eyesight to gather the visual imagery of her poem: eyesight that can be compared to sunlight, similarly to Milton's "Lycidas" or T.S. Eliot (85). The initial title, "Tangled Hair," enforces the head section for the dialogic collection consisting of the metaphorical-metonymical Japanese short poems. Utilizing a dividing but interactive syllabic formality, Yosano Akiko and her co-operator Tekkan created a symbolically synthesized volume fusing allegorical independency and self-assertion.

In the following four sections with titles of more concrete imagery than the first one — "Ship of Lotus Flowers," "White Lily," "Young Wife of Twenty," and "The Dancers" — the author completes the images of love and creation. In doing so, the speaker invokes the hardest area hindering the completion of her love and creation, that is, the human reality which seldom follows the romantic imagination permitting everything to happen, despite its fullest potential with the incessant new birth:

The clear spring inside me
Overflowed,
Became muddy —
A child of sin you are
And so am I. (Goldstein and Shinoda 91)

6 According to Baba (48), it is Yosano Akiko who used the term "breast" in a sexually appealing context for the first time in the history of the *Waka*.

Following the central image of the crown of hair, the outcry of consumption from the first two pieces of the last section, "Thought is Spring," draws the whole work to the finale. Right after the prayer for her own "passion to burn / With whatever strength possible," she decides to actualize her potential:

Spring is short —
How could we believe
Our life to be imperishable?
I let him grope for
My full breasts with his hands. (Bownas and Thwaite 159; my modification of the translation)

The mirroring *Tanka* poem is full of intertextual reflections: in Yosano Akiko's universe of fetishistic oneness, every 31-syllable line is foregrounded as a self-sufficient whole as life. In order to appropriate mentality and physicality as the final comprisal, the last poem suggests that the poetic universe lived by the reader exists only in the dream of a girl induced by the sound of "thirteen strings." Yosano Akiko's poetic universe is created by a productive feminine voice that synthesizes cosmic diversification in a continuous binary conflict: the speaker and her lover, her divided self, purity and maturity, day and night, time and space, reality and heaven. Six chapters are separated into two groups, according to their degree of abstraction. The first and last focus on a description of the imaginary cosmos while the remaining four evoke the purported real world. The counterpart of the immensity of the cosmos — symbolized by the blackness of night — is represented by the frequently evoked white female body. From her body — at the same time the creative voice of the author — long, black hair comes forth and expands, in turn representing the darkness of cosmic space. This visual image allows the reader to recognize that, in the tangling of energy within the entire work, the world is produced out of the speaker's youthful metamorphosing of her body. It is like a "graceful lily" which is "submerged ... at the bottom of a spring" (Goldstein and Shinoda 16). Revealing a simultaneous unification and differentiation, the poet-speaker's voice is identified with light from the sun. The motif of the light as a tenor and the voice as its vehicle is manifested from the beginning of the text. Piercing the curtain of black hair of the title, the morning light in "Enji-Murasaki" generates the poetic universe. The first *Tanka* poem overdetermines the breaking by light. The tapestry of night ("Yo no chō") now lets fall the drops of musical starlight as the transformation of the overnight conversation between a couple of angels: the rhythmic sound of the second part, "sasameki tsukishi," with the repetition of the fricative "s," is represented by the twinkling star. The metamorphosis continued by earth as the rising partner of heaven: the fallen light changes itself to the lines of the black hair of an attractive female figure in the world below. The dominance of positivity in the first poem is imposed by the combination of

the flashing "star" and newborn "present" ("hoshi no ima wo"), later crystallized at the centre of the poem with six syllables breaking the *Tanka* convention.

In the images of oneness and rebirth throughout the text, the black lines of hair-words become identical with the shafts of light. Moreover, the shadow only involves the surface of the illuminating voice in the dominance of the spring as well as the syllables of reflections. The existence of darkness is temporary, as suggested by the general title which is immediately replaced by the first section's title in colour. The light becomes totally embodied, assimilating the accumulated, existential weight of the tangled hair. The first ideogram of the poet-author's pen name, which describes the sun three times, represents crystal. The textual self-reflexivity floods in a differential signification of physical language. In order to fill or complete the world with herself — thus overcoming the modernist limitations of individuality — the poet-speaker transforms her body into the expanding sunlight. Her white body of masculine strength is at the same time of pregnant motherliness. The equality of superimposed voice, light, water, jewel, hair, sun, body, and cosmos, imposes the absolute oneness as the structuring principle of the real world.

Yosano Akiko's work is avant-garde literature. It is alternately described as a "youthful, strong echo" (Hinatsu 1953a, 144) and Shinma Shinichi mentions its "sharpness" cutting through the traditional *Waka*'s ambiguous generality (1969, 98). The semiotic structure of her text — "the irregular syntax," "the private meaning of certain words," and "her elliptic style" (Keene 23) — challenges the reader. For instance, her metaphors for sunlight foreground individuality from such in the *Waka* tradition of "suffocated" convention for elegance (Kawamoto 88). Her codification of the classical *Waka* results in a fusion of "absences" and assimilates the many voices of poets and her poetry directs the reader to its historical depth by the suggested literary tradition with the citation of a title, *The Tale of Genji*, an allusion to the aristocratic life around the imperial court.

The Myōjō school's romanticism, which reaches its apex in the idealistic verbalization of Madonna by Yosano Akiko, herself the fetish of the school, incorporates the poets' strong self-consciousness seeking for the dissolution of boundaries between self and the Other by way of motherliness and language. In the overall equation of language and life, by which shouting should be the most expressive rendering, the promoter Yosano Tekkan artificially strengthened the original text based on the bodily frame of his followers, which resulted in the explosion of that consciousness. The ethos also described the admonitory picture of the naked self, which was identified with the country itself, to be drowned in battle. The final goal of lifelong commitment corresponds to the loss of sight as death, the result of the deconstruction by the powering light; death equals the returning to the motherly body of reproduction. Shutting the eyes, the dead go beyond the taboo of incest, seeking for the realization of union and rebirth. Death

represents seminal impetus as well as erotic culmination. The myth of incestuous reproduction — represented in Yosano Akiko's allegorical-symbolical overdetermined collection — is necessitated by her recognition of Japanese homogeneity, while, at the same time, it serves as the universal salvation for the limited modernist self:

Stay, sweet spring:
Wisteria at night,
Rows of maidens
In a ballroom —
How swift is time! (Goldstein and Shinoda 12)

Although every word in the text is given privileged status, a representative sign may be the "I," leading to the observing-reflecting "eye" and its sound "ai" signifies "love" in Japanese. The ideogram for "love" is, in fact, carefully avoided, thus becoming both present and invisible, in order to allow equality among the words and images in the text.

As a mother-to-be (she ultimately bore 11 children), Yosano Akiko's poetry envelops through her particular appropriation of word and image as self-universe the ultimate creative self. By her poetic powers she creates a new femininity in order to assimilate Otherness. This universal "ocean" should save the enemy as her divided self. The creation of such a nostalgic image may be an illusion. Nevertheless, the author herself claimed that her approach is more realistic than reality by according ontological status to "illusion," or poetic imagination as part of reality (*Akiko kawa* 247-48). This may also be explained by Yosano Akiko's brief passion for Tekkan that has been sublimated in her poetry. Her creation of a new self as puzzling Otherness involves alienation and anxiety; however, it is in a special moment also stimulating communicative creation. From another angle, her voice of hatred is completely absorbed by the incantation of motherhood. Weaving the modern self's victory and destiny, Yosano Akiko's avant-gardist work decidedly influenced the direction of Japanese poetry. Her poetry also initiated the feminist movement in the liberal era of Taishō (1912-26).

Okayama — Kurashiki-City

Works Cited

- "Adashi-no." *Nihon kokugo dai jiten*, 1972.
Baba, Akiko. *Kanshō: Yosano Akiko no shūka*. Tokyo: Tanka shinbunsha, 1981.
Bowmas, Geoffrey, and Anthony Thwaite, ed. and trans. *The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987.
Eliot, T.S. "The Hollow Men." *The Complete Poems and Plays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1969. 81-86.
Fuji, Hisayo. "Midaregami ni okeru aiyōgo." *Kokogo kyōku kenkyū* (April 1966): 72-74.
Goldstein, Sanford, and Shinoda Seishi, ed. and trans. *Tangled Hair*. By Yosano Akiko. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1987.
Hasegawa, Izumi. "Shintai-shi no keisei." *Kōza Nihon gendaishi-shi*. Vol. 1. Tokyo: Ubun shoin, 1973. 131-57.
Hinatsu, Kōnosuke. *Meiji Taishō shijin*. Tokyo: Yō shobō, 1953a.
Hinatsu, Kōnosuke. *Meiji Taishō shishi*. Vol. 1. Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1953b.
Ishii, Takashi. *Meiji-ishin no butai-ura*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975.
Itsumi, Kumi. *Midaregami zenshaku*. Tokyo: Ofūsha, 1979.
Kawamoto, Kōji. "Haiku no shigaku." *Nihon shiika no dentō*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1991. 63-212.
Keene, Donald. *Dawn to the West: Poetry, Drama, Criticism*. Vol. 2. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1984.
Kojima, Yoshio. "Kashū Midaregami wo ronzu." *Bungaku kenkyū* (April 1966): 1-23.
Milton, John. "Lycidas." *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. Ed. John Hayward. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1956. 142-47.
Murasaki, Shikibu. *Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji)*. Vol. 1. Ed. Yamagishi Tokubei. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1956.
Okina, Kumi. "Midaregami no seiritu made." *Kokubungaku kenkyū* 29 (1953): 12-25.
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel. "The Blessed Damsel." *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. Ed. William M. Rossetti. Vol. 1. London: Ellis and Elvey, 1897. 232-36.
Sasaki, Nobutsuna, ed. *Shin-kokin Waka shū*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1959.
Savan, David. *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce's Full System of Semiotic*. Toronto: Toronto Semiotic Circle, 1988.
Seki, Ryōichi. "Dentō shiika to gendai shi." Murano et al. 3-31.
Shinma Shinichi. "Biography of Yosano Tekkan." *Nihon no shiika* 4. Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1981. 403-05.
Shinma Shinichi. *Kindai Tanka-shi ron*. Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1969.
Thwaite, Anthony. "Introduction: A Poetry for Everyone." Bowmas and Thwaite xxxvii-xxxiv.
Yosano, Akiko. *Akiko kawa. Tanka hyōron*. Ed. Kimata Osamu. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1980. 245-381.
Yosano, Akiko. *Midaregami*. Tokyo: Tokyo shinshisha, 1901.
Yosano, Akiko. *Midaregami. Kashū I*. Ed. Kimata Osamu. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979. 1-64.
Yosano, Tekkan. "Bōkoku no ne." *Yosano Tekkan, Yosano Akiko shū*. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1968. 230-34.
Yosano, Tekkan, ed. *Myōjō*. Kyoto: Rinsen shoten, 1964.