

6. Kitabatake Nori-  
tomo (d. 1471).

662. SUMMER. A verse on “Cooling Down,” written for a thousand-verse sequence at the house of the Governor of Ise<sup>6</sup>

Oh, for some blossoms—  
to bid storm winds to visit  
this summer garden!

hana mogana / arashi ya towan / natsu no niwa

663. SPRING

Wait to scatter,  
blossoms: for now there’s no wind  
I can complain to.

machite chire / hana ni kakotan / kaze mo nashi

664. SUMMER. Written at the artificial hill of Ōuchi Masahiro’s garden, when the latter asked him to compose a first verse describing the place<sup>7</sup>

7. Ōuchi Masahiro  
(d. 1495) was a prominent warlord.

The pond—a sea;  
the branches—thick groves far back  
in summer hills.

ike wa umi / kozue wa natsu no / miyama kana

665. AUTUMN. Written at the Enmyōji Temple in the Echigo provincial seat

Ah, for coolness  
it rivals the water’s depths—  
this autumn sky.

suzushisa wa / mizu yori fukashi / aki no sora

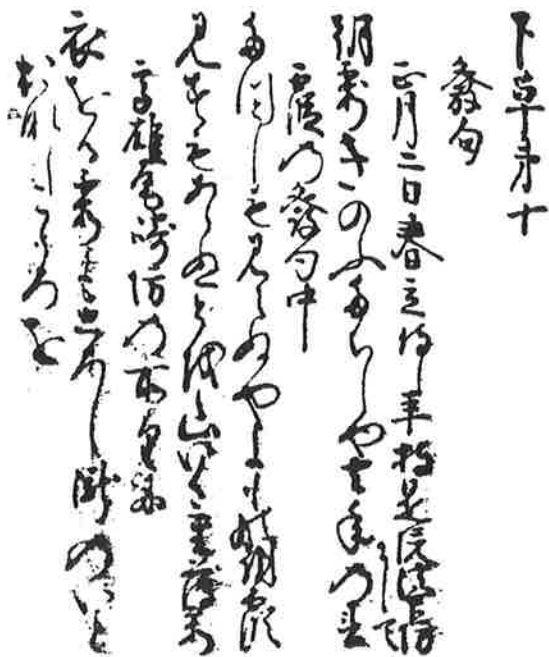


### “Three Poets at Minase”

One of the ironies of medieval literary history is that the great anthologies of linked verse compiled by Nijō Yoshimoto, Sōgi, and others contain only bits and pieces of the works they represent and no full *hyakuin*, or hundred-verse sequences. Partly this is because the single link was in fact the major unit of composition for renga poets; but still it can be argued that to appreciate the true artistry of renga poets one must see them at work in the fullest form of their art.

Of the many sequences that suggest themselves for such a purpose, the most appropriate is *Minase sangin hyakuin*. This work, traditionally considered the best of its kind—a sort of primer for aspiring poets—was composed by Sōgi and two disciples, Shōhaku (1443–1527) and Sōchō (1448–1532), in 1488 and presented as a votive offering to a shrine at Minase dedicated to the memory of Emperor Go-Toba. Yet, significantly, one need know almost nothing more than its status as a votive offering (and not even that much, for ninety-eight of the verses) to understand the Minase sequence. For linked verse, as mentioned in the Introduction, is a conventional art form; there is no demand for the individualistic expression that is at the heart of lyric poetry in the West. In this sense, then, *Minase sangin hyakuin* is an example of perfection achieved through well-known conventions rather than a work of more singular excellence.

The conventions for *hyakuin* were known by poets as rules, the most basic of which may be simply stated. First is the rule that each verse in the sequence must stand on its own, semantically and grammatically. Second is that each verse must combine with its predecessor to form a complete poetic statement. Then comes a host of prescriptions that in sum demand variety and constant change in the sequence—one set limiting the number of poems running in series in the primary categories (verses in the categories of Autumn and Spring restricted to at the most five verses in series, those in Winter, Summer, Travel, Shinto, Buddhism, Lamentation, Mountains, Waters, and Dwellings to three); another limiting repetition (azalea once, wild geese twice, “the world” five times, and so on); and still



A leaf from one of Sōgi's personal anthologies

another limiting the recurrence of thematic and lexical categories, words, and images (instances of the category Love to be separated by at least five verses, instances of “pine” to be separated by at least seven, and so on). In a word, the rules demand that every full sequence represent the entire court tradition—all of the categories of the imperial uta anthologies and other revered works—but in a way that allows no one topic, theme, or idea to dominate the whole. Even the images that are virtually required by tradition to appear in every sequence—the moon and cherry blossoms—are restricted to eight and four appearances, respectively, making it certain that neither will preponderate.

Yet this does not mean that a renga sequence is simply a series of short uta, since in linked verse the artistic energy is focused less on individual verses than on the links between them. Sometimes the link does little more than fill out the scene presented by its predecessor, as in this example from the Minase sequence:

## 726. Shōhaku

In morning calm  
the sky retains not a trace  
of last night's clouds.

asanagi no / sora ni ato naki / yoru no kumo

## 727. Sōchō

In snow, how bright is the gleam  
of far mountains all around!

yuki ni sayakeki / yomo no tōyama

Here Sōchō expands on Shōhaku's scene, adding snow—which brings with it the season of Winter—as a shining reminder of a stormy night. Such expansion or elaboration is central to the nature of every *hyakuin*.

Not all links are so straightforward. Again, a link from the Minase sequence can be used to illustrate.

## 685. Shōhaku

Must it interrupt my dreams—  
this hateful wind in the reeds?

yume ni uramuru / ogi no uwakaze

## 686. Sōchō

All there was to see  
were sad remnants of my old home,  
people I once knew.

mishi wa mina / furusatobito no / ato mo ushi

Since the word “dream” generally indicates the category of Love in linked verse, the speaker of Shōhaku's verse—as a single statement—can be taken to be a frustrated lover, unable to meet his companion even in his dreams; but in his link Sōchō changes the site of the dream to another speaker's run-down home. A lover's complaint thus becomes a Lament over lost time, shifting the theme in a way that opens up new possibilities of development.

The essence of a linked-verse sequence, then, is a dialectical movement that produces now a prosaic scene, now a more striking one, here a simple

extension, there a complete change in interpretation, setting off exclamations against sighs and speaking for a host of people including travelers, lovers, old men, recluses, peasants, and emperors—all in a symphonic structure that contains the poems within a formal whole while resisting comprehensive interpretations.

Finally, it is important to note that all linked-verse sequences are highly allusive: in the general sense, because the vocabulary of the genre is mostly borrowed from the uta tradition, and more specifically, because poets constantly draw on the resources of famous poems of the past. This is particularly so in *Minase sangin hyakuin*, which, as noted above, was composed in memory of Emperor Go-Toba, on the anniversary of his death-date and near a shrine dedicated to his name. That Sōgi and his disciples were very much aware of the circumstances surrounding their composition is evident in the first verse of the sequence, in which Sōgi alludes very directly to Go-Toba's famous *Shin kokinshū* poem describing spring dusk along the Minase River (see poem 360) and also in the last, in which Sōchō alludes to another of the former sovereign's poems (SKKS 1635; s.n. 47). Beyond these two references, there is no overt indication of the circumstances surrounding the sequence's creation (the headnote simply reads, "A hundred-verse renga sequence composed by Sōgi, Shōhaku, and Sōchō on the twenty-second day of the First Lunar Month of the second year of the Chōkyō era [1488]"); and elsewhere the poets allude to *Kokinshū*, *Genji monogatari*, and a number of other classical sources. Rather than being dedicated to one man specifically, then, *Minase sangin hyakuin* as a whole conjures up the courtly past (along with a number of more plebeian scenes) as that past is inscribed in the poetic themes and images of the tradition of which Go-Toba was a part. The vision thus is a fragmented one, in a way an objective correlative for the Buddhist law that underlies all the rules of linked verse and much of the aesthetic consciousness in Muromachi Japan—namely, the law of impermanence.

In the translation, the topical category to which each verse would belong according to the renga rulebooks is included in a headnote, with brief comments on links between verses and other background information given in marginal notes. It should be understood that these aids to interpretation represent an attempt to "read" the text within the tradition of classical poetics and are not part of the work itself.

## 666. Sōgi. [SPRING]

- [1] Some snow still remains  
as haze moves low on the slopes  
toward evening.<sup>1</sup>

yukinagara / yamamoto kasumu / yūbe kana

1. An allusion to poem 360, by Retired Emperor Go-Toba.

## 667. Shōhaku. [SPRING]

- [2] Flowing water, far away—  
and a plum-scented village.

yuku mizu tōku / ume niou sato

## 668. Sōchō. [SPRING]

- [3] Wind off the river  
blows through a clump of willows—  
and spring appears.<sup>2</sup>

kawakaze ni / hitomura yanagi / haru miete

2. Link: spring "appears" in swaying willows.

## 669. Sōgi. [MISCELLANEOUS]

- [4] A boat being poled along,  
sounding clear at break of day.<sup>3</sup>

fune sasu oto mo / shiruki akegata

3. Link: swaying willows become visible at break of day.

## 670. Shōhaku. [AUTUMN]

- [5] Still there, somewhere:  
the moon off behind the mist  
traversing the night.<sup>4</sup>

tsuki ya nao / kiri wataru yo ni / nokoruran

4. Link: heavy mist makes the sky still seem dark at daybreak.

5. Link: temporal shift, with the hidden moon acting as a symbol of autumn's decline.

## 671. Sōchō. [AUTUMN]

Out on frost-laden fields  
autumn has come to its end.<sup>5</sup>

shimo oku nohara / aki wa kurekeri

## 672. Sōgi. [AUTUMN]

[7] With no care at all  
for the insects crying out,  
grasses wither away.

naku mushi no / kokoro to mo naku / kusa karete

## 673. Shōhaku. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[8] Pay a visit, and by the fence—  
a path standing in the open.<sup>6</sup>

kakine o toeba / arawa naru michi

## 674. Sōchō. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[9] So deep in the hills,  
the village spends all its time  
amidst storm winds.<sup>7</sup>

yama fukaki / sato ya arashi ni / okururan

## 675. Sōgi. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[10] If you're not used to the life,  
the solitude is hard to bear.<sup>8</sup>

narenu sumai zo / sabishisa mo uki

6. Link: the path is "open" because the grasses around it have died.

7. Link: the withering is now credited to storm winds.

8. Link: a reply to the speaker of the previous verse, explaining that the solitude is formidable only to newcomers.

## 676. Shōhaku. [LAMENT]

[11] No more of that, now:  
this is no time to lament  
that you are alone.<sup>9</sup>

imasara ni / hitori aru mi o / omou na yo

## 677. Sōchō. [LAMENT]

[12] Have you not learned before this  
that all things must always change?<sup>10</sup>

utsurowan to wa / kanete shirazu ya

## 678. Sōgi. [SPRING]

[13] Dew trying in vain  
to form on cherry blossoms—  
a pitiful sight.<sup>11</sup>

okiwaburu / tsuyu koso hana ni / aware nare

## 679. Shōhaku. [SPRING]

[14] Still some sunlight remains—  
faint rays shining through the haze.<sup>12</sup>

mada nokoru hi no / uchi kasumu kage

## 680. Sōchō. [SPRING]

[15] "Has nightfall come?"—  
birds cry out above, making  
their way toward home.<sup>13</sup>

kurenu to ya / nakitsutsu tori no / kaeruran

9. Link: words of self-encouragement, counseling resignation.

10. An echo of poem 129, by Komachi.

11. Link: a concrete example of the abstract principle stated in poem 677.

12. Link: the failure of the dew is credited to the faint rays of the evening sun.

13. Link: the birds are fooled by the faint sun into thinking night has fallen.

23. "The time has come" for the wild geese to depart for the continent, as they do each spring. An allusion to SZS 36, by Minamoto no Toshiyori (s.n. 46).

24. *Oboroge* means both "hazy" and "uninteresting." Link: the speaker asks the geese to stay and enjoy the moon. An allusion to SKKS 182, by Princess Shikishi (s.n. 47).

25. Link: the speaker asks his companion to stop and enjoy the moon before parting. An allusion to SKKS 58, by Monk Jakuren (s.n. 48).

26. Link: the wind carries the sound of a fulling block (see the note to poem 256) from the village at the far edge of the field.

## 691. Shōhaku. [SPRING]

[26] "The time has come!" I hear—  
the call of wild geese in spring.<sup>23</sup>

kikeba ima wa no / haru no karigane

## 692. Sōgi. [SPRING]

[27] A hazy moon, yes,  
but obscure in its beauty?  
Wait a moment—see.<sup>24</sup>

oboroge no / tsuki ka wa hito mo / mate shibashi

## 693. Sōchō. [AUTUMN TRAVEL]

[28] One brief night, vagrant as dew—  
then faint light of autumn dawn.<sup>25</sup>

karine no tsuyu no / aki no akebono

## 694. Shōhaku. [AUTUMN]

[29] At the field's far edge  
stands a village, distantly,  
where mist is rising.

sueno naru / sato wa haruka ni / kiri tachite

## 695. Sōgi. [AUTUMN]

[30] Carried by on passing wind—  
the sound of mallet on cloth.<sup>26</sup>

fukikuru kaze wa / koromo utsu koe

## 696. Sōchō. [WINTER]

[31] Even on cold days  
I have only these thin sleeves,  
every nightfall.<sup>27</sup>

sayuru hi mo / mi wa sode usuki / kuregoto ni

## 697. Shōhaku. [LAMENT]

[32] An uncertain livelihood—  
in the hills, gathering wood.

tanomu mo hakana / tsumagi toru yama

## 698. Sōgi. [LAMENT]

[33] I had not lost hope—  
but now my way through the world  
has come to nothing.<sup>28</sup>

saritomo no / kono yo no michi wa / tsukihatete

## 699. Sōchō. [LAMENT]

[34] What a wretched situation!  
Is there nowhere left to go?

kokorobososhi ya / izuchi yukamashi

## 700. Shōhaku. [LOVE]

[35] The end of my life—  
that is all I can wait for,  
after last night.<sup>29</sup>

inochi nomi / matsu koto ni suru / kinuginu ni

27. Link: the sound of the fulling block makes the speaker lament his poverty.

28. Link: a man down on his luck lives a hard life in the hills. An allusion to GSS 1083, by Narihira (s.n. 49).

29. Link: life is wretched for the person who can have only one night with his love.

## 701. Sōgi. [LOVE]

30. Link: after one night, the speaker is resigned to forget—until he begins to feel love again.

[36] What could be the cause of it—  
that I should feel such love again?<sup>30</sup>

nao nani nare ya / hito no koishiki

## 702. Sōchō. [LOVE]

31. Link: in love with one person, the speaker wonders why he should be attracted to another.

[37] While I still have you,  
why think of anyone else?  
Why this discontent?<sup>31</sup>

kimi o okite / akazu mo tare o / omouran

## 703. Shōhaku. [LOVE]

[38] No resemblance do I see  
to that other countenance.

sono omokage ni / nitaru dani nashi

## 704. Sōgi. [LAMENT]

32. Link: “that other countenance” now is the former state of the old capital.

[39] The shrubs, the grasses—  
even these long bitterly  
for the old capital.<sup>32</sup>

kusaki sae / furuki miyako no / urami nite

## 705. Sōchō. [LAMENT]

33. Link: bitterness inspired by nostalgia is itself a kind of attachment.

[40] Even here in my house of pain,  
I still have some attachments.<sup>33</sup>

mi no uki yado mo / nagori koso are

## 706. Shōhaku. [LAMENT]

[41] Before time passes,  
remember your parent fondly—  
and take comfort now.<sup>34</sup>

tarachine no / tōkaranu ato ni / nagusameyo

34. Link: a new context for the “pain” is found in the grief of one who has lost a parent.

## 707. Sōgi. [LAMENT]

[42] Days, months move toward their ends,  
rolling on as in a dream.<sup>35</sup>

tsukihi no sue ya / yume ni meguramu

35. Link: the speaker warns us to find comfort in memories while they are still vivid.

## 708. Sōchō. [TRAVEL]

[43] Leaving this shore,  
a boat stops for its last stop  
before far Cathay.<sup>36</sup>

kono kishi o / morokoshibune no / kagiri nite

36. Link: a boat leaving for the continent may seem to have a long journey ahead—but the return trip will soon come.

## 709. Shōhaku. [BUDDHISM]

[44] Ah, to hear of a Law  
that could free one from rebirth!<sup>37</sup>

mata umarekonu / nori o kikabaya

37. Link: “this shore” refers to this life, which the speaker is leaving for the “far shore” of enlightenment.

## 710. Sōgi. [AUTUMN LOVE]

[45] “Till we meet again”—  
like dew my feelings languish  
only to return.<sup>38</sup>

au made to / omoi no tsuyu no / kiekaeri

38. Link: even after meeting the Good Law, the speaker finds his dedication fragile as dew.

## 711. Sōchō. [AUTUMN LOVE]

39. Link: sometimes one's resolve weakens, like dew scattered on autumn wind; but it always comes back.

[46] Though wearied by autumn wind  
I go on with the deception.<sup>39</sup>

mi o akikaze mo / hitodanome nari

## 712. Shōhaku. [AUTUMN LOVE]

40. Link: an allusion to the plight of the Safflower Lady in *Genji monogatari*, who despairs while Genji is away in exile.

[47] Of no use at all,  
the call of the pine cricket  
from wormwood tangles.<sup>40</sup>

matsumushi no / naku ne kai naki / yomogiu ni

41. Link: the speaker laments his lack of resolve to leave the world behind. Based partly on an allusion to SKKS 1560, by Shunzei (s.n. 50).

## 713. Sōgi. [AUTUMN]

[48] Rope-cordons mark the mountain—  
where only the moon resides.<sup>41</sup>

shimeyū yama wa / tsuki nomi zo sumu

## 714. Sōchō. [LAMENT]

42. Link: the bell sounds to wake the speaker, but still he procrastinates, reluctant to leave the world.

[49] A bell sounds, and I  
see what's there ahead of me—  
unable to sleep.<sup>42</sup>

kane ni waga / tada aramashi no / nezame shite

## 715. Shōhaku. [WINTER LAMENT]

43. Link: despite advancing age—symbolized by white hair—the speaker cannot bring himself to leave the world.

[50] How thick it lies on the head—  
this frost, night after night.<sup>43</sup>

itadakikeri na / yona yona no shimo

## 716. Sōgi. [WINTER]

[51] In winter's blight  
stands a somber crane, in reeds  
by a little cove.<sup>44</sup>

fuyugare no / ashitazu wabite / tateru e ni

44. Link: now the frost accumulates on a crane's head.

## 717. Shōhaku. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[52] In the tide-wind at nightfall—  
boatmen out in the offing.

yūshiokaze no / okitsu funabito

## 718. Sōchō. [SPRING]

[53] Heading nowhere,  
the haze spreads out and away—  
but toward what end?<sup>45</sup>

yukue naki / kasumi ya izuku / hate naran

45. Link: based partly on an allusion to poem 460, by Yoshitada.

## 719. Sōgi. [SPRING]

[54] You can't see where it came from—  
spring in a mountain village.<sup>46</sup>

kuru kata mienu / yamazato no haru

46. Link: spring came from a place unknown, and departs the same way.

## 720. Shōhaku. [SPRING]

[55] Among green branches—  
a trickle of late blossoms  
falling to earth.<sup>47</sup>

shigemi yori / taedae nokoru / hana ochite

47. Link: late cherry blossoms fall amid green branches, signaling that spring will soon depart.

## 721. Sōchō. [AUTUMN]

[56] Parting the way beneath trees—  
a pathway heavy with dew.

ko no moto wakuru / michi no tsuyukesa

## 722. Sōgi. [AUTUMN]

[57] It's autumn, true—  
but how can my dry rock house  
admit rain showers?<sup>48</sup>

aki wa nado / moranu iwa ya mo / shigururan

48. Link: the showers  
are the hermit's tears.

## 723. Shōhaku. [AUTUMN BUDDHISM]

[58] Here I am, in sleeves of moss—  
yet still the moon seems at home.<sup>49</sup>

koke no tamoto mo / tsuki wa narekeri

49. Link: the moon-  
light is reflected in rain-  
drops on the monk's  
sleeves.

## 724. Sōchō. [AUTUMN BUDDHISM]

[59] Now we discover  
how devoted is the heart  
of the recluse.<sup>50</sup>

kokoro aru / kagiri zo shiruki / yosutebito

50. Link: the ability  
to appreciate such  
beauty is evidence of a  
fine sensibility.

## 725. Sōgi. [TRAVEL]

[60] Over waves now at peace—  
a boat seen rowing away.<sup>51</sup>

osamaru nami ni / fune izuru miyu

51. Link: an allusion  
to the story of a Chi-  
nese official who left  
the capital to become  
a farmer-hermit. See  
s.n. 51.

## 726. Shōhaku. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[61] In morning calm  
the sky retains not a trace  
of last night's clouds.

asanagi no / sora ni ato naki / yoru no kumo

## 727. Sōchō. [WINTER]

[62] In snow, how bright is the gleam  
of far mountains all around!<sup>52</sup>

yuki ni sayakeki / yomo no tōyama

52. Link: a clear  
morning sky makes the  
last night's snowfall  
shine brightly on the  
mountains.

## 728. Sōgi. [WINTER]

[63] Never do I tire  
of life in my mountaintop hut—  
even after the leaves.

mine no io / konoha no nochi mo / sumiakade

## 729. Shōhaku. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[64] One learns to bear solitude  
from the sound of the pine-wind.<sup>53</sup>

sabishisa narau / matsukaze no koe

53. Link: based on an  
allusion to SKKS 565,  
by Hōribe no Nari-  
mochi (d. 1159; s.n. 52),  
in which pines inspire  
feelings of solitude  
after the leaves have  
fallen.

## 730. Sōchō. [BUDDHISM]

[65] Who besides myself  
might be arising at dawn  
time upon time?<sup>54</sup>

tare ka kono / akatsukioki o / kasanemashi

54. Link: a monk  
comforts himself by  
thinking that others too  
must be awaking early  
to begin devotions.



## 731. Sōgi. [AUTUMN TRAVEL]

55. Link: the query of poem 730 is now rhetorical—a lament over the loneliness of the road.

[66] Only the moon could know this—  
how sad one is on a journey.<sup>55</sup>

tsuki wa shiru ya no / tabi zo kanashiki

## 732. Shōhaku. [AUTUMN]

56. Link: frost sets the season as late autumn.

[67] Already dew-laden,  
and now frost too withers them—  
my autumn sleeves.<sup>56</sup>

tsuyu fukami / shimo sae shioru / aki no sode

## 733. Sōchō. [AUTUMN]

57. Link: the beautiful plumes of flowering miscanthus (see the note to poem 253) fall in late autumn.

[68] Plumes on flowering miscanthus—  
what a shame that they must fall!<sup>57</sup>

usu hanasusuki / chiramaku mo oshi

## 734. Sōgi. [AUTUMN]

58. Allusions to poems 273, by Shunzei, and 253, by Toshiyori.

[69] A quail cries out  
where dusk falls beyond a cliff—  
on a cold day.<sup>58</sup>

uzura naku / katayama kurete / samuki hi ni

## 735. Shōhaku. [LAMENT]

59. Link: further development of the allusion to poem 273, with an added allusion to poems 120–21, by Narihira.

[70] Once a village, now a field—  
but the lonely life goes on.<sup>59</sup>

no to naru sato mo / wabitsutsu zo sumu

## 736. Sōchō. [LOVE]

[71] If he should return,  
he will see how patiently  
I have waited.<sup>60</sup>

kaerikoba / machishi omoi o / hito ya min

60. Link: a woman waits at a run-down house for her man to return.

## 737. Sōgi. [LOVE]

[72] Whose heart could it possibly be—  
to feel itself so aloof?<sup>61</sup>

utoki mo tare ga / kokoro naru beki

61. Link: so long has she waited that the woman begins to resent her man.

## 738. Shōhaku. [LOVE]

[73] Since the beginning  
it has been untrustworthy—  
the way of love.<sup>62</sup>

mukashi yori / tada ayaniku no / koi no michi

62. Link: a change in perspective in which the speaker of poem 737 becomes a man complaining of his lover's coldness, and poem 738 a sarcastic reply.

## 739. Sōchō. [LOVE]

[74] That it will not stay forgotten  
makes you hate the world the more.<sup>63</sup>

wasuraregataki / yo sae urameshi

63. Link: despite the pain, love refuses to be forgotten.

## 740. Sōgi. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[75] Living in the hills,  
what knowledge should one have  
of springs and autumns?<sup>64</sup>

yamagatsu ni / nado haruaki no / shiraruran

64. Link: now the speaker is a man who has fled to the hills but cannot escape his memories.

## 741. Shōhaku. [SUMMER]

[76] Grasses that no one planted,  
rank around a brushwood door.<sup>65</sup>

uenu kusaba no / shigeki shiba no to

65. Link: even the grasses show time's passage.

## 742. Sōchō. [SPRING]

[77] Alongside a fence—  
fallow paddies left behind,  
only half-plowed.<sup>66</sup>

katawara ni / kakio no arada / kaeshisute

66. Link: a lazy farmer leaves his paddies half-plowed, just as he lets the grasses grow around his hut.

## 743. Sōgi. [SPRING]

[78] A man goes walking away,  
hazy in the evening rain.<sup>67</sup>

yuku hito kasumu / ame no kuregata

67. Link: the man leaves his paddies to find shelter from the rain.

## 744. Sōchō. [SPRING]

[79] The place where I stop  
for the night, the bush warbler  
no longer likes.<sup>68</sup>

yadori sen / no o uguisu ya / itouran

68. Link: based on an allusion to SKKS 82, by Ietaka (s.n. 53), in which the speaker asks a bush warbler for lodging. In poem 744, the man walks off when the warbler will not sing.

## 745. Shōhaku. [SPRING]

[80] Ah, the stillness of the night,  
beneath cherry trees in bloom.<sup>69</sup>

sayo mo shizuka ni / sakura saku kage

69. Link: the warbler will not sing because he does not want to disturb the stillness beneath the blossoms.

## 746. Sōgi. [SPRING]

[81] Lamp turned aside,  
I look to blossoms for my light—  
day about to break.<sup>70</sup>

toboshihi o / somukuru hana ni / akesomete

70. An allusion to poem 222, by Bo Juyi.

## 747. Sōchō. [LOVE]

[82] Who will it be, dreaming now—  
that fine arm for a pillow?<sup>71</sup>

ta ga tamakura ni / yume wa micken

71. Link: awake in the night, the speaker wonders if blossoms might be appearing in someone else's dream.

## 748. Shōhaku. [LOVE]

[83] I gave up all thought  
of seeing that pledge fulfilled—  
as the years went by.<sup>72</sup>

chigiri haya / omoitaetsutsu / toshi mo henu

72. Link: the rejected speaker wonders if someone else might be enjoying his lover's charms.

## 749. Sōgi. [LAMENT]

[84] At my advanced age, who can hope  
for a visit to the hills?<sup>73</sup>

ima wa no yowai / yama mo tazuneji

73. Link: now facing death, the speaker laments not having left the world behind long ago.

## 750. Sōchō. [LAMENT]

[85] So thoroughly  
have I hid myself away—  
they'll think I'm dead.<sup>74</sup>

kakusu mi o / hito wa naki ni mo / nashitsuran

74. Link: after so many years in the hills, a hermit loses hope for a visit from friends.

## 751. Shōhaku. [LAMENT]

75. Link: still the recluse lives on, despite his desire for final release.

[86] Still it hangs on in the world—  
this jewel string that is my life.<sup>75</sup>

sate mo ukiyo ni / kakaru tama no o

## 752. Sōgi. [MISCELLANEOUS]

76. Link: the speaker continues to hang on to life, reduced to burning pine needles for fuel.

[87] Needles from the pines—  
every morning, every night  
going up in smoke.<sup>76</sup>

matsu no ha o / tada asayū no / keburī nite

## 753. Sōchō. [MISCELLANEOUS]

77. Link: a question for which the preceding 752 is an answer.

[88] People living at seaside—  
what do they do to survive?<sup>77</sup>

uraba no sato yo / ika ni sumuran

## 754. Shōhaku. [AUTUMN TRAVEL]

78. Link: a traveler unable to sleep in harsh weather wonders how local people survive under such conditions.

[89] With the autumn wind  
and a rough beach for a pillow—  
I despair of sleep.<sup>78</sup>

akikaze no / araisomakura / fushiwabinu

## 755. Sōgi. [AUTUMN]

79. Link: awake in the night, a man hears wild geese calling.

[90] Wild geese cry from the mountains,  
the moon sinking in the sky.<sup>79</sup>

kari naku yama no / tsuki fukuru sora

## 756. Sōchō. [AUTUMN]

[91] Tomorrow I'll watch  
as the dewdrops disappear  
from bush clover.<sup>80</sup>

kohagihara / utsurou tsuyu mo / asu ya min

## 757. Shōhaku. [LOVE]

[92] Like the fields of Ada Moor—  
so is the heart of that man.<sup>81</sup>

ada no ōno o / kokoro naru hito

## 758. Sōgi. [LOVE]

[93] You must not forget—  
that we promised to the end,  
dream or reality.<sup>82</sup>

wasuru na yo / kagiri ya kawaru / yume utsutsu

## 759. Sōchō. [LAMENT]

[94] I think, but no longer know  
what I mean by "long ago."<sup>83</sup>

omoeba itsu o / inishie ni sen

## 760. Shōhaku. [BUDDHISM]

[95] One Buddha leaves us  
for another to appear—  
in this world of ours.<sup>84</sup>

hotoketachi / kakurete wa mata / izuru yo ni

80. Link: based on an allusion to the anonymous KKS 221 (s.n. 54), which describes dew on bush clover as the tears of wild geese passing overhead.

81. Link: the speaker laments the fickleness of a lover whose feelings are as changeable as the dews on Ada Moor—"Moor of Transience."

82. Link: the speaker chastises his lover for not honoring a pledge to remain faithful.

83. Link: the lover replies, "But when was it that we made the pledge?"

84. Link: the Buddha has no end, appearing in one incarnation and then another.

85. Link: just as the breezes bring life to the bare trees of winter, so does the Buddha appear constantly in the world.

86. Link: "peaceful" (*nodoka*) is a term traditionally applied to spring landscapes alone.

87. Link: haze is a harbinger of spring.

88. Link: based on an allusion to SKKS 1635 (s.n. 45), by Retired Emperor Go-Toba.

## 761. Sōgi. [SPRING]

[96] A grove of withered trees—  
yet even here spring winds blow.<sup>85</sup>

kareshi hayashi mo / harukaze zo fuku

## 762. Sōchō. [SPRING]

[97] Mountains at morning—  
but how many frosty nights  
preceded the haze?<sup>86</sup>

yama wa kesa / iku shimoyo ni ka / kasumuran

## 763. Shōhaku. [SPRING]

[98] Smoke makes for a peaceful scene  
around a makeshift hut.<sup>87</sup>

keburi nodoka ni / miyuru kariio

## 764. Sōgi. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[99] Among the lowborn too  
must be some who live their lives  
in tranquility.

iyashiki mo / mi o osamuru wa / aritsubeshi

## 765. Sōchō. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[100] For all men everywhere  
the Way lies straight ahead.<sup>88</sup>

hito ni oshinabe / michi zo tadashiki

## 681. Sōgi. [TRAVEL]

14. Link: the traveler under the forest canopy relies on the birds to tell him night is coming.

[16] Going so deep in the hills,  
there's no sky to show the way.<sup>14</sup>

miyama o yukeba / waku sora mo nashi

## 682. Shōhaku. [WINTER TRAVEL]

15. The "showers" are the traveler's tears.

[17] A break in the storm—  
but still showers on the sleeves  
of a travel robe.<sup>15</sup>

haruru ma mo / sode wa shigure no / tabigoromo

## 683. Sōchō. [AUTUMN TRAVEL]

16. Link: moonlight is "wasted" in the tear-drops of a common traveler.

[18] Here on a pillow of grass  
the moonlight seems like a waste.<sup>16</sup>

waga kusamakura / tsuki ya yatsusan

## 684. Sōgi. [AUTUMN LOVE]

17. Link: time passes in vain for one unable to meet his lover.

[19] For too many nights  
the time has gone by in vain—  
autumn deepening.<sup>17</sup>

itazura ni / akasu yo ōku / aki fukete

## 685. Shōhaku. [AUTUMN LOVE]

18. Link: wind in the reeds keeps the speaker from dreams of his lover.

[20] Must it interrupt my dreams—  
this hateful wind in the reeds?<sup>18</sup>

yume ni uramuru / ogi no uwakaze

## 686. Sōchō. [LAMENT]

[21] All there was to see  
were sad remnants of my old home,  
people I once knew.<sup>19</sup>

mishi wa mina / furusatobito no / ato mo ushi

19. Link: the "remnants" are now those of a dream of home.

## 687. Sōgi. [LAMENT]

[22] Up ahead, in my old age,  
what will I rely on then?<sup>20</sup>

oi no yukue yo / nani ni kakaran

20. Link: from the past, the speaker turns to the future.

## 688. Shōhaku. [LAMENT]

[23] So without color  
are these verses of mine—  
yet some comfort, still.<sup>21</sup>

iro mo naki / koto no ha o dani / aware shire

21. Link: a reply to the query of poem 687.

## 689. Sōgi. [MISCELLANEOUS]

[24] This too can serve as a friend—  
the sky as night descends.

sore mo tomo naru / yūgure no sora

## 690. Sōchō. [SPRING]

[25] Today, clouds replace  
the blossoms that scattered—  
crossing a peak.<sup>22</sup>

kumo ni kyō / hana chirihatsuru / mine koete

22. Link: with the blossoms gone, the clouds must serve as companions. An echo of poem 290, by Shunzei.

# Traditional Japanese Poetry

AN ANTHOLOGY



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