

INTRODUCTION



By the mid- to late Edo period (1603–1868), the ability to compose poetry in Chinese (*kanshi*) had become a skill possessed by many Japanese, in particular well educated city dwellers in the major urban centers. *Kanshi* composition was no longer the exclusive domain of Japan's intellectuals, priests, and courtiers as it had been in earlier periods of the nation's history. For these individuals, writing *kanshi* served both formal and informal functions, but its private, informal use among friends and family was especially marked by this time. Countless pieces of verse recorded on attractive papers, these matched to the season and the occasion, were written impromptu and exchanged with an apparent ease and casualness rivaling the modern use of the picture postcard or greeting card in the West. In short, far from being a peripheral activity or a casual transitory amusement, the composition of Chinese poetry had clearly become an essential part of Japanese social life and human relationships, reflecting the tastes, values, and social mores of the individuals who composed it. Yet despite *kanshi*'s deep roots in Japanese culture, which reach back at least to the early seventh century, and its flourishing in subsequent centuries, the genre is today the domain of only a small number of Japanese specialists, existing on the periphery of Japanese studies as if not truly an authentic part of Japanese culture. It is hoped that the present study of a body of informal *kanshi* by citizens of Kyoto (old Heian) during mid- to late Edo times will help to refocus scholarly interest on this essential part of Japanese culture and shed light on the lives of the Edo Japanese, in particular, their personal relationships, values, and concerns, which are so often depicted in their poetry.

In 1997 the library of the Kokusai Nihon Bunka Kenkyū Sentā (International Research Center for Japanese Studies), in Kyoto, purchased an

outstanding *tanzaku* 短冊 poem collection, comprising rare artifacts originally collected by the Kyoto bibliographer Ozasa Kizō (1896–1980), former head of the Yōmei Bunko archive in Kyoto. The Ozasa collection constitutes one of the largest and most distinctive bodies of *tanzaku* extant today, comprising 910 original holographs by 708 different Edo-period poets, intellectuals, artists, and other persons living in the Kyoto area. Over 90 percent of these poems are composed in vernacular poetic forms, *tanka* (thirty-one syllable verse cast in five lines or phrases) being the most numerous, followed by *haiku* (seventeen-syllable verse in three lines). The collection includes as well some eighty-two Japanese *kanshi*, four *kanshi* couplets, and finally, two single-line Chinese *tanzaku*. (Forms with fewer than four lines are excluded from the present study and translation.) It is this small group of eighty-two complete *kanshi tanzaku* that is the subject of the present study.

Tanzaku, which will be discussed further below, are long, narrow slips of decorative Japanese paper, backed silk, or veneer traditionally used from around the fourteenth century for drawing small paintings and recording poetry. These provide an attractive and colorful backdrop for the poems themselves, giving an added dimension to their aesthetic appeal. What is unique about the Ozasa *tanzaku* is that all of the *tanzaku* poems that have been assembled were composed by persons listed in one or more of the nine consecutive editions of *Heian jinbutsushi* 平安人物志, a pocket-sized mid- to late Edo period Who's Who directory for the city of Heian (now Kyoto).¹ The number of *tanzaku* poets in the Ozasa collection represents about a third of the total quantity of individuals listed in the nine editions combined. Attributed to a still unidentified compiler known only by the pseudonym Rōkanshi 弄翰子, a name which was used for the duration of the publication, this work was regarded in its day as an essential guide for would-be students and artists who journeyed to Heian, then a major cultural and economic center, in hopes of studying in the private academies and studios of the professional and artistic elite. *Heian jinbutsushi* was updated and revised roughly once each decade over a period of nearly a hundred years, its first edition appearing in 1768, the ninth and last edition in 1867, at the very end of the Edo age.²

A second distinguishing characteristic of the Ozasa collection is that it appears to have been assembled primarily with the aim of including works by as many persons represented in *Heian jinbutsushi* as possible, with the individual literary merits of each *tanzaku* verse being a secondary consideration. What was written, in other words, mattered less to Dr. Ozasa than who had written it, the corollary of this being that the poems on these *tanzaku* are extremely varied in their literary quality, with works ranging from the professionally polished poem to the undistinguished amateurish composition. Let us take a closer look now at the poets themselves.

The Poets

Ozasa was uniquely successful in assembling works by a truly diverse collection of individuals, whose literary legacy offers us a fascinating cross-section of kanshi composition in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japan. All the poets represented in the Ozasa kanshi *tanzaku* were locally prominent citizens pursuing a variety of professions ranging from medicine and mathematics to Chinese philosophy and the fine arts, but relatively few of them could in fact claim Chinese poetry as their area of primary expertise. Yet composing poetry in Chinese was, for the educated townsman and scholar, a fairly common activity at this time in Japan's history, one required on social occasions such as birthdays, farewell parties, seasonal events such as the Double-Ninth Festival, and similar communal celebrations. Henry W. Wells, writing on the subject of Chinese poetry composed in China, observes that "[a]ll persons capable of the rather laborious achievement of literacy were expected to read and write verse. Only a few poets could by any extension of the term be called professionals. Poetry was, in short, one of the requisite accomplishments of the 'complete gentleman.'"³ The same was true in mid- to late Edo Japan, when virtually all highly literate men (and to a lesser extent, women) wrote informal, often social poetry when the occasion called for it.

Of course, whether in China or Japan, some poets had more talent than others, as can readily be observed in the selections by the poets of the *Heian jinbutsushi*, where the poems at times seem to be "more an admirably

cooked loaf of bread than an elaborately prepared cake,”⁴ to borrow Wells’ apt description of poetry by run-of-the-mill Chinese poets. Most of these largely amateur *Heian jinbutsushi* poets were male, reflecting the vast numerical superiority of men in the Edo kanshi tradition as a whole. Two-thirds of them made their living primarily through teaching, as *kangakusha* 漢学者 (Confucian Studies scholars), or through service as *jusha* 儒者 (Confucian officials), who were generally trained in one or more areas of Chinese studies, such as philosophy, linguistics, or history. The rest engaged in a variety of other professions separate from Chinese studies, being artists, calligraphers, seal-carvers, doctors, and Buddhist priests. There is even one mathematician.

Few among the ranks of the amateur kanshi poets published their own poetic anthologies or had verse preserved in other Edo literary collections. Since we have so few compositions, often just one, by each of these lesser-known individual poets, the question arises as to how much verse each wrote during his lifetime. Does each poem represent one of its author’s *best* endeavors, chosen by Ozasa from among some larger corpus, or is it the poet’s *only* extant piece of verse? The answer will in most cases remain a mystery. And yet the level of technical skill displayed in these poems and the familiarity with the language, themes, and allusions of classical Chinese literature all suggest that most of these poets, whatever their shortcomings, had a respectable degree of first-hand experience with kanshi composition, which is to say that the poems translated here were probably not their first or near-first attempts.

After describing the *tanzaku* medium itself, its physical attributes and origins, we will briefly trace the development of kanshi in Japan and identify the fundamental features of the genre. We will then go on to treat various aspects of the kanshi *tanzaku* of the Ozasa collection, paying particular attention to their themes, language, imagery, and prosodic features. Finally, we include a complete translation of the kanshi with annotations and brief biographies for each poet.⁵

The *Tanzaku*: A Short Description of Their Characteristics and Origins

Tanzaku are of special interest for their artistic and calligraphic beauty, quite apart from the poems themselves. One may find every imaginable style of writing, from conservative and traditional printed forms to exuberant, highly idiosyncratic and difficult cursive styles, these often utilizing uniquely variant character orthographies. The *tanzaku* kanshi were often extemporaneously composed at informal festive occasions, which may help to explain why they display a rather higher than average incidence of orthographical errors as compared to anthologized literary kanshi, which tend on the whole to be carefully written and edited.⁶ Deciphering the *tanzaku* script character by character is a challenge, one made all the more daunting by the fact that cursive forms from the early nineteenth century onward tended to deviate from earlier orthodox standards governing form and stroke order. Nevertheless, without these calligraphic and orthographic elements of individual expression, the *tanzaku* kanshi would surely not have the same aesthetic appeal and character. The varieties of papers upon which they are written are likewise an art form in themselves and thus merit at least a short description here.

Papers and Decorative Design

The special papers used in the *tanzaku* are highly varied in both their constitution and surface decoration. This decoration includes, for example, elegantly hand-painted scenes, applied designs or accents, surface patterns of scattered gold or silver flecks or squares, pressed, printed, or stenciled patterns, embedded motifs utilizing leaves or other natural materials, and dotted designs created using the *mizutama* 水玉 “water-drop” effect. The vast majority of *tanzaku* are made from carefully backed *washi* 和紙 (Japanese handmade paper), plain, dyed, or even marbled in various subtle hues and usually made from the paper mulberry bush (*kōzo* 楮, *Broussonetia kajinoki*), daphne bark (*ganpi* 雁皮, *Wikstromemia sikokiana*), or a bast-fiber bark from the paperbush (*mitsumata* 三桠, *Edgeworthia chrysantha*).⁷ Kanshi *tanzaku* are, however, often comparatively plain, utilizing paper

that has little or no decoration.

In texture, *washi* ranges from the crepe-like, thick ceremonial *danshi* 檀紙 paper, which is made chiefly of mulberry fibers, to the soft, somewhat thinner but highly desirable mulberry paper called *sugihara* (*sugihara*) 杉原, and the most popular *torinokogami* 鳥の子紙. *Torinokogami* is a strong, top-quality paper made from *ganpi*, with a close-pored texture and smooth finish. It was highly sought-after in the middle ages for *tanzaku* and square *shikishi* 色紙 papers, which were often gorgeously decorated. One may also find examples of non-paper materials among *tanzaku*, including silk, thin wooden veneer shingles (*begi* 剥ぎ), and *karakami* 唐紙, a kind of Chinese paper that had a thin whitewashed surface and pearlescent surface design. Clay was added to some papers to make them more serviceable and less apt to dry out. One clay paper was a variety known as *maniai-shi* 間に合い紙, which is reportedly extinct today.⁸

The majority of kanshi *tanzaku* bear a design referred to as a *suki-moyō* 漉き模様, that is, a decoration produced during the paper-making process itself. Most typically, this decoration follows the traditional motif known as *uchi-gumori* 内曇り (打ち曇り), the “cloud” pattern, in which waves of indigo appear in the upper mid-section of the *tanzaku*, with pale lavender waves toward the bottom, all against a plain, beige *ganpi* background. *Uchi-gumori* was the most popular of all *tanzaku* papers through the ages, having first made its appearance in the Muromachi period (1336–1573). Another popular kind of design known from early times is *bokashi* 暈かし, a paper with wavy edges of shaded colors in interesting swirls and other patterns. Also relatively common was a pressed textured pattern resembling cloth or canvas, so-called *nunome-gami* 布目紙 (“cloth-textured paper”), a thick mulberry paper.

Paper maintained a high standard of beauty and technical excellence well down to the Genroku era (1688–1704), after which time varieties and design motifs increased while overall quality apparently declined to some extent. Nowadays, the standard *tanzaku* strip measures 6 cm. in width by 36.5 cm. in height, although a slightly wider “Hiroshima *tanzaku*” paper is sometimes preferred for paintings. Even in the older specialty paper shops in Kyoto, comparatively few varieties of *tanzaku* paper are available

for purchase today, no doubt owing to greatly diminished consumer demand.

The Development of Tanzaku as a Medium for Recording Poetry

The practice of employing *tanzaku* as a decorative medium for recording poetry probably arose around the beginning of the fourteenth century. The earliest example known is an item by courtier Reizei Tamesuke (1263–1328). The history of the development of *tanzaku* remains rather obscure, complicated by the fact that the word *tanzaku* (written variously as 短冊, 短尺, 単冊, 短籍 and often pronounced *tanjaku* during the eighth through twelfth centuries) was in common generic use some six centuries before its meaning narrowed and the term came to designate this poetic medium.⁹ As far as can be determined from the scanty facts available, the term *tanjaku* first meant plain paper oblongs or tags of indeterminate size used for a variety of purposes. Some early functions include the labeling of goods and as paper slips for drawing lots in divination exercises and court raffles.¹⁰ The term was also employed in the Nara period (704–793) to refer to paper slips used to record work-performance reviews (*kōka* 考課) and rank-promotion notices. During Heian times (794–1185) the term sometimes designated paper slips for recording poem drafts for use in poetry contests or for drawing poetic topics by lot at poetry-writing parties.¹¹ Narrow slips of paper called *kirigami* 切紙 were also utilized in the Heian period by poetry-anthology editors to record draft copies of poems submitted during the compilation process.¹² These poetry-related uses of paper slips or scraps of various kinds, which had become common in court circles by the late Heian period, were the forerunners of the medieval poem *tanzaku*. As no Heian examples are known to be extant,¹³ a fuller account of their individual characteristics is presently not possible.

From around the thirteenth century, *tanzaku* slips emerged as a more formal medium for recording verse on assigned topics (*tsugi-uta* 続歌 or *tandai* 探題) at group poetry-writing meetings, both private and public. On these occasions, verse was written extemporaneously, the more practiced poets assuming responsibility for large numbers of topics, the less experienced taking only a few. One early account of this activity is

found in the historical work *Azuma kagami* 東鏡, which records an event dated 2/24/1251 when some 360 poems were composed at one sitting, although such poetry-writing events were likely held in earlier times as well.¹⁴ Scholars conjecture that on these occasions, the *dai* 題 (topics) were written at the top of the *tanzaku* prior to the meeting, and the assembled guests were asked to add a suitable verse below the topic, on the same slip.¹⁵ Records from the early fourteenth century show that certain poets also began using *tanzaku* slips to record rough drafts of poems composed on topics assigned in advance (so-called *kenjitsudai* 兼日題).¹⁶ It was apparently around this time, in the early Muromachi period (1336–1392), that the modern notion of *tanzaku* as a decorative, rather than merely utilitarian, medium for the recording of poetry became current.

During the Muromachi period, beautifully patterned papers were created specially for the purpose of recording poetry for posterity and exchange. Rules were also set regarding paper size and the physical layout of the composition, these governed by considerations of rank or status and gender of the poet.¹⁷ In the Edo period, gold and silver foil pieces and smaller powdery flecks became popular in surface designs. Hand-painted motifs or pictures with printed design overlays were also common. The rules governing layout also became minutely elaborated during this period. Today, kanshi *tanzaku* from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are considered highly rare. In fact, ones dating back a mere century or so have become extremely hard to find, even in Kyoto, where so many *tanzaku* were exchanged and collected over the centuries.¹⁸

The Preservation of Tanzaku and the Character of the Ozasa Collection

Paper, whatever the kind, is a difficult medium to preserve. Thanks to the strenuous efforts of collectors such as Ozasa, we are still able to enjoy today many fine, well-preserved examples of the *tanzaku* art. Some of these were probably originally given as gifts or souvenirs at social gatherings or else were presented as attachments to other gifts (such as paintings), and once received, were likely stored away by the recipient and later by his descendants. Other *tanzaku* were no doubt retained by the poet

himself and his immediate family in an attempt to preserve his poetry or samples of his work. But for every *tanzaku* that has survived, it is certain that many thousands of others were irreparably damaged by mold or insects, lost in fires, floods, war, and other disasters over the intervening centuries, or else simply discarded. It is for this reason that the Ozasa collection, preserving as it does many hundreds of *tanzaku* from both the famous and obscure, these produced in a single geographic area and representing a fairly circumscribed period of Japanese history, is considered especially valuable.

The Ozasa *tanzaku* constitute a body of pristine holographs for which there exist neither textual commentaries nor emended editions. While these textual realities have presented obstacles, it has been a pleasure for the authors of the present study to be able to read and evaluate a body of poetry in its original state, as written in the poets' own hands. But what makes this collection particularly interesting as literature is the relative unselfconsciousness of the poems overall and the simple, unaffected charm of the lyrical verse in particular. The rhetorical plainness of many of the Ozasa kanshi stands out all the more once the verse is extracted from the decorative *tanzaku*, typeset, and printed in a modern text. Some of the amateur poets were doubtless writing at the limits of their ability, unable to produce poetry of a more sophisticated nature even if they tried. The fact that many of the poems were apparently composed *extempore* with little opportunity for thought and revision, in situations where the premium was on rapidly delivering a finished product, would also help to account for their relative plainness. One further factor comes into play: the poetic composition itself was viewed as only one component of a larger aesthetic whole—poem, paper, and calligraphy. Consequently, poets may not have been overly concerned with displaying their highest level of technical expertise because the overall success of their endeavor did not depend solely upon the artistic merits or originality of the poem. This tendency appears especially marked in the social *tanzaku*, which will be discussed below.

We note that many of the Ozasa kanshi *tanzaku* can be grouped in various family or quasi-family clusters. Most notable is the cluster of verse

centered around poet Iwagaki Ryūkei (author of SBK 27-1), which includes poems by his adopted sons Iwagaki Tōen and Iwagaki (Okada) Gesshū, as well as by the latter's birth father Okada Kunihiko (Nangai), who had scholarly ties to Ryūkei. Ryūkei's own teacher, Miyazaki Inpo, and various students of Inpo are also part of this group: Naoi Toku and Misaki Jō, for example. Another prominent cluster surrounds Minagawa Kien and his student Umetsuji Shunshō and includes various persons connected to them by either birth or training, Shunshō's brother Umetsuji Mareyasu, Kitawaki Tansui, and Imakōji Kōson among them. These connections suggest that Ozasa acquired some of the *tanzaku* in intact groups, purchasing them directly from family members or from persons closely associated with a particular school or literary family.

The Kanshi Tradition and the *Tanzaku*

Kanshi in Japanese Literary Life

Until the early decades of the twentieth century, kanshi composition enjoyed a high status in Japanese literary life, in some periods even taking precedence over vernacular verse as the poetic form of choice for formal expression. From around the seventh century to the early twentieth century, the composition of poetry and prose in Chinese was indeed an essential part of the literary lives of Japanese courtiers, priests, and intellectuals; by Edo times, kanshi composition had spread downward to persons in the artisan-merchant class, whose ability to compose in Chinese was seen as a mark of both social and intellectual achievement. The practice of writing Chinese poetry in the Japanese court was traditionally considered a means for developing and expressing one's aesthetic and literary sensibilities, at the same time fostering the dissemination of traditional Confucian values. The ability to versify in Chinese was also regarded as an indispensable social grace, one that brightened and fortified human relations and heightened the dignity of formal occasions at court. Further, Chinese poetic forms provided a mode of expression involving a range of thematic concerns uncommon, if not absent entirely, in the waka 和歌 (vernacular poetry) tradition, which was relatively narrow

and circumspect in its literary themes: political events, rural life, the pain of poverty, the misery of illness, and even death itself are examples of kanshi topoi virtually excluded from Japanese verse, especially that written after the Heian period began.

As the art of kanshi developed, especially from the mid-Heian period on, we see it become an increasingly important expressive medium for the Japanese poet. Incorporating imagery, vocabulary, and settings peculiar to Japanese life, the *kanshi* came to reflect more clearly Japanese tastes and concerns, and in the hands of the best poets, achieved its own sense of style and authentic local color. In short, kanshi through the centuries gained a measure of cultural independence from the Chinese tradition and enjoyed considerable popularity as a native literary genre. As such, the body of *kanshi* poetry bequeathed to us is a valuable source of insights about Japanese life and culture across the centuries.

By the Edo period (1603–1868), various styles of Chinese, ranging from the fairly orthodox variety to the hybrid “variant Chinese” form, had been in use for well over a thousand years, flourishing as the formal written language of officials, scholars, and priests. Chinese literary composition during the Edo age reached a level of popularity and broad appeal never before seen. As noted above, by mid-Edo times, the composition of kanshi, and poetry in the vernacular for that matter, was no longer principally the domain of samurai, scholar-officials, and priests, but had filtered down to literate urban merchants, farmer-landowners, artisans, and women as well. Poetry societies, *shisha* 詩社, were established in the urban centers east and west, and innumerable anthologies of verse were published and circulated as the printing industry advanced and the literacy rate rose. As is apparent from reading the Ozasa *tanzaku*, Kyoto citizens composed poetry on every imaginable social and private occasion: poetry—both waka and kanshi—had become a standard means to commemorate human events such as birthdays and memorial services, to offer thanks for hospitality received, and to send felicitations to friends and colleagues. *Tanzaku* also record moments of personal pleasure, remembrance, and reflection—moments sometimes so private as to be almost incomprehensible to those outside the poet’s immediate circle. We

will take a closer look at the function of kanshi *tanzaku* in the section which follows.

Kanshi Tanzaku and Their Compositional Contexts

The kanshi *tanzaku* display considerable versatility in function, reflecting social, lyrical, and literary concerns. The majority of the Ozasa kanshi can be described as private and informal in character. However, some of the social poems, most typically those in the congratulatory mode, have at least a semi-public nature, having been composed for a circle of friends at a social event. This social element is prominent in at least a quarter of the Ozasa kanshi, which were composed and presented as modest gestures of gratitude, expressions of friendship and goodwill, or else to commemorate birthday parties, farewells, reunions, festivals, and other such occasions.

It follows that the poet and the intended reader or readers often shared certain unspoken understandings tied to the specific occasion when the poem was composed. Many of these pieces were written as private communications, solely for the pleasure or benefit of the recipient, rather than as works of art to be shared with the world. That is to say, it seems that most of the social *tanzaku* were conceived by their writers not as literary creations but as social ephemera not unlike modern emails or postcards scrawled during travel, documents rarely saved for future generations. We may imagine that many of our poets would be surprised, if not alarmed, to find us scrutinizing and puzzling over the contents of their poems today. SBK 90 by Priest Myōdō (1769–1837), titled “Going to Hōrin’an and Presenting a Poem in Respectful Appreciation to the Master,” nicely illustrates this social, specifically occasional use of *tanzaku*.¹⁹

The retreat where I am staying is nearby;
 Going back and forth each day has made us close.
 Many thanks for your hospitality tonight—
 Finest delicacies from the hills and seas!

In many of the poems in this social *tanzaku* category, passing mention is

made of the natural setting, with one or more lines of conventional, semi-formulaic description, as in the following verse (SBK 5-1) by Akutagawa Tankyū (1710–1785):

Low-lying pines, a canopy of green, standing on all four sides.
 Dragons roaring, waves resounding, a new year has arrived.
 Old immortals, long-time friends, great pillars of our land—
 You surely know if you eat those petals you'll live ten thousand springs!

Vernacular social poems of the same sort, usually classified in the anthologies under the heading of “felicitations,” are commonplace in the Japanese literary tradition, being used in many of the same contexts from early times. Book Seven of *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (comp. 905) includes the following two birthday poems, KKS 355 and KKS 356, which make imaginative use of the crane and pine tree motifs so popular in the late Edo private kanshi *tanzaku*:

355. Ariwara Shigeharu. *Composed for a celebration in honor of Fujiwara Miyoshi's sixtieth year*

tsuru kame mo	Even turtles and cranes
chitose no nochi wa	meet unknown fates at the end
shiranaku ni	of a thousand years.
akanu kokoro ni	Please leave the length of your life
makasehatetemu	to one whose heart is greedy.

356. Monk Sosei. *Composed on behalf of Yoshimine Tsunenari's daughter for a celebration in honor of her father's fortieth year.*

yorozuyo o	This pine represents
matsu ni zo kimi o	prayers for your eternal life.
iwaitsuru	May I always dwell
chitose no kage ni	in the shadow of the tree
sumamu to omoeba	that endures a thousand years. ²⁰

The Enigmatic Lyrical Poem

Roughly a quarter of the Ozasa kanshi reveal a lyrical impulse, the subjects ranging from private pastimes, pleasant moments amidst nature, and recollections of the past to observations about society and the times. One example is SBK 3, by Minagawa Kien (1734–1807), which appears to have been written following a visit to a place of special significance to the poet:

I used to gaze at that peaceful spot, I see it in my mind.
 These old feelings, complex and tangled, never for a moment cease.
 Sometimes in my dreams these feelings I encounter,
 And if this happens during the day, my thoughts stray far away.

In the case of quatrains like the above, we can only guess what circumstances might have prompted the composition of the poem. Circumspection is essential when reading such verse, for one can easily misapprehend the poet's intentions, especially when the occasion for the verse is not explicitly stated or when a poem has no title. Comprehension is made even more difficult when the grammatical subject is missing or pronoun indication is weak and the identity of the speaker becomes obscured. Many of the *tanzaku* thus resemble a challenging jigsaw puzzle, one in which there are too few pieces clearly in place to be able to discern the form of the missing ones and thus to find and put them into their proper places. But kanshi *tanzaku* need not be obscure. An example in which the message comes through clearly, even in the absence of a title or other contextual details, is the following poem (SBK 44), composed by Hata Koresuke (1756–1827) on the occasion of the moon casting its light into the poet's room:

The dew is bathed in brilliant light, the moon a millstone shape.
 In the autumn sky clouds have vanished, a single goose wings by.
 Late at night within the blinds I put aside my silver candle—
 The pure light admonishing me to read the Buddhist sutras.

The Descriptive Poem: Snapshots of Man and Nature

Almost a third of the Ozasa kanshi are characterized by an emphasis upon natural description, the external, objective world filling the entire poetic space with a succession of impersonal images. But in the very details of nature—what is selected and the specific images used to describe it—we may at times discern the poet's attitude toward those surroundings or other philosophical concerns, even in the absence of an overtly subjective tone. A poem may describe a vast panorama—such as the morning vista at Arashiyama—or just a small natural object, for example, a golden oriole on a snowy branch or the beautiful unnamed flower described in SBK 67 by Igarashi Sonshin (d. 1835):

Covered in dew and braving the wind, green tendrils slanting down.
Morning it opens, night withdrawing, one day after another.
Its fragrant spirit descends from the Milky Way at dawn,
Changing it into a certain kind of fresh and beautiful flower.

Written in the style of the Chinese *yung-wu* 詠物 (Jp. *eibutsu*), “poems on things,” Sonshin's piece, like so many of the *tanzaku*, does not identify its subject (a morning glory?). Several reasons for this omission may be offered: the poem was perhaps accompanied by a painting of the object being depicted, obviating the need for any title, or perhaps the poet saw no reason to state his poetic subject, because the recipient or those actually present when the verse was written knew what was being portrayed.

Panoramic descriptions of hills, valleys, and the native terrain generally seem larger in scale and more wide-ranging in scope—and commensurately less precisely focused—than the corresponding natural images common in waka verse. The following quatrain, SBK 469 by Okada Gesshū (1808–1873), takes into its range of view the broad sweep of the countryside, from the glow on the hills to the river waters, with the presence of the poet only faintly in evidence:

One bunch, another bunch, drawing the sightseers in.
 A thousand branches, a myriad branches—the fullness of late spring.
 The most breathtaking sight of all is the Rankyō gorge at dawn:
 The glow on the hills, the charm of the waters have a spirit all their own.

In other poetic vignettes, the portrait is not of nature but of human interaction: a small, at times imaginary, scene, either contemporary or historical, of a sort popular among the more well-known mid- to late Edo poets such as Kashiwagi Jotei (1763–1819), Kikuchi Gozan (1772–1855), and Hitta Shōtō (1779–1833), whose verse abounds in local color and scenes from the daily lives of shopkeepers, geisha, and other urban folk. One example from the *tanzaku* is a verse by Okada Kunihiko (1763–1837), SBK 61, titled “A Beautiful Woman Looking in a Mirror”:

Before the blinds of kingfisher green, midday fast approaching.
 The beautiful lady has not yet descended from her room upstairs.
 Painting her eyebrows languidly as she smiles at Master Chang,
 She opens and closes her makeup mirrors, with one held out
 behind her.

Poems on historical topoi, mostly from Chinese sources, are relatively common among Japanese kanshi. There are several among the *tanzaku* which focus upon the remembrance or glorification of a historical event or person, such as the Chinese imperial concubine Wang Chao-chün, the subject of SBK 37. This type of poem belongs to a subgenre known in China either as the *huai-ku shih* 懷古詩 “poems recalling antiquity” or the *jung-shih shih* 詠史詩 “poems on history.” The ancient past is usually defined in terms of Chinese, rather than Japanese, history, a commentary on the enduring prestige and influence of China’s culture. Typically, these historical poems include at least one couplet where the poet expresses his personal response to the individuals or events described, as in the final couplet of SBK 1 by the artist Miyazaki Inpo (1717–1774):

Events recorded on bamboo slips, plainly to be seen.
 Men's reputations based entirely on the name they left behind.
 Such a shame that Huan Wen wished to leave an evil name;
 And we admire Chang Han for his "wine-cup raising spirit."
 The rites and music of Han and T'ang are there for all to see;
 The writings of Pan Ku and Ssu-ma are revered by every age.
 Whenever I read the histories I sigh over and over with regret—
 For hundreds of years no one of their ilk has ever appeared again.

Of a similar conspicuously Chinese stripe are the antiquarian, picturesque *tanzaku* poems composed in the Six Dynasties (222–589) palace style. Notable for their aesthetic distance and overrefined images, these are usually so far out of touch with the kanshi poet's life and surroundings as to seem composed merely as composition exercises or for calligraphy practice. An example is the following "lonely lady" nocturne (SBK 52), titled "Moonlight in the Palace Ladies' Quarters," which was written by a Buddhist priest named Tōteki (d. 1807):

Flowering peach trees soaked with dew bearing the chill of spring.
 The water clock dripping on and on, the shades of night grow deep.
 So very melancholy the moon shining beyond the crystal blinds.
 She gazes at it all alone, from her coral pillow.

The Ozasa Kanshi: Literary Style, Technique, Themes, and Imagery

Style and Technique

Generally speaking, the Ozasa kanshi display a concrete, often prosaic, treatment of their subject matter and tend to use simple, rather than complex poetic modes. Many are courtly or elevated in their tone and handling of their subject, and only rarely earthy or plebeian; mildly personal but seldom effusively passionate; and reflective at times, yet not richly imaginative. While some of the *tanzaku* may strike the reader as mannered and artificial, the best verse conveys authentic-seeming sentiments and

represents the aesthetic middle ground of Japanese poetry: safely within the confines of tradition and convention, yet rooted firmly in Japanese experience and the native setting. Like the Japanese waka, the Ozasa kanshi show within a small range of poetic forms or genres a variety of modes, which are often used in overlapping fashion—most notably, the congratulatory, declarative, descriptive, reflective, and quasi-philosophical modes, with dramatic and narrative varieties being absent. Poetic tone in the kanshi ranges widely, from the sentimental or melancholy to the humorous, the tragic, and the mildly didactic. Some use of metaphor is present, but rarely is it carried to imaginative extremes.

With only one or at most two kanshi by each of the poets, many of whom are otherwise unknown, it is difficult to comment on individual style, much less make specific statements regarding the stylistic character of the entire collection. The poetry should be described, if anything, as heterogeneous and eclectic, perhaps most indebted to the styles of the High T'ang, especially in the Wang Wei-influenced landscape poems and in the Taoist-inspired verse reminiscent of Li Po (701–762). But we find also examples in the Six Dynasties palace style, as well as poems with the plainer, more earthy images and straightforward diction which became popular in mid-T'ang and on into the Sung. Thus, it must be said that the collection does not reflect one single age, genre, or style of Chinese *shih*, but instead represents an aggregate of classical styles synthesized into a pleasing, somewhat homogeneous whole.

Technically, most of the kanshi *tanzaku* show comparatively little reliance upon complex literary rhetoric and allusion to Chinese culture; indeed, sophisticated literary techniques are seldom in evidence. This is partially a function of the often extemporaneous nature of the kanshi *tanzaku*, but it also tends to be a characteristic of kanshi generally at this time in the late Edo period. Several registers of kanshi diction may be observed, from the elegantly formal and decorous to informal, even unconventional, colloquial language.

Various stylistic weaknesses can be seen from time to time, hardly surprising given the amateur status of the majority of the *tanzaku* poets and the impromptu nature of many of the verses. In particular, clarity of

meaning and thematic continuity are sometimes compromised, especially in the quatrain, a form so brief and fettered with generic constraints that the poet needed to exercise all the skill, forethought, and economy of expression he could muster in order to create an efficient, integrated whole. Parallelism and antithesis also break down on occasion in the octaves, the poet lapsing into prosaism sometimes verging on colloquial usage. It was no doubt difficult for amateur poets in particular to create flawless parallel couplets on account of their relative inexperience, and for the same reason, syntax can be noticeably irregular. These characteristics, coupled with the occasional ungrammatical locution and the oddly positioned caesura, work to create a distinctive eccentricity, one which is not necessarily unappealing.

Themes and Topoi

The topoi in this kanshi group are impeccably tasteful. The poems share with the broader kanshi tradition a wide range of themes, the most prominent among them being the pleasures of the four seasons and the bounties of nature—its gentle awakening, luxuriant flowering, and inevitable decay. The strong interest in documenting the changes and appearance of natural objects and scenery is counter-balanced by an equal concern with human affairs—celebrations, travel, human relationships, social mores, and so on, topoi shared with Japanese vernacular poetry.²¹

Particularly prominent, as already noted, within the human affairs category is the party or banquet motif. In poetry of this kind, the theme of health and longevity is preeminent, no doubt because the expression of auspicious sentiments was considered *de rigueur* on festive social occasions. Poems on this theme are characterized by a Taoist coloring, with as many as ten kanshi in the Ozasa *tanzaku* making mention of longevity, the following poem, SBK 35, by Kinoshita Shizuka (1753–1815) being a typical example:

Verdant, flourishing pine trees, brightness reaching the heavens.
 Curving branches, layer on layer, lend color to the longevity banquet.
 Before the steps where the feast is held we pick the immortal
 mushrooms,
 And up on a hill we loudly sing, pledging to prolong our lives.

While most of the banquet verse appears to have been written at or immediately following the special event, SBK 57-1 by Nakamura Toshitaka (1782–1837), titled “Congratulating Mr. Yagi on his Forty-second Birthday,” may have been composed and sent in advance of the festivities because the poet was unable to attend:

Imagining your birthday party, six times seven springs.
 Fragrant plants, jade-like trees—many, many guests!
 An elegant atmosphere in the hall as people raise their cups,
 All intoning the Nine Similitudes, the sound so fresh and new.

The Ozasa *tanzaku* consist entirely of compositions by residents of Kyoto and its immediate environs—city-dwellers engaged in occupations which kept them in the city most of the time. Thus, we do not find kanshi devoted to such “rural” concerns as the joys of rustic retirement, the bittersweet experience of loneliness in the countryside, and the homesickness of the traveler who journeys away from home for long periods, all of which are important themes elsewhere in the kanshi tradition. On the other hand, the city poets do write about the pleasures of recreational rambles on the outskirts of the city—there are a dozen poems describing such outings—and we observe how poet Naoi Toku (?–1789) in SBK 36 expresses his private fascination for the hermit’s way of life, glimpsed one day while out walking:

.....
 Off in the distance I see the hermit's dwelling.
 Surrounding the house a cordon of lush flowers.
 Far from the dust, shelves full of books.
 The house's owner hasn't yet returned.
 I prepare to leave, yet feel some hesitation.

After nature and human events, a third, albeit considerably less prominent, thematic area in the Ozasa kanshi is the realm of the spiritual and transcendental: Buddhist notions and truths about life, such as the evanescence of youth and happiness and the rapid passage of time. The best example is SBK 470 by Miyahara Ekian (1806–1885):

A fallen blossom borne by the current—thirteen springs have passed.
 Swift as a colt past a crack in the wall, but this shouldn't startle
 your spirit.
 In life, after all, there's no distinction between Self and other things.
 Before we know it, we all end up as dust on Mount Pei-mang.

Another rather unusual *tanzaku* with a melancholy quasi-philosophical tone is SBK 74-1 by Iwagaki Matsunae (1774–1849), titled “Mourning on the First Anniversary of the Death of My Daughter's Husband, Vice Governor of Dewa,” which was written on the day of the Tanabata Star Festival:

Behold those two stars: although apart for a year,
 Annually they enjoy a reunion, truly a match divine.
 Why did such a noble son-in-law leave our daughter behind?
 His spirit not returning on this day of Tanabata.

While subjects such as war, politics, sexual relations, and natural calamities were certainly not off-limits in kanshi, they are rare in the *tanzaku*. SBK 269-2, a quatrain by a doctor named Mutobe Tokika (?–1845), charmingly alludes to the amorous thoughts of youths, while the Nanga artist

Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924) writes about having to flee from what appears to be political danger to the far north (SBK 637-2). But beyond this, the kanshi seldom stray. Clearly, it is in the realm of light-hearted social exchange, the quiet scenes and rhythms of life in the city, and the immediate beauties of the natural world that the *tanzaku* poet felt most comfortable.

Imagery and the Native Terrain

The imagery of the Ozasa kanshi tends to be fairly general and abstract, lacking the delicate crystalline focus of the waka, which is known for its refined images such as *asaborake* (dawn at its first pale light), *yukima* (patches where snow has melted away), and *utsurika* (transferred scent). Like the waka, most kanshi are largely visually oriented, focused on the scenes of nature, but by comparison they seem less subjective and precise in their treatment: floral scent, for example, figures in seven poems (chilly scent, subtle scent, fragrant chrysanthemums, and so on), yet fine discrimination is not normally present. We observe as well a preference for the clean, decorous and elegant image and a disinclination to focus on the down-to-earth world of creatures like beetles, frogs, and dogs, which had in the same period become rather fashionable among influential kanshi poets such as Majima Shōnan (1791–1839) and Murakami Butsuzan (1810–1879). No doubt these tendencies were in keeping with the social context of many of the *tanzaku*, which called for traditional and refined topics rather than experimentation with the novel and mundane.

A detailed survey of the imagery in the Ozasa kanshi helps us to define more concretely the aesthetic preferences and thematic concerns of this group of nineteenth-century Japanese poets.²² One observes that the poems are particularly rich in nouns or nominal constructions. These collectively constitute a poetic catalog of the perceptual and intellectual images in the minds of the poets. Most prominent are natural images describing the appearance of the moon and ambient conditions of the atmosphere: the wind, rain, snow, and clouds. The moon was particularly close to the Japanese heart, appearing in about a quarter of the kanshi verse in this collection—clearly a congenial and consoling presence and

thus worthy of the poet's attention. This interest in the moon is also apparent in native poetry, where the moon typically functions as a symbol of spiritual truth and supreme beauty as well as natural change and the relentless advance of time. In these kanshi, the moon is variously compared to a millstone (SBK 44), a sickle (SBK 143), and even a slender wisp of a lady, the poet's reliable evening companion (SBK 75-1). It is the chilly evening moonlight, the high moon over hills, and the winter sliver of a moon. The moon is also a source of spiritual inspiration: the "admonishing" pure moon whose light provides the conditions for study, the moon which guides, encourages spiritual growth, and comforts the poet in his solitude. Among our favorites is SBK 75-1, untitled, by Umetsuji Shunshō (1776–1857):

Refining and polishing my poetic skills, I stay awake for hours.
 Sitting alone in my empty study, the door never closed at night.
 Nobody comes save the beautiful one, to see which of us is the thinner—
 The bright moon in white silk sleeves in the middle of my garden.

The daytime sun and sky, by contrast, were of less interest, seen in only eleven of the compositions. The Milky Way figures in three poems, and stars in only two—the stars of the Tanabata legend in SBK 74-1 and the rare Lady Star of SBK 78. But the celestial images can be striking, as in the following outstanding summer verse, SBK 139-2 by Priest Ninryū (1783–1855), titled "Lotuses in the Rain":

Burning skies, imminent rain, the sky as if on fire.
 Stormy rain dashes the lotuses—it seems to be raining lotuses!
 I'm suddenly aware of a scented wind; fragrance fills the room.
 Peace all around me everywhere as I take delight in nature.

In those kanshi which depict weather and the natural conditions impinging on the poet, misty atmosphere and clouds are perhaps most frequently seen, featured in almost a quarter of the poems. Mist in the social *tanzaku* is often the "auspicious" mist or atmosphere enveloping a

party scene (real or imaginary), but the forms and descriptions of clouds or similar are sufficiently varied from poem to poem as to be interesting: bluish, broken, trailing, colorful, gauzy, vanishing, rolling, and so on. The wind, too, is an almost omnipresent natural element found in ten of the kanshi and often quite appealingly portrayed, as in the following charming *zekku* by Asakura Keizan (1755–1818), SBK 60, titled “An Autumn Evening in the Mountains”:

Autumn hills, chilly air billowing through my robes.
 The cold has begun, the light of the Milky Way shimmering in the sky.
 The wind speaks, then before I know it, pine cones falling from
 the trees.
 Deer belling now and again, harmonious sounds in the night.

Another natural phenomenon engaging the poets’ interest is precipitation: rain, snow, dew and frost appear in a quarter of the poems and again show pleasingly varied treatment. There is dew bathed in moonlight (SBK 44), elegant frost on flowers (SBK 47), snow clearing around the plums (SBK 86-1), and even snow dotting a warbler’s wings (SBK 307), one of the more refined images of snow, made all the more delicate by the notion that the “wind” arising from the bird’s wings is propelling the scent toward the poet:

Plum tree by the window—a lovely yellow warbler.
 Light snow dots its golden wings.
 It gives a shake, the flowery branches move.
 A slight breeze brings a chilly scent.

The four seasons per se are seldom specifically mentioned, no doubt because the seasonal images themselves were considered sufficient to evoke a particular time of year. Summer and winter are less often the seasonal subject than spring and autumn, perhaps because poets found them relatively uncongenial times of the year and thus had less interest in describing them. This tendency is also pronounced in the vernacular

poetry and in kanshi in general; as Brower and Miner have observed, "Summer is perhaps the most neutral of the seasons, and with winter, usually gets the shortest treatment in the anthologies."²³

Among images in the animal kingdom, the *tanzyaku* poets clearly felt an affinity for birds over all other creatures, these figuring in fifteen of the kanshi. By contrast, there is no treatment of insects, a curious omission given their not infrequent appearance in mid- to late Edo kanshi. Images of flowers (twelve varieties) and trees (seven varieties) abound in the poems, with a special interest being accorded bamboo and the long-lived pine tree. The latter enjoyed almost cult status among Edo Japanese and was a particularly prominent image in the auspicious festive kanshi: we encounter pure and chaste pines, ancient pines, cold pines, pine "flowers," pines oozing valuable sap (which was taken in tonics to promote longevity), and pines being described as old friends, or *vice versa*.

In the realm of imagery associated with human existence, we gain charming glimpses of the quotidian lives and surroundings of the *Heian jinbutsushi* poets, which come to life in their references to common objects, both as poetic subject and as image. It is in these that we can appreciate in at least some of its detail the immediate physical and cultural milieu of the poet: oil lamps sparking in the cold (SBK 442), ink slabs (SBK 442), the new calendar of the year (SBK 689-1), and the orchid-lined hallways of an inn (SBK 305). This was a lifestyle which had room for pleasant leisure pursuits and travel, if not to distant places then to local scenic spots, where kanshi were often composed on the spur of the moment. We can almost hear the "creaking palanquin" (SBK 380-1) and the oars of the boatmen (SBK 434) as the traveler journeys past farmhouses inhabited by contented peasants (SBK 48) and passes the huts of hermits (SBK 36). He ambles along scenic roads with his gourd and walking stick (SBK 51, 626), then relaxes drinking tea near a brazier or enjoys a pot of wine (SBK 7-1, 27-1, 76-1, 77-1). There are dancing sleeves (SBK 28), billowing robes (SBK 60), and the hats of city folk with brims tilted down shielding them from the elements, as in the following verse titled "Kyoto in Early Spring" (SBK 628) by Priest Inji (?-1870):

From the northeastern peaks the wind arrives, snow in its wake.
 The people on the city streets have tilted the brims of their hats.
 Heaven's majesty is close at hand, extraordinary the weather:
 Spring has come to Shang-lin park, spreading a rosy haze.

The Japanese coloration is accentuated by the various localities described or alluded to in the poems, all but three of which are native—places such as Kyoto's Mt. Hiei, Yase ford, and the hills of Arashiyama. Attractively portrayed, moreover, are the Japanese seasonal and human events in the lives of the poets, these related to such occasions as moon- and flower-viewing, drinking with friends at parties, sleeping on boats during travel, visiting acquaintances during the rainy season, and loafing in the summer heat. It follows that the persons who figure in the kanshi are also mostly Japanese subjects—hermits and fortune-tellers, travelers and priests, old men, and young lads—with only the occasional character borrowed from the Chinese literary heritage. The following verse by Mutobe Tokika (?–1845), titled “Dawn in Autumn” (SBK 269-2), illustrates well the vivid, appealing local color seen in the best kanshi *tanzaku* of this collection and shows how far kanshi had come in reflecting the Japanese cultural environment:

In a willow lane cracking whips, young lords passing through.
 On a village mound picking vegetables, rustic youngsters gather.
 Although the morals of a world at peace prevail throughout the land,
 Noble and humble alike enjoy their share of lustful thoughts.

The Formal and Prosodic Qualities of the Kanshi *Tanzaku*

Poetic Genres

Most of the eighty-two kanshi in the Ozasa collection are cast in one of the subgenres of the “modern style” (*chin-t'i-shih* 近體詩) of regulated verse (*lü-shih* 律詩), which will be described in more detail below.²⁴ The “modern style” arose around the sixth century in China and achieved full

maturity during the T'ang period (618–907), after which time this genre fairly dominated the practice of Chinese verse in both China and Japan for centuries to come. This style was characterized by its adherence to rigorous formal rules and its strict prosodic requirements for the implementation of rhyme (always with level-tone words) and the deployment of alternating oblique and level tone sequencing in specific positions throughout the poem. The net effect of these prescribed patterns was the euphonic, rhythmic contrast and repetition of tones, not only within a given line, but also between certain corresponding words in a couplet. Verbal parallelism in the middle two couplets of octaves was also required.

As will be explained in further detail below, in the Ozasa *tanzaku* kanshi one finds some degree of deviation from the basic prosodic rules in about 80 percent of the poems, with this tendency being more marked in the later ones. (We must remember, however, that Chinese poets themselves, even reasonably well-known writers, did not always achieve total parallelism or full compliance with the prosodic rules in their regulated verse.) The Japanese poet was quite adept, however, when it came to crafting acceptable rhyme-schemes: with handy Chinese rhyme guides at their disposal, most of the Ozasa kanshi poets (about 92 percent) managed to adhere to the rules for rhyme.²⁵ That the poems rhymed at all seems rather remarkable given that most kanshi when read aloud were simultaneously converted into a variety of Japanese translationese, where all considerations of rhyme were lost, this through the use of the so-called *kundoku* 訓読 (Japanese gloss) translation system. This use of *kundoku* enabled poets to accommodate the demands of Japanese syntax and grammar without losing the necessary Chinese vocabulary elements. Lost in this process, however, were the aural features of Chinese, notably its euphonic tonal contrasts and rhyme, which could only be appreciated through the correct Chinese vocalization of the kanshi.

However much was sacrificed in the process of *kundoku* translation, the composition of Chinese modern-style kanshi nevertheless continued throughout the Edo period, with the *zekku* 絶句 (Ch. *chüeh-chü*) quatrain being the most commonly used form in both Edo kanshi and the Ozasa

tanzaku. Two varieties are found in the latter: the highly popular *shichigon zekku* (七言絶句) with seven words to the line, and the somewhat less common five-word *gogon zekku* (五言絶句). In both kinds of quatrains, tonal alternation patterns needed to be observed and rhyme implemented in even-numbered lines (the first line could optionally be included in the rhyme scheme in seven-character octaves). The successful quatrain had no room for clumsy locutions and meandering sentiments, every word needing to “pay its way.” Some of the Ozasa *zekku* contain lines with redundant characters, many of them empty function words, these filling spaces which otherwise could be put to better poetic use.

Two additional, far less common regulated-verse forms among the Ozasa kanshi are the *shichigon risshi* (七言律詩) and the *gogon risshi* (五言律詩), the seven-character and five-character octave, respectively, both of which had end-rhyme in even-numbered lines, with rhyme being optional in the first line of the *shichigon* variety.²⁶ These two genres, in combination with the aforementioned seven-word *zekku*, comprise the three most common forms of regulated verse in both China and Japan, collectively known as the *santai-shi* 三体詩, “the three forms [of regulated verse].”

Prosody and Compliance with the Rules of Regulated Verse

During the Edo period, kanshi poets, amateur and professional, were generally well-versed in the tonal requirements of regulated-verse composition and carried around with them pocket-sized tonal prosody guides. These handbooks supplied characters for each of the traditionally designated rhyme categories as well as lists of useful poetic phrases arranged either by topos or by season. Each character constituting these poetic phrases was individually marked for the poet’s reference with its specific tone category. These tonal identifications were derived from a Chinese classical work entitled *P’ing-shui yün* 平水韻 (Jp. *Heisuiin*, The Rhyme Standard), which in its 1252 edition specified 107 general categories of rhyme, the number later decreasing by one to 106 in the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). This work is still the standard, being used to evaluate tonal categories for *kanji* found in modern Chinese-Japanese character dictionaries.²⁷

Without a close analysis of the tone and rhyme schemes of every kanshi in the Ozasa collection, a task beyond the scope of the present study, it is impossible to ascertain what proportion of the total number conform to the rules of regulated verse tonal prosody. Full data also need to be assembled in order to determine the level of compliance with other rules related to features such as parallelism and the incidence of word repetition (also closely monitored in regulated verse). Without such detailed information, it is often difficult to determine with absolute certainty whether a given quatrain is really a regulated verse, a poem of the freer *ku-shih* ("old-style poem") variety,²⁸ or just a pair of linked prose couplets.

Pending a complete survey of the tonal prosodic structure of all kanshi in the Ozasa collection, we have for the time being examined about half of the poems in this group, analyzing the degree of adherence to a limited number of basic prosodic rules. We have selected for this study twenty of the earliest kanshi (these by poets born ca. 1708–1766), and twenty later poems by poets born ca. 1772–1834. Excluded from consideration are poems with known orthographic problems of a sort that makes final determinations difficult. Also excluded from the sample is SBK 636, which displays a rather unusual oblique rhyme pattern for which we could find no suitable tonal models for comparison. The data from this survey is reflected in the chart "Tonal Prosody in the Kanshi *Tanzaku*: A Survey of Their Compliance with the Basic Rules of Regulated Verse," which follows below. Item 1 in the chart checks for overall compliance with the prescribed tonal scheme, as laid out in the Appendix, Section 2. Items 2–9 identify specific tonal and rhyme-related requirements, all of which are individual components of the overall prosodic framework, which is evaluated in item 1.²⁹ It is hoped that this data, representing, we believe, the first ever kanshi survey of its kind, will serve as a general indicator of the degree of compliance with the rules of regulated verse prosody in the Ozasa *tanzaku* and provide a basis for future comparison with anthologized kanshi from the same and earlier periods.

The following list provides a brief description of each of the nine tonal and rhyme-related prosodic requirements which we have chosen to examine in this survey, the results of which are shown in the chart below, under

items (1) through (9):

- (1) Overall compliance with total regulated-verse tonal arrangement patterns (as charted in the Appendix, Section 2)
- (2) The two-four alternation rule (known technically as 二四不同): the second and fourth characters in a line must not be in the same tonal category.
- (3) The two-six identity rule (二六對): characters two and six in a seven-word line must be in the same tonal category.
- (4) The tone-reversal rule (反法): in a seven-word line, the second, fourth, and sixth characters in the first line of a couplet must not be in the same tonal category as those in the second; in the five-word couplet, this rule applies to characters two and four only.
- (5) The binding rule (粘法): lines two and three, four and five, and six and seven in the heptasyllabic octave should show the same tonal category in positions two, four, and six. In the pentasyllabic octave, only the second and fourth words were regulated in this fashion. In the *zekku*, the binding rule is essentially the same, but of course applied only to the second and third lines.
- (6) The end-of-line triple tone non-repeating rule (下三連): a line may not end with a series of three characters in either the level or oblique tonal category.
- (7) The isolated-level and isolated-oblique tone rule (孤平孤仄): in the five-character line, the word in position two cannot be in a tone “isolated” (that is, different) from the ones above and below it; in a seven-character line, the word in position four may not be isolated in this way. (Isolation in other positions, such as the final three characters, was also considered undesirable, although this position is not included in this survey.)
- (8) The line-number rule (句法): *zekku* are always in four lines, all with either five or seven words (on rare occasions, six) per line; *lū-shih* have eight lines, in fives or sevens.
- (9) The rhyme (押韻) rule: the level tone is used in rhyming lines generally, rhymes being positioned in even-numbered lines, with the first line also permitted to enter the rhyme scheme in heptasyllabic verse. Non-

rhyming lines, by contrast, should end in an oblique tone. There are thirty categories of rhyme classified as being in the level tone, all of the remaining seventy-six categories being oblique.

Tonal Prosody in the Kanshi Tanzaku: Some Conclusions

Forty percent of the Ozasa kanshi may be found to contain two or more prosodic errors when analyzed using the standard regulated verse prosodic diagrams. Thus, while it was the apparent intention of poets to compose regulated verse, often they were not completely compliant.³⁰ Twenty-four kanshi (over half of those surveyed) contain only one or no errors of the kind surveyed under item (1), while only nine poems (about a fifth of the total) are fully compliant in all nine categories. On the other hand, the data indicate that only four kanshi (10 percent of the sample) display three or more errors, which represents an error rate of 15 percent or greater in the case of the heptasyllabic quatrain, which accounts for sixty-five of the eighty-two poems in this kanshi group.³¹ Items in this category may well have been written as *ku-shih* (and in the case of SBK 2, as a prose couplet) and if so, should not be evaluated as examples of regulated verse. A high percentage of poets, some 95 percent, were able to stay clear of defect 6, where three tones, either level or deflected, appear in succession at the end of the line. By contrast, poets seldom avoid the commission of the tone-isolation proscription, item 7 in the above list. Only twenty-two of the forty kanshi surveyed manage to avoid isolating a tone in either position four (in the seven-word poem) or two (in the case of five-word verse), two critically important points. Isolation is sometimes found in some other positions as well, although these were considered somewhat less problematic. This defect, whether in position two, four, or elsewhere in the poem, was evidently also one of the commoner errors in Heian-period verse, according to the research of Kinpara Tadashi.³²

Some differences between the early and late samples of *tanzaku* kanshi were found. The earlier group shows a cumulative total of twenty errors under item (1), which surveys overall adherence to the general prosodic patterns for regulated verse. By contrast, the later group of kanshi displays a significantly higher error rate, with some twenty-eight instances

Tonal Prosody in the Kanshi *Tanzaku*: A Survey of Their Compliance with the Basic Rules of Regulated Verse

Shibunkaku poem numbers are listed in the left vertical column; the rule numbers 1–9 (as described on the previous page) are listed horizontally along the top. A “○” below the item indicates compliance, an “X” non-compliance. A minus figure (-1, etc.) indicates the number of prosodic errors (i.e., instances of deviation from the overall prosodic scheme), as presented in the diagrams found in the Appendix, Section 2, which contains eight different regulated verse templates or diagrams. These are referred to in this chart as D1–D8. “NA” indicates that the rule or requirement in question does not apply.

Rule Number

Poem No.	Apx. Sec. 2 (1)	二四 不同 (2)	二六対 (3)	反法 (4)	粘法 (5)	下三連 (6)	孤平 孤仄 (7)	句法 (8)	押韻 (9)
1	D1: -2	○	○	-1	○	○	○	○	○
2	D7: -4	-1	NA	-1	-3	-1	-1	○	X
3	D5: ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5-1	D6: -2	-1	○	-1	-1	○	○	○	○
7-1	D2: ○	○	○	○	○	○	-3	○	○
8	D5: ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10	D6: -1	-1	-1	-1	-1	○	○	○	○
18	D6: -1	○	○	○	○	○	-1	○	○
23	D6: ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
24	D5: ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	X
25	D6: ○	○	○	○	○	○	-2	○	○
27	D6: ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
28	D8: ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
32	D5: -2	○	-1	○	○	○	○	○	○
34-1	D5: -2	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
34-2	D7: -1	○	NA	○	○	○	○	○	○

35	D5: -2	○	NA	○	○	○	○	○	○
36	D3: -2	-1	NA	-1	-1	○	-2	○	○
38	D5: -1	○	-1	-1	-1	○	-2	○	○
44	D6: ○	○	○	○	○	○	-1	○	○
254	D5: ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
255	D6: -1	○	-1	-1	-1	○	○	○	○
269	D6: ○	○	○	○	○	○	-1	○	○
307	D8: ○	○	NA	○	○	○	○	○	○
308-1	D6: -4	-2	-2	-3	-3	○	-1	○	○
354-1	D5?: -4	○	-1	-1	-1	○	-2	○	○
407-2	D6: -1	-1	-1	-1	-1	○	-2	○	○
434	D5: -4	-1	-1	-2	-2	○	-1	○	○
438	D7: -2	-1	NA	-1	○	○	-1	○	○
469	D3: -2	○	-2	-2	-1	○	-1	○	○
470	D5: -1	○	-1	-1	○	○	○	○	○
475-1	D6: -1	-1	-1	-1	○	○	-1	○	○
490-2	D6: ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
565-2	D5: -2	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
625	D5: -2	-1	○	-1	○	○	○	○	○
628	D6: ○	○	○	○	○	○	-1	○	○
639	D6: -2	○	-1	○	○	-2	-2	○	○
648-2	D6: ○	○	○	○	○	○	-1	○	○
684-2	D8: ○	○	NA	○	○	○	○	○	○
689-1	D5: -2	○	-1	-1	-1	○	○	○	○

of deviations from the standard under item (1). This data appears at least to suggest that as the Edo period went on there was a growing tendency among poets to overlook the tonal rules, thus departing from traditional Chinese models. This apparent prosodic adaptation has its parallel in the tendency of kanshi in the nineteenth century to show a greater incidence of Japanese imagery, local color, and subject matter.

An additional general observation can be made concerning tonal prosody schemes in the quatrains in our sample. Whereas it was customary in

the seven-word quatrains by Chinese poets to begin the poem with a level-tone character (the standard “level-starting” model seen in chart 5 of the prosodic diagrams in the Appendix, Section 2), Japanese poets, at least in this selection, seem to have slightly preferred the variant “oblique-starting” type, with sixteen examples of the oblique variety as opposed to fourteen of the “level-starting” one. This apparent preference for “oblique-starting” in the seven-character *zekku* is reflected in an old rhyming manual of the Meiji period dated 1878, a pocket guide for aspiring kanshi poets titled *Shigo saikin* 詩語碎金 (A Golden Treasury of Poetic Vocabulary, 2 vols.) compiled by Tsutsumi Daisuke 堤大介 of Tokushima and published by Yukawa Teisho 湯川亭書 of Naniwa (Osaka). This reference work identifies the oblique-starting variety of seven-character *zekku* as “standard,” the level-starting type as “variant.”³³ Tsutsumi’s other identifications appear to be consistent with Chinese practice: that is, the pentasyllabic *zekku* took the oblique-starting form as “standard,” the level-starting type as “variant.”³³ However, in our sample of five-word poems (seven poems out of the forty surveyed), we find only three “standard” oblique-starting poems and four “variant” level ones, this suggesting that Japanese poets used both types almost equally, if not slightly preferring the level variety.

Finally, among the forty kanshi analyzed, all but two (5 percent) have implemented rhyme correctly. The reader wishing to see a rhyme survey of all the kanshi *tanzaku* in the Ozasa collection may refer to the chart in the Appendix, Section 1, which contains complete data by genre showing about a 92 percent overall compliance with the rhyme rules, with no apparent tendency for poets to abandon this essential kanshi feature as the Edo period progressed.

The analysis of the tonal prosodic features of handwritten kanshi such as these has important practical applications, assisting us to decipher accurately the handwritten poem texts: where a cursive character is not fully legible, our knowledge of the likely prosodic value (i.e., level or oblique tone) of a word in that position in the poem, as determined by the rules of regulated verse, can enable us to narrow down the field of potential identifications and thus more accurately identify the word in question.

Paying attention to rhyme categories is also important. Whenever one is attempting to identify a final character which occurs in an even-numbered poetic line (which would be expected to match the rhyme sound of other even lines), one needs to give consideration to possible identifications which fit into the rhyme scheme observed in the other even lines, remembering always that a potential identification may be *semantically* viable while not being *prosodically* appropriate.

A Note on the *Heian jinbutsushi tanzaku shūei* Text and Orthography

All of the Ozasa poems have been monochromatically reproduced in Shibunkaku's *Heian jinbutsushi tanzaku shūei* 平安人物志短冊集影 (1973). Compiled by Ozasa Kizō and edited by Taira Haruki, this volume also provides provisional printed transcriptions of the poems (albeit with errors) in its "Shakubun" section. Although these transcriptions are a valuable resource, they are not accompanied by annotations or corrections of the original texts. Deciphering the original *tanzaku* is difficult work, for the poems are written in varying styles and degrees of cursive script, and in certain instances the orthography is made all the more difficult to interpret by the decorative background of the paper. In producing printed texts of the kanshi, we have followed the original character forms as closely as possible. In many cases, the original texts utilize a wide diversity of variant forms, *itaiji* 異体字. We have endeavored to provide a match for each variant character; after the variant form we have added in parentheses the more recognizable standard form (基本字) except in cases where the *itaiji* form is still in common modern use as a *tōyō kanji* and is therefore easily recognized. We have been unable to reproduce every single *itaiji* even with our available repertoire of about 80,000 Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian graphs in the software application "Konjaku Mojikyō 今昔文字鏡." For these irreproducible items, we have substituted the standard form of the same character.

Where orthographical errors are found in the original holographs—and these are not numerous—explanatory notes have been added to the

translations. Normally the text has been corrected, with mention of such emendations included in the corresponding notes. Character and punctuation errors are found in the printed texts of the poems contained in *Heian jinbutsushi tanzaku shūei*. Such mistakes reflect either a misreading of the original characters or else a typesetter's mistake or omission. These problems have been corrected to the extent of our abilities in the actual texts we provide, obviating the need to identify each correction in our poem notes. We have been unable to confirm through secondary sources the correct readings for the names of several poets. In these instances, we have indicated that our readings are provisional. For biographical facts we have utilized a variety of Japanese sources, most notably the information supplied by Ozasa in *Heian jinbutsushi tanzaku shūei*, where many of the salient known facts concerning each poet's life have been assembled. The biographies in this work were based in part on the seventeen unpublished handwritten volumes of notes prepared by Ozasa, which we have also utilized. These notebooks, which contain information on 2089 *Heian jinbutsushi* figures, are collectively known as *Heian jinbutsushi teiran* 平安人物志提覧 (hereafter referred to as "Teiran") and are now owned by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

Other standard reference works consulted in the preparation of our biographical notes include the following sources: (1) *Meika denki shiryō shūsei* 名家伝記資料集成, 5 vols., Shibunkaku Shuppan, Kyoto, 1984; (2) *Kinsei jinmei jiten* 近世人名辞典 in *Nihon shoshigaku taikai* 日本書誌学大系, vol. 36 (1-3), Seishōdō Shoten, 1984; (3) *Kyoto-shi seishi rekishi jinbutsu daijiten* 京都市姓氏歴史人物大辞典, *Kadokawa Nihon seishi jinbutsu daijiten*, vol. 26, Kadokawa Shoten, 1997; (4) *Nihon kanbungaku daijiten* 日本漢文学大事典, comp. by Kondō Haruo, Meiji Shoin, 1985; (5) *Dai Nihon jinmei jisho* 大日本人名辞書, vols. 1-5, 11th rev. ed., Kōdansha, 1980; and (6) *Nihon jinmei jiten* 日本人名辞典, 3rd ed., comp. by Haga Yaichi, Shibunkaku Shuppan, Kyoto, 1983.