

## FOREWORD WITH ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This monograph comprises a collection of annotated English translations of eight-two Chinese poems (kanshi) found in the monumental collection of Edo period poetry written on *tanzaku* 短冊 (decorated paper or silk slips) assembled by Dr. Ozasa Kizō (1896–1980). It includes as well an introductory investigation into various social, literary, and prosodic aspects of these kanshi and biographical notes on each poet. The *tanzaku* collection itself consists of 910 poem slips, most of them dating from the nineteenth century and written predominantly in Japanese. The collection, representing the works of 708 poets, has been gathered together into albums and is now owned by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto.

Ozasa Kizō was a distinguished Kyoto bibliographer whose mission, indeed his life passion, was to collect *tanzaku* poems composed specifically by well-known Kyoto-area poets, calligraphers, painters, and other professionals of cultural distinction whose biographies are found in the old late Edo period Who's Who known as the *Heian jinbutsushi* 平安人物志 (A Biographical Guide to Heian Notables). This work, editions of which were no larger than a paperback, appeared serially nine times over roughly a hundred years following its first appearance in the late eighteenth century. Some of the individuals found in the *Heian jinbutsushi* were professional poets, but the vast majority were amateur literati who composed verse mainly for amusement or to communicate expressions of gratitude or friendship to colleagues and acquaintances. It is the poetry by these virtually unknown amateurs which makes the collection particularly valuable and interesting, giving it a special, often idiosyncratic flavor.

My acquaintance with the Ozasa poems was initially made via the Nichibunken website toward the end of 1999. Captivated by the prospect of someday studying the Chinese poems in the collection, I decided to apply for a fellowship to conduct research at the Center. My research was subsequently undertaken with the generous support of Nichibunken over a nine-month period between September 2000 and June 2001, during which time I pursued my investigation of the kanshi poems in the Ozasa collection in association with the Heian Jinbutsushi Kenkyūkai headed by Professor Mitsuta Kazunobu. I am most grateful for the support of the Center and for the opportunity to work with Professor Mitsuta and his distinguished colleagues, without whose kind support this work would not have come to fruition. Professor Mitsuta is a well-known specialist in the field of medieval Japanese poetry, who possesses an exceptionally deep and complex understanding of the Japanese literary tradition. The group of scholars which he leads is similarly multi-talented and impressive, with expertise ranging across many cultural fields, including medieval prose and poetry, art history and design, Buddhism, and Japanese aesthetics. Several group members have particular expertise in the material analysis of the *tanzaku*, their construction and decoration.

As a visiting professor of Japanese with a special interest in kanshi, I was welcomed into the *Heian jinbutsushi* group which met at regular intervals to read and discuss the Ozasa poetry. Together, we examined not only the poetic language of the original Japanese and Chinese verse texts, but also their literary qualities and socio-cultural contexts in an attempt to better understand the world of the late Edo poet. The inspiration of these scholars, their friendship and encouragement, heartened me throughout the months I lived away from my family.

Reading poetry in a raw, unedited, handwritten form without the benefit of scholarly commentaries is a daunting task, one which necessarily proceeds through many stages of trial and error to the eventual establishment of a punctuated and (one hopes) accurate text. Professor Mitsuta and the other scholars in the *Heian jinbutsushi* group possess an extraordinary wealth of literary and linguistic experience invaluable in a groundbreaking enterprise of this kind. Their facility at spotting errors and

omissions in the Shibunkaku printed text (*Heian jinbutsusubi tanzaku shūei*) which we used for reference was especially valuable, and I have acknowledged important character emendations in the notes to the translation. Further, the diverse body of cultural knowledge collectively possessed by the group, which spans practically every imaginable genre, historical period, and cultural institution in Japan, was for me a constant source of enlightenment. The reader will find in the pages of this monograph new insights and interpretive suggestions made by scholars in the group, which are acknowledged in the verse commentaries.

Prior to each meeting of the research group, I prepared English translations and extensive annotations, while also writing biographies for each poet. I also attempted to produce for each poem studied a serviceable, albeit highly tentative, Japanese *kakikudashi-bun* 書き下し文 translation. *Kakikudashi-bun* is a variety of traditional Japanese translationese which has long been used to convert Chinese-style texts to a form more syntactically readable as Japanese. Fortunately, my colleagues were able to improve considerably both the style and syntax of the Japanese translations. I also greatly benefited from the opportunity to gain hands-on training in the mechanics and style of *kakikudashi-bun* production. It is my hope that the *kakikudashi-bun* texts, which are still being polished and have not been included in the present monograph, can eventually be published by the Center, thereby enabling these to reach an even wider audience.

I am further grateful for the knowledge which I have acquired concerning *tanzaku* artistic motifs and the complex paper-making and applied design process. During January 2001, the *Heian jinbutsusubi* group met over several days to survey in exhaustive detail every one of the *tanzaku* artifacts for the purpose of building a comprehensive database documenting the physical and artistic properties of works in the Ozasa collection. Many features of *tanzaku* design, as well as the specific qualities of papers and other media used to produce *tanzaku* over the centuries, became clear to me for the first time. Thus, I found myself enjoying these slips of *washi* paper, wood veneer, and silk in a manner not previously possible. This new-found appreciation of the art of *tanzaku* in all of its richness and

complexity was an unanticipated gift from Professor Mitsuta's group.

I wish also to thank Professor Mitsuta for opening my eyes to the importance of the Ozasa private notebooks (still unpublished), which document his acquisition of the *tanzaku* over many years. I began to read them and was delighted to find within their pages many private facts and revelations, which added yet another dimension to my research. I learned, for example, from reading the first drafts of Dr. Ozasa's letters to various art dealers during the 1960s and 1970s, of the truly remarkable lengths to which he went in seeking and securing some of the rarer items. The manifest zeal which Dr. Ozasa displayed in collecting and documenting the *tanzaku* became a source of energy for me as I neared the end of my study with an ever-present awareness, verging on feelings of dread, that my days at the Center were rapidly running out and the resources of the Center would be available to me no more.

Anyone working with variant Chinese, whether it be prose or poetry, knows that the language is fraught with orthographical and grammatical challenges as well as interpretive complexities. My partner in this linguistic enterprise was Dr. Timothy R. Bradstock, a classical Chinese scholar and poetry specialist with whom I have collaborated on two earlier anthologies of kanshi verse. Over the period of a year, Professor Bradstock read the *tanzaku* kanshi, collaborated on the translation of the texts, and helped to identify Chinese allusions as well as grammatical errors and infelicities, which are frequently present in the idiosyncratic species of Chinese used by these Japanese poets.

We have come to see the Ozasa poems as colorful prisms through which one can glimpse, often in a new light, the human experience of urban life in late Edo Japan. It is our hope that these poems, presented for the first time in English translation, with full annotations and an introductory study, will provide not only literary enjoyment but also cultural knowledge to anyone who reads them. The verse of the *Heian jinbutsushi* poets is more than just a record of Japanese literary tastes and aesthetics; it is also a valuable source of insights into the social history and culture of Kyoto during the nineteenth century, offering us a unique window on the lives of urban professionals, for whom the exchange of poetry was a

routine event on social occasions of every kind.

Without the help of many at Nichibunken, this project would not been brought to a successful conclusion. I offer my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Patricia J. Fister, editor of the Nichibunken Monograph Series, for her generous assistance and patience in the preparation of the final manuscript and for her belief in the value of this undertaking. Our thanks also go to Professor James C. Baxter of Nichibunken, for his abiding interest in this project and his timely advice at various critical junctures. I appreciate as well the unstinting assistance of Nishikawa Chikako, Nakamura Setsuko, and the many other fine Nichibunken librarians, who were always prepared to assist with bibliographic problems and book searches on short notice. It goes without saying that my access to the renowned Nichibunken library, which owns nine rare editions of the *Heian jinbutsushi*, was a *sine qua non* for the timely completion of this research.

I wish also to express my thanks to Nichibunken staff members Shinohara Hatsue, Okuno Yukiko, Sasaki Ayako, and Kusunose Akitsu. Each of them graciously helped to make my life and research at the Center all the more enjoyable and productive. Thanks also are due to Sukemitsu Kazuhiro and his colleagues in the Computer Information section, who helped me to install the software for the insertion of premodern Chinese character forms. I am also grateful to Professors Senda Minoru and Aiba Atsushi, and to Mr. Kashihara Akira, all of whom generously facilitated the publication of this research. To colleagues and reviewers who read or evaluated the manuscript at various stages, I offer my thanks.

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Finally, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the former Director of Nichibunken, Dr. Kawai Hayao, for his kind support of my work, and to the present Director, Professor Yamaori Tetsuo, without whose assistance this book might not have seen final publication at the Center.

In works of this kind, which are produced without the benefit of earlier scholarly commentaries, emended editions, or similar studies, not every stone will have been turned over, and errors will remain for other scholars to correct. There will doubtless arise other plausible interpretations of these often enigmatic poems, as well as alternative readings or identifications of the more difficult cursive characters found therein. All deficiencies which remain at this point, however, are entirely the authors' responsibility. Timothy Bradstock, my collaborator, and I look forward to future studies by other scholars, which may offer corrections or provide additional insights into the poems themselves and the poets from whose creative imaginations they emerged.

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