

Shasei and Modern Tanka: A Comparison of Masaoka Shiki and Tsukamoto Kunio

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On 15 November 2019, I received the privilege of presenting my translations of one tanka each by Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) and Tsukamoto Kunio (1920-2005) at the Waseda University waka/tanka translation workshop *The Power of Translation: Who's Afraid of Poetry?* Because of the Shiki translation, it was a great honour to participate in this event with Janine Beichman, who has written the best English-language biography of Shiki. These tanka represent two different approaches to an important concept for the development of this poetic form since the 1890s, *shasei* ('sketching from life'). Whereas Shiki's interest in *shasei* had a significant impact on tanka in the early twentieth century, Tsukamoto's post-war work questioned this approach and advocated instead an embrace of artificiality in the manner of that other great but tragically short-lived *littérateur* of the 1890s, Oscar Wilde.⁽¹⁾ Just when Shiki was urging poets 'to look for beautiful scenes in nature with the aim of copying reality', having been influenced by Western naturalist painting, Wilde had recently proclaimed in 'The Decay of Lying' that 'All bad art comes from returning to Life and nature'.⁽²⁾ Wilde cites the Japanese 'rejection of imitation' as a model for an art that emphasises its own artificiality.⁽³⁾ 'The Decay of Lying' was published in *Intentions* in 1891 together with 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green', the inspiration behind the 1965 collection, *Midori-iro kenkyū* ('A Study in Green'), in which the Tsukamoto tanka I selected appears. This article will explore these differences in approach through my translations of Shiki's and Tsukamoto's tanka.

Shiki's first use of the term *shasei* to refer to his own work appears in his *Ōji kikō* (*Journey to Ōji*) of August 1894, when he wrote that he and a painter, Nakamura Fusetsu (1866-1943), were 'sketching from life' (*shasei suru*).⁽⁴⁾ As Beichman's biography explains, Shiki's use of this term was inspired by his encounter with Fusetsu.⁽⁵⁾ When Shiki was appointed as editor of *Shō Nippon*, he needed an illustrator; an artist Shiki knew, Asai Chū (1856-1907), introduced him to Fusetsu, a protégé of Asai. Fusetsu and Shiki would go to art exhibitions together and frequently talked about painting and literature; Shiki later observed that there were 'many things I realised about the connections between what Fusetsu was saying and haiku', which formed his main literary interest at that time.⁽⁶⁾ Beichman also observes that Asai had in turn been taught by Antonio Fontanesi, the first professor at the Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō ('School of Technical Fine Arts') between June 1876 and October 1878.⁽⁷⁾ Fontanesi had visited Paris in 1855, where he came across the work of the Barbizon school of painters such as Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot and Théodore Rousseau; in 1861, three of his paintings were exhibited at the Salon de Paris.⁽⁸⁾ The Barbizon school were named after the village in the forest of Fontainebleau near Paris, where they would frequently practice *plein air*

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- (1) Some Japanese writers refer to Tsukamoto Kunio after the first mention as 'Kunio', considering his personal name as his *gō*, or artistic name, as is the case with Shiki, while others, including the well-known tanka critic Katō Takao, use his family name. I have adopted Katō's practice throughout this article.
- (2) Masaoka Shiki, *Utayomi ni atauru sho* ('A Book for Uta Poets') (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2013), p. 121; Oscar Wilde, 'The Decay of Lying', in *Intentions*, 2nd edn (London: Osgood, McIlvaine and Company, 1894), pp. 1-55, p. 3.
- (3) *Ibid.*, p. 25 and pp. 45-47.
- (4) Lee Rui, *Masaoka Shiki no shasei bungaku to sono shūhen* ('Masaoka Shiki's *Shasei* Literature and Its Contexts') (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 2012), p. 9.
- (5) Janine Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki: His Life and Works* (Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 2002), p. 54.
- (6) Shiki, *Bokujū itteki* ('A Drop of Ink') (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1994), p. 156.
- (7) Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki*, p. 54; Matsui Takako, *Shasei no henyō: Fontaneeji kara Shiki e, soshite Naoya e* ('The Development of *Shasei*: From Fontanesi to Shiki and Naoya') (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 2002), p. 6.

painting. In the summer of 1900, Asai himself went to stay in the village of Grez-sur-Loing nearby and produced several paintings there.⁽⁹⁾

The Barbizon school's emphasis on *plein air* painting can be detected in Fontanesi's telling his students, as Asai recalls, to 'make sketches of the Marunouchi district' and scolding them when they said they could not find anything worth sketching: 'if they would only look around them there was enough there to keep them busy drawing for two generations'.⁽¹⁰⁾ But, though he certainly told his students that subject matter for art could be found anywhere, Fontanesi's conception of *shasei* was not merely an exhortation to copy life as it is. On the contrary, in one of his lectures, he explained that 'Great paintings that copy a natural scene as it is are rare. If the composition – with many trees clumped together, perhaps – is ugly, the number of trees should be reduced in response'.⁽¹¹⁾ While the elements of the painting must be well observed, the reduction of such elements to the essential ones is crucial, as can also be seen in his insistence on a single focal point: 'When the central object is fixed as the aim of a painting – that is, the central thing is copied in closer detail – it is best if the objects to the left and right of it are less detailed'.⁽¹²⁾ These ideas are evident in Fusetsu's approach to painting as well. A central focus is 'fundamental' to painting: 'a focal point should be chosen, and the strongest light should fall on it'; if, however, 'there is no main idea, the result is necessarily that the entire picture becomes tangled and chaotic'.⁽¹³⁾ Furthermore, 'In a painting, there is the main element [*shu*] of its subject matter, and the supporting element [*kyaku*] that makes this emphasis all the more vivid. [...] if this distinction is blurred, the painting cannot be said to qualify as art'.⁽¹⁴⁾

When discussing painting and literature with Fusetsu, Shiki would have found that Fusetsu's conception of a painting's arrangement coincided with his own earlier views of poetic structure. In *Dassai shooku haiwa* ('Haiku Conversations from the Otter's Den'), serially published in *Nippon* between 1892 and 1893, he criticised *haikai renga* because they are, in his view, 'not literature': they have 'no unity or harmony running through them'.⁽¹⁵⁾ Shiki's conception of this 'unity or harmony' which he saw as a necessary constituent of 'literature' (*bungaku*, a category in which he included both haiku and tanka) can be observed in his discussion of the *kireji* ('cutting word') of a haiku about Sarashina, a mountainous location famed for moon-viewing:

Sarashina ya tsuki wa yokeredo inaka nite

Ah, Sarashina!

The moon is good, though it is
in the countryside⁽¹⁶⁾

'In a haiku', Shiki explains, the *kireji* (in this case, *ya*) 'is used to mark the boundary between its phrases. This *kireji*, he writes, 'stands between the main element [*shu*] and supporting element [*kyaku*]' of the *hokku*.⁽¹⁷⁾ 'In this *ku*, Sarashina is the main element [*shu*]. The *ya* in Bashō's "old pond" *ku* is the same'.⁽¹⁸⁾ It is this ordered and integrated arrangement of the *shu* and *kyaku* elements that gives haiku their 'unity'. Fusetsu's and Shiki's aesthetics of 'unity' thus overlap to a significant degree. Neither simply copied whatever was around them but, rather, emphasised the

(8) Ibid.

(9) Maekawa Masahide (ed.), *Asai Chū* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1997), p. 90.

(10) Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki*, p. 55.

(11) Kumamoto Kenjirō (ed.), *Meiji shoki raichō Itaria bijutsuka no kenkyū* ('A Study of Italian Artists in Japan in the Early Meiji Period') (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1940), p. 149.

(12) Ibid.

(13) Nakamura Fusetsu, 'Shukyaku' ('The Main and Supporting Elements'), in *Gadō ippan* ('A Part of the Way of Painting') (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1906), p. 57.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Shiki, *Dassai shooku haiwa*, in *Shiki zenshū*, ed. Masaoka Chūsaburō, 22 vols, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1975), p. 258.

(16) Ibid., p. 205.

(17) Ibid.

(18) Ibid.

selection and integrated composition of a main and supporting element in their work. This aspect of their *shasei* practice is therefore at least as important an element as the ‘imitative’ aspect.

Indeed, when Shiki turned his attention to tanka in 1898, he was at pains to point out that *shasei* does not merely mean the copying of what is ‘real’. In *Utayomi ni atauru sho* (‘Letters to a Tanka Poet’), published in *Nippon* between 12 February and 4 March that year, he explains:

Though oil painters have to rely on *shasei*, I would say that they use it to paint beautifully gods, demons, and other things that cannot exist. However, painting gods and demons relies of course on *shasei*; the difference lies in sketching things just as they are and the gathering together [*atsumeru*] of each of the sketched elements [*ichibu ichibu no shasei*].⁽¹⁹⁾

It is in this ‘gathering together’ that the process of artistic creation takes place. As Donald Keene’s biography makes clear, from February 1898 Shiki began to focus on writing tanka alongside his serial publication of *Utayomi ni atauru sho*.⁽²⁰⁾ On 25 March 1898, Shiki held the first meeting of what became known as the Negishi tankakai (‘Negishi Tanka Society’) at his home in Negishi, Tokyo.⁽²¹⁾ These meetings were usually held every month and continued after Shiki’s death in 1902; its poets would found the tanka magazine *Araragi* (‘The Yew Tree’) based on Shiki’s principles of *shasei*. Many of Shiki’s tanka, written either on his own or for the occasion of the Negishi Tanka Society, frequently take as their inspiration the back garden of his Negishi house.

The main reason for this was that, by 1898, Shiki struggled to walk because of his tuberculosis and could only ‘crawl’ between rooms in the house.⁽²²⁾ In ‘Shōen no ki’ (‘Record of the Little Garden’), which appeared in *Hototogisu* (‘The Cuckoo’) on 10 October that year, Shiki writes, ‘now that my illness has worsened to the point that I can neither stand up nor go outdoors, the little garden is my universe and its plants and flowers have become the sole material for my poems’.⁽²³⁾ This did not prevent him from entering the garden, however: when describing the bush clover that grew towards the back of the garden, as the diagram included with its original publication indicates, he notes that ‘On clear days, I several times had a chair placed nearby and managing to reach it with someone’s help, would amuse myself by removing the small insects that foraged among the bush’.⁽²⁴⁾ After a storm, he would ‘crawl outside’ (*haidetete*) and ‘had the chair I spoke of earlier placed in the garden and filling a bucket and metal basin with water, I washed the mud off those bush clover that had escaped damage’.⁽²⁵⁾ It would seem that Shiki’s condition took a turn for the worse in 1901. In *Bokujū itteki* (‘A Drop of Ink’), he looks back on 1900: ‘Last year at this time, I could go as far as the next room by crawling. This year it’s difficult just to turn in my bed. Next year at this time I shall probably be unable to move’.⁽²⁶⁾ In 1900, then, Shiki was no longer able to stand up on his own.

The first tanka presented at the translation workshop was one of several Shiki composed on the theme of chrysanthemums on 3 November 1900. On that day, he was not accompanied by the other members of the Negishi Tanka Society, most of whom were travelling to Nikkō that day.⁽²⁷⁾ The chrysanthemum was celebrated by the Chinese poet Tao Yuanming, whose *tianyuan* (‘fields and gardens’) style of poetry Shiki alluded to many times during these years, for being able to withstand the frost, and thus came to be a symbol of perseverance. Indeed, in ‘Shōen no ki’, Shiki recalls singing to himself Yuanming’s poem ‘San jing jiu huang’ (‘Three Paths Almost Overgrown’), in which ‘Song ju you cun’ (‘the pine trees and chrysanthemums remain’).⁽²⁸⁾ In the sequence composed on 3 November, the present

(19) Shiki, *Utayomi ni atauru sho* (‘Letters to Tanka Poets’), in *Shiki zenshū*, vol. 7, p. 28.

(20) Donald Keene, *The Winter Sun Shines In: A Life of Masaoka Shiki* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 131.

(21) Wada Katsushi (ed.), *Shiki no issho* (‘Shiki’s Life’) (Tokyo: Zōshinkai, 2003), p. 466.

(22) Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki*, p. 125.

(23) *Ibid.*, p. 111.

(24) *Ibid.*, p. 112; ‘Shōen no ki’ (‘Record of the Little Garden’), in *Shiki zenshū*, vol. 12, pp. 235-39, p.238.

(25) *Ibid.*, p. 238; Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki*, p. 111.

(26) *Ibid.*, p. 125.

(27) Wada, *Shiki no issho*, p. 558.

(28) The ‘three paths’ allude to a hermit’s garden.

mixes with memory:

Toshidoshi ni nagame koto naru waga niwa no kotoshi no aki wa kiku ōkariki

In my back garden,
which I've watched so many years,
this year in autumn
so many chrysanthemums
have been coming out to bloom⁽²⁹⁾

Shiki does not just record the chrysanthemums' appearance in the present but reflects on previous experiences gathered from his 'many years' spent watching the garden. 3 November was a clear, sunny day, yet Shiki wrote the following in the sequence:

Garasudo no soto ni sakitaru kiku no hana kaze ni ame ni mo ware mitsuru kamo

Outside the glass doors,
even in the wind and rain,
the chrysanthemums
continue their blossoming
and I keep on watching them⁽³⁰⁾

Shiki thus compares his perseverance 'in the wind and rain' with that of the chrysanthemums, as Tao Yuanming does in 'San jing jiu huang'. It is clear, however, that in the second tanka Shiki is drawing on his memory, not merely recording what is happening in the present moment.

The tanka chosen for the workshop is presented in the *Shiki zenshū* ('Collected Works of Shiki') as the third in this sequence:

Waga niwa ni saku kurenai no kiku no hana orite kinikeri e ni utsusu beku

The crimson-coloured
chrysanthemums blossoming
in my back garden –
returning with some I'd picked
so I could sketch a picture⁽³¹⁾

The decision to translate the tanka into English syllabic units of 5-7-5-7-7 was partly motivated by the contrast that I wished to illustrate between the formal orthodoxy of Shiki's tanka, which appear in Japanese syllabic units of 5-7-5-7-7, and Tsukamoto's tanka, which change the order of these units. In the first part, or the *kami no ku*, Shiki's alliteration is noticeably heavy: *saku kurenai no kiku no hana* contains four *ks* in two adjacent pairs. The Japanese syllables *wa* and *ni* each appear twice in the first five in a phrase Shiki frequently employs in this sequence, while *ku* appears twice in succession in *saku kurenai*. The translation attempts to respond to this degree of alliteration with the *k*-sounds in 'crimson-coloured / chrysanthemums' and the *bs* in the chrysanthemums 'blossoming / in my back

(29) Shiki, *Shiki zenshū*, vol. 6, p. 344.

(30) Wada, *Shiki no issho*, p. 735; Shiki, *Shiki zenshū*, vol. 6, p. 344. I am grateful to Saitō Masaya for his helpful comments and advice regarding my translations of these tanka.

(31) Ibid.

garden’.

In the *kami no ku*, there is an explicitly stated possessive pronoun, *waga* (‘my’). There is no pronoun in the *shimo no ku*, however. For the interpretation of the person picking the flowers as identical to the ‘my’ of the *kami no ku*, I have relied on the kind advice of the scholar of Japanese literature, Wada Hirofumi, the scholar and practitioner of senryū, Taira Sōsei, and the haiku poet Saitō Masaya. All agreed that, even in the context of Shiki’s being unable to stand at this time, the performer of the verbs ‘*orite*’ (‘pick’ or, literally, ‘break’) and ‘*kinikeri*’ (‘came’, in this context ‘returning’) is the tanka’s speaker.⁽³²⁾ During the workshop, it was objected by another participant at the event, Thomas McAuley, that the use of the *keri* suffix in ‘*kinikeri*’ indicated that these verbs must have been performed by someone else. It is true that, as Haruo Shirane explains, ‘For beginners of Japanese, the general rule is that *ki* is direct, personal recollection and *keri* is hearsay past’.⁽³³⁾ However, as Shirane also points out, *keri* is also used to express ‘exclamatory recognition’ (*eitan*).⁽³⁴⁾ Wada, Sōsei, and Saitō all propose that the *keri* in this tanka is – as is frequently the case in traditional Japanese poetry, including many of Shiki’s haiku and tanka – the *eitan* use of *keri* rather than its *denbun* (‘hearsay’) meaning.⁽³⁵⁾ Wada therefore suggests that the most likely reading of the *shimo no ku* is that Shiki is recalling a memory, just as he evidently does in the second tanka quoted above. The translation attempts to respond to this sense of recollection by locating both the picking of the chrysanthemums and the subsequent sketching in the past.⁽³⁶⁾

This tanka was primarily chosen because it exemplifies Shiki’s interest in *shasei* (‘sketching from life’), both in its description of the tanka’s ‘I’ sketching a ‘picture’ (*e*) of the chrysanthemums and the influence of this very act of *shasei* depiction on the style of the tanka itself. As is well known, Shiki made sketches of the flowers in his garden in his notebooks at this time while continuing to write poetry and *zuihitsu* prose. The brush he was using for his sketches at this time had been given to him by Fusetsu. Just as Fontanesi and Fusetsu had done, Shiki illustrates something he had seen with his own eyes, ‘sketching’ the chrysanthemums: in this tanka, he uses the same character, 写, in the verb *utsusu* (‘sketching’ or ‘copying’) that is used in the compound *shasei*, 写生 (‘sketching from life’). However, he then also adapts this subject matter to the structural principles that Fontanesi and Fusetsu had also learned to use when ‘sketching from life’. Just as, in the Bashō ‘old pond’ *hokku*, the ‘main element’ of the ‘old pond’ is integrated into a unified whole with the ‘supporting element’ of the frog’s splash, as Shiki had explained in *Dassai shooku haiwa*, the ‘main element’ of the chrysanthemums in the *kami no ku* is complemented by the ‘supporting element’ in the *shimo no ku* of the artist sketching them. This arrangement of the depicted object as the ‘main element’ and the artist as the ‘supporting element’ demonstrates the relationship between artist and subject-matter in *shasei*: the natural object is foregrounded; the artist draws from it.

This seemingly imitative treatment, or ‘copying’, of the ‘natural object’, though the method of the treatment demonstrates Shiki’s artistry, is criticised in Wilde’s ‘The Decay of Lying’, which first appeared in *The Nineteenth Century* in 1889 before being published in *Intentions* two years later.⁽³⁷⁾ It takes the form of a fictitious dialogue between Cyril and Vivian about the latter’s article, which has the same title as the dialogue itself. When Cyril suggests at the start that they ‘go and lie on the grass, and smoke cigarettes, and enjoy Nature’, Vivian responds by

⁽³²⁾ After completing this translation for the workshop, I also came across Sanford Goldstein and Seishi Shimoda’s translation: ‘this sprig / of red chrysanthemum / blooming in my garden / I plucked / to make a sketch for me’. Shiki, *Songs from a Bamboo Village*, tr. Goldstein and Shimoda (Rutland: Tuttle, 1998), p. 221.

⁽³³⁾ Haruo Shirane, *Classical Japanese: A Grammar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 73.

⁽³⁴⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁽³⁵⁾ See, for example, Shiki’s 1899 haiku, ‘tsue ni yorite / tachiagarikeri / hagi no hana’, translated by Burton Watson as, ‘With the help of a cane / I actually stood up – / bushclover blossoms’, or his 1901 tanka, ‘fujinami no / hana no murasaki / e ni kakaba / koki murasaki ni / kakubekarikeri’, which Watson gives as ‘If I were to paint / the purple / of the wisteria blossoms, / I ought to paint it / a deep purple’. Shiki, *Selected Poems*, tr. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 75 and p. 107. In both cases, the *keri* suffix is used to express a moment of realisation on the part of the speaker.

⁽³⁶⁾ Of Shiki’s extant works, it has not been possible to identify one of the red chrysanthemums that matches the date of the tanka’s composition. See Shiki, *Shaseiga*, ed. Masaoka Chūsaburō (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1975).

⁽³⁷⁾ Joseph Bristow and Rebecca N. Mitchell, ‘The Provenance of Oscar Wilde’s “Decay of Lying”’, *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 111, no. 2 (June 2017), pp. 221-40, p. 221.

saying, ‘Enjoy Nature! I am glad to say that I have entirely lost that faculty’.⁽³⁸⁾ He explains:

People tell us that Art makes us love Nature more than we loved her before; that it reveals her secrets to us; and that after a careful study of Corot and Constable we see things in her that had escaped our observation. My own experience is that the more we study Art, the less we care for Nature. What Art really reveals to us is Nature’s lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition.⁽³⁹⁾

Vivian’s mention of Corot, usually categorised as a Barbizon school painter, indicates that his view of the superiority of ‘Art’ over ‘Nature’ is opposed to those who seek to imitate the Barbizon school’s apparent intention to imitate nature. Shiki’s interest in Fusetsu’s ideas about painting, which derived from Fontanesi and the Barbizon school, can thus be interpreted as representing an opposite tendency to that expressed by Vivian, though the latter is careful not to attribute this attitude to Corot and Constable themselves but, rather, to those who claim that ‘careful study’ of their work should be employed to ‘see things in [Nature] that had escaped our observation’.

Vivian is critical, however, of Emile Zola’s novels, which have often been described as ‘naturalist’. Zola is, he claims, ‘determined to show that, if he has not genius, he can at least be dull’, adding that, ‘from the standpoint of art, what can be said in favour of the author of *L’Assommoir*, *Nana*, and *Pot-Bouille*? Nothing’.⁽⁴⁰⁾ By coincidence, Shiki encountered Zola’s novels in the same year as the first publication of ‘The Decay of Lying’, reading Edward Wharton Chalmers’s 1888 English translation of *Nana* with the subheading, ‘*A Realistic Novel*’, and *L’Assommoir*, which had been translated into Japanese by Uchida Roan and serially published as *Sakaki* (‘The Drunkard’) in *Jogaku zasshi* (‘Women’s Studies Magazine’) between May and July 1889.⁽⁴¹⁾ Curiously, just before Shiki began to take an interest in *yōga* (‘Western-style painting’) as a model for his *shasei* approach through his encounter with Fusetsu, Wilde’s creation, Vivian, presented Japanese painting as a model for an art that proposes a ‘frank rejection of imitation’ and ‘a love of artistic convention’.⁽⁴²⁾ Whereas the ‘conventional’ (*tsukinami*) aspect of waka from the tenth-century *Kokin wakashū* onwards, with its ‘artificial skill’ (*itsuwari no takumi*), is what Shiki criticises in his 1899 essay on the waka poet Tachibana Akemi, Vivian praises the ‘imaginative vision’ and ‘exquisite fancy’ in ‘the work of Japanese artists’ such as ‘Hokusai’.⁽⁴³⁾ Their depiction of Japanese people, in Vivian’s view, is based not on imitation but on the ‘delicate self-conscious creation’ of these artists; Japanese people themselves are, Vivian claims, ‘not unlike the general run of English people’; in this sense, then, Japan is a ‘pure invention’.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Wilde’s first appearances in Japanese were brief and sporadic until the publication of Mori Ōgai’s translation of Wilde’s play *Salome* in 1909, after which a spate of translations of it followed.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The previous year, the writer Iwano Hōmei had claimed that ‘the best works by Wilde are essays such as *Intentions* and *De Profundis*, and that his poems are mere imitations of Rossetti and Swinburne’.⁽⁴⁶⁾ He dismisses the plays, though, as ‘nothing significant’.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The novelist Tanizaki Junichirō’s maiden short story of 1910, ‘Shisei’ (‘The Tattooist’), and several subsequent works, are indebted to Wilde’s plays and fiction, leading Tanizaki to be referred to that year as ‘Wairudo-kun’ (‘Mr Wilde’).⁽⁴⁸⁾ The playwright and member of the *Shirakaba* (‘White Birch’) literary society Kōri Torahiko’s 1911 adaptations of the *nō* plays *Dōjōji* and *Kanawa*, meanwhile, draw on *Salome*’s depiction of the *femme fatale*. Kōri’s fellow *Shirakaba* member, Tanaka Uson, observed that ‘a combination of *nō*, opera, bowler hats, Hofmannsthal and

⁽³⁸⁾ Wilde, ‘The Decay of Lying’, p. 3.

⁽³⁹⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Ibid., p. 13.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Shiki, *Fudemakase*, ed. Kanai Keiko et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2003), pp. 99-100.

⁽⁴²⁾ Wilde, ‘The Decay of Lying’, p. 25.

⁽⁴³⁾ Shiki, ‘Akemi no uta’ (‘Akemi’s Uta’), in *Shiki zenshū*, vol. 7, pp. 135-56, p. 144; Wilde, ‘The Decay of Lying’, p. 46.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Wilde, ‘The Decay of Lying’, p. 46.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Hidaka Maho, *A Study of Oscar Wilde and Adaptations of His Works* (PhD Thesis: Kyoto University, 2015), p. 202. Hidaka gives an excellent overview of Wilde’s early reception in Japan, although Wilde’s influence on Kōri Torahiko is not mentioned.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Ibid., p. 204.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Hidaka, *A Study of Oscar Wilde*, pp. 210-11.

Wilde' gives the 'flavour' of Kōri's dramatic works.⁽⁴⁹⁾ 1920 saw the appearance of Yaguchi Tatsu's five-volume edition of Wilde's works, including the essays in *Intentions* and *De Profundis*. Wilde's influence in Japan continued after the Second World War: Mishima Yukio, who acknowledged Kōri's Wildean versions of *nō* as the inspiration for his own *nō* adaptations, expressed his 'longstanding interest' in Wilde's work in 'Osukaa Wairudo ron' ('On Oscar Wilde'), and recalled that the first book he owned was a copy of Wilde's *Salome*.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Mishima's first major novel, *Kamen no kokuhaku* ('Confessions of a Mask'), includes several references to Wilde's work and draws for its title on Wilde's dictum in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green', a biographical portrait of the writer and poisoner Thomas Griffiths Wainwright included in *Intentions* and discussed at length in Mishima's Wilde essay, that 'A mask tells us more than a face'.⁽⁵¹⁾

It was in this context that Tsukamoto Kunio wrote the tanka collection *Midoriro kenkyū* ('A Study in Green'), which likewise alludes to Wilde's essay on Wainwright. Shiki's *shasei* approach in tanka developed at his Negishi Tanka Society was continued by his disciples, such as Itō Sachio, and led to the foundation of *Araragi* in 1908. *Araragi* came to dominate the tanka world until the Second World War, particularly through the work of Saitō Mokichi, an adept of Sachio who later edited the magazine and was one of the most prominent pre-war tanka poets in Japan.⁽⁵²⁾ Together with Okai Takashi, Tsukamoto, a twenty-nine-year-old tanka poet then based in Osaka, 'rejected *Araragi*'s approach' and the '*shasei* of the *Araragi* style'.⁽⁵³⁾ In 1949, Tsukamoto co-founded the tanka magazine *Méthode* with Sugiura Hitoshi and his first tanka collection, *Suisō monogatari* ('Sea Burial Tales'), an elegy for Sugiura, was criticised by the *Araragi* establishment but lauded by Mishima.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The novelist continued his support for Tsukamoto's tanka, later writing to him to praise him for his 'revival of an important Japanese awareness of beauty that has been forgotten in modern Japan'.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Tsukamoto expresses his reaction against the *shasei* approach in the afterword to *Midoriro kenkyū*: he advocates a poetics of 'fantasy' (*gensō*) that 'countered naturalism and realism'.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The search for 'absolute beauty' and 'ultimate individuality' is to be found through this 'action of fantasy', not through imitation of 'nature'.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Rather than emulating Shiki's condemnation of the 'artificial skill' of all waka from the *Kokin wakashū* onwards, Tsukamoto singles out the thirteenth-century *Shin kokin wakashū* ('New Collection of Waka Past and Present') as the 'greatest classic' of Japanese poetry and views it as a model for his poetics of 'fantasy'.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Katō Takao considers Tsukamoto's fifth and sixth collections, *Midoriro kenkyū* and *Kangengaku* ('The Music of Sensory Illusion'), as the 'peak' not only of Tsukamoto's tanka, but of post-war tanka as a whole.⁽⁵⁹⁾ In line with the Wildean allusion in its title, *Midoriro kenkyū* is an exploration of the common 'energy' that, according to Mishima, Wilde identifies in Wainwright's 'appreciation of beauty' and 'sin'.⁽⁶⁰⁾ In Mishima's view, Wilde seeks to express in both 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green' and *De Profundis* the necessity of 'suffering' in the achievement of 'pleasure'.⁽⁶¹⁾ Mishima cites Wilde's writing in *De Profundis* that 'melancholy is the true secret of

(49) Tanaka Uson, 'Kōri-kun wo omou' ('Remembering Kōri'), in Kōri, *Kōri Torahiko zenshū* ('The Collected Works of Torahiko Kōri'), ed. Yamauchi Hideo, 3 vols, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1936), pp. 25-28, p. 28.

(50) Mishima Yukio, 'Kindai nōgakushū ni tsuite' ('On Modern Nō Collections'), *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, vol. 27, no. 3 (March 1962), pp. 147-51, p. 147; Mishima, 'Osukaa Wairudo ron' ('On Oscar Wilde'), *Kaizō bungei*, vol. 2, no. 4 (April 1950), pp. 26-34, p. 26.

(51) Wilde, 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green', in *Intentions*, pp. 57-91, p. 64. The phrase is absent in the 1889 version of the essay.

(52) Katō Takao, *Kindai tanka shi no kenkyū* ('Studies in Modern Tanka Poetry') (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 2008), p. 314.

(53) Shimazu Tadao, *Gendai tanka ron* ('On Contemporary Tanka') (Osaka: Izumi shoin, 2007), p. 28.

(54) Kondō Hidesō, 'Mishima Yukio – sakka hōmon' ('Mishima Yukio – An Interview with the Author'), *Bungakukai*, vol. 6, no. 9 (September 1952), pp. 96-97.

(55) Mishima, letter to Tsukamoto (14 February 1965), in Isoda Kōichi (ed.), *Tsukamoto Kunio ronshū* ('A Collection of Essays on Tsukamoto Kunio') (Tokyo: Shinpisha, 1997), pp. 35-36, p. 35.

(56) Tsukamoto, 'Batsu' ('Afterword'), in *Midoriro kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shiratama shobō, 1965), pp. 163-65, p. 163.

(57) *Ibid.*, p. 165.

(58) *Ibid.*, p. 163.

(59) Katō, *Kindai tanka shi no kenkyū*, p. 344.

(60) Mishima, 'Osukaa Wairudo ron', p. 31.

life' (though Wilde's tongue was firmly in his cheek in this passage).⁽⁶²⁾ The tanka that would make up *Midoriro kenkyū* began to appear in the magazine *Tanka* from January 1961. In October, thirty appeared under the title 'Midoriro kenkyū: a study in green'. Wilde's mixture of 'suffering' and playful humour can be detected in the second tanka:

kami yo ware fukaki fuchi yori
Kashi no hae aoao to su no akibin ni tome de profundis.....domine

Asphyxiated
 in an empty vinegar
 bottle, the green fly
 is trapped – O Lord, hear my cry *de profundis...*
 out of the profoundest depths *domine*⁽⁶³⁾

The reference to 'de profundis.....domine' is, of course, not only to Psalm 130 but to Wilde's *De Profundis*, written, as Mishima had noted in his essay on Wilde, during the latter's imprisonment in Reading Gaol.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Both Wilde's suffering in Reading Gaol and his realisation that 'suffering' is a 'revelation' is suggested in the contrast between the fly's asphyxiation in the empty bottle of vinegar and its 'green' colour. The 'vinegar' (*su*) recalls the 'deadly vinegar' rising up to Christ in Wainwright's description of Rembrandt's *The Crucifixion* cited in 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green'.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Tsukamoto's Wildean humour, though, can be detected in the comic hyperbole of the '*fukaki fuchi*' ('profoundest depths'). The traditional 5-7-5-7-7 Japanese syllable count is disrupted by the syntactical break between '*tome*' ('trapped') and '*kami*' ('Lord'), thereby placing extra emphasis on '*kami yo ware*' ('O Lord, hear my cry').

This experimentation with the traditional form of the tanka is evident throughout *Midoriro kenkyū* and is present from his first tanka collection onwards. The second tanka I discussed at the Waseda workshop first appeared in the January 1961 issue of *Tanka* as part of thirty tanka under the title '*Kakumei enkinhō*' ('Revolutionary Laws of Perspective'). In a note following this section in *Midoriro kenkyū*, Tsukamoto observes that, 'Since the Impressionists, the mathematically correct laws of perspective' have 'been completely uprooted and lost their significance'; 'contemporary thought' is characterised by the undermining of this stable sense of perspective.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Many of Tsukamoto's tanka in this section feature abrupt shifts in perspective from one scene to another:

San Sebasuchan e no naka ni hitasura ni mizuhori mizu no ue yuku tsubaki

In the Saint Sebastian
 painting, the deep thirst
 for water – on the
 water's surface a single
 camellia floats away⁽⁶⁷⁾

The conventional 5-7-5-7-7 Japanese syllable count is reshaped, with the first unit instead containing seven Japanese syllables (and the two instances of the final '*n*' in '*San Sebasuchan*' counting as a separate Japanese syllable). This change – reinforced by the epiphora of the repeated particle '*ni*' at the end of the two subsequent five-syllable units

(61) Ibid., p. 29.

(62) Wilde, *De Profundis* (London: Methuen, 1905), p. 47; Mishima, 'Osukaa Wairudo ron', p. 34.

(63) Tsukamoto, 'Midoriro kenkyū: a study in green', *Tanka*, vol. 8, no. 10 (October 1961), pp. 22-24, p. 22.

(64) Mishima, 'Osukaa Wairudo ron', p. 34.

(65) Wilde, 'Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 51 (1889), pp. 41-54, p. 47.

(66) Tsukamoto, *Midoriro kenkyū*, p. 20.

(67) Tsukamoto, 'Kakumei enkinhō' ('Revolutionary Laws of Perspective'), *Tanka*, vol. 8, no. 1 (January 1961), pp. 110-13, p. 110.

– suggests the theme of deprivation and the return, in the *shimo no ku*, of spring’s profusion. This rhythmical change thus combines with what Katō calls a radical ‘shift’ (*tenkan*), midway through the fourth unit (the third in the translation), from the ‘thirst’, which recalls Christ’s ‘thirst’ in Wainwright’s description of Rembrandt’s *The Crucifixion*, to the ‘plenty’ of the ‘water’s surface’, the camellia tantalisingly ‘float[ing] away’.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Katō considers the camellia to suggest the spring; indeed, the character for ‘camellia’ (椿) includes the ‘spring’ element (春) on its right-hand side.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Saint Sebastian’s suffering thus accompanies the spring’s resurrection. This radical shifting of perspective from one scene to another is characteristic of Tsukamoto’s revolutionary disruption of ‘the laws of perspective’ in *Midoriro kenkyū*.

As with the tanka that alludes to Wilde’s *De Profundis*, this tanka arguably also alludes to a Wildean theme, that of Saint Sebastian. In ‘The Tomb of Keats’, first published in *The Irish Monthly* in July 1877, Wilde remembers looking at ‘the mean grave of this divine boy’, a ‘Priest of Beauty slain before his time’.⁽⁷⁰⁾ At that moment, ‘Guido’s Saint Sebastian came before my eyes as I saw him at Genoa, a lovely brown boy, with crisp, clustering hair and red lips, bound by his evil enemies to a tree and, though pierced by arrows, raising his eyes with divine, impassioned gaze towards the Eternal Beauty of the opening heavens’.⁽⁷¹⁾ Read in this light, the contrast of Sebastian’s thirst and the ‘camellia’ on the water might be read as that of his suffering on earth with the ‘Eternal Beauty of the opening heavens’. Another possible source for the allusion to ‘the Saint Sebastian / painting’ is Mishima’s *Kamen no kokuhaku*. When the novel’s ‘I’ is thirteen years old, he gets out ‘some volumes of art reproductions, which my father had brought back as souvenirs from his foreign travels’.⁽⁷²⁾ He comes across ‘a reproduction of Guido Reni’s “St. Sebastian”’: despite Sebastian being pierced with arrows, he sees in it ‘none of the traces of missionary hardship or decrepitude that are to be found in depictions of other saints; instead, there is only the springtime of youth, only light and beauty and pleasure’.⁽⁷³⁾ Rather than ‘pain’, he sees in Sebastian ‘some flicker of melancholy pleasure like music’.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The novel’s ‘I’ then experiences his first ‘ejaculatio’.⁽⁷⁵⁾ When read in the context of Mishima’s Saint Sebastian, the ‘camellias’ in Tsukamoto’s tanka come to represent the fusion of the martyr’s ‘pain’ with a more explicitly homoerotic ‘pleasure’ of the ‘springtime of youth’.

The two selected tanka thus represent two very different treatments of the theme of painting. They encapsulate two broad tendencies in the development of modern tanka: the turn towards *shasei*, away from the ‘artificial skill’ of the *Kokin wakashū*, as Shiki saw it, and the embrace of a Wildean artificiality in Tsukamoto’s more formally experimental post-war tanka, which rebelled against the new orthodoxy that Shiki’s disciples had established. As a more careful examination of Shiki’s understanding of *shasei* demonstrates, however, their views of art’s relationship to nature are not diametrically opposed: Shiki’s *shasei* is still based on a carefully structured poetics based on the contrast of a ‘main element’ and a ‘supporting element’ in the tanka’s *kami no ku* and *shimo no ku*. A similarity might be detected in this regard to Tsukamoto’s juxtaposition of the ‘trapped’ fly and its cry of desperation in the first quoted tanka, or the ‘thirst’ and the camellia on the ‘water’s surface’ in the second. Perhaps the most telling difference in their treatments of painting, though, lies in the sense of redundancy of Shiki’s ‘sketch’, which seeks to ‘copy’ (*utsusu*) the chrysanthemums’ quality which Shiki admires is their ability to persevere, just as he sought to withstand the onslaught of his tuberculosis; likewise, his aesthetics in the tanka discussed in the workshop is one of preservation. By contrast, Tsukamoto’s tanka does not merely ‘copy’ Guido Reni’s *Saint Sebastian*; through his poetics of ‘fantasy’, he adds to it, imagining the camellia floating on the water. In this way, Tsukamoto’s tanka achieves not merely a preservation of its subject matter through art but, instead, its regeneration.

(68) Wilde, ‘Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green’, p. 47; Katō, *Kindai tanka shi no kenkyū*, p. 346.

(69) Ibid.

(70) Wilde, ‘The Tomb of Keats’, *The Irish Monthly*, vol. 5 (1877), pp. 476-78, p. 477.

(71) Ibid., p. 478.

(72) Mishima, *Kamen no kokuhaku* (‘Confessions of a Mask’), in *Zenshū*, 42 vols, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2000), pp. 173-364, p. 202; *Confessions of a Mask*, tr. Meredith Weatherby (New York: New Directions, 1958), p. 38.

(73) Mishima, *Kamen no kokuhaku*, p. 203; Mishima, *Confessions of a Mask*, p. 39.

(74) Mishima, *Kamen no kokuhaku*, p. 203; Mishima, *Confessions of a Mask*, p. 39.

(75) Mishima, *Kamen no kokuhaku*, p. 204.