

“*Kanshi* and Allusion, Social Intercourse, and East Asian-*criture*:
The Example of Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862-1922)”

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The Problem of Allusion

JTW A: *Poems on Poetry: Literary Criticism by Yuan Haowen (1190-1257)* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982; rev. ed. Melbourne and Basel: Quirin Press, 2019). (元好問)

(1) *First page*: Poem in Chinese, Poem Romanized, Poem in Barbarized Translation, Poem in Naturalized Translation. (2) *Followed by 5-to-10-page explication*, in terms of: (A) What the author is trying to say in each poem, (B) What earlier critical opinion he is drawing upon in the formulation of his views, and (C) What earlier prose and poetry he is using to devise his own expression—all drawing on the 750 years of scholarship post-dating the poet.

JTW B: “*Kanshi* in Translation: How Its Features Can Be Effectively Communicated,” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 21 (2014), 1,i,12 pp.

Five Desiderata

(1) The *kanji* text. (2) A *kundoku* 訓讀 rendering of how the poems might be read aloud ‘in Japanese.’ (3) A visual sense of caesurae and rhymes by giving Chinese or *ondoku* readings. (4) Naturalized *and* barbarized translations where necessary to bring out the ‘literal’ and paraphrasable sense of lines. And (5) notes or text to clarify the expressions being used.

From two translations of a Mori Ōgai *kanshi* on the eve of his retirement, “齟齬”:

(1) Richard Bowring: title untranslated (in *Mori Ōgai and the Modernization of Japanese Culture*):

As a boy I was the wonder of the world;
Why when the road was long did I weary at the halfway mark?
Three years abroad measuring the snow like a disciple of Ch’eng I,
Then twice in battle I managed to avoid a soldier’s death.

(2) JTW: translated title, “Shedding Milk Teeth”:

齟齬期爲天下奇 キ/キ
Shedding milk teeth / expected to become // an under-heaven wonder
Chōshin yori tenka no ki taran to kisuru mo
Tiáochèn qī wéi tiānxià qí

其如路遠半途疲 ヒ/ヒ
But how! / the road far // mid-route am tired
Sore ikan michi toku shite hanto ni tsukaretaru wa
Qí rú lù yuǎn bàntú pí

Milk teeth once shed, I hoped to become a world-class marvel;

2 But alas! the road is long, and midway I feel spent.

三年海外經程雪
Three years / beyond the sea // passed time ‘Cheng snow’-style
Sannen kaigai ni Teisetsu o hete
Sānnián hǎiwài jīng Chéngxuě

兩度軍中免革屍 シ/シ
Two times / in the military // avoided ‘leather corpse’
Ryōdo gunchū ni kakushi o manekaru
Liǎngdù jūnzhōng miǎn gésī

For three years abroad, I respectfully sought instruction, ‘the snow mounting,’
(as happened to the disciples of Cheng Yi 程頤, 1033-1107)

4 And twice in wars, was spared becoming a leather-wrapped corpse.

Title and Line 1: 齧齧: ‘Shedding milk teeth’; cf. Yu Xin 庾信 (513-581), 齊王憲碑, “Epitaph for Qi Wangxian”: 未逾齧齧、已講論天下事. “Before losing his milk teeth, he was already expounding on affairs of the world.”

Line 3: 程雪: ‘Cheng snow’: The allusion is to *Song shi* 428, 宋史, 楊時傳: “When Yang Shi and You Zuo 遊酢 went to seek instruction from the philosopher Cheng Yi 程頤, he was sitting with his eyes closed. They stayed in attendance and did not leave. When Cheng came to, the snow outside was already a foot deep.” **The anecdote underscores the patient and respectful attitude one should have when seeking instruction, how much one should value learning, and how quickly time passes in their pursuit.**

Explicate the **Triad:** (A) diachronicity, (B) referentiality, and (C) ‘real’ implication of expressions used. Communicate **Five R’s:** rhythm, rhyme, readings (oral/aural), renderings (literal and paraphrasable, if necessary), and referencing (via allusion and as suggested by other usage).

Another example: ‘Literal’ and paraphrasable renderings of a Mori Ōgai couplet. From a 1916 *kanshi* occasioned by Ōgai’s editing a reprint of his *Minawashū* (水沫集, みなわ集) anthology:

將此天潢霑涸沫 *Kono tenkō o motte komatsu o uruusan to shi*
Jiāng cǐ tiānhuáng zhān hé mò
SHŌ SHI TENKŌ TEN KOMATSU
無端灑向不毛田 *Hashi naku mo fumō no den ni mukatte sosogu*
Wúduān sā xiàng bù máo tián
BUDAN SAI KŌ FUMŌ-DEN

A) ‘Literal’ rendering:

With this Heavenly Pond, moistening dessicated foam;
Useless, to sprinkle water on non-arable fields.

B) Paraphrasable rendering:

With freshets of water as from the Milky Way’s stream (namely, with my new and experimental writings of twenty-five years ago that are being reprinted here—both original works and translations), I wanted to resuscitate a literature that was gasping for life, like the frothing fish in *Zhuangzi* 莊子;

But it is pointless to try to water totally barren land—a public and literary world (*bundan* 文壇) both unreceptive.

JTW C: “The *Kanshi* of Mori Ōgai: Allusion and Diction,” *Japonica Humboldtiana* 14 (2011), pp. 89-107.

Allusion:

General treatment of ‘allusion’ by James Robert Hightower, David Lattimore, and Earl Miner summarized and extended, esp. as to *What function(s) does a particular allusion serve in a poem?*

Ōgai allusions identified. **Four Lists** (citing specific Ōgai *kanshi* lines):

- (1) Authors or works *named by* Ōgai in his *kanshi*: **16**, incl. Zuo Si 左思 (253?-307?), Lu You 陸游 (1125-1209), and Gao Qi 高啟 (1336-1374).
- (2) Passages in his *kanshi* *incomprehensible* without understanding the allusion. The texts or authors unquestionably alluded to: **21**, incl. *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, *Soushenji* 搜神記, and Li Panlong 李攀龍 (1514-1570).
- (3) Other works or authors Ōgai *in all likelihood* is alluding to: **6**, incl. *Kongzi jiyu* 孔子家語, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846), and Wei Zhuang 韋莊 (836-910).
- (4) Earlier Japanese *kanshi* authors with *phrasing similar to* that of Ōgai (as cited by Ōgai’s commentators): **12**, incl. Hirose Kyokusō 広瀬旭莊 (1807-1863), Kashiwagi Jotei 柏木如亭 (1763-1819), and Yanagawa Seigan 梁川星巖 (1789-1858).

Diction:

Ōgai, the *Kanji* king. **Three Stages:**

- (1) The *Kanji* Show-off.
- (2) The *Kanji* Grand Master.
- (3) The *Kanji* Retired Emperor.

JTW D: “Mori Ōgai: Translation Transforming the Word/World,” *Japonica Humboldtiana* 13 (2009-10), pp. 61-109.

Ōgai’s **two** most famous translations: *Sokkyō shijin* 卽興詩人 (*The Impromptu Poet* by Hans Christian Andersen) and *Fausuto* ファウスト (*Faust* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe).

The relationship between the author’s *kanshi* and these works.

How Ōgai’s translations transformed Japanese linguistic, literary, and mental worlds.

The Social Role of *Kanshi*

JTW E: “Sociability in Poetry: An Introduction to the Matching-Rhyme *Kanshi* of Mori Ōgai,” in ‘Ōgai’ – *Mori Rintarō: Begegnungen mit dem japanischen ‘homme de lettres’*, Klaus Kracht, ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), pp. 63-123. (cìyùn, jīn 次韻)

‘Sociability’: Dozens of Ōgai *kanshi* about or for friends, for social occasions, as dedications, etc.

For example, a dedicatory *kanshi* for the pioneering work on early Chinese Buddhist art by Ōmura Seigai 大村西崖 (1868-1927). *Shina bijutsu shi: Chōso hen* 支那美術史: 彫塑篇 (Tokyo: Butsusho Kankōkai Zushōbu 佛書刊行會圖像部, 1915), 2 vols.; cf. Alexander Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1959).

Matching-rhyme poetry: Its history in China and Japan; as a type of ‘sociability.’

JTW F: “The Matching-Rhyme *Kanshi* of Mori Ōgai: Ancient-Style Poems (*koshi*) and Regulated Verse (*risshi*),” *Japonica Humboldtiana* 17 (2014-15), pp. 63-123. (次韻: 古詩, 律詩)

Several exchanges, incl. *kanshi* by Ōgai as part of a debate with Imai Takeo 今井武夫 on the proper term for ‘statistics’: *kanshi* interchange as satire and ridicule.

JTW G: “The Matching-Rhyme *Kanshi* of Mori Ōgai: Quatrains (*zekku*),” *Japonica Humboldtiana* 16 (2013); pp. 109-168. (次韻: 絕句)

Several exchanges, incl. an Ōgai response to the following 1889 anonymous *kanshi* criticizing the recently published *Shintaishi shō* collection of experimental poem translations:

Anon., “Translations Are Mud” “譯文泥” [format abbreviated here]

修辭本自異東西 / 碩學當年亦噬臍 / 到底詩歌翻不易 / 原文如玉譯文泥

Fine writing, of course, differs East and West;

Those scholars of the time (i.e., those who came up with the *Shintaishi shō* translations) can only gnaw their navels in regret.

It is not even remotely easy to translate song and poetry;

Originals are like jade, translations mud.

Ōgai Response [format abbreviated here]

詩派何殊東與西 / 他年豎子噬其臍 / 唯憐昨夜渭城 / 雨細草新花踏作泥

Are poetic factions any different, East or West?

Some day the s.o.b. who wrote that poem will gnaw *his* navel.

The only shame is, with last night’s Wei-city rain,

“Delicate grasses and fresh blossoms, trampled, were turned to mud.”

Lines 2 and 3: [Notes on ‘s.o.b.,’ ‘gnaw his navel,’ and ‘Wei-city rain’—here omitted.]

Line 4: The entire line is a quotation from Cen Shen (715–ca. 770) – a fact that no one has pointed out before; the phrasing also ties it in with Line 3: QTS 201 (2097): 岑參, 首春渭西郊行呈藍田張二主簿: 回風度雨渭城西, 細草新花踏作泥. “Whirling winds, passing rains, west of Wei City; / Delicate grasses and fresh blossoms, trampled, are turned to mud” (JTW tr.). **Ōgai is saying that the anonymous critic with his poem about *Shintaishi shō* has sullied something that is beautiful.**

How *Kanshi* Fit into the East Asian Context

JTW H: “*Kanbun*, Histories of Japanese Literature, and Japanologists,” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 10.2 (April 1998), pp. 23-31.

Importance of *Kanbun*.

‘Chinese’ // ‘Sino-Japanese,’ ‘Sino-Korean,’ ‘Sino-Vietnamese.’

JTW I: “*Kanshi* as ‘Chinese Language’: The Case of Mori Ōgai,” in *Rethinking the Sinosphere: Poetics, Aesthetics and Identity Formation*, ed. Nanxiu Qian, Richard J. Smith, and Bowei Zhang (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press), forthcoming.

Colloquial expressions in Ōgai’s ca. 250 *kanshi* are compared against the ca. 500 poems total in *Tangshi sanbai shou* 唐詩三百首 and *Qianjia shi* 千家詩, and against the ca. 50,000 poems in the *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩.

In Ōgai *kanshi*, an amalgam of expression has been integrated that is less common in, uncommon to, or not found in ‘classical Chinese.’

Certain of Ōgai’s expressions, and many of his puns, are scarcely comprehensible without a knowledge of Japanese, and several turns of phrase by him differ significantly from Chinese usage.

Also, ‘expansion’ phenomenon: possible Japanese substrate in one favored grammatical usage.

JTW J: “‘Literary Sinitic’ and ‘Latin’ as Transregional Languages: With Implications for Terminology Regarding ‘*Kanbun*,’” *Sino-Platonic Papers*, No. 276 (March, 2018). 14 pp.

Supposedly, Latin a spoken language (e.g., in ‘Rep. of Letters’) and ‘literary Sinitic’ only a written one.

But medieval and later Latin not spoken as much, and as effectively, as generally thought: per Julie Barrau, G.G. Coulton, Thomas Haye, and Françoise Waquet.

Many spoken uses of ‘Sinitic.’ // ‘Literary Sinitic’ (a problematic term).

Kanshi: > for Inner Circle > potentially, for Educated Japanese > theoretically, for East Asia Elite.

(A) Preferred terminology: ‘Japano-Sinitic’ or ‘Sino-Japanese.’ (B) Acceptable term: ‘Sinitic.’ (C) Not preferred: ‘classical Chinese,’ ‘literary Sinitic,’ ‘literary Chinese,’ and ‘Chinese.’

‘**E.A.-criture**’ (i.e., East Asian-*criture*): Its advantages as a term: (1) It emphasizes the written nature of the shared language. (2) It is pan-East Asian. (3) It is geographically neutral. (4) It allows for degrees of portability. (5) It sidesteps the problem of ‘literary’ value.

NOTE: Most articles cited above are available online, both at the journal’s website and at the author’s.

Add’l. articles on Ōgai’s *kanshi*—not referred to today:

JTW K: “Mori Ōgai, ‘The Grouch’: A *Kanshi* (Sino-Japanese Poem) about Paintings for Sale in a Modern Department Store,” *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 71.2 (2017): 627-634.

JTW L: “*Kanshi* by Mori Ōgai: *Hokuyū nichijō* and *Go Hokuyū nichijō* (Part 1),” *Japonica Humboldtiana* 18 (2016): 53-120. (北游日乘, 後北游日乘)

JTW M: “*Kanshi* by Mori Ōgai: *Hokuyū nichijō* and *Go Hokuyū nichijō* (Part 2),” *Japonica Humboldtiana* 19 (2017): 49-94.

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