FOUR KYÔGEN PLAYS ON HAIKAI

by

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Abstract

Four plays of the medieval comic theatre of Japan, Kyōgen, are presented here in English translation; Fujimatsu, Chigiriki, Mikazuki, and Hachiku Renga. The plays all deal with the medieval comic linked verse form of poetry, Haikai no Renga. They were selected for the insight which they offer into both art forms. The analysis introducing the plays discusses the similarities between the Haikai no Renga and Kyōgen in terms of historical development and aesthetic attributes.

The translations were made as literal as possible, relying on the collection of Kyōgen plays by Koyama Hiroshi, Kyōgen Jo, Gei Koyama based his collection on a text of the Ōkura school, the Yamamoto Azuma Jiro hon. This is the text currently used by the Ōkura school in performance.

Because of the terseness of the original scripts, the analysis of the plays is supported in large part by observations of actual performances of the plays in Japan. This was thought to be valuable in that the plays depend heavily on mime for their humor. Chapters I through IV present the analysis of the four plays. The plays themselves comprise the final section of the paper.
# Table of Contents

I. Introduction ................................................................. 1

II. History ................................................................. 8

III. Form and Humor ....................................................... 15

IV. Conclusion ............................................................. 24

V. Footnotes .................................................................. 26

VI. Fujimatsu ............................................................... 30

VII. Footnotes for Fujimatsu .............................................. 44

VIII. Chigiriki ................................................................. 46

IX. Footnotes for Chigiriki ................................................ 62

X. Mi-hKazuE-i-K.sg- ...................................................... 63

XI. Footnotes for Mi-hKazuE-i-K.sg- .................................. 69

XII. Hachiku Renga ......................................................... 70

XIII. Footnotes for Hachiku Renga ...................................... 83

XIV. Bibliography ............................................................ 86
List of Figures

1. Diagram of the Kyōgen stage ........................................85
I. Introduction

Humor is often said to be a uniquely cultural phenomenon, incomprehensible to outsiders. If this is true then Kyōgen, the classical comic theatre of Japan is an anomaly. The impish mimic movement, the delightful variety of sound words, the enactment of the universal weaknesses and embarrassments of man combine to reach the viewer on a very childlike level of enjoyment. Indeed the actors themselves seem very like children as they copy and at the same time make fun of the adult world to which they do not appear to belong. Led along by the antics on stage, the audience enters a fairyland where everything seems to be an exact replica of the real world and yet is slightly askew.

The thief carefully hopping over invisible melons in the farmer's melon patch, the henpecked husband's display of bravery in combat with a non-existent opponent, the jingle of the temple bells deliciously rolled off the servant's tongue, any one of these scenes will bring to the mind of the viewer echoes of his childhood.

Kyōgen is fun. In a harmless, relaxing way Kyōgen revives in us an innocent joy in life which crosses generational and national barriers to delight us again and again.

The purpose of this essay is to introduce four plays of the Kyōgen repertoire in English translation. The plays included are Fujimatsu, Chigiriki, Hachiku Renga, and Mikazuki. Each of the plays pertains to some aspect of the linked verse form of poetry, Haikai no Renga, a popular form of entertainment, as was the Kyōgen, during the Muromachi period. The incorporation of Haikai into the Kyōgen plays was a natural development considering the similarity in humor, subject matter, and aesthetic concepts. Moreover, both arts appear to have been fashionable during periods of social turmoil. At such times in history people have demanded a fresh outlook on life which the humorous arts provided. In this essay I will present the historical and artistic similarities between the two arts, based on the plays appended.
In addition to these plays, there remain at least four other plays concerning Haikai: Renga Bishamon, Renga Nusubito, Renga Jittoku, and Daikoku Renga. The plays which I have chosen afford the greatest insight into the various aspects of both Kyōgen and Haikai because of the variety of verse and the description of the Haikai meetings. The text from which the plays were translated is, to my knowledge, one of the most recent annotated collections of Kyōgen available, Kyōgen Jos, Ge 狂言上下, by Koyama Hiroshi 小山弘志. He has based his edition on the original scripts of Yamamoto Azuma Jirō 山本東次郎 of the Yamamoto Azuma line of the Okura school 大蔵. The plays appear in slightly different form in the Izumi school 別泉 texts.

Kyōgen was first referred to in conjunction with Haikai in the Haikai Sho Gakusho 講話初学抄 1642, by Saitō Tokugen 藤原了元, of the Teimon school 身門 of poetry. He simply notes that if one refers to Renga, it is associated with 野能; if one refers to Haikai, it must be associated with Kyōgen. Later, Okura Toraaki 大蔵虎明 repeats this adage in his work, the Waranbe Gusa 童子草 of 1660. As both the schools of Kyōgen and Haikai were formally defining their arts at this time, one may assume that the Haikai poetry appearing in Kyōgen was introduced and recorded in the plays at about this time. Because of the informal nature of both of these art forms at their inception, a more definite dating is not possible.

Kyōgen is generally assumed to have first appeared in the early Muromachi period. However, as the early Kyōgen was an improvised theatre, transmitted orally, there are no historical records prior to the late sixteenth century. The Kyōgen scenarios performed today date from the late Muromachi-early Edo period, when the first schools of Kyōgen were formed and the plays were first recorded. Accordingly, the costumes and most of the vocabulary date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries although traces of earlier language structures do remain.

Generally, Kyōgen actors chose for their subject matter, the everyday life situations and relationships of the common man. The plays remaining with us are naturally those dealing with universally recurring
dilemmas. The humor or truth of Kyōgen is to be found in the gentle exposure of the vanities and stupidities found in all people. Because of this, Kyōgen has succeeded in touching a responsive chord in men of every age since its beginning. We are delighted to see the pompous would-be poet brought down to earth by his practical wife in Mikazuki. In Chigiriki we cannot help but sympathize with Tarō’s attempt to disguise his shame before his domineering wife. In each case, the poignant portrayal of human feelings is overwhelming.

The actors' ability to elicit a strong response from the audience is the more amazing in that the repertoire is extremely limited in scope. The plays are all one act with similar form and content. So much so in fact that blatant repetition of entire scenes is not uncommon. In Fujimatsu, for example, the first quarter of the play can be found in identical format in the plays Bunzo and Bō Gashira. The opening scenes of Fujimatsu and Hachiku Renga, depicting the irate superior calling on his irreverent subordinate, are also strikingly similar.

The characters belong to one of a dozen or so Kyōgen character types. Of them, the figures of the master and the servant, Tarō Kaja, are the most familiar in that they appear in approximately one-third of the 210 plays in the repertoire. The master may be referred to alternately as Daimyō "large land owner," or Shomyō "small land owner." These titles are not to be mistaken as references to the great lords of the Edo period. Rather, they reflect the aspirations of the newly risen land owning farmer of Muromachi Japan whose total holdings may have amounted to no more than one or two fields and a house servant, Tarō Kaja.

Another character type of noticeable importance in the Haikai plays is the woman. Dressed in a woman's low belted robe, with a length of white cloth wrapped about her head, she is otherwise without make-up or mask. The roughness of the undisguised masculine face compliments her belligerant manner and often crude strength. In these plays she appears both passionate and domineering.

There are prototypes for this woman in folk tales. Often they tell of a poor simple charcoal vender who rises in the world due to his wife's fortune and wisdom. However, the Kyōgen woman also has a place in the history of the middle ages in Japan. During a period of constant warfare
the woman had to be capable of managing the home and the economic support of her family. In Mikazuki this situation is exaggerated with the husband putting on the airs of a wandering poet while his wife works at home to keep them both alive. The conflict which develops, is eventually, delicately and humorously resolved through the very passion of their love.

The Kyōgen plays are divided into the following categories: Waki Kyōgen "celebratory plays," Daimyō Kyōgen, 大名狂言, Shōmyō Kyōgen 小名狂言, Muko Onna Kyōgen "son-in-law, woman plays," Oni Yamabushi Kyōgen 鬼山伏狂言 "devil,mountain priest plays," Shukke Zatō Kyōgen 出家座頭狂言 "monk, blindman plays," and finally Atsume Kyōgen 集狂言 "miscellaneous plays." The designation of the plays varies not only from school to school but among the various families within a school. The principle behind the categorizing of the plays is derived from No. It reflects the effort made by the Kyōgen schools to give the theatre some structure. The appellations, however, are not particularly appropriate for Kyōgen and many of the plays qualify for two or more different groupings.

The plays are designated according to the lead character or the Shite. For example, in the master-Tarō Kaja plays, if the Shite is the landlord, then he is referred to as a Daimyō and the play is categorized as a Daimyō play. On the other hand, if the Shite is Tarō Kaja, the landlord is introduced as a Shōmyō, a man of the area, or a fortunate fellow, and the play is categorized as a Shōmyō play. According to the designation, the dress of the character varies slightly. Aside from these technical points the characters of the master and servant are essentially the same.

Among the plays included here, only Fujimatsu has been labeled a Daimyō play. However, the same subordinate-superior relationship can be identified in Chigiriki and Hachiku Renga. Chigiriki is in fact a Muko Onna play, as is Mikazuki. Hachiku Renga falls under the heading of Atsume plays.

The acting technique in Kyōgen is highly stylized. Although an independent theatre from the No, Kyōgen's long association with No may have encouraged the ritualized acting method which developed. Every movement and every speech follows a particular pattern peculiar to Kyōgen. Just as the audience immediately recognizes the familiar Tarō Kaja, so too, they are acquainted with the movement and speech of each of the character-types.
The aim of this method of acting is to produce the illusion of spontaneity so critical to the humor of Kyōgen. The importance of this is apparent in the Haikai plays. It has been said of the plays depicting Haikai sessions that they are among the most difficult to perform. An actual Haikai session was a spontaneous battle of wits. More than the beauty of the verse, the quick and witty response was valued. Therefore, a great deal of skill is required on the part of the actors who, with a few gestures and exclamations and accurate timing, must recreate the intensity of such an atmosphere. Probably because of their difficulty, the Haikai plays are rarely performed.

In the plays included two forms of Haikai verse appear. One is the one-link verse, or Tan Renga 短連詠, appearing in Mikazuki and Fujimatsu. The other is the long linked verse which appears in eight verses in Hachiku Renga.

Tan Renga is made up of two verses of 5-7-5 and 7-7 syllables. Sometimes, they may be presented in reverse order, a practice popular at the close of the Muromachi period and during the Tokugawa period. The verses form a riddle with its solution. They may be linked together by kakekotoba or a pivot word expressing two meanings; an engo or word association relating disparate elements in the poem; or simply by contrasts and comparisons in imagery, feeling or meaning between the verses. Most of the Tan Renga are taken from the Shin Sen Inu Tsukubashu 新撰犬試波集 by Yamazaki Sōkan 山崎宗簡 1465-1553. This was the first independent compilation of Haikai verse.

In longer Haikai such as those appearing in Hachiku Renga, an attempt was made to preserve a harmonious mood throughout. This required more stress on the regulations for linking than in the informal Tan Renga. However, the process of linking is essentially the same and much of the feeling of the riddle remains.

Haikai in Kyōgen are inevitably referred to as Renga. The term Renga refers to the serious form of linked verse dating back to the Kamakura period. At that time, the court poet Nijo Yoshimoto 二条良基 1320-1388, compiled the first collection of linked verse called the Tsukubashu 築波集. He also established an elaborate set of rules for linked verse which elevated it from a frivolous amusement to an accepted art form. In reaction
to the serious linked verse, an informal form also developed. They were distinguished as Ushin or verse with sincerity and Mushin or verse lacking in sincerity. 18

Although some form of the frivolous or comic linked verse existed along side the Renga during the early Muromachi period, no collections of it were compiled until those of Yamazaki Sōkan and Arakida Moritake (1473-1549). Therefore, we may conclude that the comic linked verse was not a recognized form until the advent of the Inu Tsukubashū.

This suggests that one reason for the reference to Renga rather than to Haikai in the plays is that the term Haikai was not used until the late Muromachi period in reference to comic verse. Furthermore, as Haikai was not an established form, all linked verse was probably referred to as Renga.

A second reason for the use of the term Renga in Kyōgen is that it reflected the yearnings of the lower classes after culture. The characters are aspiring Renga poets who not only fail to produce poetry but are ignorant of their failure. The Kyōgen poets are all beginners of the lowest rank, as is apparent from the crudity of the Chigiriki session.

Although a formal Renga group would have been referred to as a Kō, the popular lower class groups such as that described in Chigiriki were known as Shoshinkō "beginners' groups." The organizer of the group or the host was selected as an honor by the group. He is referred to in Chigiriki as Tō. As the guests arrive each gives a formal greeting of, "Host of the Renga meeting, congratulations!" 19 The Chigiriki group further attempted to conform to the formal Renga regulations by hanging a scroll in the Tokonoma, an inset into the wall, and by displaying an arrangement of flowers. The scroll which would have been formally shown on such occasions would have been one of the god of poetry, Yamato Takeru No Mikoto, or of the poetic genius of the Manyōshū, Kakimoto Hitomaro, or most often one of the patron saint of Renga, Tenmangū. The Tenmangū was in fact Sugawara Michizane, a poet courtier of the early Heian period.

In a formal group, the meeting would commence with the teacher or Sōshō and the scribe or Shūhitsu being seated at the head of the group. Although the office of the teacher was a vague one, the scribe's duties were strictly formulated. He was the keeper of the elaborate set of
rules and it was up to him to judge whether or not the verses were correct. If they were, he would record them on the formal Renga paper, the Kaishi.

Following the Renga meeting a small banquet would take place at the expense of the host. The themes of Mikazuki and Hachiku Renga revolve around the debts incurred due to the expenses of such Renga banquets.

Haikai is especially suited to Kyōgen humor in that both forms aim at exposing the ostentatious pretentions of the serious arts and their practitioners. In this regard, Haikai conscientiously thwarted the regulations of Renga in terms of word use and linking practices. The result is a sometimes mocking, sometimes vulgar humor.

In the next two chapters, I will discuss the historical and artistic influences on the plays presented here. The historical section will emphasize two basic periods in Kyōgen's development, the early and late Muromachi period. The second chapter will present a discussion of the form and humor in the plays and poetry.
II. History

The dearth of historical records available on Kyōgen prior to the sixteenth century has left the origins shrouded in obscurity. However some idea of Kyōgen's past may be gained from the descriptions of the earlier arts of Sarugaku and Dengaku. Records indicate a convincing similarity between the Kamakura Sarugaku and Dengaku and the Kyōgen.

For example, a passage in the Gunsho Ruiju, published in 1287, and attributed to Fujiwara Akihira, records a sequence of Sarugaku skits such as, "Priest Fukkō Begs For Robes," "The Nun Myōtaka Asks For Swaddling Clothes," "A Country Gentleman Goes to the Capital," and "The Tricks of a Lad from the Capital." The last two in particular contain the main character-types of the Kyōgen plays, as well as revealing a tendency toward irony which figures prominently in Kyōgen.

If we compare the Shin Sarugakuki account with a reference to Kyōgen in the Kanmongyoki, the relation becomes obvious. In this passage, a Kyōgen troupe is said to have performed a play entitled, "The Impoverishment of a Court Noble," at the palace of the Emperor of Fushimi. Like the Sarugaku, this play is indicative of a sarcastic attitude toward the established order. In this case, it resulted in the dismissal of the head of entertainment and a reprimanding of the Kyōgen troupe for the inappropriateness of the performance.

Another early reference in the Eiga Monogatari describes a scene of village Dengaku which has been interpreted as a predecessor of the Okina Nō performance. As a Kyōgen player has always performed in Okina, the description is revealing of the early Kyōgen. The account is of a rice planting ceremony, "After peasant women marched in, there appeared an old man, master of ceremonies, holding a torn umbrella in his hand and clad in a strange garment. He was followed by a group of ten or more Dengaku performers. With crude drums tied to their waists and drum sticks in their hands, they marched along in odd gait and played their flutes, while they sang rustic songs and went through various dance motions." The choreographic quality in Kyōgen today may be considered
to have been derived in part from the ceremonial aspects of Dengaku.

Kyōgen also appears to be linked, historically, to the tradition of Sarugaku and Dengaku. This can be noted in the transition from the earlier to the later theatrical modes. Throughout the Kamakura period, Sarugaku and Dengaku troupes increased in popularity under the patronage of the major shrines in the Kansai region around Mt. Hie. The troupe travelled about the area giving performances. They attracted both the upper and lower segments of society. Towards the end of the Kamakura period, major disturbances and divisions in the government resulted in a relocation of power in the local villages. The village headmen began to form contracts with the performing troupes to engage them for village festivals. This provided a stimulus for the creation of local village troupes. According to Toraaki, Kyōgen first appeared at this time, in local areas around Mt. Hie. He identifies the priest Gen'emon of Mt. Hie as the first to record Kyōgen. Unfortunately, there is no direct evidence to substantiate this view. However, scholars agree that some form of Kyōgen emerged at about this time as there are references to a theatre called Sarugaku Kyōgen and Dengaku Kyōgen. The exact relationship between the village Sarugaku and Dengaku and the Kyōgen remains a mystery.

The first important period for Kyōgen was the early Muromachi period. At this time, the great unrest and turnover in social classes which elevated the former lower class farmer to a landowning retainer created a new audience for Kyōgen. From this new audience was drawn the character-types and every day living situations which form the core of Kyōgen as well as Haikai. Subjects such as the rising lower class man's attempts at formal poetry and his vanity in his new position are frequent in Kyōgen.

Examples of this are numerous in the Haikai plays. In Chigiriki, the host of the beginner's Renga group attempts to emulate the procedure for the formal meetings. However, Taro's appearance on the scene dispels any illusion of decorum. He criticizes the flower arrangement with, "You call that an arrangement? They've just been thrown together." Later, he mocks the wall hanging, "Can't you, yourselves, see how crooked it is? Usually that's a very important concern for the host of a Renga gathering or tea ceremony."
Exposure of the aspiring poet occurs again Mikazuki. Here, the character opens with a highly pretentious speech, "Though I'm a rather common fellow, I really love linked verse. Whenever I hear of a linked verse meeting, anywhere, I just can't resist. It's so intoxicating that I forget to go home." Reminded of the fact that he will be host of the next meeting he decides to hurry home but falls again into pedantic revery. "Oh, really, there's nothing so fascinating as linked verse. The excitement of giving the opening verse, the suprise of the answering link, and to be the host, how utterly delightful!" When his wife complains of his extended absence from home, he chides her with, "You nag that way because you don't appreciate the joys of linked verse...!"

Most examples of actual linked verse occur in Fujimatsu and Hachiku Renga. The absurdity of many of the verses and the ulterior motives behind them reveal a complete disregard for the ideas espoused by Nijo Yoshimoto and practised by the more refined groups of poets.

In Fujimatsu, the master suggests a bout of Renga to determine whom shall have the larch tree. Tarō Kaja uses the opportunity to ridicule the vanity and blundering stupidity of his master. The play ends with the enraged master reciting, as he strikes Tarō Kaja, "Achhhh! I yell striking/ My voice is also fearsome/ You tremble at it." To this the clever Tarō Kaja replies, "When a cricket gets angry/ the thrush is always happy." The allusion to the master's rage, which exposes his vulnerability is inescapable. The master forces Tarō Kaja to his knees in punishment.

The linked verse in Hachiku Renga like that in Fujimatsu is crude and reflects the ulterior motives of the characters. The two poets argue over the rules for linked verse although neither is very clear about them. Their argument is ostensibly on the high plane of poetics, but is actually a continuation of their earlier dispute concerning money. Neither is happy with the pointed remarks in the other's verse. The lender complains, "That's not current usage for an opening verse." The Borrower urges him to correct it. The Lender suggests that the line, "Oh wind waiting midst the pines/ Won't you please refrain," sounds discordant. He actually objects to the Borrower's plea to put off the repayment of the debt.
The Borrower insists that the line, "refrain, refrain," is popularly used. This sequence recurs in the reverse order with the Borrower objecting.

Naturally, the crudity of the lower class linked verse sessions is exaggerated in the Kyōgen. However, there is evidence to suggest that such sessions of linked verse were not uncommon in the early Muromachi period. Sōgi  宗祇, 1420-1502, a renowned Renga poet of the fifteenth century, is known to have composed Haikai as well. One reason for the practice of Haikai by the Renga masters was that their patrons were the uncultured country lords. It is easy to conceive how the attempts at serious Renga meetings must have deteriorated into little more than Haikai jests and riddles.

Some evidence of this is available in the Seisuisho 宴絵巻, a collection of humorous stories from the capital. There are numerous accounts of ignorance and stupidity in the Renga sessions. Although these stories may be totally fictitious, the very existence of them suggests that they had some basis in society.

In one story, the teacher warns a participant that the boat is too near. He is referring to the rule in Renga dictating that the suihen, or words having to do with water, couldn't be used more than once in seven verses. The obtuse participant responded with, "having no boat, I ride in a hallowed out tree."

Another story, attributed to an incident between Sōgi and a disciple, indicates that linked verse was used to test the opponent's skill. In this sequence, Sōgi and his disciple are walking on the beach. Sōgi asks a fisherman what the seaweed in his net is called. The fisherman replies that it can be called either me or mo. Sōgi then recites a verse in which the verb 'called' can also be interpreted as 'calling'. "They can be(are) called(calling) either me or mo."

From these stories and others, it seems clear that Haikai was practised informally by the established poets of the day. Furthermore, many of the formal Renga sessions must have reverted to Haikai humor when the untutored country lords participated.
The type of humor in these examples from the Seisuishō appears in Yamazaki Sōkan's compilation of Haikai, the Shin Sen Inu Tsukubashū. Perhaps his approval of the Haikai humor is most apparent in an alternative verse he offers to that of Sōgi. Sōgi wrote, "A robe of mist/ the sleeves are soaked." and added, "From the white foam/ the goose lifts off and returns." Sōkan added the alternative verse, "Princess Sawa/ standing there in spring/ pissing." Clearly, unlike his predecessor Sōgi, Sōkan revelled in the vulgar humor of the Haikai which indeed he established as an independent poetic form.

Although not really vulgar, the verses appearing in Fujimatsu and taken from the Inu Tsukubashū display a similar want of elegance. The master recites, "In the Western Sea/ a thousand fathoms deep/ the deer are crying." The verse probably alludes to the Tale of the Heike in which the Heike clan drowned in the Western Sea. Taro Kaja's response has a double meaning. It may be translated to read, "Like a spotted fawn/ we know not where it stands." In this interpretation, the fawn refers to the young emperor who drowned along with the Heikei warriors. However, the verse may also be rendered, "White foam rising on the waves/ like white spots on a young fawn." By ignoring the classical allusion which the master intends, the second interpretation destroys the tone of gravity in the first verse entirely.

In the same play Taro Kaja takes an opportunity to tease his master. The master offers the verse, "In front of Sannō shrine/ the shrine gate has been painted/ bright vermillion red." Taro Kaja responds with, "Red it is the color/ of the monkey's mug, how strange!" The master correctly perceives this to be a direct reference to his own face red from drinking, and vents his rage on Taro Kaja. This verse is also from the Shin Sen Inu Tsukubashū.

The humor in the above verses is the more pungent because of the master's utter failure to produce good poetry. No doubt the Renga teachers of this period were plagued by the imitative or pretentious verses of their country patrons. They must have been tempted, as Taro Kaja was, to respond with subtle irony.

Although vulgarity and impropriety have been eliminated from the Kyōgen performed today, various comments of Seami suggest that at one
time Kyōgen approached Haikai in its humor. In the Jurokubushū, Seami recommends that, "neither in speech nor in gesture should there be anything low. The jokes and repartee should be appropriate even to the ears of the nobles and the refined. However funny they may be, one should never introduce the vulgar. This is of utmost importance to bear in mind." His concern for the propriety of Kyōgen was natural considering that Kyōgen were performed with the No during his lifetime. No doubt, Seami, like his Renga counterparts, was forced to perform for the untutored lords whose tastes demanded the inclusion of Kyōgen.

After the death of Seami, there are almost no references to Kyōgen aside from the collection of plot summaries in the Tensho book 1573-1586. The next period in which Kyōgen as well as Haikai appear is again a time of disruption and upheaval in society. The end of the Muromachi period saw the rise of the lower class and the subjection of Japan under the hand of the former farmer, Hideyoshi Toyotomi.

Under the patronage of Hideyoshi, Kyōgen formed its first school, the Ōkura. One of the earliest master's of the school, Torakiyo 1566-1646, was granted a fief by Hideyoshi. The Ōkura school was followed by the formation of the Sagi school (no longer extant) which received the patronage of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and finally the Izumi school formed during the Tokugawa period.

Kyōgen in this period was forced to respond to the unrefined tastes of the newly risen warrior audience. The crudity and exaggerated humor increased with the competition from the newly formed Kabuki theatre. In fact the popularity of Kabuki became so great that Kyōgen actors were forced to perform roles in the Kabuki. In this way, Kyōgen began to lose its independence as an established theatre and the terms Kabuki and Kyōgen began to be used interchangeably.

In order to rescue Kyōgen from the threat of Kabuki, Ōkura Toraaki, the son of Torakiyo, recorded the Kyōgen plays which had until this time existed almost solely as an oral tradition and improvisation. He further dictated the theatrics of Kyōgen in his treatise, the Warancé Gusa. In this work Toraaki defends the Ōkura tradition which he maintains is the true Kyōgen. He notes that people complain that the Ōkura tradition is too close to the No in style. This is due, he says, to the fact that
the public has no experience of the true Kyōgen. What has in fact happened, he claims, is that the popularly performed No has deteriorated into a semi-Kyōgen art. Likewise, the Kyōgen of other troupes has also deteriorated into a vulgar, gaudy show. Toraaki then sets out to define the true art of the Kyōgen. The result is more or less the highly ritualized form which we see today.

Haikai too underwent severe renovations under the guidance of Matsunaga Teitoku 1571-1653. However, the Haikai with which the Kyōgen is concerned seems to date from the earlier period, during the Muromachi times. The source for the Haikai in Kyōgen is, generally, the earlier compilation of Haikai, the Inu Tsukubashū by Yamazaki Sōkan.

The second chapter of this essay will be a discussion of the form and humor in the Haikai plays.
III. Form And Humor

This chapter will provide an analysis of the four Haikai plays in terms of form and humor. A discussion of the formal elements of Kyōgen must emphasize the importance of speech and mime upon which the acting is based. These elements are in turn made up of an intricate blend of recurring patterns. The structure of Kyōgen can best be understood by turning directly to the plays.

First, let us consider the importance of speech and mime in creating scenes on a totally unadorned stage. One of the more vivid examples can be observed in Chigiriki. Taro battles his invisible opponent crying out, "Yai! If you're not home, come out and show me! (He puts down his stick and pulls out his fan.) This time, swish, I'll pull out my sword. I'll strike off your right arm, I'll strike off your left arm. With my return thrusts I'll slice and slice until I leave you limbless!" Other scenes though less violent, offer detailed descriptions of the surrounding areas. In Hachiku Renga the Borrower elaborates on a new remodeling job, "Well, well, what excellent design. You put the kitchen over there?" Then looking around again, he continues, "Everywhere the planning shows such exquisite taste. Ah, ha, did you put the Tokonoma here?" When the Lender asks him what he thinks of it, he matters him, "Usually they say that the Tokonoma is difficult to situate but in this room, there is no other place for it." Finally, he spots a scroll in the Tokonoma, "Ah ha! A scroll of Renga poetry. Excuse me but whose calligraphy is that?" The very personal color injected by his exclamations and his constant glancing about him brings the scene into focus for us.

Another example is the travel scene in Fujimatsu. The master and Taro Kaja have arrived at the shrine. "Ah yes," sighs the master, "whenever we come, it's always quiet, tranquil, and holy before the shrine, isn't it?" Then he exclaims, "Aha! I haven't been here for some time. The shrine gate has been redone. Let's offer a poem about the shrine gate." Here too, we are struck by the clarity of the scene.

The dependence on mime and speech has several functions in Kyōgen. One is to allow for freedom in changing and refocusing scenes. In the example in Hachiku Renga of the remodeled architecture, the Borrower verbally decorates the stage with the fixtures in the room. In one moment
the stage is cluttered with the newly designed house. However, in the next minute, the scenery has receded to the background and the two actors dominate the stage in their linked verse bout. This eliminates the problem of any distraction from the focus intended in a particular sequence.

A second function of the mime and speech is to allow freedom of movement on the stage. Despite the limited space on the stage, in each of the plays there is a scene which entails travelling some distance. In *Chigiriki* the master remains seated on stage while Tarō Kaja departs to make an announcement for the Renga meeting. For all intents and purposes, the master is invisible to the audience while Tarō Kaja makes his journey. According to the stage directions, Tarō Kaja stands at the Jō pillar and faces front while the master seats himself at the Fueza. Tarō Kaja circles the stage and stops at the first pine on the Hashigakari. Here he greets the neighbors and a conversation ensues. In *Mikazuki*, both the man and woman enter the stage. The woman seats herself at the Fue pillar, while the man proceeds to the Jō pillar to introduce himself. The woman does not enter the scene until much later. In the meantime, we learn that the man is on his way home from a poetry session. He circles the stage and stops again at the Jō pillar. He indicates that he has arrived home and calls for his wife. The woman now stands and approaches the Waki pillar to enter the scene. Interestingly, in this case, as in the others, the movement is totally illogical in the usual sense. The man has, after all, merely returned to the point on stage from which he started. Furthermore, the woman, instead of crossing the stage toward him, walks in another direction, in answer to his call. However, it attests to the skill of the acting that the audience accepts this method of creating distance on stage. In the first instance, the scene is expansive with the man travelling a long distance. In the second, the scene has been telescoped to include only the house and its immediate surroundings. The woman must walk through the rooms in the house to reach the door. She therefore approaches in what ordinarily would appear to be a circuitous route.

Naturally, this method of creating scenes and delineating the stage requires the participation of the audience. In fact, the incompleteness of the suggested movement and image encourages the viewer to complete the scene in his mind. When Tarō in *Chigiriki* points out the various
flaws in the Ren'ga meeting, the scene is fixed in the host's home. But, in the next moment when he is rolling about outside on the ground in fear, the home has totally vanished from the mind of the viewer. Thus, with the skillful aid of the actors, the minds of the viewers perform acrobatic adjustments in their visual perception.

The speech and mime encourage and even require the participation of the audience. In this sense, Kyōgen resembles the linked verse meeting, in which each member of the group was both a listener and creator. Both arts reflect the concept of the "creative process," an aesthetic theory adhered to by many arts of the middle ages. Nishio Minoru, in his book Chūsei Teki Na Mono To Song Tenkai, explains this term by referring to the Tsurezure Gusa by Yoshida Kenko. He describes the importance of the incomplete and transient image to the creative process. As Kenko writes, concerning the beauty of mortality, "If man were never to fade away like the dews of Adashino, never to vanish like the smoke over Toribeyama, but lingered forever in this world, how things would lose their power to move us! The most precious thing in life is its uncertainty." Kenko further elaborates on this point by asking rhetorically, "Are we to look at cherry blossoms only in full bloom, the moon only when cloudless?" He answers unequivocally, "Branches about to blossom or gardens strewn with faded flowers are worthier of our admiration." The essence of beauty lives then in its power to move us through the ephemeral, incomplete quality of all things. For man to participate in the beauty of transiency is for him to live and create art. To use Kenko's own image, we see in the faded flowers, the buds that will follow and in the buds, the fallen petals. Thus we become involved in the process of life.

Kyōgen clearly exhibits this theory through its emphasis on audience participation in the creation of the suggested scenes of the play.

Speech in Kyōgen further promotes participation through various techniques of dialogue. The actors almost always face the audience when speaking to each other. One speaks; then there follows a barely perceptible pause before the other character's face becomes animated and he responds. For example, when the master calls Taro Kaja, Taro Kaja stands motionless and without any expression to one side. A half second elapses before Taro Kaja's face lights up in a delightful grin. He then calls out, "Ye-e-s, sir," making an absurdly low bow. The result is that the audience feels as though the dialogue must pass through their minds.
Before reaching Taro Kaja.

Another device in dialogue which requires active audience participation is the overlapping of two different speeches on stage. The sudden appearance of another separate dialogue on stage forces the audience to resolve the two speeches as isolated situations. Thus, a sense of spatial distance is created. As the focus of the audience's attention moves toward the new dialogue, a successful transition between the two parts of the play is accomplished. In Chigiriki this occurs when Taro enters. The guests and host have been conferring on the center stage when Taro begins his introduction from the Hashigakari. The effect is to alter the focus from the Renga meeting to the outsider Taro. This is used frequently in Chigiriki, which is complicated by several disparate themes.

The mime and speech in Kyogen are confined to particular patterns of acting. These patterns extend from such basic areas of performance as the rhythm of speech and the particular method of walking, to the repetitions among the scripts of particular scenes throughout the repertoire. The patterns provide a cohesive element to the otherwise rambling plots. They also create an atmosphere of intimacy and familiarity necessary to the humor and mood of Kyogen.

Aside from the inevitable introduction of the character, the Sake drinking scene, the calling-on-the-neighbor scene, and the concluding scene of the plays, the Haikai plays preserve the ritual of the linked verse. The ritual however, does not consist of the formalities involved in a Renga meeting but rather is a unique Kyogen ritual. It consists of a brief discussion as to who shall give the opening verse, followed by a discussion of what the verse should be. "What shall it be." "Yes, what shall it be?" "How about this?" "Have you one already?" and so on. Identifiable sequences like this help to anchor the play to a specific Kyogen mood, a mood of the intimacy of one's own living room.

In this intimacy, the audience can relax with the assurance of the familiar and thus become vulnerable to suggestions by the actors. Kyogen exploits this complacency in the audience to create laughter through the sudden reversal of the expected procedure or pattern. The result is an illusion of spontaneity in the acting. This will be discussed more fully in the analysis of humor.
Perhaps the achievement of a feeling of complacency in the audience can better be comprehended if we refer to a quotation from Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Proust speaks of the psychological adjustment man must make in order to accept the unfamiliar. It is exactly this adjustment period which *Kyōgen* succeeds in eliminating through the recurrent patterns of behavior. "It is our noticing them that puts things in a room, our growing used to them that takes them away again and clears a space for us. Space there was none for me in my bedroom (mine in name only) at Balbec, it was full of things which did not know me, which flung back at me, the distrustful look that I had cast at them, and without taking any heed of my existence showed that I was interrupting the course of theirs." In *Kyōgen*, the audience is easily ensconced in the familiar rituals of speech and recurrent scenes derived from everyday life.

In *Mikazuki* and *Fujimatsu*, the Sake drinking scene radiates a feeling of warmth and harmony. The audience recognizes the sequence and can therefore participate in it and relate to it without psychological resistance. This is true too of the linked verse scenes in *Mikazuki*, *Fujimatsu*, and *Hachiku Renga*, in which each character recites the expected number of syllables and his partner responds with one of the familiar linking methods. In this way, the patterns also contribute to the participation of the audience as they willingly become involved in the familiar world of *Kyōgen*.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the humor, some mention should be made of the importance of the structure of the stage in *Kyōgen*. *Kyōgen* is performed on the *No* stage. Its asymmetrical shape encourages interaction from the audience. The stage is open on three sides with a roof and eaves reaching out over the audience. An open passageway extends out to one side and is used both as an entrance way and as part of the stage proper. The result of the openness of the stage is that space seems to flow out in all directions. The flow is enhanced by the evenness of the lighting on and off the stage. The audience is drawn into the setting and the demarcation line between on stage and off is obscured. Thus, the very structure of the stage compliments the acting method, in which participation by all present is of prime importance.
There are several basic devices used in the creation of laughter or humor in *Kyōgen*. Perhaps the most essential is the illusion of spontaneity created through sudden reverses in the accepted patterns of the play. As the audience and actors become absorbed in a particular procedure, a sudden reversal causes tension and a release in laughter. This particular technique forms the basis of *Haikai* as well, which depends on reverses in the expected response. Another device is that of repetition. The exact word for word repetition either of one's own words or another's deprives them of their impact and renders them ridiculous. Finally, displacement of the emphasis of a remark or a verse in poetry occurs when an insignificant detail is responded to at the expense of the main point.

Laughter precipitated by a reversal of an anticipated pattern is best illustrated by the linked verse sequence in *Hachiku Renga*. The session begins slowly with arguments over the first and second verses. Then the momentum picks up in the third verse, which is followed immediately by the fourth. At this point, the audience anticipates the immediate recitation of the fifth verse. However, the Borrower abruptly breaks the rhythm, protesting, "Oh! It's become too strained. Let's take more care." The two begin again and there follows the fifth, sixth, and seventh verses, gradually approaching the intensity of a climax. This time, the Lender breaks up the sequence, calling out, "You there!" The sudden break is upsetting and results in laughter because of the comical nature of the complaints of the poets. They are of course finding fault not with the poetry but with the content. The sudden breaks in the sequence occur at precisely the moment when the audience too becomes aware of the double edged meanings in the links. Therefore, though jolting, the reversals do not seem unnatural.

*Fujimatsu* offers another example of this method of humor. The master introduces himself and explains that his disrespectful servant, Taro Kaja, has taken leave without asking permission. The master is enraged at such temerity. He blusters his way to Taro Kaja's dwelling and after calling him out, orders him to his knees. Taro Kaja's response is completely out of accord with the scene and with his character. He falls flat on his face before the master in an exaggerated abeyance. Even the master
is startled by this extreme response and retreats with, "What a display! You're so irritating. Oh, do get up." The progressive anger is suddenly abated by the unexpected reaction of Taro Kaja. The surprise and the knowledge that Taro Kaja did this purposely to outwit the master, causes the audience to react with laughter.

In Chigiriki a similar incident occurs when Taro is rolling about on the ground after his beating. "Ohhh, let me go. I'll never come again. Please forgive me, please, please, forgive me," he pleads. Just then, his wife comes running to him, "Come, come, what's happened here? Pull yourself together! Pull yourself together!" When Taro recognizes his wife, he suddenly jumps to his feet and swaggers off to the side. "E-i woman. Why have you come?" To her explanation that she heard he was being beaten, he pretends to be offended. He shows his disdain saying, "Don't be absurd. Can a man be thrashed so easily?" Taro's sudden reversal of stance is comical.

In Mikazuki, this type of unanticipated reversal of the pattern is evident in the concluding song. The song is originally from the No play, Ashikari in which a couple is reunited after a long separation. The audience would ostensibly recognize the song and anticipate the lines. However, in the Kyōgen version, the lines have been altered. The original song contains the lines, "We cast aside all our griefs and take up again the pledge of the past." In Mikazuki these lines read, "Let's shoulder the vexations and take up again the pledge of the past." Here too the sudden change in the expected order evokes laughter. Furthermore, in this case, it encourages a comparison between the absurdity of the quarrel in Mikazuki with the tragic separation in the No play.

Repetition is the second most frequently employed technique of humor. The effect of repetition is to render the phrase or motion ridiculous. This is used in Fujimatsu when the master and Taro Kaja bargain over the larch tree. Each time the master asks, "What shall we trade?" Taro Kaja responds with, "Yes, what shall it be." This recurs so often that the effect of the repetition is compounded by the repetition of the sequence itself. The result is hilarious.

Repetition is also an important element in the linked verse sessions in the plays. In Hachiku Renga the session opens with the Borrower's verse. He recites his first line, the Lender repeats it. He finishes his verse and the Lender repeats the final lines as well. The verse has little vitality after the frequent repetitions. Next the Borrower
repeats the Lender's verse after his recitation. By this time, it is impossible to take the verses seriously. The use of repetition is then followed by the technique of absorption and sudden reversals in the next six links. By using one technique of humor on top of another the feeling of spontaneity is secured and with it both the humor and the intensity of an actual Haikai sessions. This occurs also in the Fujimatsu play.

Repetition of the same phrase by one character is practised in Chigiriki by the woman. She rushes on stage, crying, "Oh no, oh no! Yaa! Yaa! Can it be? How horrible!" When Taro attempts to deny his beating, she reacts with, "That's shocking, just shocking!" Later she praises Taro's courage, "Ahhh, bravely done, bravely done. Now indeed you are my lord." The constant repetition of her outbursts makes it impossible to take her seriously. The same thing is true of the guests at the Renga meeting, in Chigiriki, who speak in chorus.

In addition to the reverses in patterns and the use of repetition, displacement of emphasis is also an element in the humor of Kyogen and more significantly, of Haikai. For example, the verses in Fujimatsu contain numerous examples of displaced emphasis. The master recites, "You who follow behind me/ Wait, wait for a little while." Instead of answering this with a verse, Tarō Kaja takes the verse literally and sits down to wait. When the master chastizes him, he exclaims, "Ohhh, ohhh, was that poetry, sir?" He thus removes emphasis from the link to the literal meaning which appears the funnier in that Tarō Kaja has obviously done so intentionally.

In another verse, Tarō Kaja responds to his master's, "In front of Sanno Shrine/ the shrine gate has been painted/ bright vermillion red." By linking his verse solely to the word "red," Tarō Kaja removes the emphasis from the shrine. He recites, "Red it is the color/ of the monkey's mug, how strange!"

Displacement of emphasis also occurs outside of the linked verse sessions in the Mikazuki play. The couple have been arguing over the serious issue of divorce. From this major crisis, the emphasis suddenly switches to the question of what article should be used as proof of divorce. Unlike the reversal of a pattern, the switch of emphasis proceeds quite naturally out of the preceding sequence. The couple's conversation moves naturally from the question of divorce to the proof. However, in fact, the article of proof is such a minor detail to dwell on that it makes the question of divorce itself seem silly.
As may be gathered from this analysis, the form, mood, and humor are interdependent. Although I have attempted to discuss them separately, they must in the final estimation, be regarded in their entirety. The form supports the mood which both effects and is effected by the humor in turn related to the patterns of the form. The spontaneity and lively humor of Kyōgen must be attributed to the skill of the actors in manipulating the techniques of Kyōgen.
IV. Conclusion

The selection of Kyogen plays dealing with the subject of Haikai sessions is significant for a number of reasons. First of all, Kyogen provides perhaps the only opportunity for experiencing an early Haikai meeting. Few records of early Haikai sessions remain. Moreover, not only is Kyogen one of the only vehicles for Haikai but it is also particularly suited to Haikai. When Toraaki codified Kyogen he insisted on preserving the spontaneity of the early improvised theatre. It is this atmosphere which is essential to a Haikai session as well.

The incorporation of Haikai into the Kyogen plays was natural in terms of both the parallel historical development of the arts and the similarity of form and content. Historically, both arts fluctuated in popularity with their more serious counterparts, the Renga and the No. They surfaced in times of social turmoil when their satirical humor was welcomed by the rising classes in society. Later, when the age demanded that these hitherto improvised arts be formulated or lost to posterity, both attempted to codify and stabilize their aesthetic forms. Unfortunately, in the case of Haikai this meant a drastic change in the original poetic sensibility.

As to structure, both Kyogen and Haikai are performances demanding the participation of all present. A Haikai session consists of a group of people in which each member must create a verse which both grows out of the previous verse and can give birth to a new one. In the third chapter I have tried to illustrate that Kyogen too requires the participation of both audience and actors in order to take place. The play itself is constructed much on the lines of linked verse. There are a series of distinct and independent sequences which are linked together by intricate transitions requiring the acknowledgement of the viewers. The overlapping of dialogues was one such technique. Further, in both cases, the plot or theme is of little consequence. The play or poem depends for unity upon a certain underlying mood preserved throughout. In Haikai as in Kyogen, it is a mood of joyous celebration.
The final section of this paper is a translation of the four plays which I have discussed above. In making the translations as literal as possible I have perhaps sacrificed much of the humor of Kyogen. However, one must remember that Kyogen is theatre. Like the Haikai Kyogen was never intended to be read as literature. Therefore, I have chosen to present the plays in as exact a form as possible while relying for analysis on the actual live performances.
Footnotes

1. Each of these plays can be found in the texts of any of the Kyōgen schools.

2. The term Haikai no Renga refers specifically to the comic linked verse of the Muromachi period, as opposed to Renga or serious linked verse, and Haikai or the linked verse of the Tokugawa period. However, for the sake of convenience, the term Haikai alone will be used throughout this essay when referring to Haikai no Renga.


4. Renga Bishamon is found in all the schools however it is known in the Izumi School as Bishamon Renga. Renga Nusubito and Daikoku Renga are found in all schools. Renga Jittoku is found in the Okura school and in the Izumi as Tenjin.

5. Yamamoto Azuma was adopted by the Yamamoto Azuma Jiro family and received his Kyōgen practise under Ōkura Sentarō. He became prominent in the theatre world following the Meiji Restoration and retired under the name of Azuma. He left two collections of Kyōgen. The earlier one upon which Koyama has based his collection was copied during Yamamoto's training period. The second volume which is kept secret from the public, was copied later in his life for his descendents. However, the differences between the two collections appear to be minor. The Yamamoto collection is the script book for the Ōkura school and is therefore very close to the collection by Okura Torahiro. The differences are primarily the result of greater standardization and detail in the plays. Yamamoto also added thirty-five post Meiji Restoration plays to the earlier collection. There are 194 plays in all as opposed to the 180 existing plays of the Okura family texts.

6. The Izumi school formed during the Tokugawa period. The Ōkura school was the first of four schools of Kyōgen which formed in the late Muromachi period. The other schools were the Sagi which received patronage during the Tokugawa period but later disappeared altogether,
and the Yamamoto branch of the Ōkura school.

7. The earliest collection of Kyōgen plays is a collection of actor's notes in the Tenshō bon which dates from sometime during the Tenshō period (1573-1586). The next existing collections belong to the Ōkura school. The Ōkura Toraaki bon 1642 was compiled by Okura Toraaki in eight volumes with 210 plays. The Ōkura Torakiyo bon 1646 was compiled by the father of Toraaki. Only eight plays remain from this collection. The earliest Izumi school text is probably the Tenri bon, also known as Kyōgen Rikugi. The exact origins and date are obscure but it seems to have been from about the time of the later Okura school texts. Poems, speeches, and songs are kept in a separate volume. For the Sagi school, the earliest text appears to have been the Sagi Denuemon bon from around 1688. The Kyōgen Ki, first printed in 1660 and reprinted in 1699 seems to have been collected for the convenience of the audience rather than for any specific school. In 1792, the Ōkura school published the Torahiro bon which precedes the Yamamoto Azuma texts although very similar to them. The Torahiro bon contains 165 plays. Finally, the Sanbyakubanshū hon was recorded by Izumi Kohayakawa Shotaro in 1909 for the Izumi school. It seems to have been based on earlier Izumi texts and contains 200 plays. In addition to these early editions of Kyōgen, numerous collections have been made, based on them, in recent times. The collection by Koyama Hiroshi is one of these.


9. Ibid.


11. Ibid. p. 195.


19. From the translation of the Chigiriki play appended to this essay. Henceforth, all citations from the translations will not be footnoted. The reader is urged to refer to the translations.


24. Ibid. p.168.


27. Tatsuzaburo Hayashiya, *Bungaku Ge Koku Jō* Vol. 6 Nihon Bungaku no

28. Ibid. p.405.

29. Ibid. p.405.


31. Ibid. p. 409.


35. Toraaki Okura, Waranbegusa, p.15.


38. Ibid. p.115.

The Master enters, followed by Taro Kaja. The Master announces himself at the Jo pillar while Taro Kaja seats himself at the back of the stage.

Master: I am a lord of this neighborhood. My only servant ran off somewhere without so much as asking for permission. Now I hear that he returned last night and he still hasn't paid his respects to me. How infuriating! The rascal! I'm going to his place right now and give him a good thrashing! I ought to be on my way. (He starts out.) Honestly, if he'd come to me, I'd have allowed him five or ten days, but this is inexcusable. (He circles the stage and stops at the center.) I'm already here. If he recognizes my voice, he won't come out, so I'll disguise it. (He goes to the Waki pillar, opens his fan and hides his face behind it.) Excuse me? Is anyone home?

Taro Kaja: (He rises and goes to the Jo pillar.) How peculiar. I just got back last night and already someone is calling at the gate. Who's there?

Master: Is anyone home?

Taro Kaja: Who is it, please? (He approaches the Master and peers over his fan.)

Master: (He drops the fan.) On your knees!

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir. (He drops to his knees and prostrates himself suddenly before the Master.)

Master: (He is startled.) What a display! You're so irritating. Oh, do get up.

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: You didn't even recognize your own Master's voice just now.
What an unfaithful servant! Besides that, you've been off somewhere without requesting permission.

Taro Kaja: Please, sir. Since I'm your only servant, I knew that even if I asked I wouldn't be allowed to go. So, I made a pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji in secret.

Master: If it's for a pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji, you needn't bother to obtain my permission, is that it?

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: Shameless rascal. (He looks away and speaks to himself.) How do you like that? When I think I'll give him a good beating, he tells me that he's made a pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji. I'll have to overlook it this time or face the wrath of the shrine gods. (He turns to Taro Kaja.) All right, all right, I'm letting you off so stand up.

Taro Kaja: Can it be true?

Master: It's true.

Taro Kaja: In actual fact?

Master: Absolutely.

Taro Kaja: Oh, what a relief. (He stands.)

Master: Were you scared?

Taro Kaja: I've never seen you in such a rage! I feared you might even kill me. It made my hair curl!

Master: Exactly! I was in a much worse temper than usual. But when you told me of the pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji, I was forced to forgive you. Now, tell me about your trip.
Taro Kaja: As you wish, sir. As the land is at peace and the Imperial reign prospers, there were many, many pilgrims coming and going amidst the mountains and valleys.

Master: Indeed, there must have been. I hear you've carried back a nice larch tree from Mt. Fuji. Is that right?

Taro Kaja: Oh no, I didn't do anything of the sort.

Master: Don't fib. The children have told me of it.

Taro Kaja: Have they?

Master: Yes.

Taro Kaja: True, I did bring one back, but it's for someone else.

Master: Even so, can't you at least show it to me?

Taro Kaja: There's no harm in your seeing it, sir. Please, come this way.

Master: All right.

Taro Kaja: (He opens his fan and goes from the Jiutai seat towards the Waki pillar.) Swish, swish, swish. (He slides sideways across the stage, acting out the opening of a sliding door.) Excuse me, sir, but this is the larch tree.

Master: (He walks to the center of the stage.) So, is this it?

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: As long as I'm looking it over, I may as well get comfortable and really study it. (He sits at the center of the stage and faces the Waki pillar.)
Taro Kaja: That's a thought, sir.

Master: (He looks in front of him.) Oh my, this is a superb larch tree.

Taro Kaja: (He speaks to the curtain.) Hey, hey there! The Master is here, so bring out the Sake cups. What's that? No money for Sake? Well, go pawn that old tattered robe. Go on! (After giving this order to someone off stage, he returns and sits down beside the Master.)

Master: Hey, Taro Kaja.

Taro Kaja: At your service, sir.

Master: The shape of the branches is even better than I'd heard.

Taro Kaja: People admired it all along the way.

Master: Of course, they must have. You know, since you left, I've been working in the garden. There's a perfect spot in front of the artificial island for the larch tree. Why not let me have it?

Taro Kaja: But I just explained, it's for someone else, so I can't possibly offer it to you.

Master: In that case, how about trading?

Taro Kaja: What would you trade?

Master: Ah ha! If you'll speak of it already, you must be willing to consider an exchange, am I right?

Taro Kaja: Not exactly, but I might discuss the matter with the party involved and see.

Master: That's only civil. So, what shall we trade?
Taro Kaja: Yes, what shall it be?

Master: How about my great sword made by the famous Samurō of Bizen?

Taro Kaja: An excellent article to swap. However, my friend hasn't even enough rank to have a sword bearer, so that wouldn't do.

Master: Certainly, we can't exchange a formal sword if he doesn't have a sword bearer. What shall we trade?

Taro Kaja: Yes, what shall it be?

Master: Ah ha! How about my dog trained for falconry?

Taro Kaja: That's an excellent idea. However, he hasn't got a falcon so he wouldn't need a dog.

Master: Certainly, he wouldn't want the dog without a falcon. What shall it be?

Taro Kaja: Yes, what shall it be?

Master: Ah ha! I'm reluctant, but what about my black horse?

Taro Kaja: There's no place to tie him up.

Master: Is that so? Tie him to your house.

Taro Kaja: Oh, now hold on, that horse is violent. He'd demolish a small one or two room shack like this.

Master: Of course, he'd probably pull it down. It's a shame about the tree, but there's nothing to exchange. I guess I'll be off.

Taro Kaja: Oh, please, wait a moment. I have holy wine from Mt. Fuji, won't you have some?
Master: Please, bring it here.

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir. (He goes to the back of the stage, opens his fan and carries it forward.) I present the holy wine.

Master: Pour it in here. (He opens his fan.)

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: That's enough.

Taro Kaja: Filled to brimming.

Master: (He takes it.) Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! (He smacks his lips.) Excellent wine. Fill it up again.

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir. (He does.)

Master: Drinking this is the same as making the pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji, don't you agree?

Taro Kaja: Exactly, sir.

Master: Ahh, this holy wine reminds me, I've heard that you go around to all the linked verse beginner groups, criticizing and pestering everyone. Is that true?

Taro Kaja: Not at all, I do nothing of the sort.

Master: Don't play innocent. I've heard you're a good poet. Let's drink up and then recite a bit of poetry.

Taro Kaja: An excellent idea, sir.

Master: What shall it be?
Taro Kaja: Yes, what shall it be, sir.

Master: How about this?

Taro Kaja: Have you got one already, sir?

Master: Carrying in hand,

Taro Kaja: Carrying in hand,

Master: an old muddy colored robe, / dirty and tattered.

Taro Kaja: Now then, will you have another round of drinks?

Master: Hurry, go fill it up.

Taro Kaja: (He stands and goes toward the exit off stage. He faces the curtain.) You, there, don't yell so loud. He's all ready made an opening verse about the tattered robe. Understand?

Taro Kaja: (He returns to the stage.) I've filled it up.

Master: Pour.

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: (He takes it.) Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh, perfection!

Taro Kaja: Filled to the brim.

Master: Well, aren't you going to add a verse?

Taro Kaja: What was your verse again?

Master: Carrying in hand, / an old muddy colored robe / dirty and tattered.

Taro Kaja: Split it is at every spot / from seam to seam it's mended.
Master: Split it is at every spot/ from seam to seam its mended.
You're even better at composing than I'd heard. I've had plenty
now, take it. (He closes his fan.)

Tarō-Kaja: Won't you have one more?

Master: No, no, I said I've had enough.

Tarō Kaja: In that case, I shall put it away. (He closes his fan.)

Master: Well, I'm feeling so good from this holy wine, that I'm going
to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of the protector god, Sanno, of Mt.
Hie.

Tarō Kaja: Shall I accompany you?

Master: (Sarcastically.) Oh, but you probably have other things to do.

Tarō Kaja: Not at all, I'll come along.

Master: Of course you will! Stand!

Tarō Kaja: I obey, sir. (The two rise. The master goes to the Waki
pillar while Tarō Kaja goes to the Jō pillar.)

Master: Now then, as we're on our way to the Sanno Shrine, we'll
compose linked verse, and if I win, then I'll take the tree.

Tarō Kaja: That's not fair, sir.

Master: Why not?
You who follow behind me/ Wait, wait for a little while.3 (He starts out.)

Tarō Kaja: Yes, sir. (He seats himself at the Taisho seat.)

Master: Tarō Kaja! Tarō Kaja! Hey, Tarō Kaja! What are you doing there?
Taro Kaja: The Master said, "You who follow behind me, wait, wait for a little while." So I'm waiting here.

Master: That was poetry!

Taro Kaja: Ohhh, Ohhh, was that supposed to be poetry, sir?

Master: Indeed, it was.

Taro Kaja: If I'd realized then I'd have added a link immediately.

Master: Hurry up, make a verse!

Taro Kaja: If together we go/over the floating bridge/ surely it will sink.⁴/ You who follow behind me,/ wait, wait for a little while.

(Taro Kaja points rudely at the Master behind him as he finishes reciting.)

Master: Look you! The verse was all right but stop that! (He refers to the pointing action.)

Taro Kaja: I obey, sir.

Master: Above there is but one side,/ below there is but one side.⁵

Taro Kaja: The crescent of the moon/ when we see it's image/ reflected in the water,⁶/ above there is but one side,/ below there is but one side.

(He points up and down.)

Master: Didn't I forbid you to do that!

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: Below there is but one side,/ above there is but one side.⁷

Taro Kaja: Oh, excuse me, but that's the last poem with the "above" and
"below" parts reversed.

Master: It's my line so I'll do as I please, whether I want "above-below," or "below-above." I'm taking the larch tree if you don't come up with a link. (He comes after Tarō Kaja.)

Tarō Kaja: (He raises his arms to protect himself.) Oh, I'll add one, I'll add one!

Master: Be quick about it!

Tarō Kaja: In the hollow tree/ along the trunk and branches/ the woodpecker pecks/ below there is but one side,/ above there is but one side.

Master: That was superb. Now I'm really going to stump you.


Master: I'll give you both, trembling and a verse. (He starts to walk.)

In the Western sea

Tarō Kaja: In the Western sea,

Master: A thousand fathoms deep,/ the deer are crying.

Tarō Kaja: White foam rising on the waves/ like white spots on a young fawn.

Master: That was too forced. Take more care!

Tarō Kaja: I obey, sir.

Master: Deep in the mountains

Tarō Kaja: Deep in the mountains

Master: Why do we hear the sounds/ of a boat rowing?
Taro Kaja: (He stops at the Jo pillar.) Excuse me, sir, but may I make a suggestion?

Master: Well, what is it now?

Taro Kaja: If you were to change the "Western sea where the deer cry," from the last poem to "deep in the mountains," and change "deep in the mountains where the boats are heard," to "Western sea," you could make two good poems.

Master: They're my lines so I'll do as I please whether deer cry in the sea, or boats are rowed in the mountains! If you can't make a link, then the larch tree is mine! (He approaches threateningly.)

Taro Kaja: (He raises his arms to shield himself.) Oh, I'll add a link, I'll add one!

Master: Be quick about it!

Taro Kaja: Fruits from every mountain tree/ everywhere, crossing the sea.  

Master: Fruits from every mountain tree'/everywhere, crossing the sea. What? We've already arrived at the shrine. Come around and worship too.

Taro Kaja: Very well, sir. (The two sit side by side in the center of the stage. They open their fans, place them before themselves, and clap their hands together in worship.)

Master: (He closes his fan and turns.) Ah yes, whenever we come, it's always quiet, tranquil and holy before the shrine, isn't it?

Taro Kaja: Indeed, it is always holy before the shrine.

Master: Aha! I haven't been here for some time. The shrine gate has
been redone. Let's offer a poem about the shrine gate.

Taro Kaja: If you like, sir.

Master: How about this?

Taro Kaja: Have you got one already, sir?

Master: In front of Sanno shrine

Taro Kaja: In front of Sanno shrine

Master: the shrine gate has been painted/ bright, vermillion red.

Taro Kaja: Red it is the color/ of the monkey's mug, how strange.

Master: Hey, you there!

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: You're really insufferable. You know how I like wine and that when I drink, I get red. So you went on and on about it being the holy wine of Mt. Fuji and had me drink some. Now my red face is funny, is it!

Taro Kaja: Wait, calm yourself, please, and listen a moment. Aren't the monkeys the holy messengers of Sanno? I was describing the red faces of the monkeys, not your mug.

Master: Mug! Again you say mug?

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: Oh well, we're before the shrine, so I'll let you off. Stand! (He stands and goes to the Waki pillar.)

Taro Kaja: I obey, sir. (He stands and goes to the Jo pillar.)
Master: Humph! You've got all the answers, haven't you. No matter what I say, I can't exhaust your store. There are linked verse containing words which can only be used once in every thousand links. Let's try one of those.

Tarō Kaja: An excellent idea, sir.

Master: Come before me.

Tarō Kaja: I obey, sir.

Master: Closer.

Tarō Kaja: Yes, sir.

Master: Directly in front of me.

Tarō Kaja: Yes, sir. (The two circle the stage in opposite directions and meet in the middle.)

Master: (He strikes Tarō Kaja on the shoulder with his fan.) This is also a verse!

Tarō Kaja: Making striking verses!

Master: (He returns to the Waki pillar.) Achhhhhh! I yell striking.

Tarō Kaja: Achhhhhhh! I yell striking

Master: My voice is also fearsome/ you tremble at it.¹⁵

Tarō Kaja: When the cricket gets angry/ the thrush is always happy.¹⁶

Master: Nonsense! On your knees!
Taro Kaja: Yes, sir. (He drops to his knees.)

Master: Hey! (He calls, rebuking Tarō Kaja.)

Taro Kaja: Yes, sir. (He obeys following the Master. The Master exits followed by Tarō Kaja.)
Footnotes

1. Te ni moteru/ kawarake iro no/ furuawase 手に持てる/かわら色の/古絵
The master is referring to the robe which Taro Kaja ordered his help to pawn for wine.

2. Sakegoto ni aru/ tsugi me nari keri さけごとにある/つぎめなりけり
There is a pun on Sakegoto which may mean "every rip" or "wine."
There is also a pun on Tsugi me which can mean either "continuous," or "pouring." Therefore an alternative translation would be, "Once the Sake is begun, you can not stop the pouring." This refers to the Master's inordinate love of wine.

3. Ato naru mono yo/ shibashi todomare あとなる物よ/しばしばどまれ
This is located in the Inu Tsukubashu.

4. Futari tomo/ watareba shizumu/ uki hashi wo.../渡れば沈も浮橋を
This is located in the Inu Tsukubashu.

5. Ue mo kata kata/ shita mo kata kata 上もかたかた/下もかたかた
This found in the Inu Tsukubashu with a slightly different wording.

6. Mikazuki no/ mizu ni utsuro kage mireba 三日月の氷にうつろう影見れば
This is found in the Inu Tsukubashu.

7. Shita mo kata kata/ uemo kata kata 下もかたかた/上もかたかた

8. Utsuogi no/ motosue tatakau/ kera tsutsukiうつお木の休末たたかうつつき
There is an allusion made using the word Utsuoi which means hollow.
It alludes to Utsuro from the previous verse, meaning to reflect.

9. Nishi no umi/ chiiro no soko ni/ shiku nakite 西の海牛の底に鹿鳴きて
Nishi umi ro western sea alludes to the Tale of the Heike in which the clan drowned in the western sea. The fawn may refer to the young emperor who also drowned here.
10. Ka no ko madara ni/ tatsu wa shira nami
The term "shiranami" is a poetic word for "I don't know." The verse may be translated alternately as, "Like a spotted fawn/ we know not where it stands."

11. Okuyama ni/ fune kogu oto no/ kikoyuru wa
Found in the Shunrai Zui No. 紫燕鶴鴒 and the Tsukuba shu.

12. Yo mo no ko no mi ya/ umi wataruran
Located in the Inu Tsukubashu. There is a pun on "umi" which can mean either "to ripen," or "sea." This poem exhibits the technique of linking opposites, i.e. mountain and sea.

13. Sannō no mae no torii ni/ ni wo nurite
Found in the Inu Tsukubashu.

14. Akaki wa saru no/ tsura zo, okashiki
Found in the Inu Tsukubashu.

15. Atto iu / koe ni mo onore/ oji yokashi

16. Kera hara tateba/ tsugumi yorokobu
A form of this verse appears in the Tensho book 1578. The verse appears in this form in the Toraaki book 1646, and the Ke Fuki Gusa 1647毛吹草 by Matsue Shigeyori 松瀬重顯.

The significance of the Mt. Fuji pilgrimage dates the theme of the play at the end of the Muromachi period when it was popular to make pilgrimages to Fuji to offer prayers. The Fuji Matsu is thought to be a Kara Matsu or a larch tree which though common in Tohokū, was a novelty in the Kansai area.
The Master enters followed by Tarō Kaja. The Master announces himself at the Jo pillar, Tarō Kaja seats himself at the back of the stage.

Master: I am the master of this house. Today, I will host the Renga beginner's group which I have formed with the young men of the village. It's almost time for the meeting so I'll send Tarō Kaja to make the announcement. Yai! Yai! Tarō Kaja! (He goes to the Waki seat.)

Tarō Kaja: (He stands.) Yes, sir. (He goes to the Jo pillar.)

Master: There you are!

Tarō Kaja: In your presence, sir.

Master: How quick! I don't want anything in particular. It's just that it's about time for you to announce the meeting.

Tarō Kaja: Very well, sir.

Master: You'll deliver this message, "Since it is almost time to begin, I would be honored if you would all be my guests for the Renga gathering."

Tarō Kaja: I understand, sir.

Master: Oh, and don't go by Taro's place. We've always invited him but when the rascal comes, he's so boisterous that he upsets everything.

Tarō Kaja: Yes, of course, sir.

Master: Hurry now.

Tarō Kaja: Very well, sir.

Master: Off with you!
Taro Kaja: Yes, sir!
(The Master seats himself at the Fueza.)

Taro Kaja: (He stands at the Jo pillar and faces front.) Well, well, how grand! My Master is to be host for the Renga gathering and I must make the announcement. But, whom shall I call on first? Ah, the family at Shimio no cho is nearest. I'll hurry over there. (He starts out.) I certainly hope he's at home. (He takes a turn around the stage and stops at the first pine on the Hashigakari.) Here I am already. I'll call on him. (He faces the curtain.) Excuse me? Is anyone there?

First guest: (He comes out to the first pine.) There's someone at the door. Who is it?

Taro Kaja: It's me.

First guest: Oh, is it you, Taro Kaja. Why stand at the gate? You should have come right in.

Taro Kaja: Thank you, but I thought you might have guests.

First guest: Very considerate of you. Well then, what brings you here?

Taro Kaja: Nothing special. My Master sent me as his messenger.

First guest: What is the message?

Taro Kaja: Just this, "Since it is almost time to begin, I would be honored if you would all be my guests for the Renga gathering."

First guest: How very thoughtful. However, you're a little late. Everyone has already gathered at my house. We'll come along together shortly.

Taro Kaja: In that case, I needn't call on the others?

First guest: No, there's no need for that.
Taro Kaja: All right then, shall I go on ahead?

First guest: Fine.

Taro Kaja: Very good, sir.

First guest: Thank you for stopping by.

Taro Kaja: You're most welcome, sir. (He faces front.) Ha, ha, ha, marvelous, marvelous! That was easily done. Now, quickly, I can return. (He goes to the center stage and kneels before the Master.) Excuse me, are you in?

Master: Taro Kaja! You're back so soon?

Taro Kaja: Everyone had gathered at the Shimo no cho home by the time I arrived. They'll be here shortly.

Master: What luck.

First guest: (After parting from Taro Kaja, he stands at the first pine of the Hashigakari, faces the curtain and calls. This occurs over the conversation between the Master and Taro Kaja.) Hello? Is everyone here?

Other guests: (The curtain is raised and they come out.) Here we are. (They stand in a row on the Hashigakari.)

First guest: Taro Kaja was just sent here by the Lord (the Master's name) Shall we be off?

Other guests: That's fine with us.

First guest: Very well, then, let's go. (He starts out.)

Other guests: We're coming, we're coming. (They follow him.)

First guest: (He stops at the entrance to the stage proper.) We've
already arrived. Go on in.

Other guests: Very well.

Taro Kaja: Ah, they're here already.

Master: Indeed, they have arrived. (He goes out of the Waki pillar and seats himself.)

Guests: (They enter the stage together and line up by the Waki pillar.)
First guest: Host of the Renga meeting (The other guests join him in chorus.) congratulations! (They all salute him.)
(Taro Kaja retires to the Taisho seat and seats himself.)

First guest: Everyone had gathered at my house before the message arrived so we've come along together.

Master: How good of you. Usually, we invite Taro to join us but he's so disruptive that I didn't call for him this time.

First guest: We passed his gate but we didn't ask him either.

Master: Fine! Now then, will someone please give the opening verse?

First guest: Of course, sir, but let's open with our host's verse.

Master: No, no, first, I'd like to hear your thoughts.

First guest: Oh no, I insist, you must do us the honor.

Master: In that case, shall whoever has an inspiration begin?

Guests: (In chorus.) An excellent idea, sir.

Taro: (During the above exchange, a man has entered the stage and announces himself at the first pine of the Hashigakari. His monologue is heard over the others.) I am Taro and I live in this neighborhood. Today, there is a Renga meeting at the home of the Lord (The Master's name.)
Usually, someone informs me but today no one came to call. How insulting! I'm just going to barge right in! (He comes onto the main stage area and seats himself in the center.) Honorable host, congratulations.

Master: Taro! You've come?

Taro: What do you mean, "Taro! You've come?"

Master: Just that.

Taro: Hey, you there.

Master: Yes?

Taro: You must have a teacher for a beginner's group. Today, no one came for me.

Master: Oh, no, Taro Kaja was sent.

Taro: What? "Taro Kaja was sent?"

Master: Exactly.

Taro: (He turns.) Yai! Taro Kaja! Why didn't you come by?

Taro Kaja: I forgot.

Taro: Can you forget your Master's orders? (He looks over the other guests with a sweeping glance.) You're all to blame! Didn't you pass my gate? Why didn't you stop for me?

First guest: We (He is joined in chorus by the other guests.) forgot.

Taro: What? "You forgot?" That's too much, just too much! You all forgot, is that it? (He turns to the Master.) Anyway, let's hear the opening verse.
Master: It hasn't been presented yet.

Taro: What's that? "It hasn't been presented yet?"

Master: That's right.

Taro: What have you been doing till now? Is it possible that you haven't composed the opening verse yet? Iya! Who arranged the flowers?

Master: I did them myself.

Taro: You call that an arrangement? They've just been thrown together. (He breaks into laughter.)

Master: (He stands and goes to the front of the stage.) Taro, come over here.

Taro: (He stands and follows.) Yes?

Master: You're so critical, you're annoying everyone. Wait in the kitchen and I'll call you when the opening verse has been composed.

Taro: I have come as a teacher. I don't wait in any kitchen! (He returns to his seat.)

Master: What shall I do now?

Taro: (He turns to the other guests.) All right, I'd like to hear your opening verse.

Master: (During the actions of Taro, he stands at the Fueza.) Yai, yai! Tarō Kaja! Tell Taro that you'll call him when the food is prepared and that until then, he can go to the kitchen.

Tarō Kaja: (In front of the Master.) As you wish, sir. (After receiving the order, he goes to the Hashigakari and the Master returns
First guest: It hasn't been presented yet.

Taro: Not presented yet? Impossible! Iya! Who's responsible for that hanging?

First guest: The honored host of today's meeting.

Taro: Can't you, yourselves, see how crooked it is? Usually, that's a very important concern for the Host of a Renga gathering or Tea ceremony.

Taro Kaja: (From the Hashigakari.) Taro! Oh, Taro!

Taro: What? (He goes over to the Hashigakari.)

Taro Kaja: Your presence is annoying. You've been asked to wait in the kitchen until the banquet is ready. Then, I'll call you.

Taro: What would you know about it! Get away from me! (He goes back on stage, Taro Kaja follows him.)

Master: (While the other two are talking on the Hashigakari.) Oh, what a pest. When he comes back this time, let's give him a beating to remember.

First guest: A great (The guests in chorus.) idea.

Master: Will you be ready?

Guests: Yes, sir.

Taro: (He comes back to the center of the stage.) Hey there, hey there, honored host.

Master: What is it?
Taro: Just now, Taro Kaja said to me, "Go to the kitchen and wait until I tell you that the dinner is prepared." I came to instruct, not to eat!

Master: It'll be all the worse for you if you refuse.

Taro: All the worse for me? Why?

Master: We'll give you an idea.

Taro: Who will?

Master: We (The guests join in.) all will!

Taro: (Laughing.) So, you'd threaten me? I may be only one against many but Taro is fearless!

Master: Really? Are you sure?

Taro: Of course!

Master: You'll regret it.

Taro: What will I regret?

Master: You'll see. All right everyone, let's give Taro his beating! (He stands and everyone stands.) Together the Master and guests surround Taro.) You worm!

Taro: What are you up to?

Master: What are we doing? We're going to thrash you to a pulp!

Master and Guests: Scoundrel! Wretch! Fiend! (At once they act out beating him, furiously, and kicking him.)

Master: Enough. Come, let's go.

Guest.
Guests: Yes, sir. (They go together from the *Wakizae* to the *Jiutai* seat. They line up and then, one by one, they sit and face the right.)

Taro: (Prostrated.) Ohhh, let me go. I'll never come again. Please forgive me, please, please, forgive me.

*W*oman: (She stands at the first pine on the *Hashigakari* with her sword drawn from over her right hip and a long stick in her other hand.) Oh no, oh no! Yaa! Yaa! Can it be? How horrible! My husband, where are you? (She discovers Taro.) What's happened to you? (She leaves her stick at the *Jōzaa* and goes to him.) Come, come, what's happened here? Pull yourself together! Pull yourself together!

Taro: Please forgive me, please, please, forgive me. I'll do anything!

Woman: Is something wrong? It's me, me.

Taro: You?

Woman: That's right, me.

Taro: Who's this "me." My wife?

Woman: Of course, it's me.

Taro: (He rises and goes to the *Wakiza.*) E-i, woman! Why have you come?

Woman: (Going to the *Jōza.*) Why?! I heard that you were being beaten so I dropped everything and ran. But tell me, what's happened?

Taro: Don't be absurd! Can a man be beaten so easily?

Woman? You make me so mad! Will you try to deceived me? There's proof here, right here!
Taro: Where?

Woman: Here and here, what's this, what's this? (She goes up to Taro and shows him the footprints all over his sleeves.)

Taro: Oh, this?

Woman: Exactly.

Taro: Everyone said," Since Taro hasn't decided on a family crest, from now on, let him have this one."

Woman: That's shocking, just shocking! Does a man receive men's footprints as a crest and leave it at that? You must kill them! Kill them!

Taro: Hold on, you shrew! If I go after them, I'll be killed.

Woman: I know that but even at the risk of your own life, you must get revenge.

Taro: Ahh, you're a brave one! If you're so eager, take this and kill them yourself. (He offers her the sleeve with footprints covering it.)

Woman: That's outrageous! Disgraceful! You're the man here. Would you have me go? If you don't get them, you shall never step across our threshold again!

Taro: If I don't kill them, I can't come home?

Woman: You can't come home.

Taro: I guess I've decided. I'll kill them.

Woman: Bravely said, bravely said. Now, indeed, you are my Lord.
Taro: But, you will come too?

Woman: How could I not stand by you?

Taro: Let's go then and kill them.

Woman: Come here and I'll prepare you for battle.

Taro: Very well, get me ready.

Woman: Yes, my Lord.

Taro: (He goes to the Taisho seat. The woman hands him a sword and pulls the robe off one of his arms to free it for battle.)

Woman: First of all, put on this sword.

Taro: All right. Well, well, nothing gets by you. If you had been with me today, I wouldn't have been shamed in this way. What a pity.

Woman: If I'd come, no one would have dared to lift a finger to you. It's really too bad.

Taro: How do I look?

Woman: Excellent! Take this stick too and club them with it. (She hands him the stick.)

Taro: Ah, you're as strong as a man. (He takes the stick and goes to the Wakiza and stands there.)

Woman: (She stands at the Jōza.) That's perfect. Now, who was the host today?

Taro: The host today?

Woman: That's right.
Taro: The host today was Lord (the Master's name.)

Woman: He's always been a foul character. Hurry now, go and get him.

Taro: All right, come along. (He starts out.)

Woman: Coming, coming. (She follows him.)

Taro: As I said, if you'd accompanied me today, I wouldn't have suffered such abuse. What a shame.

Woman: Just as you say, if I'd been there, no one would have dared to lift a finger to you. It's such a pity.

Taro: (He circles the stage and at the center of the stage he turns toward the woman.) Here we are. This is it. This is the home of Lord (the Master's name.)

Woman: (At the Joza.) Is this it?

Taro: Yes.

Woman: Quick! Run in and whip him!

Taro: What's come over you? Be quiet!

Woman: Why? Go on now, go on, don't dawdle!

Taro: (He trembles and trembles facing the Wakiza.) Excuse me. I've come to pay a call.

Woman: (From behind Taro.) Hey! (He turns to face her.) Why announce yourself? Burst in and kill him!

Taro: Hold on. You're such a shrew! It is said that,"A man does well to err on the side of politeness." Now just be quiet.

Woman: Even if, "A man does well to err on the side of politeness," this
dillydallying is insufferable!

Taro: (He trembles.) Excuse me, is Lord(The Master's name.) at home?

Master: (He doesn't move.) He's out.

Taro: He's out. (He looks to his wife.) Hey there, woman.

Woman: What is it?

Taro: They say he's out.

Woman: Is he out?

Taro: (Facing front with vigor.) Yai! If you're not home, come out and prove it! I'll take my stick and waving it at your chest, I'll shove you back shaking and tottering and pound you till you drop! (He acts this out with his stick.)

Woman: (She waves him on with her right hand.) Ahhhh, bravely done, bravely done. Now, indeed, you are my Lord. Well, who's next?

Taro: The next is (The name of a guest.)

Woman: That fellow (The name of the guest.) is rotten to the bone, totally out of keeping with his age. Quickly now!

Taro: Yes. (He starts out.) Come on, come on.

Woman: (She follows him.) Coming, coming.

Taro: Now then, this fellow(The guest's name.) is not at all what he appears, he has a very hot temper. So don't make such a racket this time.

Woman: Yes, my Lord. But you too, don't you behave as you have, just
barge in and trounce him.

Taro: Very well. (He takes a turn around the stage to the first pine on the Hashigakari and then back.) Here we are. This is it.

Woman: (At the Joza.) What?

Taro: This is the home of (The name of the guest.)

Woman: All right, now burst in and kill him!

Taro: Will you cut that out! You're a real shrew! Let me do this my own way.

Woman: Go on, go on, stop this nonsense.

Taro: (Again he trembles as he faces the curtain.) Excuse me, sir (The name of the Guest.)

Woman: ( Abruptly. ) Hey you!

Taro: (He is startled by her voice.) What!

Woman: Why do you call him "sir?" Just rush in and attack him!

Taro: Shrew! You startled me. I thought maybe Lord( the guest's name.) had come out!

Woman: So what if he had, you should kill him when he does come out.

Taro: They say that, "A man does well to err on the side of politeness." Now, wait over there.

Woman: No matter how much, "A man does well to err on the side of politeness," such stammering and stuttering is too much! Just too much!

Taro: Excuse me, is Sir (The guest's name) at home?
First guest: (He doesn't move.) He's out.

Taro: He's out. Here, here, woman! (He returns to the Jōza.)

Woman: (She goes to the Wakiza.) What's happened?

Taro: They say he's out too.

Woman: He's out too?

Taro: (With vigor.) Yai! If you're not at home, come out and show me! (He puts down his stick and pulls out his fan.) This time, swish, I'll pull out my sword. I'll strike off your right arm, I'll strike off your left arm. With my return thrusts I'll slice and slice until I leave you limbless! (While speaking, he acts out his speech with his fan.)

Woman: (She waves him on with her right hand.) Ahh, bravely done, bravely done! Now, indeed, you are my lord. Well, who's next?

Taro: Since the others were all sympathetic, we needn't call on them right away need we?

Woman: In that case, we'll go around to thank them tomorrow morning.

Taro: That's a good idea. Everyone must see how I've put them in their places!

Woman: Indeed, everyone must know!

Taro: I'd really like to sing of this as we return home. Come along this way.

Woman: Yes, my lord.

Taro: (He is at the Taisho seat.) "When I call at this place, they say no one is home."
Chorus: (Made up of the Master, Tarō Kaja, and the Guests.) "When he calls at that place, they say no one is home. Just like the old saying, "What use is a stick/ when the battle is licked?/ What use is a stick/ when the battle is licked?"'

Taro: (As the chorus sings,) he dances with the stick and finishing he calls to his wife.) Hey, and hey and up! (He lifts the stick onto his shoulder)

Woman: Oh, my dearest darling, come to me, come to me...

Taro: Yes, oh yes. (He goes up the Hashigakari.)

Woman: Please, come to me, come to me....

Taro: (He follows her.) Yes, oh yes.
(The two exit followed by the Master, the guests, and Tarō Kaja, in that order.)
Footnotes

1. The term Chigiriki 千切木 refers to a pole or stick used to carry things by balancing it over the shoulders of one or two people. Here it is being used as a weapon. Furukawa Hisashi in Kyogen no Sekai identifies Chigiriki as乳切木 or a pole cut to the height of the breast.

2. The blank left for the lord's name is a custom dating back to the tradition of improvised theatre in which the names of inhabitants of the particular locale would have been substituted.

3. 吾がかい果てこのちぎりきとは、刀かかることをや申しすうん。 There is a play on the word Chigiriki which also means a "pledge of peace." This would demand the alternate translation of, "When the battle is over, the pledge of peace." This term may also refer to a contract as in the marriage vows. Therefore, the saying refers both to the quarrel between Taro and the Renga group and between Taro and his wife. After the quarrel, their marriage is renewed. Taro takes up the symbol of power, the Chigiriki or the stick, which his wife had entered carrying, and off they go together. An element of humor is added by having Taro follow his wife off stage rather than the usual order of man followed by woman.

According to Furukawa Hisashi, this song is one of a group of Iroha songs using the letters of the alphabet to make rhymes. It is found in slightly different form in the Heike Monogatari 六日物語, きさかいはてこのちぎりきかな, and in the Ke Fuki Gusa毛吹草, きさかいはてこのぼうちぎりき, under the section on Sewa.世話.
Man enters followed by a woman. The man announces himself at the \textit{Joza}. The woman seats herself by the \textit{Fue} pillar.

Man: I live in this neighborhood. Though I'm a rather common fellow, I really love linked-verse. Whenever I hear of a linked-verse meeting, anywhere, I just can't resist. It's so intoxicating that I forget to go home. Tomorrow, I'll be the host. Since everyone will be coming, I'd better get back home to start the preparations. I should be on my way. (He starts out.) Ah, really, there is nothing so fascinating as linked-verse. The excitement of giving the opening verse, the surprise of the answering link, and to be the host, how utterly delightful! (He circles the stage once and stops at the \textit{Joza}.) What's this! I'm already here. Oh woman! Where are you? Are you home?

Woman: (She stands.) Sounds like he's home. So, you've returned? (She goes to the \textit{Waki} pillar.)

Man: I just got back.

Woman: You didn't get lost? What a surprise! You've actually found your way back here.

Man: Yes, well you know how it is. There were linked-verse meetings everywhere and I kept attending one after another. It was all so captivating that I've only just returned today.

Woman: That's it, chatter away, "Oh how captivating, how enchanting!" Your heart's been taken over by linked-verse. A night here, a day there, do you care that at home we haven't even enough to get by on? It's unbearable for me already! You'd better pay more attention to your home!

Man: You nag that way because you don't appreciate the joys of linked-verse. Anyway, tomorrow, I'll be the host of the gathering and everyone will be coming. Make the necessary preparations.
Woman: What! You're mad, you're stark, raving mad! There's barely enough to cook for this morning and evening. How are we to get through this day? You'd better forget it.

Man: Well, you, you've no sensitivity at all. Didn't your parents also participate in linked-verse gatherings? Not only that, but once before when I was host, didn't you make the preparations? Well?

Woman: I had no choice then. I went home and borrowed everything from father.

Man: So, go and do it again.

Woman: How can you even suggest that? Not just once or twice but! Even if they are my own parents, how can I make such demands? If you're still set on this, please give me a divorce.

Man: A divorce?

Woman: That's right.

Man: You don't mean it.

Woman: I do.

Man: Honestly?

Woman: Positively.

Man: Oh, to think that you could be so unreasonable! I've been counting on being the host and I just can't back out now. There's no alternative. How shameful, I'll have to divorce you. Get out, go back to live with your parents.

Woman: Then even if it means a divorce, you still won't give up this nonsense?
Man: Precisely.

Woman: It's hopeless, I'll go home. Give me some sign of divorce.

Man: Take what you like and leave.

Woman: Even if it's just a scrap, they say it must come from the husband's own hand. So, if you please, give me something from your own hand.

Man: I'd like to but I haven't anything. (He picks up the winnow that the stage hand has placed by the Ōzōa.) Ah, here's a winnow. The very winnow you've had in your hand from morning to evening. Take this and go. (He gives it to the woman.)

Woman: (She takes the winnow.) Then I shall put this on my head and be off. (She holds it to her head with her right hand.)

Man: How embarrassing!

Woman: I'm going now.

Man: Are you on your way already? If you're ever in the neighborhood, stop by, I'll serve you some tea.

Woman: I'm very much obliged. (She walks slowly toward the Hashigakari.)

Man: (He watches her leave.) Oh, how miserable! She looks just like the shedded skin of a cicada. Watching her reminds me of an opening verse. (He calls out to the woman.) Hey there, hey!

Woman: (She turns back at the first pine.) What is it? Can I do something for you?

Man

Man: No, no, nothing in particular but, watching you reminded me of an opening verse and so I called.

Woman: What was it:
Man: Till now unseen/ with a winnow on her head,/ Eve of the Twentieth.
That's it. (He faces front.) Till now unseen/ with a winnow on her head,/ Eve of the Twentieth. Well, well, that was splendid! (He goes to the Fue pillar and seats Himself.)

Woman: (Aside.) Oh, but wait a moment. They say that if you don't reply to an opening verse, you'll be reborn as a worm without a mouth. So I'd better go back and give the answering link. (She returns to the Jōza.) Oh, excuse me, are you there? Hello?

Man: (He stands.) What? That's my wife's voice! (He goes to the Waki pillar.) So woman, have you come back?

Woman: No; no, nothing of the sort, but usually they say that if you don't answer an opening verse, you'll be reborn as a worm without a mouth. I've returned to give the responding link.

Man: Yes? Why that's wonderful! Such sensitivity! And so, what is your link? Quick, let me hear it!

Woman: It is I who must suffer/ cast off in the dead of night.

Man: Ha ha! Not even the god of poetry, Sugawara no Michizane could have done better! In my wildest dreams, I never imagined that you were so skilled at linked-verse. From now on I won't go anywhere, ever. And I won't be host for the gathering either. I'll stay home, and we'll enjoy linked-verse together. How about it? Come back to me.

Woman: Oh, you make me so happy! If you'll only stay home, how can I refuse you?

Man: Ha, ha! We must celebrate! But first, come over here.

Woman: Yes, my lord. (She goes to the Waki pillar, sits and places the winnow beside her.)

Man: (He seats himself at center stage.) I feel like I'm meeting you
again for the very first time.

Woman: That's exactly how I feel!

Man: Well, well, I never dreamed you could compose such poetry. Let's celebrate and drink our wedding vows again.

Woman: That would be heavenly.

Man: (He turns his back to the audience, opens his fan, and carries it in his right hand; he picks up the top of a stool with his left hand, and sits at center stage.) Have some wine and then pour a bit for me. (He hands her the lid and ladles the wine with his fan.)

Woman: Yes, my lord. (Taking it, she drinks.) Now, let me offer this to you. (She passes the ladle.)

Man: (Then, I shall drink. (He pours and drinks the wine.) So, let me offer you some more. (He passes it to her.)

Woman: Thank you. (The man sings a congratulatory song as he serves her wine.) Finishing this cup, I toast our reunion. (She puts the lid down beside her and the stage hand takes it away.)

Man: All right now, hand me that winnow and I'll dance for you.

Woman: Yes, my lord. (She hands him the winnow.)

Man: (He holds the winnow in his hand as he sings and dances.) An entire beach of sand/ Can be counted to the last grain,/ But the delights of poetry/ Are not to be numbered;/Cherish them! Here by Naniwa Bay, renowned in poetry,/ Let us shoulder the vexations/ (After putting the winnow back on his wife's head, he dances.) And take up again the pledge of the past,/ Our hearts are filled with joy."³ (He finishes dancing and stands before the Taisho.) Ah, my beloved, come, come to me. (He calls her.)

Woman: Yes, my lord, yes. (She stands with the winnow on her head
and goes up the Hashigakari.)

Man: Come, come to me. (He follows her.)

Woman: I'm coming, I'm coming.

Man: Come, come to me.

Woman: I'm coming, I'm coming. (The woman goes off stage followed by the man.)
Footnotes

1. いまだ見ぬ 十日のはの三月は。
There is a pun on the word "Mikazuki." The poem can be translated Till now unseen/ the crescent shape of a new moon/ Eve of the Twentieth.

In this case, "Mikazuki," refers to the late rising new moon on the twentieth of each month.

2. 今宵を出ず 仕指しこそううけれ。
There is a pun on "Mi." "Mi" refers both to the winnow basket, and the moon. It also may refer to the woman herself.

3. 霊の臭穂はよみ深くし盡くすとも、この道は盡きせめや難波の恨みうち競ってありし契りにかえり會う縁こそしるうちけれ。
This passage is also recorded in the No play Ashikari which has a similar theme of a couple united through linked-verse. In the No, however, the line, "uchi kazukete," reads "uchi wasurete." The Kyōgen used "kazukete," because of the pun on "mikazuki." This also adds a parody to verse. The couple takes on the vexations of marriage rather than as in the No, forgetting their sorrows. The word "kazuki" also refers to the bride in her wedding gown because she is covered from head to foot. In the Kyōgen, the man places the winnow on his wife's head as he says the line, "uehi kazukete." The passage is quoted from Donald Keene's, 20 Plays of the No Theatre, p. 162, the play Ashikari. The seventh and eighth lines have been changed to reflect the Kyōgen text! These lines in the Keene version read, "We cast aside all our griefs/ And take up again the pledge of the past." "Uchi wasurete/ arishi chigiriki ni kaeri au."
The Lender enters followed by the Borrower. The Lender announces himself at the 小頭 pillar. The Borrower seats himself at the back of the stage.

Lender: I live in this neighborhood. Although I lent some rice and money to a friend quite a while ago, he still hasn't repaid me. When I've sent my man to his house, he pretends to be out, or if he does appear, my messenger reports that he gossips about me. If he simply said that he couldn't pay, I wouldn't mind, but as he's just being rude, I'm going to go and force him to pay. I should get started. (He starts out.) Ah truly, as they say these days, "When borrowing, it is with the face of the compassionate Jizo Buddha, when repaying, it is with the horrible face of Emma the God of Hell." How true. (After taking a turn around the stage, he stops at the center of the stage.) I'm already here. If he recognizes my voice, he won't come out, so I'll disguise it. (He walks to the 萬木 pillar and hides his face behind his fan.) Excuse me? Is anyone home?

Borrower: (He goes to the 小頭 pillar and speaks to himself.) That's surely the voice of Sir (the Lender's name.), calling at the gate. He's probably come for the money. It'll be awkward to meet him. I'll pretend to be out.

Lender: Excuse me?

Borrower: (He opens his fan and hides his face behind it.) He's out.

Lender: Who's speaking?

Borrower: I'm a neighbor but I'm watching the house while he's away.

Lender: What? You're a neighbor but you're watching the house?

Borrower: That's right, sir.
Lender: In that case, when he returns, please relay a message for me. I am (the Lender's name.) and I'm here about a private transaction. As he's away, please inform him that I'll be home and he must stop by.

Borrower: I understand, sir.

Lender: I'm depending on you to tell him.

Borrower: Yes, sir.

Lender: Oh, what an obnoxious character. He's pretending to be out again. What am I to do? (He thinks for a moment.) I have it! They say that he always leaves by the back alley so I'll circle around that way. The more I think of it, the angrier I get. If I meet him, I won't let him get away with this! (He goes to the front of the stage.)

Borrower: (He speaks over the Lender's speech.) Marvelous! I'm so pleased. I carried it off ingeniously. But sometimes he comes back again right away, so I'd better sneak out the back way. (He starts to go.) Ah, really, it was splendid the way I maneuvered the "he's out" ruse today. What a satisfying feeling! (At the Metsuke pillar, he turns, faces front and meets the Lender.)

Lender: E-y! (He goes back to the Waki pillar.)

Borrower: E-y! Sir (The lender's name.), where are you off to? (He returns to the Jo pillar.)

Lender: I've just come from your house.

Borrower: Then I greet you with both joy and sorrow.

Lender: You there! There is an etiquette for greeting people. This, "joy and sorrow" has never been a part of it!
Borrower: Of course, but sir, didn't you say that you'd been just now to my home?

Lender: Exactly, I was there.

Borrower: Then, it's a shame that I wasn't there to greet you, but again what happiness to meet you here. And so, I said, "with both joy and sorrow."

Lender: You've certainly become a smooth talker since our last meeting.

Borrower: Yes, sir.

Lender: Anyway, what about the money you owe me?

Borrower: Yes, well, I've been trying to raise the money and I've managed to get most of it together but I'm still a bit short. How about it? Will you give me two or three days?

Lender: Oh no, I'm sick of hearing you pleas for "two or three days!" Today, I'm taking you home with me and I'll force you to pay so resign yourself to it.

Borrower: But, today I have an appointment. I'll drop by your place tomorrow.

Lender: Such obstinacy! You'll go to your engagement tomorrow. Today, you're coming with me!

Borrower: Oh, but what you suggest is impossible. Even if I do come, I can't pay. It won't matter to you if I come tomorrow.

Lender: No, no, no, whether or not you can pay, I say that you must come!

Borrower: In that case, as you wish.

Lender: Go on ahead! Go on ahead!
Borrower: Please, after you, sir.

Lender: Huh! Do you think I'd trust a rascal like you to follow me? I insist you lead the way!

Borrower: All right, I'll go first. (He starts out.) Well, come along, come along.

Lender: (Following.) I'm coming, I'm coming. You're so unreliable.

Borrower: Why am I unreliable?

Lender: Why? When I send a messenger, either you pretend to be out or if you do admit to being in, you gossip about me. Was there ever such impudence?

Borrower: Wait one minute! Why is it me who does the gossiping? Your messenger simply lies to suit himself.

Lender: Well, that's also a possibility. (They take a turn around the stage and stop at the center.) So, we've already arrived. Go right in.

Borrower: (At the Jo pillar.) This will be fine.

Lender: No, no, go in.

Borrower: Very well, sir. (He goes to the Waki pillar.)

Lender: (Changing places with the borrower, he stops at the Jo pillar.) Make yourself comfortable.

Borrower: Thank you, sir.

Lender: (At the Jo pillar, he turns to the curtain.) Yai, yai! I've come with (the Borrower's name.) today so lock the back door and the gate. All right?
Borrower: Excuse me!

Lender: What is it? (He seats himself in the area of the Ōjo pillar.)

Borrower: How can you be so heartless! Now that I'm here, I'll hardly be running off. It's overdoing it a bit to lock the door and gate!

Lender: Oh no, you misunderstood. Usually, it's imprudent to have someone intrude on a private business transaction. That's all.

Borrower: Yes, of course, a noble sentiment.

Lender: Now then, pay me, pay me!

Borrower: Certainly. (He looks around.) Ah! Ah ha! Why, I see you've remodeled the house.

Lender: You didn't know about the remodeling?

Borrower: Not at all.

Lender: It was done last month.

Borrower: What? Last month?

Lender: That's right.

Borrower: Then, of course, I wouldn't know. I was in the country last month, but if I'd been here I'd have helped with the scaffolding.

Lender: Oh, yes, well, I might have called on you. Now then, pay me!

Borrower: Directly, directly. (He looks around.) Well, well, what excellent design. You put the kitchen over there?

Lender: Do you think it's all right?
Borrower: It's a superb kitchen, sir.

Lender: Now then, pay me, pay me!

Borrower: This minute. Everywhere the design shows such exquisite taste. (He talks as he looks around and faces the front.) Ah ha, did you put the Tokonoma here?

Lender: What do you think of it?

Borrower: Usually, they say that the Tokonoma is difficult to situate, but in this room there is no other place for it.

Lender: Now, I've said that you must pay me!

Borrower: I shall, right away. Well, well, an excellent Tokonoma. Ah ha! A scroll of Renga poetry. Excuse me but whose calligraphy is that?

Lender: Oh, just a child's hand.

Borrower: Ah, his honor, the child.

Lender: Well, yes.

Borrower: My, my, that is a superb hand. Excuse me for being bold but I didn't realize that you could write so well.

Lender: I'm told that in the future I may develop a good hand.

Borrower: You have remarkable style, sir.

Lender: Oh, the Renga poetry reminds me. I've heard that you circulate among the Renga beginner groups and criticize everyone, is that right?
Borrower: I'd never do that.

Lender: Don't pretend. I've heard that you're quite a poet. Shall we compose the first eight lines for the front of the Renga paper?

Borrower: An excellent idea.

Lender: First of all, put yourself at ease.

Borrower: If you will allow me, sir.

Lender: Please, feel free.

Borrower: Thank you. I shall then. (They change from the formal seated position and sit down crossed-leg fashion.)

Lender: So, first, you give the opening link.

Borrower: No; no, I insist, after you.

Lender: It is said, "To the guest's opening verse, the host responds." I must attend you.

Borrower: I see, have you designated me the guest?

Lender: At least for today, you are the guest.

Borrower: I am so very grateful. Then, whoever has an inspiration should begin.

Lender: Fine.

Borrower: What shall it be, sir?

Lender: What shall it be.

Borrower: How about this?
Lender: Have you one already?

Borrower: Flowers in full bloom

Lender: Flowers in full bloom

Borrower: Wind waiting midst the pines/ won't you please refrain. \(^1\)
How's that?

Lender: Wind waiting midst the pines/ won't you please refrain.

Borrower: Yes, that's it.

Lender: That's not current usage for an opening verse.

Borrower: Why not? I'm just a novice, so if there are awkward sections please correct them.

Lender: I don't know if I could improve a verse of yours, but shall I just try and see?

Borrower: Please do.

Lender: First of all, as far as the "Flowers in full bloom," it's fine. But somehow the following, "Wind waiting midst the pines/ won't you please refrain," sounds discordent to me.

Borrower: Oh, you mean the, "Won't you please refrain," line?

Lender: Yes.

Borrower: Oh no, I'm positive the verse, "refrain, refrain," is in popular usage.
Lender: Well, in that case, there must be a rejoinder. What shall it be?

Borrower: Yes, what shall it be.

Lender: How about this?

Borrower: Have you one already?

Lender: Bring forth the cherry blossoms/ rain laden clouds on high.² Well?

Borrower: Ahhh. Bring forth the cherry blossoms/ rain laden clouds on high.

Lender$: Exactly.

Borrower: That's not current usage for a linking verse.

Lender: Why not? I'm also still learning so please correct me.

Borrower: To speak of correcting your poem! Well, I certainly didn't intend to change anything but shall I just try?

Lender: Please do.

Borrower: From the "cherry blossoms," on it's fine, but the opening, "Bring forth" line is unsettling.

Lender: The "Bring forth" section?

Borrower: That's right.

Lender: I'm sure that, "Bring forth, bring forth," is what makes the link.

Borrower:
Borrower: Very well, shall we compose the third verse?

Lender: Fine.

Borrower: What shall it be?

Lender: Yes, what shall it be?

Borrower: How about this?

Lender: Have you one already?

Borrower: Oh so many times/ only mist and the evening moon/ around my poor old hut.3

Lender: Pressing my appeals for love/ the gong resounds at sunset.4

Borrower: Oh! It's becoming too strained. Let's take more care.5

Lender: All right.

Borrower: Even the rooster

Lender: Even the rooster

Borrower: At the hour of parting/ must put off his cries.6

Lender: Don't betray them to others/ oh barrier guard of love.7

Borrower: Lest it become known/ Don't send the messenger/ to your secret wife.8

Lender: You there.

Borrower: Yes, sir.
Lender: When have I disgraced you by sending my messenger to you?

Borrower: Now, now, please contain yourself and listen. Didn't you say earlier, "When from time to time, I have sent a messenger to his home he's either pretended to be out or when he does admit to being there, he gossips about me." It was all the talk of the messenger. Now, this verse doesn't mean, "don't send the messenger," but rather "messenger don't tell others/ of my secret wife."

Lender: Ah ha! "Messenger, don't tell others/ of my secret wife."

Borrower: Exactly.

Lender: Marvelous! Now, I shall give you one. As she love me so/ I must send at least this note. (He takes the promissory note from his robe and tosses it out before the Borrower.)

Borrower: As she loves me so/ I must send at least this note.

Lender: That's it. (He pushes the note toward him.)

Borrower: (He looks at the note.) What is this, sir?

Lender: The promissory note that we signed.

Borrower: Oh, but wait a moment. This isn't time to throw away the note. Sometime in the near future I shall pay. Now, please, put this away. (He pushes it back.)

Lender: No, no, you misunderstand. Your poem just now was so good that I wished to honor you.

Borrower: Oh my, you're giving me this?
Lender: Right.

Borrower: I'm overwhelmed but (He takes it up.) even though I've been negligent up till now, how can I accept? I must refuse. (He pushes it back.)

Lender: Well, well, you have such high principles! But, as I've something special in mind, take it.

Borrower: Still, I simply must refuse. (He pushes it back.)

Lender: No, no, you must accept. (He pushes it back.)

Borrower: But, I must refuse.

Lender: Well, if you're resolved on it then I'll have to resign myself. (He takes up the note.)

Borrower: Oh, excuse me, but... (He gives an embarrassed smile.)

Lender: Yes?

Borrower: Usually, you mustn't take what is offered. On the contrary it is said to be impolite to do so. I shall accept with many thanks.

Lender: Ahh, very good. (He puts the note down again.)

Borrower: Thank you very much. (He takes it up gratefully.)

Lender: This really isn't so unusual. As you know, I also enjoy Renga. However, until now, I hadn't found a suitable partner. From now on, you must come from time to time to join me in composing Renga.

Borrower: Of course, I haven't called on you in some time but that was due to my debts. From now on, I shall visit you frequently as your Renga partner.
Lender: I'd like to remain and discuss this with you, but as I've some duties in the kitchen, I must go. Please relax with a cup of tea.

Borrower: I should be leaving soon too.

Lender: Must you go so soon?

Borrower: Yes, thank you.

Lender: You are most welcome.

Borrower: Thank you, sir. (He bows in thanks. The two stand and the lender leaves the stage.)

Borrower: (He goes to the seat and seats himself; he takes the note in both hands.) Ah, ah, it is like waking from a nightmare. This is owing to my love of Renga, a gift of Michizane, the God of poetry. I can't simply return home now. I must offer a song. (He stands.) Kind indeed is the heart of man;/ I never expected to see,/ the shape of a blossom/ revealing such hues,/ the heart of a man/ forgiving my dues;/ Oh, princely indeed is the heart of man. (He goes to the front of the stage.) Whom shall I fear in all the world now that I am free of this? (As he says this he rips up the note, throws it away, and leaves the stage.)
Footnotes

1. 花盛り御見あれしか松の風. There is a double meaning in this verse hinging on the phrase, "gomenarekashi," which has been translated as "Won't you please refrain," but which may also be interpreted as "Please forgive me." The Borrower is asking that his debts be forgiven. There is also a pun on the word "matsu," meaning pine tree and "matsu" meaning to wait. The flowers refer to cherry blossoms which are easily lost to the wind. The Borrower identifies himself with the cherry blossoms and pleads with the wind (the Lender.) to wait. This verse is a hokku(opening verse) contained in the Inu Tsukubashu. The original verse reads, "Hana no koro arekashi matsu no kaze." This differs slightly from the Kyogen which reads, "Hana sakari gomen narekashi matsu no kaze."

2. 桜にはせや雨の浮雲. There is a play on the word "nase ya" which has been translated as, "Bring forth," but which may also be interpreted as, "Pay me." The lender has turned the image around and identifying himself with the elegance of the cherry blossoms demands that he be paid. The rain laden clouds may be considered an allusion to the floating world or pleasure quarters of which the Borrower seems to be a frequenter. A form of this verse can be found in the Spring poems of the Shinkokinshu.

3. 幾たびも霞に侘び月の暮. There are several puns in this verse. "Kasumi ni wabin" has been translated as "my poor old hut" but may also be interpreted as "kasu" meaning "to borrow," "mi" meaning "I" and "wabin" meaning "excuses." In which case "Tsuki no kure" may be taken as "end of the month" rather than "evening moon." An alternate translation might be," Oh so many times/ for me, the borrowing one/ end of the month excuses."

4. 戀責めかえる人相の鐘. "Koi" is used here as a pun to refer to both "love" and to the "demands" of the lender. Kane refers to the bell in "iriai no kane" which refers to the ringing of the temple bell at the end of the day, but may also refer to "money." Therefore, an alternate translation would read, "Pressing strongly my demands/ for money I should receive."
5. The Borrower uses the term, tsuke noberu meaning "to take it easy. However, the "noberu" may also mean postpone. The Borrower uses it with this added meaning in reference to his debts.

6. 難もせめて別れは延べて鳴け. This verse has the underlying meaning of, "At least at parting/postpone the payments."

7. 人目をさらぬ恋の御守. "Don't betray" has the underlying meaning of "don't postpone," as in the payments. "Morasuna" means don't slip, don't tell others.

8. 知の立つに使は付けを忍び妻. There is a play on the word, "Tsuke so" which has been translated as, "to send" but may also be interpreted as "To pass on," or "gossip." This causes a misunderstanding between the two men. The Borrower claims that he intended the poem to read, "Lest it become known/ messenger don't tell others/of my secret wife." The Borrower identifies himself with the secret wife who must be sad and lonely. The secret wife is of course the mistress.

9. あら慕えば文をこそやれ. The love note refers to the promissory note. The underlying meaning here is, "As you plead so often/ I must give at least this note." "Shitaeba" may mean yearn for, desire, or love.

10. やさしの人の心や. いつ駄れも花の姿の、色あらわれて この人の、借り物をゆるさざる類子な人の心や. The song in this case is in free verse and is probably a simple children's song. The term waka has simply been used to refer to a song rather than a formal waka poem.
1 Third pine of the Hashigakari. 三ノ松
2 Second pine of the Hashigakari. 二ノ松
3 Third pine of the Hashigakari. 一ノ松
4 Shite pillar. シテ柱
4a Jōza. 常座
5 Metsuke pillar. 目付柱
6 Waki pillar 脇柱
6a Wakiza. 脇座
7 Fue pillar. 笠柱
7a Fueza. 笠座
Bibliography


