

## The Heart in Season: Sampling the Gendai Haiku Non-season *Muki Saijiki*<sup>[1]</sup>

Translators: Yūki Itō, Tomoko Murase, Ayaka Nishikawa, Tomoko Takaki  
Compiler and editor: Richard Gilbert

### Preface by Yūki Itō, with Richard Gilbert

About a decade ago, Tohta Kaneko wrote *An Introduction to Haiku*,<sup>[2]</sup> an illuminating presentation of haiku culture. Within, two main attitudes toward seasonal themes (kidai) or seasonal keywords (kigo) are discussed: the divergent approaches typified by Bashō and Issa. Bashō's attitude toward kidai tends toward idealism, while Issa takes an approach related with realism. These two attitudes to seasonal themes or keywords continue today. Bashō lived like a traveling-hermit and pursued deep philosophical thought, while Issa lived a penniless life among the masses. Bashō comes from the samurai class, while Issa hails from the farmer or peasant class. Bashō celebrates a penniless life because such a lifestyle finds sympathy with the renunciation of desire. Issa, on the other hand, felt that such a glorification of poverty was based on the stable status of the samurai class, and that Bashō did not know real poverty. We might say that Bashō is an illuminating philosopher, but he has a certain strain of idealism (“a thing useless for daily life is beautiful” is a Bashō aphorism), where Issa is more the realist. These two haiku poets' philosophies and attitudes toward seasonal keywords are strikingly different.

Before discussing this point further, it seems useful to clarify some of the technical terms used. From a philological point of view, the term “haiku” did not exist in the Edo period (from circa 1600). Following the Meiji revolution (1868) Japan was introduced to Western technology, philosophy, etc., and was strongly influenced by Western art movements (e.g. Romanticism, Impressionism). Shiki Masaoka (1867-1902) refined and developed the hokku or haikai into “haiku,” coining the new term, and made “haiku” independent from the hokku tradition (the first stanza of a renga). After haiku became a fully independent genre, the term “kigo” was coined by Otsuzi Ōsuga (1881-1920) in 1908. “Kigo” is thus a new term for the new genre-approach of “haiku.” So, when we are looking historically at hokku or haikai stemming from the renga tradition, it seems best to use the term “kidai.” Although the term “kidai” is itself new—coined by Hekigotō Kawahigashi in 1907! When discussing Bashō and Issa, the term “kidai” is best applied, because both of these authors' works are in the tradition of hokku. It is this term which Tohta Kaneko uses throughout *An Introduction to Haiku*.

Returning to Bashō and Issa, Bashō regards kidai as a way to commune with the creative power of nature (zōka). Bashō does not regard kidai as a rule, but rather as a word or keyword establishing a relationship with *kokoro* (heart, mind). Kaneko Tohta paraphrases: “Bashō said to his disciples, ‘find kidai for yourself. If you are unable to do this, you cannot become a good haikaishi (haiku poet).’” Importantly, this is not because kidai is primary in itself, but rather that without finding an expression of language which unites Self with zōka, one cannot achieve a deep sense of heart (i.e. knowing). Bashō also has said, “Even if the word is not traditional kidai, in the case that the word has enough quality to be kidai, do choose it and use it. When you find a new kidai, it will be a great gift for the next generation” (*Kyoraishō*). The *Muki Saijiki*<sup>[3]</sup> compiles these types of words as muki-kigo for the first time.

In contrast to Bashō, Issa regards kidai as language arising from daily life. For example, Issa regards snow—one of the four prototypical season-symbols of “most beautiful things” in Japanese poetry and cultural tradition—as distasteful, as snow is related with the terrible hardships he faced in his northern homeland. We see that, contrastively, Issa treats small insects and animals as kidai in a strongly compassionate manner (against the primary locus of the tradition). Insects are companions in daily life. So, Issa sought kidai from daily living, while Bashō sought kidai primarily from the essential phenomenology of *kokoro*. In this regard, Tohta Kaneko discusses two types of *kokoro*. One is the “solitary thinker's heart,” written as 心 (kokoro). Another is

“compassionate heart,” written as 情 (*furari-gokoro*). This difference had vanished by the end of the Edo period, but existed when Bashō and Issa lived. Tohta Kaneko continues (to paraphrase) that “Bashō is a pursuer of the 'solitary thinker's heart,' while Issa is an impoverished person with a 'compassionate heart.' Issa exemplifies *furari-gokoro* in his use of *kidai*.”

In Issa's philosophy, based to a large extent on daily life, we note that the horse and dog are close and constant companions. It seems precisely due to this close and constant relationship that neither of these animal species appears in any previous *saijiki*. The *Muki Saijiki* contains hundreds of similar examples. In fact, none of the terms in the *Muki Saijiki* are generally found in regular *saijiki*.

### Organization

A traditional *saijiki* normally has seven sections: *jikō* (time and season), *tenmon* (natural phenomena), *chiri* (geography), *seikatsu* (daily life), *gyōji* (seasonal events), *dōbutsu* (animals), and *shokubutsu* (plants). Sometimes, two sections are combined into one section; in such a case, the *saijiki* will have six sections. This present *muki saijiki* also has six sections; however, there are no *jikō* or *gyōji* sections, because the *Muki Saijiki* is not concerned with "season." Alternatively, the editorial committee has created new sections: *ningen* (human) and *bunka* (culture), as contemporary haiku tends to treat themes which are related with human society. This innovative choice of categories is an epoch-making event in the history of the *saijiki*.

In the listings below there are three levels of category: The top level is represented by the six overarching subjects mentioned just above. Below this level are the main topical categories (the number “2” is placed before these terms, and they are indicated in ‘title boldface’). Example haiku may accompany these second-level terms, but most of the *muki-kigo* are at the third, finest level of resolution. Usage of the *muki-kigo* is usually literal (the word appears in the haiku); however, this third level of words harbors a sense of figuration. In some examples, a haiku associated to a group of figurations may contain an inference to one of the *muki-kigo*, though the orthography (actual word) does not appear. As well, there may be *muki-kigo* given, with no example haiku to exemplify it. In such cases sense must follow sensibility—an additional aspect of figuration, related to the future of *gendai haiku*.

In the 30 pages of text that follow are nearly 1000 *muki-kigo* terms. Many of these have several variant meanings or significances—this effort points to the scale necessary for a useful *saijiki*. This single volume is complimented by four additional volumes of roughly equal size, one for each of the four seasons. The five volumes make up the complete *saijiki* of the Modern Haiku Association.

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<sup>[1]</sup> *Gendai haiku saijiki* (5 vols.) Tokyo: Gendai Haiku Kyōkai [Modern Haiku Association], June 2004.

<sup>[2]</sup> Except where cited, all materials in this Preface relating to *kidai* and *kigo* were taken from *haiku nyūmon* [*Introduction to Haiku*], Tokyo: Jitsugyo no Nihonsha, 1997, pp. 196-217, translated by Yūki Itō and Richard Gilbert.

<sup>[3]</sup> For additional *muki saijiki* and other *kigo* resources by the authors, please visit our [kigo page](http://www.iyume.com/research/kigo.html) [www.iyume.com/research/kigo.html].