

# Kokinshū Selection for Japanese 466

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## Tanka 153

Composed at the Empress Kanpyō's poetry contest—Ki no Tomonori

さみだれ  
五月雨に  
もの思ひをれば  
ほととぎす  
時鳥  
夜ふかく鳴きて  
いづち行くらむ

In the April showers<sup>1</sup>  
When I dwell on this and that  
The cuckoo calls out  
Up so late, I wonder  
Where is it going?

## Tanka 154

夜やくらき  
道やまどえる  
時鳥  
わがやどをしも  
すぎがてに鳴く

Is the night so dark?  
Or has it lost its way?  
The cuckoo—  
It cannot but to stay  
near my house, and cry

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<sup>1</sup>This is a rather extreme translation of 五月雨, I realize—and since the word is supposed to refer to an early summer rain, rather than a late spring one, perhaps I am overreaching. I felt, though, that referring to a specific time in English, one with its own vaguely poetic associations, was a worthwhile goal. I don't translate it like this in every instance, though; just here.

## Tanka 155

Topic unknown—Ōe no Chisato

やどりせし  
花橘も  
枯れなくに  
など時鳥  
こゑたえぬらむ

Though it was your home  
This orange-blossom tree  
has not withered yet  
Why, then, o cuckoo  
does your voice no longer sound?

## Tanka 156

Ki no Tsurayuki

夏の夜の  
臥すかと思へば  
時鳥  
鳴くひと声に  
明くるしのため

This summer eve  
Just when one thinks to lie down  
The dawn is brought, brightened  
by the cuckoo's  
slight voice.

## Tanka 157

Mibu no Tadamune

暮るるか  
みれば明けぬる  
なつの夜を  
あかずとや鳴く  
山時鳥

Just when I think that night has  
fallen  
I look, and the dawn breaks  
Is that why you cry  
O mountain cuckoo?  
Is the short night so unsatisfy-  
ing?

## Tanka 158

Ki no Akimine

夏山に  
恋しき人や  
入りにけむ  
声ふりたてて  
なく時鳥

Perhaps it is because  
my lover went into  
the mountains  
that the crying cuckoo  
raises its voice

## Tanka 159

Topic Unknown—Poet Unknown

去年の夏  
鳴きふるしてし  
時鳥  
それかあらぬか  
声のかはらぬ

The cuckoo who  
all last summer, called out  
Is that you, or is it not?  
Your voice  
has changed not a whit.

## Tanka 160

Composed on hearing a cuckoo's cry—Tsurayuki

五月雨の  
空もとどろに  
時鳥  
なにを憂しとか  
夜ただ鳴くらむ

Your cry resounds through  
The spring shower  
O cuckoo—  
what is so distressing  
that you would call through the  
night?

## Tanka 161

On the occasion of drinking wine in the chamber of a court official, one was told  
 “Compose a poem on waiting for the cuckoo,”—Mitsune

時鳥	O cuckoo—
声もきこえず	Not hearing your voice
山びこに	Won't you sound your cry
ほかに鳴く音を	from some other mountain
こたへやはせぬ	and let the echo reach us? <sup>2</sup>

## Tanka 162

On hearing the cuckoo cry in the mountains—Tsurayuki

時鳥	When you cry, cuckoo
人まつ山に	in Matsuyama
鳴くなれば	where I wait for my love
われうちつけに	Suddenly my pining heart
恋ひまさりけり	swells. <sup>3</sup>

## Tanka 163

On hearing the cuckoo cry where one used to live—Tadamine

むかしべや	Is the past
今も恋しき	so dear, even now, Cuckoo?
時鳥	Is that why
ふるさとにしも	you come back
鳴きてきつらむ	to your old villiage, and cry?

<sup>2</sup>The plural seems appropriate given the headnote.

<sup>3</sup>This translation is a bit of a reach, and I realize that. A more conservative translation of the last two lines might read “Suddenly I/am overcome with longing,” but as long as it’s there, I wanted to work in the “to wait” sense of “pine.” It’s simply too tempting of a pun not to make—perhaps the less powerful for that, but I couldn’t help myself.

## Tanka 164

On hearing the cuckoo's cry—Mitsune

時鳥	The cuckoo—
我とはなしに	Thought quite unlike me
卯の花の	Why would it too, calling out,
憂き世の中に	fly to this wretched world
鳴きわたるらむ	that recalls the utsugi flower? <sup>4</sup>

## Tanka 165

Composed after seeing a dewdrop on a lotus leaf—Sōjō Henjō

蓮葉の	The lotus leaf
にごりにしまぬ	—though its heart is pure and
こころもて	unclouded—
なにかは露を	Why would it deceive me
玉とあざむく	with a drop of dew
	that looks like a jewel?

## Tanka 166

On a night when the moon was particularly appealing, composed on the daybreak—  
Fukayabu

夏の夜は	While the summer night
まだよひながら	was yet young, I thought
明けぬるを	daybreak came.
雲のいづこに	Into which cloud
月やどるらむ	did the moon go to rest? <sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>I was unsure how to work out the makurakotoba of 卯の花; perhaps it should be omitted entirely, but I did not feel comfortable doing that.

<sup>5</sup>Admittedly, a stretch, and a somewhat childish one at that. It seems, though that the moon is being anthropomorphized in the poem, and to convey that in translation, I felt “rest” or “live” would be better than a less overtly human “hide,” for example.

## Tanka 167

When the neighbor sent a request for a *tokonatsu* flower<sup>6</sup>, one felt very fond and sent this poem along with it.—Mitsune

塵をだに  
 すゑじとぞ思ふ  
 咲きしより  
 妹とわが寝る  
 とこなつの花

I would no sooner think to  
 scatter dust on  
 the blooming *tokonatsu* flower  
 than I would the bed  
 I share with my beloved

## Tanka 168

Composed on the last day of the sixth month.

夏と秋と  
 行きかふ空の  
 かよひ路は  
 かたへすずしき  
 風や吹くらむ

The path that  
 Summer and Autumn take  
 coming and going across the sky  
 Perhaps it is the cool wind  
 that blows from the other side

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<sup>6</sup>I found “pink” as a possible English rendition of this, but uncertain as I am of how to use “pink” as a noun, I left the word untranslated.