

BASHÔ'S *FÛRYÛ* AND THE AESTHETIC OF *SHÔYÔYÛ*: POETICS OF ECCENTRICITY AND UNCONVENTIONALITY

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Introduction

In Japanese literary history, Bashô's name is always associated with the elevation of *haikai* (comic linked verse) to a high art. In order to transform the genre from a merely entertaining pastime to a serious art form, Bashô and his followers sought new poetic possibilities and principles. Of these, Chinese poetry and the Daoist classics are among the most important. This study examines Bashô's adaptation of the Daoist ideas, focusing on the relationship between his concept of *fûryû* and the Daoist notion of *shôyôyû* (C. *xiaoyaoyou*).

Fûryû is an important aesthetic concept in traditional Japanese culture, but the precise meaning of the term is a complicated issue. *Fûryû* is derived from the Chinese word *fengliu*, "wind flowing (blowing)." *Fengliu* in Chinese texts has multiple implications, ranging from a metaphor on the unpredictability of human existence, to a word for the popular customs and mores of a society, to term for exceptional literary styles, to a term for elegant but unconventional behavior and aesthetic taste inspired by the Daoist works *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* and Buddhist thought, to a term for the heightened appreciation and expression of sensual-aesthetic experience and sensibilities, and to a term inferring an amorous, flamboyant quality.¹ By the Song era (960-1279), these meanings associated with *fengliu* had already been in common use in Chinese texts.

Along with the introduction of Chinese texts into Japan over the centuries, the multiple meanings of *fengliu* (J. *fûryû*) came to be used in Japanese and blended with native thoughts. As a result, *fûryû* became a very difficult term to define. In his study of *fûryû* in Japanese literature and arts, Okazaki Yoshie provides a comprehensive survey of the multiple usages of *fûryû* in Japanese texts. According to Okazaki, the earliest Japanese text that contains the word *fûryû* is the *Manyôshû*, in which the

¹ This summary of the multiple meanings of *fengliu* is based on Richard John Lynn's article, "The Range of Meanings of *Fengliu* in Early Chinese Texts," presented at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting (San Diego), 10 March 2000.

term is given phonetic transcriptions in a native Japanese reading as *miyabi*, meaning “elegant,” “refined love taste,” or “unworldly refinement.” However, some other early Japanese texts, particularly the Buddhist didactic literature such as *Nihon ryōiki* (Record of Miracles in Japan, ca. 823), give *fūryū* a different reading, *misao*, which means “virtuous” or “spiritual integrity.”² The later Heian texts in which *fūryū* is used, such as *Bunkyo hifuron* (Mirror of Literature: Treasured Treatises, 819-20), *Honchō monzui* (The Best Writings of Japan, ca. 1058-64), and the prefaces of the imperial poetic anthologies, are mostly written in Chinese, hence it is hard to tell how the term is read with Japanese pronunciation. But, the contexts in which *fūryū* appears, suggest that the term primarily refers to *bunga*, “the elegance of letters,” and also to, “the wonder of scenic beauty.”³

From the late Heian period to the early Kamakura period, *fūryū* was increasingly used to describe the sensuous, showy beauty of artificial objects and folk arts, as evidenced by the accounts of festivals (*matsuri*) and contests of activities (*mono aware*) popular at the time. The latter meaning was widely used in medieval Japan, and *fūryū* in that vein became the synonym of *basara* and *kasa*, both suggesting flamboyant, somewhat flashy beauty. During this period, another usage of *fūryū* advocated by the Chinese literati culture—*fūryū* as the transcendence of the mundane world and the love of nature—also found its way into Japan.⁴ This latter trend of *fūryū* was typically seen in the Five Mountains (*Gozan*) Zen poetry and tea ceremonies of the late medieval and early modern Japan. In the tea ceremony, the term was associated with *suki* (devotion to an art or pleasure), “advocating an eremitic withdrawal from the world, and devotion to simple pleasures.”⁵ Additionally, *fūryū* was used to describe musical performance in medieval Japan, referring to the florid costume and decoration at first, and then also to the florid style of the music and

² Okazaki Yoshie, “Manyō jidai no fūryū” (*Fūryū* of the Manyōshū Period), in *Nihon geijutsu shichō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1948), pp. 33-65.

³ Okazaki, “Heian jidai no fūryū” (*Fūryū* of the Heian Period), in *Nihon geijutsu shichō*, pp. 66-106.

⁴ Okazaki, “Chūsei ni okeru kasa to basara no fūryū” (*Fūryū* as *Kasa* and *Basara* in the Medieval Period), in *Nihon geijutsu shichō*, pp. 89-106.

⁵ Patricia J. Graham, *Theater of the Sages: The Art of Sencha* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), p. 60

performance.⁶ On the other hand, *fūryū* in *Nō* theories suggested the classical tradition of elegant beauty similar to *miyabi*, presenting a contrast to the popular taste for *basara* at the time.⁷

Fūryū in *haikai* has often been discussed in conjunction with *fūga* (elegance of literature). Ōnishi Yoshinori points out that in *haikai* poetics, *fūga* is used to refer to the art of *haikai* specifically, whereas *fūryū* has a much broader meaning.⁸ Komiya Toyotaka also compares *fūryū* with *fūga*, saying, “*Fūryū* is something more fundamental, something that gives birth to *kanshi*, *waka*, *renga*, and *haikai*. Only superb works of poetry can represent *fūryū*. Therefore, although *fūryū* and poetry—*fūryū* and *fūga*—closely relate to each other, they are different concepts.”⁹ Okazaki observes that in Bashō’s works, *fūga* refers to literature, especially *haikai* and *haikai* spirit. He further suggests that what gives *fūga* its poetic quality is nothing else but *fūryū*.¹⁰ In a more recent study on the thoughts of *fūryū* in Japanese culture, Fujiwara Shigekazu draws examples from Bashō to demonstrate *fūryū* as “the poetics of relations” (*tsukiai no shigaku*), which he describes as an emancipated mentality in relating to people, society, nature, and oneself.¹¹

While the importance of *fūryū* in Bashō’s poetry has been repeatedly stressed by previous studies, in what meaning Bashō uses the term remains obscure. As seen above, under the same rubric of *fengliu/fūryū* multiple, and sometimes seemingly opposite, meanings and trends have evolved. Which of them has Bashō adapted into his *fūryū*? What new contribution has Bashō made to the *fūryū* aesthetics in Japan? In analyzing the uses of *fūryū* in Bashō’s writings, Okazaki notes its connection to *miyabi* and *suki*, but he also notices that from *Oku no hosomichi* (The narrow road to the

⁶ In this context, the term was often read as *furyū* instead of *fūryū*.

⁷ Okazaki, “*Chūsei no kabu engeki ni okeru fūryū*” (*Fūryū* in the Musical Performance and Theatre of the Medieval Period), in *Nihon geijutsu shichō*, pp. 107-132.

⁸ Ōnishi Yoshinori, *Fūgaron (On Fūga)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1940), pp. 130-2.

⁹ Komiya Toyotaka, *Hito to sakuhin (Writer and His Work)* (Tokyo: Koyama Shoten, 1843), pp. 58-61.

¹⁰ Okazaki, “*Haikai no fūga to fūryū*” (*Fūryū* and *Fūga* in *Haikai*), in *Nihon geijutsu shichō*, p. 214.

¹¹ Fujiwara Shigekazu, *Fūryū no shisō (The Thoughts of Fūryū)* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1994), pp. 166-229.

deep north, 1689) onward, Bashô's *fûryû*, "attains a dimension much higher than the world of *fûryû* in the Nara and Heian periods."¹² Okazaki points out the possible Zen influence in Bashô's *fûryû*, but he does not provide sufficient evidence to prove it. Fujiwara's observation of Bashô is extremely stimulating and brings out many important issues concerning *fûryû*, but his discussion focuses more on Japanese culture in general rather than on Bashô. He treats *fûryû* basically as a unique Japanese way of life, paying little attention to its Chinese provenance. However, as we shall see in the following pages, the significance of Bashô's *fûryû* cannot be fully explained without looking at its derivation in earlier Chinese tradition.

This study demonstrates that Bashô's *fûryû* advocates a poetics that places emphasis on eccentricity and unconventionality, or, to be more precise, on transcending the "worldly" by being eccentric and unconventional. It argues that this *fûryû* poetics inspired by Daoist thought and the *Wei-Jin fengliu* tradition in Chinese literature. When looking at the Chinese influence on Bashô, earlier studies tend to treat the influences of Chinese poetry and the Daoist thought separately. This article considers them as an organic integration in Bashô's work. It is shown in the following pages that Bashô's understanding of the *Wei-Jin fengliu* tradition and his understanding of Daoist principles cannot be discussed separately. Rather, the Chinese poetic anthologies and critical writings available to Bashô have constantly informed him of poetic traits rooted in Daoist thoughts, and the text of the *Zhuangzi* that Bashô used have also stressed the correspondences between the two. It is through the awareness of such correspondences that Bashô grasped the quintessential elements of Chinese poetry that are characteristically related to the Daoist idea of free and easy wandering (*shôyôyû*) and termed them as *fûryû*.

***Fûryû* in Bashô's Works**

One of the masterpieces of Bashô's prose poetry, *Oku no hosomichi* (The Narrow Road to the Deep North),¹³ contains the following passage:

After having arrived at the post station of Sukagawa,
I called upon a man named Tôkyû, who insisted that

¹² Okazaki, "*Haikai no fûga to fûryû*," p. 234.

¹³ Translation of the title is from Yuasa Nobuyuki, *Bashô: The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979).

we stay at his house for a few days. He asked me how I had fared at the barrier of Shirakawa. I replied that I was unable to compose any poem. I had been totally exhausted from the long journey, partly also because I had been overwhelmed by the scene of the landscape and by the nostalgic thoughts of the past. It would be regrettable, however, to cross the barrier without writing a single verse, so I wrote:

<i>Fûryû no</i>	The beginning of <i>fûryû</i> !
<i>Hajime ya</i>	The rice-planting song
<i>Oko no Taueuta</i>	In the remote north.

My verse is followed by a second and third verse, and we produced three linked-verse sequences.¹⁴

This poem was composed on Bashô's famous journey to the remote northern provinces, a journey that provided the sources for his creation of the best travel literature in Japanese history. Before he went on the trip in the spring of 1689, Bashô had abandoned his Plantain Tree Hut in Fukagawa—clearly a gesture of determination to start a new journey in his career. At the Shirakawa Barrier, the entrance to the far north, facing the magnificent landscape and with profound thoughts of the literary past, the poet composed the verse. The poem, in this background, is an important announcement of Bashô's poetic quest. At the same time, as the opening verse of a linked verse sequence, the poem sets the keynote for the collaborated composition and serves as a salutatory greeting to the host.

The multiple functions of the verse have caused different interpretations of its meaning, particularly of the first line. Scholars differ as to whether it refers specifically to the first poetic event the speaker has encountered at the remote northern area or broadly to the origin of poetry and all arts.¹⁵ Some early Japanese scholarship also has suggested that

¹⁴ All my translations of Bashô's writings in this study are based on Komiya Toyotaka, comp., *Kohon Bashô zenshu (The Complete Collection of Bashô's Works)*, 10 Vols. (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1964-69). Henceforth abbreviated as *KBZ*. The passage above is from *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 91.

¹⁵ See, for example, the Japanese commentaries selected and translated in Makoto Ueda, *Bashô and His Interpreters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 238. For English translations of the poem, Yuasa in his translation of *Oku no hosomichi* rendered the first line into "The first

here the term means the musical performance, *fūryū*, but this point of view is not widely accepted since no solid evidence has been found that *fūryū* evolved from rice planting songs. On the other hand, Ebara Taizō and other annotators interpreted the term as the aesthetic or artistic experience the speaker had when he stepped into the unexplored area on his journey.¹⁶ The existing English translations of the poem have been relatively concurrent in translating the term into “poetry” or “the poetic.”

Given some semantic and compositional contexts, the poem presents intriguing questions to the reader: either as praise to the host’s homeland or as an announcement of the speaker’s poetic quest, the poem has assumed a natural relationship between poetry and the rice planting song in the rustic area; but on what basis is this relationship established? The orthodox *waka* and *renga* traditions apparently do not provide a congenial basis for such an assumption. Then, what kind of poetry does Bashō’s *fūryū* refer to?

Like *fūga* (elegance of literature or poetry), *fūryū* is one of the many Chinese-origin words Bashō liked to use. In “*Sanseizu san*” (Eulogy on the Painting of the Three Sages), a prose written in his later years, he writes:

A person who puts his whole heart in *fūryū* and
harmonizes himself with the four seasons would find
the things worthy of verse inexhaustible, as the grains
of sand on the beach.¹⁷

In this passage, *fūryū* can be taken as poetry in general and is almost interchangeable with *fūga*. But in Bashō’s other writings *fūryū* is more often used to describe a quality or taste that is closely associated with the life and spirit of a recluse/wayfarer. In *Oku no hosomichi*, for example, Bashō writes about his visit to a painter at Sendai. The poet tells us that when the time came for him to leave, the painter gave him some drawings and two pairs of straw sandals with their laces dyed deep blue. Bashō comments on the sandals: “It was with the last gifts that he demonstrated

poetic venture.” Haruo Shirane translated the line as “The beginning of poetry” when discussing the performativity mode of Bashō’s poetry. See his “Aisatsu: The Poet as Guest,” in *New Leaves: Studies and Translations of Japanese Literature in Honor of Edward Seidensticker* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1993), p. 91.

¹⁶ Okazaki, “*Haikai no fūga to fūryū*,” pp. 225-6.

¹⁷ *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 507.

most clearly his character as a connoisseur of *fûryû*.¹⁸ It is noteworthy that the poet does not pay much attention to the drawings, which are of the beautiful landscapes of famous places, but stresses the artist's taste of *fûryû* demonstrated in the sandals he sent to the traveler, objects that are often associated with rusticity and a wayfarer's life.

As revealed by his example, the taste and lifestyle of a recluse/traveler is considered a basic element of *fûryû*. Once, when commenting on his disciple's verse "Record of a humble life/Is enclosed within/The gates of the thatched hut," Bashô said, "This verse is not particularly novel. But, since it is about the thatched hut and recluse, it has certain *fûryû*."¹⁹ Bashô did not give any further explanation of his judgement here. It seems that it had become an established criterion in his school that celebrating the recluse tradition is *fûryû*.

Of the elements that typically reflect the recluse tradition, Bashô and his school seem to have valued particularly the following qualities typically associated with the recluse lifestyle: rusticity, humbleness, and deliberate eccentricity and unconventionality. These elements, whether presented together or individually in Bashô's writings, assert a *fûryû* aesthetic distinctively different from the *fûryû* as an aristocratic penchant for romance and refinement in Heian literature. Rice planting, for instance, is often associated with *fûryû* in the *Shômon* (the Bashô School) *haikai*. Bashô mentions in his commentary, "The *fûryû* of rice planting, in a place like Minô or Ômi is different from that of remote areas."²⁰ The comment apparently has assumed that it is common knowledge among his disciples that rice planting, or the experience of encountering rice planting is *fûryû*.

On the other hand, the *Shômon* poetry enthusiastically celebrates the deliberate eccentricity and unconventionality in the recluse tradition. Bashô's disciple Kyorai once writes about how the Master taught him to seek *fûryû* in eccentricity. He tells us that once he composed a verse as the following:

<i>Iwabana ya</i>	The overhanging cliff—
<i>Koko nimo hitori</i>	Here is another
<i>Tsuki no kyaku</i>	Companion of the moon!

¹⁸ *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 115.

¹⁹ "Hatsukaishi *hyôchû*" (Commentaries on the First *Haikai* Collection of the Year, 1986), in *KBZ*, Vol. 7, p.410.

²⁰ *KBZ*, Vol. 7, p. 414.

When the late master came to the capital, Kyorai asked: “Shadô had suggested that I change the last line to ‘The monkey of the moon,’ but I preferred ‘companion.’ What do you think?” The late master said: “What will ‘monkey’ do here? Tell me how you have come up with the conception of the poem.” Kyorai replied: “I was thinking that the speaker, enjoying the bright moonlight, wanders in mountains and fields while reciting poems. At that moment he saw another poet under the cliff.” The late master said: “It would add more *fûryû* if you make ‘here is another companion of the moon’ the poet’s self-portrait, though this will make it a first-person poem. I like this poem a lot, too, so I have included it in *Oi no kobumi*.”²¹ My taste at that time was still low, perhaps barely reaching the second or third class. However, though the reinterpretation of the late master, the poem took on the tone of an eccentric (*Kyôsha*).

Later, when thinking about it again, I realized that by making the verse a first-person poem, it created an image of an eccentric, which is ten times better than the original conception. As the author of the poem, I didn’t understand the spirit of eccentricity at the beginning.²²

This passage is revealing in examining the criteria regarding the poetic expression and appreciation of the *Shômon* School. Kyorai’s original conception of the poem focuses on the poetic sentiment of the speaker who, while indulging deeply in poetry and the beauty of the moonlit night, suddenly notices another person who also enjoys being alone as the companion of the moon. “The companion of the moon” humorously implies the loneliness of the recluse/traveler, creating an image at once lofty and comic. Although Kyorai’s original conception was not bad, Bashô found that it lacked eccentricity and suggested making the phrase “here is another companion of the moon” the poet’s self-identification. With Bashô’s interpretation, the poet’s utterance is no longer a monologue describing what he has just discovered, but a dialogue that addresses both spatially to the audience and temporally to the literary past. The use of “another” indicates that the speaker is aware of the existence of a literary

²¹ *Oi no kobumi* (Poems in the Traveler’s Satchel), is a collection of poems by the *Shômon* poets, not Bashô’s travel account that has the same title. The work is no longer found.

²² Mukai Kyorai (1651-1704), “*Kyorai shô*” (Kyorai’s Notes, 1775), in *KBZ*, Vol. 7, p. 75. The last paragraph seems to have been added later. See Miyamoto Saburô’s annotation to the work in *KBZ*, Vol. 7, p. 75.

tradition that magnifies the deliberate eccentricity of the recluse/traveler, and therefore he speaks of himself as another one of those eccentrics who are proud to be the lonely companion of the moon. It is striking that both Bashô and Kyorai consider eccentricity *fûryû*, to the degree of believing that by simply changing the persona to an eccentric, the poem is much better than the original one.

Kyorai's notes show that the spirit of *kyô*, or eccentricity, is an essential element of *fûryû*, to Bashô School. In Bashô's writings, eccentricity as a poetic quality is termed *fûkyô*, which is one of the thematic and aesthetic focuses of Bashô School at its peak. Ogata Tsutomu characterizes the 1680's in the development of *Shômon* poetry as the "years of *fûkyô*,"²³ stressing the importance of the "journeys of *fûkyô*" Bashô and his fellow poets undertook from around 1684 onward.²⁴ Konishi Jin'ichi and Hitrota Jirô also consider Bashô's celebration of *fûkyô* in the early 1680's an important formative period in his growth.²⁵ Indeed, the 1680's witnessed a series of remarkable events in Bashô's life. In 1680, he moved into a hut at Fukagawa, a rustic area on the eastern bank of the Sumida River. Four years later, in 1684, Bashô left his cottage to go on his first major journey and spent the following years wandering to the remote areas of Japan. These "years of *fûkyô*" were very fruitful in Bashô's career, based on his hut life and journey, he wrote most of his masterpieces.

Although Bashô's concept of *fûkyô* has drawn much scholarly attention, thus far it has not been examined in conjunction with *fûryû*. However, as having been shown in the examples of this article, *fûkyô* is an indispensable element of the *fûryû* tradition Bashô advocated. Bashô's peculiar way of life—as a recluse and a constant wayfarer—has garnered much attention from the western scholars in religious studies. Early treatments of this subject have attributed Bashô's unique way of life to Zen influence. Since the late 1970's, studies of the phenomenon tend to locate

²³ "Shôfû haikai shi" (The History of the Bashô-style *Haikai*), in *Haiku kôza*, Miki Akira, comp. (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1969), p. 189.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 163-206.

²⁵ See Konishi Jin'ichi, "Bashô to gûgensetsu" (Bashô and Zhuangzi's *Gûgen*), in *Nihon gakushiin kiyô* 18, No. 2 (1960), pp. 145-151; and Hirota Jirô, *Bashô no geijutsu—sono tenki to haikai* (The Art of Bashô—Its Development and Background) (Tokyo: Yôseido, 1968), pp. 52-128, 335-371.

his attitude in a more sophisticated tradition that is not limited to Buddhist philosophy.²⁶ On the other hand, Steven Carter argues in his recent study that Bashô's "action was as an instance of what those in the highest ranks of a profession are always wont to do: to test their competence in a wider arena, and by so doing to claim a transcendent status for themselves and their occupations."²⁷ In regard to Bashô's concept of *fūryū*, this investigation focuses on another aspect of the phenomenon. It argues that Bashô's eccentric way of life was a literary stance or gesture, an attempt to seek *fūryū*. In fact, this attempt has been revealed in the poet's own writings. In "On the Unreal Dwelling," after writing about his life in seclusion, the poet declares:

But I should not have it thought from what I have said that I am devoted to solitude and seek only to hide my traces in the wilderness. Rather, I am like a sick man weary of people, or someone who is tired of the world. What is there to say? I have not led a clerical life, nor have I served in normal pursuits. Ever since I was very young I have been fond of my eccentric ways, and once I had come to make them the source of a livelihood, temporarily I thought, I discovered myself bound for life to the one line of my art, incapable and talentless as I am.²⁸

In the passage, the writer says that ever since he was very young he has been fond of his eccentric ways, and his "eccentric ways" led him to his art. However, little is known about Bashô's childhood, and the existing materials about his life indicate that Bashô achieved the status of *haikai*

²⁶ For relevant studies, see Richard B. Pilgrim, "The Religio-Aesthetic of Matsuo Bashô," in *The Eastern Buddhist* 10, (1977), pp. 35-53; Gary L. Ebersole, "Matsuo Bashô and the Way of Poetry in the Japanese Religious Tradition" (PhD Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1981); David L. Barnhill, "The Journey Itself Home—The Religiosity of the Literary Works of Matsuo Bashô (1644-1694)" (PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, 1986).

²⁷ "On the Bare Branch: Bashô and the *Haikai* Profession," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117, No. 1 (1997), pp. 57-69.

²⁸ Donald Keene, trans., *Anthology of Japanese Literature* (New York: Grove Press, 1955), p. 376. The account in Japanese, *Genjūan no ki* (On the Unreal Dwelling), can be found in *KBZ*, Vol. 6, pp. 470-1.

master before abandoning his literary practice in the city of Edo to move to his hut. If the available information can be trusted, his “eccentric way” of life is more likely the result of a literary pursuit, an effort to create an eccentric self-image that is considered *fūryū*. Whether his “eccentric way” of life led him to his art or his art acquired the “eccentric way” of life, what interests us here is Bashō’s belief in the direct connection between the two. This belief, as can be seen in the following prose by Bashō, is based on his knowledge of a long poetic tradition which has its deep roots in Daoist thought. The prose was written in the autumn of 1689 as an epilogue to a *haibun* (*haikai* style prose) by his friend, Yamaguchi Sodō (1642-1761).

Epilogue to “Exposition on Bagworm”²⁹

One day, while dwelling in the desolation in my cottage, I wrote a poem. Being utterly touched by the poem, my friend Sodō inscribed a prose poem to it. His lines are beautiful like brocade, and his words are gems. Reading his inscription, I saw the artistry of *The Songs of Sorrow*.³⁰ It has a novelty of Su Shi and the ingenuity of Huang Tingjian.³¹ He mentions the filial piety of Shun³² at the beginning to remind us to learn from his virtue. He praises the incapability of the bagworm to show the

²⁹ There are two existing versions of the prose poem. My translation is based on the first draft. The other draft, which is slightly different, was signed “Bashō-an Tōsei.” Bashō wrote under the literary name Tōsei at the time. It has been pointed out that the name, whose two characters mean “Peach Green,” indicates the poet’s admiration of the great Chinese poet Li Bo’s name literally means “Plum White.” “*Bashō-an*” was the name of Bashō’s cottage, meaning “Plantation Tree Hut.” The poet later used Bashō as his literary name.

³⁰ *Lisao* (Encountering the Sorrow), a classic of Chinese poetry. The author of *Lisao* is Qū Yuan (ca. 340-278 BCE).

³¹ Both Su Shi (1037-1101) and Huang Tingjian (1045-1105), were famous poets of Song China.

³² Shun is one of the five ancient emperors in Chinese legends. The tradition has it that although mistreated by his father, he served his parents dutifully. Praising the bagworm as “he Shun of insects,” Sodō in his prose makes an allusion to Sei Shōnagon’s, *Makura no sōshi* (The Pillow Book, 1002), which associates the faint voice of the bagworm with Shun, who quietly endured the maltreatment from his father.

spirit of the *Zhuangzi*. He treasures the tiny creatures like bagworm to help us understand the value of contentment with one's lot. He also draws upon the stories of Lü Fang³³ and Zi Ling³⁴ to reveal the meaning of seclusion. At the end, he jokes about the jade worm,³⁵ exhorting people not to indulge in love. Who else can know the heart of the bagworm so well except this old gentleman Sodô! What he wrote can be described precisely as "In quiet contemplation, one finds all things have their own reasons for existence."³⁶ Indeed, in Sodô I see the meaning of this famous poem.

Since ancient times, most people who deal with the writing brush pursue embellishments at the cost of content; or take content seriously, but ignore *fûryû*. When reading Sodô's prose poem, one is attracted not only by its embellishment but, more significantly, by its essence.

There is a gentleman named Chôko³⁷ in this area. Upon learning of Sodô's prose, he drew a painting based on it. His painting is truly deep in feeling while light in color. Looking at the painting intensely, one feels as if the bagworm is moving and the yellow leaves are falling. Listening attentively, one feels he has heard the bagworm's cry and felt the coldness of the gentle autumn wind. I feel very fortunate to have the leisure in this

³³ As pointed out in the annotation to the work in *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 340, Bashô must have made a mistake here. Lü Fang [should be Lü Wang], a recluse in Chinese legend. It is said that he was discovered and employed by King Wen of Zhou (ca. 1100-771 BCE).

³⁴ Ziling was a virtuous recluse of the later Han time (25-220).

³⁵ *Tamamushi* (chrysochroa elegans), literally means "Jade Worm." In the inscription Sodô writes: "Bagworm, it is because you are rejected by the Jade Worm that your sleeves are wet with tears?" (See, *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 338.) According to *Tamamushi sôshi* (The story of the jade worm), upon which Sodô makes the allusion, all kinds of insects loved Princess Jade Worm. The Bagworm also sent her his love letter, but Jade Worm didn't even reply.

³⁶ The line is from *Qiu ri ou cheng* (Extemporaneous poems on an autumn day), a group of poems by the renowned Song philosopher Cheng Hao (1032-1085).

³⁷ Hanabusa Ichô (1625-1724). He was a painter and was considered "a representative of the Genroku era." See, *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 339.

hut of idleness and to have the profound friendship of the two gentlemen, as a bagworm who has been bestowed glorifying features.³⁸

Writing poems in response to each other's work was common practice in Bashô's time, and these exchanges became good sources for studying the author's critical views and aesthetic taste. However, Bashô's taste, as indicated in the writings above, is not very clear at first glance. The beginning of the epilogue is not difficult to understand: Bashô praises the writing style of his friend by comparing his work to the masterpieces of Chinese poetry, *The Songs of Sorrow* and poems of the famous Song poets, Su Shi and Huang Tingjian. The following sentence, "He mentions the filial piety of Shun at the beginning to remind us to learn from his virtue," is also self-explanatory, although Bashô did not tell the reader that when mentioning Shun, Sodô was not trying to teach a lesson of filial piety. Sodô's prose mentions Shun in a phrase praising the bagworm, "You are Shun of insects." A bagworm is the central image of Bashô's poem that has inspired Sodô's inscription, and the image is a self-portrait Bashô uses more than once in his writings. Sodô's original words, therefore, are more a compliment to Bashô, the author of the poem, than a message of moral lesson. Bashô apparently tries to show modesty by deliberately interpreting Sodô's words in a different way.

When Bashô writes about how Sodô praises the bagworm for its "incapability" and being "tiny," the implications become difficult to understand. To understand the meaning, it is necessary to first look at Bashô's poem that has inspired Sodô's inscription, and then finds out what is "the spirit of the *Zhuangzi*" to which the poet associates the bagworm.

Bashô's poem that stimulated Sodô is a seventeen-syllable short verse: "Come and listen/To the voice of the bagworm—/The grass thatched hut."³⁹ As mentioned earlier, "bagworm" is one of the metaphors Bashô likes for his eccentric self-portrait. His "On the Unreal Dwelling," for example, introduces him as a "bagworm:"

My body, now close to fifty years of age, has become
an old tree that bears bitter peaches, a snail which has
lost its shell, a bagworm separated from its bag; it

³⁸ *KBZ*, Vol. 6, pp. 340-1.

³⁹ "Zoku minashiguri," in *KBZ*, Vol. 1, p. 125.

drifts with the winds and clouds that know no destination.⁴⁰

Here, the intended metaphor “bagworm,” like several other metaphors used with it, is a creature that is incapable, useless, and solitary, drifting along with the force of nature. These qualities, as Bashō mentions in his epilogue, reflect the spirit of the Daoist classic, the *Zhuangzi*. In the *Zhuangzi*, the absurdity of conventional values is a recurrent theme. The parable-like stories (*gūgen*) in the work deliberately go against existing values and conventions; laughing at the “talented” and “useful” and praising the “incapable” and “useless” is a typical topic. One *gūgen*, for instance, relates how Zhuangzi and Huizi⁴¹ discuss the concepts of “useful” and “useless.”

Huizi said to Zhuangzi, “I have a big tree of the kind men call *shu*. Its trunk is too gnarled and bumpy to apply a measuring line to, its branches too bent and twisty to match up to a compass or square. You could stand it by the road and no carpenter would look at it twice. Your words, too, are big and useless, and so everyone alike spurns them!”

Zhuangzi said, “Maybe you’ve never seen a wildcat or a weasel. It crouches down and hides, watching for something to come along. It leaps and races east and west, not hesitating to go high or low—until it falls into the trap and dies in the net. Then again there’s the yak, big as a cloud covering the sky. It certainly knows how to be big, though it doesn’t know how to catch rats. Now you have this big tree and you’re distressed because it’s useless. Why don’t you plant it in Not-Even-Anything Village, or the Field of Broad-and-Boundless, relax and do nothing by its side, or lie down for a free and

⁴⁰ *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 470; translation is from Donald Keene, *Anthology of Japanese Literature*, p. 374.

⁴¹ Huizi is a logician philosopher of late Zhou times. In the *Zhuangzi*, Huizi is described as, “weak in inner virtue, strong in his concern for external things.” See Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tsu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 377. Henceforth abbreviated *CWC*.

easy sleep under it? Axes will never shorten its life,
 nothing can ever harm it. If there's no use for it, how
 can it come to grief or pain?"⁴²

In the discussion, Zhuangzi's answer seems to have dragged in all sorts of irrelevant matters, but by so doing he not only negates Huizi's opinion of the big tree, but also criticizes Huizi's way of thinking fundamentally. Taking over Huizi's comments on the gnarled tree, Zhuangzi argues that crouched things are not necessarily all incapable or useless: a crouched wildcat or weasel can be very quick in catching small animals. Yet, being capable is not necessarily good. Like a fast-running wildcat that often falls into the trap, capability can be a source of danger. On the other hand, because something is big, does not always mean that it is capable—a big yak cannot compete with the little wildcat in catching rats. In the same sense, uselessness cannot be viewed, as misfortune—an unwanted tree invites no ax to harm it. Zhuangzi's point here is that all things have their reasons for existence and should not be judged with fixed values. If one does away with worldly concerns and breaks the standards of conventional values, there will be no grief or pain. Zhuangzi's notions of "Not-Even-Anything-Village" and the "Field of Broad-and-Boundless," suggest an ideal realm for unworldly nonconformists, and the nonpragmatic unconventionality of the Daoist classics provides a philosophical basis for eccentricity. It is in this context that Bashô writes in his epilogue, "He praises the incapability of the bagworm to show the spirit of the *Zhuangzi*. He treasures the tiny creatures like bagworm to help us understand the value of contentment with one's lot." The *Zhuangzi* asserts that when one is not limited by conventional values, one can see that all things have their own reason for existence (*zide*). This important idea of the *Zhuangzi* deeply influenced the Confucian scholars of Song China. Bashô's citation in the epilogue, "In quiet contemplation, he finds all things have their own reason for existence," is from a poem by Cheng Hao, one of the vocal speakers of Song Confucianism.⁴³ However, rather

⁴² Watson, *CWC*, p. 35. Romanization of the names has been altered.

⁴³ Several studies by Japanese scholars have discussed the significance of the adaptation of the Daoist idea, *zide*, in Bashô's poetry. Ebara Taizô pointed out that the Han scholar Guo Xiang's (252-312) annotation to the *Zhuangzi* had impact on Bashô's concept. See "Bashô to Rô Sô" (Bashô and Laozi and Zhuangzi), in *Ebara Taizô chosakushû* (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1981), pp. 72-9. Nonomura Katsuhide traces the sources of the

than going deeply into Song Confucian teachings, Bashô's understanding of the concept seems to relate closely to his observation of the correspondences between the Daoist spirit and the *fûryû* tradition. He criticizes the writers who pursue embellishment at the cost of content or pay attention to the content but forget *fûryû*, implying that Sodô's work is a masterpiece of *fûryû*. Noteworthy is that Bashô separates *fûryû* from content. By *fûryû*, he implies an aesthetic tradition or taste that provides the essence of the contents. As can be detected from Bashô's epilogue, Sodô's writing draws heavily upon Chinese sources, especially the recluse tradition in Chinese literature. Bashô's praise of Sodô reveals again his belief that the eccentricity and unconventionality of the recluse lifestyle is an essential element of *fûryû*, and that the quality of poetry depends ultimately on whether the work embodies this kind of *fûryû*.

Bashô's epilogue gives a clue about the theoretical roots of his perspective of unconventionality. In Japanese literature, the association of unconventionality and poetry did not begin with Bashô; in medieval poetry, particularly the works of Zen Buddhist priests such as Ikkyû Sôjun (1394-1481), the eccentric face was already prominent. Perhaps partly because of this, the association of eccentricity and unconventionality with poetry in Bashô's writings is often taken as an established value, and no explanation is given as to why the eccentric and unconventional can be poetic, or, in Bashô's term, *fûryû*. Nonetheless, the literary significance of Bashô's *fûryû* cannot be fully understood without clarifying this question. This investigation shows that to answer how eccentricity and unconventionality became aesthetic values, an examination of the construction of the *fûryû* tradition in both Japanese and Chinese history is necessary.

The Wei-Jin *Fengliu* and the Spirit of *Xiaoyaoyou*

As mentioned in the beginning of this article, the word *fûryû*, and its original Chinese term *fengliu* as well, underwent complex, semantic changes. There is often inter-fusion of the meanings when the term is used

concept to Song scholar Li Xiyi's annotation to the *Zhuangzi* and the Song Confucian writings. See "*Bashô to Sôji Sôgaku*" (Bashô, the *Zhuangzi* and the Song Learning), in *Renga haikai kenkyû* (1957), pp. 33-9. While recognizing the influence of all these sources, Hitora Jirô suggests that Bashô might have learned the idea from Tang and Song poetry. See *Bashô no geijutsu*, p. 374.

in the contexts of literature and arts. Among the many different usages of *fûryû*, Bashô's *fûryû* shoes remarkable affinity of the Wei-Jin *fengliu* tradition in Chinese literature.

Scholars view the period of the Wei-Jin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties as an epoch of self-awakening in Chinese literary history. This self-awakening went hand-in-hand with the prevalence of Daoist thought. Confucian teachings were officially promoted and transformed into the ruling ideology in the latter half of the former Han Dynasty (206 BCE-24 CE), but with the fall of the latter Han in 220 CE, the political unity collapsed and Confucianism lost its supreme authority in China. Continuous war and social turmoil caused an enormous loss of life, and a strong sense of uncertainty and impermanence shook the belief of the literati in orthodox Confucian values. Many educated people sought the meaning of life in Daoist teaching and reinterpreted Confucianism in light of Daoist thinking.

The magnetism of Daoist thought during this period of social disorder had much to do with the unique nature of its philosophical presumptions. Unlike the pragmatic Confucian teaching that regulates social behavior by means of ethical codes, the Daoist tenets, namely, "free and easy wandering" and, "naturalness and inaction" (*ziran wuwei*), assert the absolute importance of the individual's freedom and postulate the spontaneous integration of man's inborn nature with the universal order. The *Zhuangzi* criticizes Confucianists as, "enlightened on the subject of ritual principles but stupid in their understanding of men's hearts."⁴⁴ The *Zhuangzi* asserts:

If we must use curve and plumb line, compass and square to make something right, this means cutting away its inborn nature; if we must use cords and knots, glue and lacquer to make something form, this means violating its natural Virtue. So the crouchings and bendings of rites and music, the smiles and beaming looks of benevolence and righteousness, which are intended to comfort the hearts of the world, in fact destroy their constant naturalness.⁴⁵

In opposition to Confucian ritual principles and ethical codes, the *Zhuangzi* advocates a different attitude towards life-free and easy

⁴⁴ Watson, *CWC*, p. 222.

⁴⁵ Watson, *CWC*, p. 100.

wandering. The basic idea of free and easy wandering is the emancipation of mind, which the Song annotator Lin Xiyi⁴⁶ describes as, “letting one’s mind wander in naturalness.”⁴⁷ Free and easy wandering denotes and requests an aesthetically oriented realm. The concept of beauty in Chinese tradition is a domain where the free purpose of individual existence is harmoniously integrated with the law of cosmos.⁴⁸ This aesthetic orientation of Daoist thought made its literary application immediately possible. *Xiaoyaoyou* and other Daoist ideas began to be widely used in literary thinking during the Wei and Jin periods, especially through the poetry of the “Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove,”⁴⁹ and the foremost recluse poet of China, Tao Qian (365-427). The following verse by Ji Kang (224-263), one of the “Seven Worthies,” for example explicitly celebrates spiritual wandering.

⁴⁶ A scholar and official of Song China. His literary name was Juanzhai. The dates of his birth and death are unknown. According to *Song Yuang xuean* 47, he became *Jinshi* (a successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations) during the Duanping era (1234-37), and was once appointed Vice Director of the Office of Personal Evaluation. His annotation of the *Zhuangzi*, *Zhuangzi Juangzhai kouyi* (Juanzhai’s Explanation of the *Zhuangzi*), was reprinted in Japan during the Edo period and evidence shows that Bashō and his fellow poets read his interpretations of the *Zhuangzi*.

⁴⁷ Lin Xiyi, “*Zhuangzi Juangzhai kouyi*” (1629 Kyoto edition, henceforth abbreviated ZJK), in Nagasawa Kikuya, ed., *Wakokubon shoshi taisei*, Vols. 11, 12 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1976), henceforth abbreviated WST, Vol. 11, p. 478.

⁴⁸ For in-depth discussions of the concept of beauty in Chinese literary tradition and the aesthetic nature of the *Zhuangzi*, see Xu Fuguan, *Zhuongguo yishu jingshen (The Spirit of Chinese Arts)* (Taizhong: Zhongyang shuju, 1966), pp. 45-143; and Li Zehou and Liu Gangji, eds., *Zhongguo meixueshi (A History of Chinese Aesthetics)* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1987), Vol. 1, pp. 227-284.

⁴⁹ The “Seven Worthies,” according to literary convention, refer to Ruan Ji (210-263), Ji Kang, Shan Tao (205-283), Xiang Xiu (ca. 227-272), Liu Ling, Ruan Xian, and Wang Rong (234-305). The “Seven Worthies,” in trying to stay away from corrupt and dangerous politics, were said to have engaged in drinking and philosophical discussion in a bamboo grove outside Luoyang, the ancient capital of China during the Wei-Jin period.

Exterminated cleverness and discarded learning,
 My mind wanders in the deep and the tranquil:
 Not regretting if I committed an error,
 Nor making a show when meeting with success.
 Fishing in a deep valley,
 I enjoy my own world.
 With my hair down, I stroll and sing,
 And harmonious air suffuses all around me.
 O! Sing and celebrate—
 My mind wanders in the deep and tranquil.⁵⁰

This kind of bold celebration of the eccentric self is unprecedented in Chinese poetry. The first line marks an explicit allusion to the following words in the *Laozi*: “Exterminate the sage and discard the wise, and the people will benefit a hundred-fold;” and, “Exterminate learning and there will no longer be worries.”⁵¹ The second couplet alludes to the description of the “True Man” in the *Zhuangzi*: “Man, like this, could commit an error and not regret it, could meet with success and not make a show.”⁵² The heavy citations from the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* in the first four lines reveal the basis of the speaker’s stance, which provides the depth of the eccentric self-portrait in the latter half of the poem. As indicated by Ji Kang’s poem, deliberate eccentricity as an aesthetic preference has much to do with Daoist philosophy, which defines the unworldly free and easy wandering as a state of “perfect beauty” (*zhimei*).⁵³

Different from the “Seven Worthies” of the Wei period, who highlighted the aesthetic qualities of “free and easy wandering” with their unrestrained character types, the Jin poet Tao Qian manifests these qualities through his return to nature. Tao Qian has been considered the “foremost recluse poet” in China. The first of Tao’s “Five Poems on Returning to Gardens and Fields to Dwell,” describes his hermitage as follows:

From my youth I’ve lacked the worldly tune,

⁵⁰ The fifth poem of “*Chongzuo liuyanshi shi shou*” (Rewriting Ten Hexasyllabic Poems), in *Ji Kang ji zhu*, Yin Xiang and Guo Quanzhi, annots. (Hefei: Huangsan Shushe, 1985), p. 46.

⁵¹ D.C. Lau, trans., *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching* (New York and London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1963), pp. 75-6.

⁵² Watson, *CWC*, p. 77.

⁵³ Watson, *CWC*, p. 225.

By nature I have loved hills and mountains.
 Accidentally I fell into the dusty net of the world,
 And thirteen years passed at once.
 The bird in a trammel longs for its former forest.
 A fish in a pond misses its native deep.
 I opened up wasteland at the southern wilds,
 Adhering to simple, I've returned to the fields.
 On a square plot less than two acres,
 My thatched hut is eight or nine measures.
 Elms and willows shade the back yard;
 Peach and plum cover the front of the hall.
 Dim in distance, is a remote village,
 Lingering vaguely, the country smoke.
 A dog barks deep in the alley,
 A cock crows atop a mulberry tree.
 My home and yard have no dusty goods-
 The empty room has sufficient leisureliness.
 For too long I have been confined in a cage,
 Now I came back again to naturalness.⁵⁴

Intimacy with nature as a literary tradition in China did not begin with Tao Qian or the Daoist classic. Since the dawn of Chinese civilization, the closeness and correspondence between nature and man have been presumed in Chinese consciousness. Nonetheless, Confucian and Daoist thinkers shed different insights on the relationship between man and nature. With man's world as the center of observation, Confucian scholars stressed nature's correspondences to man and human society. In their writings, nature has often been perceived as incarnations of patterns and operations of human culture, and interpreted with the significance and orders established by man. Daoist thinkers, on the other hand, emphasizes that man, "pattern[s] himself on nature,"⁵⁵ and that returning to naturalness are the optimal destiny of life. Taking nature as the true home of man and

⁵⁴ *Tao Jingjie (The Collection of Tao Qian)*, 1664 Tamura edition, reprint in Nagasawa Kikuya, comp., *Wakokubon kanshi shūsei* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1977), XVII, 2/14b/p. 21; cf. James Robert Hightower, trans., *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), p. 50; Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 144-5.

⁵⁵ Lin, *ZJK*, 10/6b/p. 118.

the natural as the cosmic order, Lao and Zhuang negate the existing institutions by alienating man from nature and naturalness. Their basic approach is to emancipate human beings from the net of significances and orders people have woven for themselves. Tao Qian's poetry exemplifies the latter set of concepts; it celebrates the realization and perfection of individuality through being one with nature and returning to naturalness. Tao Qian represents an aesthetic-recluse tradition that unifies life and art, or, to be more precise, transforms life into aesthetic experiences. In this aesthetic way of life, naturalness is the principle and, free and easy wandering is the essential state. The aesthetic nature of Tao's hermitage contributed crucially to his unshakable position in Chinese poetic history: Tao Qian was idol of the entire generation of the High Tang poets, whose achievements have been considered the apogee of classical Chinese poetry. The famous Song poet Su Shi (1037-1101) emulated him verse for verse. Since the Tang and the Song, Tao's poems were included in almost every general anthology, becoming the locus of the aesthetic-recluse tradition with which Bashō identified himself.⁵⁶

Through the articulation of the Wei-Jin poets and literati, free and easy wandering became not only the preferred way of life to literati who chose nonconformity and retreat, but also the core of a poetic and literary trend that is described later by critics as *Wei-Jin fengliu*. It is to the unconventionality of the "Seven Worthies" and the aesthetic nature of Tao Qian's hermitage, that we should look for clues to the lasting vitality of the aesthetic-recluse tradition and its influence on Bashō's *fūryū*.

Bashō's *Fūryū* and the *Xiaoyaoyou* Aesthetic

Bashō's admiration for the "Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove" and Tao Qian, can be clearly seen in his writings. One prose dedicated to his deceased disciple, Matsukura Ranran (1647-1693), for example, mentions that the Master has named Ranran's young son after Wang Rong (234-305), one of the "Seven Worthies." In the same prose, Bashō

⁵⁶ Fukunaga Mitsuji, *Chūgoku shūkyō shisōshi* (A History of Chinese Religious Thoughts), traces the relationship between Zhuangzi's "wandering of the mind" and the artistic sensibility of poets and artists of the Six Dynasties (222-589) in China, and draws a line from the concept *asobi* developed in that period to Bashō's poetry. See, Fukunaga Mitsuji, "Yūge to yūge sammai-Tōyō no 'asobi' no tetsugaku," in *Tōyō shisō*, XIII (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), pp. 98-107.

describes his beloved student Ranran as: “He had the spirits of Lao and Zhuang and dedicated his whole heart to poetry.”⁵⁷ This evidence shows Bashô’s particular fondness for the “Seven Worthies” and Daoist thought. Concerning the actual texts through which Bashô gained his knowledge of the *Wei-Jin fengliu* and Daoist thought, the Chinese poetry anthologies and handbooks spread in Japan through the *Gozan Zen* temples during the late medieval and Edo periods might have played an important role. Nieda Tadashi and Hirota Jirô have isolated more than 30 books, including Daoist and Confucian classics, histories and a large number of poetic anthologies and handbooks, from which Bashô made quotations and allusions.⁵⁸ However, as both Nieda and Hirota have noticed, some of those citations might well have come from other sources, such as the *Nô* songs (*yôkyoku*). Other possible sources are Japanese introductory books on Chinese poetry. By the end of the 1670’s, reading and writing Chinese poems had become so popular that besides various Chinese anthologies and collections that were reprinted in Japan, a large number of works were derived from Japanese writers from the popular Chinese poetic books. The writing style of those works demonstrates an explicit similarity to the theoretical writings of the *Shômon* poets,⁵⁹ indicating that the *Shômon* may have been familiar with these materials. As for the original Chinese sources that may have informed Bashô of Chinese poetry and poetics, scholars agree that rather than collections by individual writers, Bashô probably read more through the popular anthologies, such as *San ti shi* (Three Styles of Poetry),⁶⁰ *Gu wen zhen bao* (True treasures of ancient

⁵⁷ See “*Tô Matsukura Ranran*” (Mourning for Matsukura Ranran), in *KBZ*, Vol. 6, pp. 519-520. Bashô’s allusions to Tao Qian will be discussed in greater detail later.

⁵⁸ Nieda Tadashi, *Bashô ni eikyô shita kanshibun (The Chinese Poetry and Prose that Influenced Bashô)* (Tokyo: Kyôiku Shuppan Sentâ, 1976); Jiro Hirota, *Bashô no geijutsu-sono tenkai to hakei* (Tokyo: Yôseidô, 1968).

⁵⁹ Ueno Yôzô, *Bashôron (On Bashô)* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobo, 1986), pp. 273-302.

⁶⁰ *Tang xian san ti shi jia fa*, was compiled by Zhou Bi (1200-?1257) around the Chunyou era (1242-1251) of the Song Dynasty. The book collects poems by 167 Tang poets and arranges them under three major genres of Tang poetry: quatrain, heptasyllabic and pentasyllabic regulated poems. It is believed that the work was brought to Japan by Chûgan

literature),⁶¹ *Lian zhu shi ge* (Strings of Pearls: a classified selection from Tang Song poets),⁶² and *Jin xiu duan* (Collection of Brocade Pieces),⁶³ as well as some handbooks of general poetics, such as *Shi ren yu xie* (Gem Like Words of Poets),⁶⁴ and *Yuan ji huo fa shi xue quan shu* (Practical Knacks and Workable Methods: An encyclopedia of poetics).⁶⁵ In these

Engetsu (1300-1375), a famous poet/priest of the *Gozan* Zen temples in medieval Japan.

⁶¹ A work consisting of two parts in twenty chapters. The first part contains 208 poems from the Han to Tang Dynasties; the second part includes prose and prose-style poetry of 33 writers from the age of the *chu ci* to the Song. There are different opinions about the compiler of the work. Nieda suggests that it is compiled by Huang Jian and edited by Lin Yizheng at the end of Song or early Yuan times. See Nieda, *Bashô ni eikyô shita kanshibun*, p. 160. The work was introduced into Japan in the early Muromachi period and was widely used during Bashô's time.

⁶² *Jing xuan Tang Song qian jia lian zhu shi ge*, is a twenty-chapter work compiled by Yu Ji and Cai Zhengsun. The first two chapters are classified collections of couplets. Couplets are categorized according to their locations, antitheses and themes. For example, there are categories such as "Full Matching of Four Lines" and "Matching of Natural Scenes in the Opening Couplet." The remaining chapters are devoted to the use of words, grouping lines and couplets of different poets under specific words that are employed in them. The work was introduced to Japan by the *Gozan* priests/scholars. It has long been lost in China but has several reprints in Japan.

⁶³ A poetic anthology compiled by Tenin Ryôtaku (1422-1500), one of the most important writers of the *Gozan* literature. The volume collects poems from the Tang through Ming Dynasties.

⁶⁴ *Shiren yuxie*, is a twenty-chapter work (The Tahara edition of 1639, which is used in this study, is 21 volumes.) compiled by Wei Qingzhi (fl. 1240-1244). According to *Siku zongmu tiyao*, the work was completed during the reign of Du Zong (1265-1274). It collects excerpts from the poetic remarks of the Song Dynasty, especially that of the southern Song. The first eleven chapters center on discussions of general poetics, and the remaining chapters focus on criticism of poets from ancient times until the Song.

⁶⁵ A 24-chapter manual of popular poetic themes and imagery. The preface states the work was compiled by Wang Shizhen (1526-1590), the

popular anthologies and handbooks, the aesthetic-recluse taste articulated by the *Wei-Jin fengliu* tradition has become not only an established aesthetic value, but also part and parcel of the poetic language. *Shiren yuxie*, for example, gives particular importance to Tao Qian's position in Chinese poetic history. Chapter thirteen treats major poets and poems before the Tang Dynasty with six sections. While all of the other poets are grouped by period and covered by five sections, Tao Qian alone is discussed in a special section. In defining the "Poetic Taste," the compiler sets out four categories. The second category uses Tao Qian to enunciate "The Taste of the Extraordinary." One excerpt quotes the famous Song poet Su Shi's comments on Tao Qian:

"Yuanming's [Tao Qian] poems may appear tame at first glance, but when you read them repeatedly, you will find an extraordinary taste in there. See, for example,... 'Plucking chrysanthemums beneath the eastern fence/Leisurely I glimpse the Southern Mountain' and 'Dim in distance, is a remote village/Lingering vaguely, the country smoke/A dog barks in the alley/A cock crows atop a mulberry tree.' These lines are supreme in ingenuity and far-reaching in meaning; his use of words is so precise and mature that it can be compared to the great carpenter who leaves no trace of cutting when whirling his hatchet; those who don't know this taste will never understand these lines no matter how hard they try."⁶⁶

The comparison of Tao's control of words to the skill of the great carpenter is based on a story in the *Zhuangzi*, which describes how Carpenter Shi can skillfully slice off a speck of plaster on the tip of a man's nose without injuring him. Su Shi cites the *Zhuangzi* to praise the naturalness of Tao's poetry. More noteworthy is the taste of Tao's poetry celebrated by both Su Shi and the compiler of the book. Tao's poems cited here were famous among Chinese intellectuals until today. The first couplet, in particular, is a classic of recluse literature.

celebrated critic of Ming Dynasty, and edited by Yang Cong, but Nieda suspects that this might be forged authorship. See Nieda, *Bashô ni eikyô shita kanshibun*, p. 294.

⁶⁶ *Shiren yuxie*, 10/3a,b/p. 95.

These sources, in turn, provide Bashô with handy materials for composing poetry. Bashô's works written after his retreat to Fukagawa show clear marks of the *Wei-Jin fengliu* tradition. In describing his Plantain Tree Hut, for instance, he writes: "Chrysanthemums flourish beneath my eastern fence, and the bamboos are like gentlemen by my northern window."⁶⁷ The first half of the sentence obviously draws upon Tao Qian's verse. The second half reminds us of the image of the "Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove."

Modeling upon his Chinese forerunners, Bashô attempted to manifest *fûryû* in both his life and poetry. Indeed, Bashô's hut dwelling and travel were not like the "hermitage" or "pilgrim" in western sense. He constantly met people, visited the historical sites of literary monuments, and composed *haikai* with other poets. These activities, as Kyorai (1651-1704) wrote, were an important part of the pursuit of *fûryû*:

"There are many unusual men of *fûryû* in the world.
No wonder the late master had journeyed throughout
the country for days and months, seeking to meet
various people who are connoisseurs of poetry."⁶⁸

Having this purpose in mind, it is not surprising that Bashô's major travel accounts all center around poems that record his meetings with the "men of *fûryû*." His first major travel account, *Nozarashi Kikô* (Exposure in the Fields, a Travel Account, 1684),⁶⁹ contains many poems of this kind, such as, "Visiting a Retired Man's Thatched House," "Staying Over Night at a Priest's Place," "On Seeing a Traveler," and "Spending New Year's Eve at a Mountain House." These occasional poems dominate the development of the account, while the prose narrative functions only as rough connections between or brief introductions to them. The structure of *Nozarashi Kikô* reveals that from the first journey, creating an appropriate context or situation in order to compose poems seems to be the traveler's top priority, and Bashô often consciously associates such context and situation to the *Wei-Jin fengliu*. The nature of the poetic context Bashô values can be seen in the following paragraph in *Nozarashi Kikô*.

⁶⁷ "*Bashô o utsusu kotoba*" (On Replanting My Plantain Tree, 1692), in *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 503.

⁶⁸ "*Kyoriku ate shokan*" (Kyorai's Letters to Kyoriku, 1695), in *KBZ*, Vol. 7, p. 476.

⁶⁹ Translation of the title is from Donald Keene, *World Within Walls* (New York: Grove Press, 1976), p. 80. Henceforth abbreviated *WW*.

Entering the country of Yamato, we came to a place called *Take no Uchi*⁷⁰ at the province of Katsuge. Because this was my company Chiri's birthplace, we spent several days there resting our feet. There was a house deep amid the bamboo groves.

Watayumi ya The sounds of the cotton bow
Biwa ni nagusamu Are comforting like lute
Take no oku Deep amid the bamboo groves.⁷¹

The comparison of the sounds of the cotton bow to music reminds us of the poem on the rice planting song, in which listening to a rice planting song is described as *fûryû*. Although the poet does not say explicitly, the theme of this poem is also one of *fûryû*. The connection between this verse and the *fengliu* tradition is made more explicit in another short prose introducing the circumstance of the poem.

Amid Bamboo Groves

When I was staying at a place called "Amid the Bamboo Groves" in Yamato, the village chief often came to see me in the mornings and evenings to, I assume, comfort me in the tedium of my travels. This gentleman is truly unusual. His mind wanders freely in the high, while his body mingles with common people, such as grass-mowers, woodcutters and hunters. Carrying a hoe, he enters the garden of Tao Qian; leading an ox, he identifies himself with the recluse at Mount Ji. He is diligent and tireless at his duties, and he also appears humble, taking pleasure in poverty. This village chief must be the kind of man who seeks retreat amid a city and his really attained it.

Watayumi ya The sounds of the cotton bow
Biwa ni nagusamu Are comforting like lute
Take no oku Deep amid the bamboo groves.⁷²

Although the village chief was not a recluse in the strict meaning of the word, this did not stop Bashô from linking him to Tao Qian and other

⁷⁰ The meaning of the name is "Amid the Bamboo Groves."

⁷¹ *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 56.

⁷² "*Take no oku*," pp. 306-7.

famous Chinese recluses, or from praising him for the detachment of his mind. Mount Ji, a mountain in modern China's Henan province, is known as the place where the famous recluses Xu You and Cao Fu lived. The *Zhuangzi* describes Xu as a lofty recluse who values individual freedom more than power and wealth.⁷³ Without proper knowledge of the spirit of *xiaoyaoyou* and its embodiment in Chinese recluse tradition, the meaning of Bashô's narrative in the account is difficult to understand. However, Bashô and his disciples seem to see the Daoist ideals and the recluse taste as one aesthetic tradition. In their vocabulary, "recluse" represents sheer poetic qualities, and to discover these qualities and to compose poems on them are *fûryû*. In this meaning, Bashô's short prose above is more an assertion of the poetics of *fûryû* than a depiction of the village chief.

The assertion of *fûryû* was a major theme of Bashô and his school in the 1680's. Besides the popular Chinese poetry books, the reading of the *Zhuangzi*, especially Lin Xiyi's interpretations of the work, the *Zhuangzi Juanzhai kouyi*, also played an important role in shaping Bashô's perspective of the recluse tradition as *fûryû*. Bashô's interest in the *Zhuangzi* has long been noticed by Japanese scholars,⁷⁴ and it has been proven that Bashô read the *Zhuangzi* through Lin Xiyi's annotations. When discussing the relationship between *haikai* and the *Zhuangzi*, Japanese scholars have concentrated on the philosophical connotations of Lin's words. Although this kind of examination is necessary and helpful in accessing the philosophical influence of Lin's text on *haikai* poets, an important feature of Lin Xiyi's explanation of the *Zhuangzi* has been virtually overlooked; throughout his interpretation, Lin frequently cites poems, even those that are not traditionally considered as representing Daoist traits, to explain Daoist principles. He also ascribes the achievements of a number of great Chinese poets to the reading of the *Zhuangzi*. As a result, he leaves the reader with an impression of the prime importance of the Daoist traits in Chinese poetry. For example, of *Zhuangzi*'s words: "Harmonize them all with the Heavenly Equality, leave them to their endless changes, and so live out your years," Lin writes:

Not waiting [for one shifting voice to pass
judgement on another] but emphasizing
harmony, so one can "harmonize them with the

⁷³ Watson, *CWC*, pp. 32-3.

⁷⁴ For information on earlier studies on the topic, see "Bibliography" attached.

Heavenly Equality;” harmonizing them with the Heavenly Equality, then one can wander freely along with the changes as one likes, and live out one’s years as one wishes. This is what Zhuangzi means by “leave them to their endless changes, and so live out your years.” To “live out your years,” is what Du Fu has written: “Being natural and unrestrained (*xiaosa*), I spend my days and months.” Being so, one not only can live out one’s years, but also can forget the years and months, forget the meanings and reasons, hence, rouse oneself freely in the realm of Nothingness. The word “rouse” here has the same implications as those of *xiaoyao*—to enjoy oneself free and easy in the realm of Nothingness, and spend one’s whole life in the realm.⁷⁵

Du Fu’s (712-770) verse cited in Lin’s explanation is from “*Zi jing fu Fengxian-xian yonghuai wubai zi shi*” (A 500 character poem singing of my feelings: moving from the capital to Fengxian Prefecture, 755). The poem was written right before the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion, which brought Tang China into years of political turmoil in the middle of the eighth century. The poem begins with a discursive, self-mocking analysis of the poet’s unsuccessful pursuit for office and, in the thirteenth and fourteenth lines, puts forth the statement, “I do have an aptitude for rivers and seas/Being natural and unrestrained, I spend my days and months.” The expression “rivers and seas” was traditionally used to indicate retreat in Chinese literature.⁷⁶ Although Du Fu is never considered a typical recluse poet in Chinese literature, Lin takes Du Fu’s verse as an example of the life of a Daoist recluse and as an illustration of “free and easy wandering.” Ishikawa Hachirō argues that Lin’s interpretation has affected Bashō’s understanding of Du Fu. He notes that Bashō characterizes Du Fu’s poetry as “*share*,” which refers to an unrestrained temperament similar to Lin Xiyi’s interpretation of Du’s

⁷⁵ Lin, *ZJK*, p. 436.

⁷⁶ In the fifteenth chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, men in retirement are referred to as “men of rivers and seas.”

poem in the *Zhuangzi Juanzhai kouyi*.⁷⁷ Du Fu's poetry is well known for its complexity and has been characterized by commentators in many different terms, but has rarely been described as "unrestrained." Bashô's peculiar characterization of Du Fu, according to Ishikawa, has much to do with Lin's interpretation quoted above. The word *share* in Japanese has a *kanji*, *sha* (C. *sa*), which also appears in *xiaosa* (natural and unrestrained), the word in Du's verse. Ishikawa points out that the *Shômon* poets always use *share* in the same sense as *xiaosa* in Lin Xiyi's interpretations of the *Zhuangzi*. He suggests, therefore, that Lin's interpretation of the *Zhuangzi* has led the *Shômon* poets to locate Du Fu in the Daoist recluse tradition.⁷⁸

Findings like this show that Lin Xiyi's interpretation greatly reinforced Bashô's impression of the correspondences between the Daoist principles and the recluse tradition in Chinese poetry. In his world, Daoist ideas are enthusiastically used because this practice is considered poetic, and Chinese poems are often cited for their embodiment of the spirit of *xiaoyaoyou/shôyôyû*. Following this *fûryû* tradition, Bashô shares his aesthetic experience with his Chinese forerunners, yet he creates a world entirely new. In "An Impression of My Thatched Cottage," Bashô writes of the leaky roof of his Plantain Hut, a topic that has been repeatedly treated by the great Chinese poets.

<i>Bashô nowaki shite</i>	Plantain leaves in the storm—
<i>Tarai ni ame wo</i>	Tonight I spend listening
<i>Kiku yo kana</i>	To rain drip in a tub. ⁷⁹

The implicit connection between this poem and Chinese poetry is revealed by Bashô's prefatory note to the poem in *Ise kikô* (A Journey to Ise).

Du Fu wrote a poem on his grass-thatched roof ruined by the wind. Su Shi, deeply touched by Du's poem, also composed a verse on his leaky roof.

⁷⁷ The term Bashô used is recorded in Hattori Ransetsu (1654-1707), "'Preface' to *Inaka no Kuawase*" (Hokku Contest in the Boondocks, 1680), in *KBZ*, Vol. 7, p.357.

⁷⁸ "*Bashô no To Ho juyô shôron*" (An Examination of Bashô's Reception of Du Fu), in *Nihon bungaku Kenkyû shiryô* (Tokyo: Yûsei Dô, 1977), VII, pp. 47-51.

⁷⁹ *KBZ*, Vol. 1, p. 63.

Listening to the rain beating plantain leaves from the world of Du Fu and Su Shi, I lie alone in my grass-thatched cottage.⁸⁰

Du Fu's poem mentioned here is "*Maowu wei qiufeng suo po ge*" (My Thatched Roof is Ruined by the Autumn Wind, 761). The title of Su Shi's poem, however, is not clear. Some Japanese scholars have suggested that "*Lian yu jiang zhang*" (Continuous rain: the rivers have overflowed, 1095) is likely to be the one in Bashō's mind. While both poems portray a lonely, rainy night, they are completely different in style and approach. Du Fu's poetic vision focuses on reality. The poet depicts in detail how autumn wind tears the thatch from his roof and blows the stalks everywhere, and how the children from the nearby village make fun of the speaker who is impotent with age. Facing the ruthless wind and people who took his thatch away before his eyes, he "screamed lips dry and throat raw, but no use." He sighs, "Then I made my way home, leaning on staff, sighing to myself."⁸¹ Miserably drenched under the leaky roof at night, the poet wishes to own a mansion of a hundred thousand rooms to house the poor scholars of the world. On the contrary, Su Shi's protagonist is calm and detached. Living in exile in his sixties, the speaker projects in the poem not only the scene of a rainy night, but also the state of his existence. He portrays himself like an eccentric who is in the scene yet remains beyond, laughing at the reality with a transcendent smile. Listening to the noise of the rain on the leaves of the banyan, the speaker does not care if it stops or keeps raining. "Even if it clears I have no place to go—" he says, "let it keep on all night pelting the empty stairs."⁸²

In Chinese literary criticism, these two poems are considered as representing two different trends: Du's is praised for its verisimilitude and social consciousness, while Su's is celebrated for its attitude transcending the reality. Interestingly, Bashō mentions neither Du's social concern, nor Su's attitude. He preserves, however, the central images that have appeared in the poems of Du Fu and Su Shi—the wind, the rain, the leaky roof and the sleepless protagonist—and focuses his vision on an aesthetic moment, in which the present experience of the poet resonates with and

⁸⁰ KBZ, Vol. 6, p. 296.

⁸¹ Stephen Owen, trans., *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 207-8.

⁸² Burton Watson, trans., *Su Tung-P'o* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 124.

fuses' into the poetic past. In this vision all the details of life have disappeared. There is only the speaker who listens and the rain that is heard; the rain, according to the poet, is from the world of his Chinese forerunners. With the rain as a transforming agent, the poetic horizon becomes symbolic: the storm connotes the force of nature; the sound of the leaking raindrops evokes loneliness and solitude; and the opening image, "plantain tree" (*bashō*), implies the poet's eccentric self. The image of the plantain tree, as described in Bashō's "On Replanting the Plantain Tree," signifies a typical eccentric in the Daoist spirit:

Although the plantain tree occasionally blooms, the flowers are not the least showy; its trunk is thick, yet not worthy of a timberman's hatchet. It belongs to the kind of "useless" trees in the deep mountains,⁸³ and has a venerable character. Priest Huaisu⁸⁴ used to wield his writing brush on plantain leaves; Zhang Hengqu⁸⁵ was spurred in learning by watching the new plantain leaves grow. But I follow neither of them. I simply enjoy the shade of the plantain tree, love it for the ease with which it is torn in the wind and rain.⁸⁶

In classical Japanese poetry and *Nō* texts, plantain leaves were conventionally used as a metaphor for the transience of man's life because

⁸³ An allusion to the "*san mu*" (The Mountain Tree) chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. See Lin, *ZJK*, 6/45a,b/p. 25.

⁸⁴ Huaisu (634-707?), a famous calligrapher of Tang time. It is said that he was poor and used to practice writing on plantation leaves.

⁸⁵ Zhang Zai (1022-1077), a celebrated Neo-Confucian scholar. He has a poem on the plantain tree—"...that I could cultivate new virtue, as the new hearts of the plantation tree/and make progress in learning, like its shooting new leaves." See *Zhangzi quanshu* (The Complete Works of Zhangzi), *Sibu beiyao* edition, p. 13/12b. Both the story about Huaisu and the poem by Zhang Zai are cited in the entry "*Bajiao*" (Plantation Tree), in *Yaunji huofa*, p. 18/34. Bashō must have gotten these materials from that source.

⁸⁶ *KBZ*, Vol. 6, p. 504.

they were easily broken by the wind.⁸⁷ A poem by Bashô's beloved poet Saigyô clearly employs the image in this vein.

<i>Kaze fukeba</i>	When the wind blows
<i>Ada ni nariyuku</i>	It proves transience—
<i>Bashôba no</i>	The plantain leaves laid waste;
<i>Areba to mi o mo</i>	Is this a symbol of the world,
<i>Tanomubeki ka wa</i>	Upon which men depend? ⁸⁸

Although Bashô, too, captures the fragility of the plantain leaves, the qualities he emphasizes are the uselessness of plantain, its contentment in solitude, and its submissiveness to forces of nature. This celebration of the nonpragmatic quality of a plant is reminiscent of the following words Zhuangzi said to Huizi about a mountain tree: “Now you have this big tree and you're distressed because it's useless. Why don't you plant it in Not-Even-Anything Village, or the field of Broad-and-Boundless, relax and do nothing by its side, or lie down for a free and easy sleep under it?”⁸⁹ This idles, “worthless,” somehow eccentric yet venerable image is the characteristic self-portrait in Bashô's poetry. Perhaps it is also the poetic self that Bashô sensed and abstracted from the poems of Du Fu and Su Shi.

As shown in the examples above, Bashô's poetry is highly intertextual. He draws widely upon Chinese sources in order to enrich the meaning and capacity of the brief *haikai* form. In building intertextual structures, Bashô is also highly selective. He is particularly interested in the elements of eccentricity and unconventionality—elements he considers as *fûryû* and associates with the Daoist spirit in Chinese aesthetic-recluse

⁸⁷ According to Donald H. Shively, the name used to refer to the plantation plant in Japanese poetry, *niwakigusa* (plant shunned in the gardens), indicates that some prejudice or even taboo existed against the plantation plant. It was shunned probably because Buddhist texts often use it as a metaphor for the fragility of the human body. See “Bashô—The Man and the Plant,” in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 16-17 (1953-1954), p. 148.

⁸⁸ Watanabe Tamotsu, annot., *Saigyô Sankashû zen chûkai* (A Complete Annotation of Saigyô's: The Mountain House Collection) (Tokyo: Kazama Shobô, 1971), p. 571. Saigyô, a late Heian-early Kamakura *waka* poet and priest, is a paramount figure in Japanese poetic history. His legacy, especially his poems on nature and travel, exerted a great influence on Bashô.

⁸⁹ Lin, *ZJK*, 1/13b, 14a/p. 418; trans. from Watson, *CWC*, p. 35.

tradition. Bashô often abstracts these elements from a text without paying much attention to the general tendency of the work or the author, as seen in his allusion to Du Fu. However, in pursuing the true *fûryû*, Bashô did not simply borrow the stock materials from the Daoist classics and Chinese poetic handbooks. Instead, he chose to relive the aesthetic experience of “free and easy wandering,” to seek what his forerunners had sought, not to trail along behind them. In this meaning, Bashô’s “eccentric ways” opened a poetic horizon where the present and the past met, and the spatial and temporal dialogic contexts merged. On this horizon of *fûryû*, Bashô and his school elevated *haikai* to a true art.

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