The Rhetoric of Death and Discipleship in Premodern Japan

Sōchō's *Death of Sōgi* and Kikaku's *Death of Master Bashō*

H. Mack Horton

JAPAN RESEARCH MONOGRAPH 19

Notes to this edition

This is an electronic edition of the printed book. Minor corrections may have been made within the text; new information and any errata appear on the current page only.

Japan Research Monograph 19
The Rhetoric of Death and Discipleship in Premodern Japan: Sōchō's Death of Sōgi *and Kikaku's* Death of Master Bashō
H. Mack Horton

ISBN-13: 978-1-55729-185-1 (electronic)
ISBN-13: 978-1-55729-184-4 (print)
ISBN-10: 1-55729-184-5 (print)

Please visit the IEAS Publications website at
http://ieas.berkeley.edu/publications/
for more information and to see our catalogue.

Send correspondence and manuscripts to

Katherine Lawn Chouta, Managing Editor
Institute of East Asian Studies
1995 University Avenue, Suite 510H
Berkeley, CA 94704-2318 USA
ieaseditor@berkeley.edu

Institute *of*
East Asian Studies
University of California, Berkeley

October 2019

JAPAN RESEARCH MONOGRAPH 19

CENTER FOR JAPANESE STUDIES

The Rhetoric of Death and Discipleship in Premodern Japan

Sōchō's *Death of Sōgi* and Kikaku's *Death of Master Bashō*

H. Mack Horton

Institute *of* East Asian Studies
University of California, Berkeley

A publication of the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley. Although the institute is responsible for the selection and acceptance of manuscripts in this series, responsibility for the opinions expressed and for the accuracy of statements rests with their authors.

The Japan Research Monograph series is one of several publication series sponsored by the Institute of East Asian Studies in conjunction with its constituent units. The other series include the China Research Monograph series, the Japan Research Monograph series, the Korea Research Monograph series, the Research Papers and Policy Studies series, and the Transnational Korea series.

Send correspondence and manuscripts to
Katherine Lawn Chouta, Managing Editor
Institute of East Asian Studies
1995 University Avenue, Suite 510H
Berkeley, CA 94720
ieaseditor@berkeley.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Horton, H. Mack, author. | Socho, 1448-1532. Sogi shuen no ki. English. | Kikaku, 1661-1707. Basho-o shuen no ki. English.
Title: The rhetoric of death and discipleship in premodern Japan : Socho's Death of Sogi and Kikaku's Death of Master Basho / H. Mack Horton.
Description: Berkeley : Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, [2019] | Series: Japan research monograph ; 19 | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018059170| ISBN 9781557291844 (alk. paper) | ISBN 1557291845 (alk. paper) | ISBN 9781557291851 (E-ISBN) | ISBN 1557291853 (E-ISBN)
Subjects: LCSH: Socho, 1448–1532—Criticism and interpretation. | Kikaku, 1661–1707—Criticism and interpretation. | Sogi, 1421–1502. | Matsuo, Basho, 1644–1694. | Japanese poetry—1185–1600—History and criticism. | Japanese poetry—Edo period, 1600–1868—History and criticism.
Classification: LCC PL792.S58 H67 2019 | DDC 895.61/24—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018059170

Copyright © 2019 by the Regents of the University of California.
Printed in the United States of America.
All rights reserved.

Cover image: *Master Bashō Entering Nirvana* (detail), by Yosa Buson. Courtesy of Bashō-ō Kinenkan.

Cover design by H. Mack Horton and Mindy Chen.

Contents

Illustrations ix

Preface xi

Introduction to the Translations 1

The Death of Sōgi 41

The Death of Master Bashō 51

Notes 59

Works Cited 105

Index to the Poems 123

General Index and Character Glossary 129

Illustrations

Figures

1. The opening page of *The Death of Master Bashō*. xv
2. The final journey of Sōgi and Sōchō. 4
3. Portrait of Kikaku in *Shokō gasan*. 11
4. The opening page of a manuscript of *The Death of Sōgi*. 24

Plates

Follow page xvi

1. Portrait of Sōgi with an inscription said to be in his own hand.
2. Portrait of Sōgi with poetic inscriptions.
3. Portrait of Sōchō signed by Kanō Ryūsetsu.
4. Portrait of “Saioku Sōchō” as reflected in the Edo popular imagination.
5. Detail of *Gathering of Haikai Immortals* signed by Chōsō (Yosa Buson).
6. Portrait of Bashō and his traveling companion.
7. Bashō pausing by a willow.
8. Bashō on his deathbed at the home of Hanaya Nizaemon.
9. *Master Bashō Entering Nirvana*, by Yosa Buson.

Preface

Sōgi and Bashō are the two most famous practitioners of Japanese linked verse, an art that captivated poetic minds for centuries. Their deaths were of commensurate importance to their literary communities, and two of their preeminent disciples, Sōchō and Kikaku, immediately composed accounts of their teachers' last days.[1] *The Death of Sōgi* (*Sōgi shūenki*, 1502), by Sōchō, and *The Death of Master Bashō* (*Bashō-ō shūenki*, 1694), by Kikaku, are among the most important death accounts in the premodern Japanese literary corpus. They provide vital information about the careers of two of Japan's iconic literary figures and their circles of disciples, while themselves manifesting appropriate stylistic accomplishment. And in Buddhist terms, they bear witness to the conviction that poetry itself can constitute a form of prayer that contributes to the repose and rebirth of the deceased. Whereas death poetry in Japan constitutes a major literary subgenre, death accounts in prose are relatively few, though, as we will see, they proliferated during the Edo period (1600–1868).[2]

This book provides annotated translations of both memorials, Sōchō's account of Sōgi's death constituting an upper verse to which Kikaku linked his lower verse describing the death of Bashō.[3] They are preceded here by an introduction that outlines how these thanatographies served the needs of the departed and the bereaved—death and discipleship—and how both memorials were subjectively fashioned in response to venerable literary precedents and to newly developing standards of taste.

Though Sōgi, Bashō, Sōchō, and Kikaku were all to varying degrees students of traditional *waka* (or *uta*) composition, it was instead to various forms of linked verse that they dedicated their primary creative energies. That art, at once literary, performative, and competitive, gave rise to some of Japan's greatest moments of poetry and poetic prose, and the opening verse of the sequence survives today in Japan's best-known verse form, the haiku.

Introduction to the Translations

"Death is always a central element of a culture's understanding of the world and humankind's place in it. Each death inevitably alters the social relations that obtain among the living, but this social disjunction takes on heightened importance when death removes an influential political figure from the world."[7] While Gary Ebersole limits his apt discussion of what he calls "the politics of death" to courtly elites, his observation also applies to transitional moments in literary leadership, when a teacher dies and his successors must reconstitute their world in his absence. This was never more true than in medieval and early modern Japan, when a demonstrated place in an established literary lineage was crucial to poetic legitimacy. The relationship between master and disciple was especially close among linked-verse poets, whose very art took shape in communal composition. Linkage–between poems and between poets–defined their enterprise, and a death represented a particular crisis to identity and continuity. Confronted by the loss of eminent poets, disciples began to record the last days of those deceased masters, the details of their deaths, and the rituals performed by the bereaved. One term that came to be applied to such records was *shūenki* (or *shūen no ki*), "death accounts," and these gradually became an institution in the linked-verse world.

As indicated in the preface, the deaths of the two greatest linked-verse masters (*rengashi*), Sōgi in the medieval era (1185–1600) and Bashō during the Genroku (1688–1704) efflorescence in the Edo period (1600–1868), occasioned the two best-known *shūenki* accounts, *The Death of Sōgi*, written soon after that linked-verse master's death in 1502 by his disciple Sōchō, and *The Death of Master Bashō*, composed immediately after Bashō's death nearly two centuries later in 1694 by his disciple Kikaku, who appropriated into his own composition elements of Sōchō's work.[8] These accounts of literary life and death portray not only the final days of two of the principal figures in Japanese letters but also the mechanics of succession in the late medieval

and early modern literary worlds.[9] And they established a precedent for such memorials thereafter.

The Death of Sōgi

By the end of his life, Inō Sōgi (1421–1502, plates 1, 2) had come to be recognized as one of history's greatest linked-verse poets and also as a repository of Japan's classical literary tradition. To have achieved primacy in the linked-verse world was eminence indeed, for that verse form had surpassed even *waka* in popularity by the late medieval period. A particularly important step on the way to renown occurred between 1471 and 1473, when Sōgi acquired the "Secret Teachings on *Kokinshū*" (*Kokin denju*) from the Kanto warrior literatus Tō no Tsuneyori (ca. 1401–ca. 1484). Those teachings, a body of jealously guarded lore about the *Kokinshū* anthology that constituted the foundation of the *waka* corpus, conferred upon their possessor undisputed poetic authority.[10] They were essential for Sōgi, whose forebears were most likely of modest samurai stock, to play a leading role at the highest levels of the poetic world.

Sōgi's closest disciple was the linked-verse master Saiokuken Sōchō (1448–1532, plates 3, 4), who traveled with him and also collaborated with him and a third poet, Botanka Shōhaku (1443–1527), on two of the most famous *renga* sequences, *Minase sangin* (Three poets at Minase, 1488) and *Yuyama sangin* (Three poets at Yuyama, 1491).[11] Sōchō also went to meet Sōgi in 1501 when the aged master was staying with his Uesugi daimyo patrons in Echigo (Niigata Prefecture). His account of the trip and its unhappy end, *The Death of Sōgi*, was a memorial of the master and a concrete manifestation of the fact of transition. It was also Sōchō's first foray into the realm of memoir writing. He would go on to write a number of other diaries, as would, of course, Bashō after him.[12]

Sōchō sent his account of Sōgi's last journey, death, and aftermath to the court literatus Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537), a close friend of both Sōgi and Sōchō.[13] But it is also a public document meant for a wider readership. It begins with the master's departure from the capital, Kyoto:

> The aged Sōgi, perhaps tired of his old cottage, resolved to leave the capital on a journey. For his first verse that spring, he composed this:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | mi ya kotoshi | For me this year |
> | miyako o yoso no | the spring haze of the capital |
> | harugasumi | will be far away. |
>
> At the end of autumn that year, he departed for the Koshi region, heedless even of the name Returning Mountain, to call on acquaintances

The Death of Sōgi

The aged Sōgi, perhaps tired of his old cottage, resolved to leave the capital on a journey. For his first verse that spring, he composed this:

For me this year
the spring haze of the capital
will be far away.[147]

At the end of autumn that year, he departed for the Koshi region, heedless even of the name Returning Mountain, to call on acquaintances in the province of Echigo.[148] Two years passed before I heard he was there, and I set out from the province of Suruga to join him at the end of the sixth month in the first year of the Bunki era [1501].[149]

I crossed the Ashigara Mountains and beheld Mount Fuji in the distance, passed by the waves breaking on the little island out in the Sea of Izu and by Koyurugi Strand, then stopped briefly at Kamakura, where the days of the Generals of the Right and the glory of the Nine Reigns seemed to be once again before my eyes.[150] The pines on the beach near Tsurugaoka Shrine and the roof tiles of Yukinoshita seemed even more impressive than those of Iwashimizu.[151] One could drain dry a sea of ink describing the beauty of the mountains and the recesses of the valleys.

Here for the last eight or nine years the Yamanouchi and Ōgigayatsu have been at war, and the eight Kanto provinces are divided between them.[152] I had heard that travel was difficult, but since I had acquaintances here and there along the route, I set out over Musashi Plain, crossed through Kōzuke, and reached the provincial capital of Echigo on the first of the ninth month.

I was greeted by Sōgi, and we spoke of the intervening months since we had last met. I then expected to take my leave and travel to the capital, but the weeks on the road had begun to tell, and I lay ill for some time. Toward the end of the tenth month I recovered and decided to set off, but

The Death of Master Bashō

Springtime in blossom brought him only a heavy head, leaden eyes, and a melancholy heart. His cottage, though cool in summer with its rocks and spring-fed stream, was also very damp, making for sleepless nights and listless mornings. In the autumn, his gloom grew only worse, gnawing at his vitals. When he composed "The worst / did not come to pass—in the snow / withered tassel-grass" and felt the evanescence of life so keenly that he barred his gate, those who came to visit did so in vain and departed, remarking sadly that he seemed to have aged a great deal that year.[213]

The master lived alone and in poverty, yet in virtue and accomplishment he was rich beyond measure. How inscrutable the karmic causes and conditions that made two thousand and more disciples from even the most remote hinterlands rely on him alone!

In the winter of the third year of Tenna [1683] his thatched hut in Fukagawa was suddenly engulfed in flames, and he escaped through the smoke by wading into the water and covering his head with a straw mat.[214] This brought him his first intimations of the fragility of the jeweled cord of life.[215] He realized then that the world is a burning house, and there can be no fixed abode.

In mid-summer of the next year he went to live in the mountains of Kai Province, but he found the winter near Mount Fuji inhospitable and so, thinking to "slip into the state of no-self under the midnight moon," he returned to the site of his old hermitage. Overjoyed to see him again, his disciples built him a new cottage on the site of the old one in the burnt field and put in a single banana plant [*bashō*], thinking it might afford him some trifling pleasure.[216] He lived in rustic seclusion, as in this verse composed in the rain: "The banana plant in a gale— / I listen at night / to the raindrops in the basin."[217] But people who loved peaceful solitude often called on him, and he came to be known as Master Bashō.[218]

At that time I had been paying visits to the abbot of Engakuji, Daiten, because of his skill in divination, and at one point I asked him to tell the

Notes

Preface

[1] Sōgi 宗祇 (1421–1502) bore the surname 飯尾, read Inō or Iio. Sōchō 宗長 (1448–1532), author of *Sōgi shūenki* 宗祇終焉記, now bears the pseudonym Saiokuken 柴屋軒, though it is more likely to have been Saioku originally (as it appears in plate 4 and in his friend Sanjōnishi Sanetaka's letter to him [n. 212]). Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694) earlier used the poetic name Tōsei 桃青. Kikaku 其角 (1661–1707), author of *Bashō-ō shūenki* 芭蕉翁終焉記, originally used his mother's surname, Enomoto 榎本. Tanaka (2000, p. 24) argues that the original name was 榎下, which he reads Enoshita but could also be read Enomoto. Kikaku later adopted the surname Takarai 宝井. He also used the sobriquet Shinshi 晋子.

On the life and work of Sōgi, see, for example, Kaneko 1983 and Okuda 1998, and for a concise introduction in English, with primary and secondary sources, see Carter 1999. On the life and work of Bashō, the bibliography is vast, but I have often resorted to Abe 1982 and 1984. For biographies in English, there are Ueda 1970, Ebersole 1980, and Shirane 1998.

[2] Harold Bolitho (2003, p. 23) draws attention to the relative paucity of intimate prose accounts of death in the Edo era and provides a corrective in the form of translations of three "thanatologues" from the period. The first (pp. 38–52) is by the priest Zenjō 善成 on the death of his son Mutsumaru 陸丸; it appears in his *Shōdō nisshi* 唱導日誌 (Preaching record) under the title *Mutsumaru myōju no ki* 陸丸命終ノ記 (Account of Mutsumaru's demise). Asaeda Zenshō includes a version in his *Zoku myōkōninden kiso kenkyū* (pp. 100–118). The second (pp. 64–86) is the description by Kobayashi Issa 小林一茶 (1763–1828) of the death of his father, Yagobei (or Yagohei) 弥五兵衛, *Chichi no shūen nikki* 父の終焉日記 (Diary of my father's death). (For other translations of this account, see Huey 1984 and Motoyama 1992.) The third (pp. 114–146) is the record that the scholar Hirose Kyokusō 廣瀬旭荘 (1807–1863) made of the death of his wife Matsuko 松子. It appears in his *Tsuishiroku* 追思録 (Recollections). Kyokusō's account contains a little poetry in Chinese, but only Issa's is a poetic account of the kind explored here.

[3] The base text that I have used for the translation of *Sōgi shūenki* is the Naikaku Bunko ms., edited by Tsurusaki Hirō 鶴崎裕雄 and Fukuda Hideichi 福田秀一, which appears in Fukuda et al., 1990, pp. 449–461. The Naikaku Bunko ms. and its

Works Cited

Note: Premodern works are cited by title; modern works, by author or editor; and translations from classical Japanese generally by translator.

Abbreviations

GR	*Gunsho ruijū*
HJAS	*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
MN	*Monumenta Nipponica*
NKBT	*Nihon koten bungaku taikei*
NKBZ	*Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*
SKGR	*Shinkō gunsho ruijū*
SNKBT	*Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei*
SNKBZ	*Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*
SNKS	*Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei*
ZGR	*Zoku gunsho ruijū*

Sources

Abe Masami 阿部正美. 1982. *Shinshū Bashō denki kōsetsu* 新修芭蕉伝記考説 (*Kōjitsu hen* 行実編). Meiji Shoin.

———. 1984. *Shinshū Bashō denki kōsetsu* 新修芭蕉伝記考説 (*Sakuhin hen* 作品編). Meiji Shoin.

Adachi Naorō 足立直郎. 1937. *Bashō shūenki* (*gikyokushū*) 芭蕉終焉記 (戯曲集). Kyōwa Shoin.

Akahane Manabu 赤羽学. 1974. "Bashō no shūen" 芭蕉の終焉. In *Bashō-ō tsuizen no nikki*, pp. 57–111.

Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川龍之介. 1918. *Karenoshō* 枯野抄. In *Akutagawa Ryūnosukeshū*, pp. 223–231. Ed. Nakamura Shin'ichirō 中村真一郎. Vol. 22 of *Nihon bungaku zenshū*. Shinchōsha, 1959.

Ariès, Philippe. 1981. *The Hour of Our Death*. Trans. Helen Weaver. Oxford University Press.

Index to the Poems

ama ga shita plate 4
How I wish
aoyagi mo 43, 84
These green willows
ariake ya 73
The moon before dawn
ashigamo no 91
The waterside
ashigaro ni 54, 99
Light-footed
bashō nowaki 51, 94
The banana plant in a gale
byōchū no 32, 56, 76
Sipping the medicine
byōnin no 76, 56
Sipping the medicine
fukaku irite 100
Having made my way
fukei yori 31, 56, 101
Let us call a crane
hakoneji o 83
Having journeyed
hamaguri no 98
Like parting a clam from its shell
hana no kumo 52, 95
Clouds of blossoms
harugoto ni 84
Every spring
hatsuyuki ni 54, 100
Come the first snow
hi ni mashite 55, 100
With each passing day

General Index and Character Glossary

Note: Premodern works are cited by title; modern works, by author or editor, and translations generally by translator.

Abutsu 阿仏 62, 70, 71
Account of the Illusory Dwelling. See *Genjūanki*
aishōka 哀傷歌 (lament) 8
Akashi 明石 13, 53, 96
Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川龍之介 79
allusion, allusiveness xiv, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 78, 83, 85, 86, 88, 103
Amano Tōrin. See Tōrin
Arakida Moritake. See Moritake
Aridōshi 蟻通 56, 100, 101
Arisoumi 有磯海 78
Ashikaga Yoshihisa 足利義尚 70
Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 70
Ashino Minbu Suketoshi 芦野民部資俊 (Tōsui 桃酔) 40, 68
Ashita no kumo あしたの雲 (Morning clouds) 22, 29, 70, 74
Asukai Masayasu. See Masayasu
Awazuhara 粟津原 (Awazu field) 79
Azumaji no tsuto 東路の津登 (Souvenir of the eastland) 61, 86, 91, 98

Bai Juyi 白居易 29
banana plant (*bashō* 芭蕉) 51, 58, 94
banka 挽歌 (elegy) 8
Bashō; Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (Matsuo Munefusa 松尾宗房, Tōsei 桃青) plates 5–9; death xi, 1, 10–11, 14, 17, 18, 27–33, 100–103; death verse 29–32; life xiii, 13, 14, 17, 27, 51–59, 64, 94, 95, 99, 102; literary style xi, xiii, xiv, 12, 20, 21, 30, 31, 34, 39, 68, 69, 77, 79, 94, 96, 98; relations with Kikaku xi, 12–14, 16–18, 25–29, 31, 33–35, 37, 39, 55–58, 65, 67, 94, 100, 102; relations with contemporary poets other than Kikaku xiii, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26, 27, 31–33, 38–40, 55–58, 61, 63–66, 68, 69, 72, 74–79, 94, 95, 99, 100–103; relation to earlier poets, particularly Saigyō and Sōgi xiii, 15, 18, 19, 23, 24 (fig. 4), 66–67, 69–73, 75, 96–98, 100–102; works xi, xiii, xv (fig. 1), 2, 12, 23, 34, 37, 51–54, 56, 60, 61, 67, 70–75, 78, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 102
Bashō isshūki 芭蕉一周忌 (First anniversary of the death of Bashō) 78
Bashō o utsusu kotoba 芭蕉を移ス詞 (Words on transplanting the banana plants) 94
Bashō school (Shōmon 蕉門) 27, 37–39, 65, 78, 95, 96, 102
Bashō shichibushū 芭蕉七部集 (Bashō anthology in seven books). See *Haikai shichibushū*