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TANKA AND HAIKAI

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TANKA AND HAIKAI

Japanese Rhythms

AUTHOR'S EDITION

SAN FRANCISCO, 1916

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and Bruno's Chap Books.

Edition limited to 200
copies.

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By Sadakichi Hartmann







TANKA I.

WINTER? Spring? Who knows?
White buds from the plumtrees wing
And mingle with the snows.
No blue skies these flowers bring,
Yet their fragrance augurs Spring.

The Tanka (short poem) is the most popular and characteristic of the various forms of Japanese poetry. It consists of five lines of 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables—31 syllables in all. The addition of the rhyme is original with the author.

TANKA II.

OH, were the white waves,
Far on the glimmering sea
That the moonshine laves,
Dream flowers drifting to me,—
I would cull them, love, for thee.

TANKA III.

MOOON, somnolent, white,
Mirrored in a waveless sea,
What fickle mood of night
Urged thee from heaven to flee
And live in the dawnlit sea?

TANKA IV.

LIKE mist on the lees,
Fall gently, oh rain of Spring
On the orange trees
That to Ume's casement cling—
Perchance, she'll hear the love-bird sing.

TANKA V.

THOUGH love has grown cold
The woods are bright with flowers,
Why not as of old
Go to the wildwood bowers
And dream of—bygone hours!

TANKA VI.

TELL, what name beseems
These vain and wandering days!
Like the bark of dreams
That from souls at daybreak strays
They are lost on trackless ways.

TANKA VII.

OH, climb to my lips,
Frail muse of the amber wine!
Joy to him who sips
Cups of fragrant sake wine
Flowing from some fount divine.

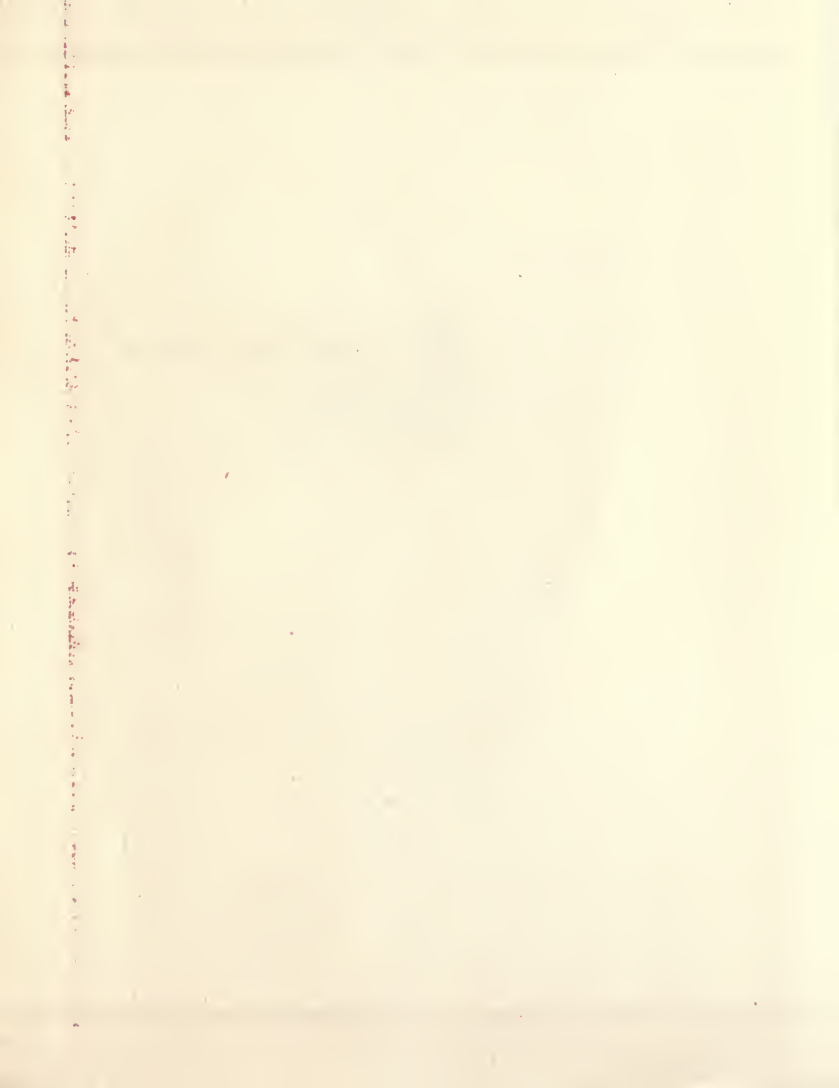


TANKA VIII.

IF pleasures be mine
As aeons and aeons roll by,
Why should I repine
That under some future sky
I may live as butterfly?

TANKA IX.

WERE we able to tell
When old age would come our way,
We would muffle the bell,
Lock the door and go away—
Let him call some other day.



HAIKAI I.

WHITE petals afloat
On a winding woodland stream—
What else is life's dream!

The Haikai is a Tanka minus the concluding fourteen syllables. It was favored in the sixteenth century. Frequently it is purely poetical and the association of thought produced too vague to be conveyed in English with such exaggerated brevity.



HAIKAI III.

AT new moon we met!
Two weeks I've waited in vain.
To-night!—Don't forget.

HAIKAI IV.

OH, red maple leaves,
There seem more of you these eves
Than ever grew on trees.

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