

journal of senryu and kyoka



## Special Issue №2

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## EDITOR'S CHOICE



*factory gates  
spit out the night shift  
into the mist*

(Philmore Place)

At dawn, the workers exhausted by the night shift leave the factory. What can be more mundane and ordinary? What made the author to depict this particular scene in his poem?

Hidden in the background, I can see the life of a person, who has a poetical gift, but who has to live in very unpoetical conditions. The factory gates can be viewed as a symbol of the workplace, where each person is just a little screw in a large machine and has value only when he works, when he produces something. All worn out screws are thrown away into the morning mist, into the outside idle world that from the factory gates' point of view is beyond comprehension and therefore devoid of any value. For the night shift workers, on the other hand, the factory gate is the borderline between the world of dead machines and wasted time and the world of living things, where the morning mist mercifully conceals the industrial suburban landscape and transforms the factory buildings into magical castles, transforms little screws into animate creatures, and the miller — into a poet. Having said that, the author does not express his feelings directly, but creates a piece of art out of an ordinary event, sketching it with reserved and aloof strokes and reminding us that every moment of our life, every little detail, however unimportant, has a deep existential meaning.

*Valeria Simonova-Cecon*

*the flea jumps  
from a cat to a cat  
into the new world*

(Maurizio Petruccioli)

Senryu are often defined as poems about the world of people, internal as well as external. And in most cases this is true. There are, however, many examples of senryu both old and modern, where people are not visibly present. Instead of people, we see animals, birds, insects and natural objects.

So, what differentiates these poems from haiku? One differentiating factor is anthropomorphism — attribution of human qualities and characteristics to non-human beings, such as animals, natural phenomena and objects.

Haiku poet acknowledges the nature's right to remain nature. If the animals talk, cry, even if they are happy or sad, they remain animals. The senryu authors, on the other hand, give animals the qualities that can only be attributed to humans. To be more precise, the senryu poets interpret the behaviour of animals exclusively from the human's point of view. Here we can see hatred and kindness, pettiness and magnanimity, greed and generosity, humility and pride..., or, as we see here, passion for exciting adventures and aspiration for exploring new worlds and galaxies...

*Vladislav Vassiliev*

***house warming  
the cat sniffs around  
the movers bend their elbows***

(Elina Vitomskaya)

The Japanese kosenryu (old senryu) of the XVIII century are often viewed by the scholars as one of the historical sources, from which one can learn a lot about traditions, customs and daily life of people of that epoch. Already in the earliest anthologies of senryu, we come across poems that are nothing more than sketches of the day-to-day life, in which the poet recreates the typical scenes of the Edo period in a couple of well-chosen words. This is the type of senryu that, I think, Elina managed to write. To create a comic effect she uses the technique of repetition and juxtaposition (the cat sniffs around / the movers bend their elbows) with an internal near rhyme of the assonant verbs (in the Russian original — Ėk). This is not, however, just a humorous sketch — it's a real keyhole, which we can look through and recognise a very familiar situation. Our imagination instantly adds the rattle of an old piano that resists getting through the door frame, the smell of fried eggs and bacon from next door... and, of course, the cat, which is traditionally let into the new apartment first.

*Valeria Simonova-Cecon*

***I like women  
otherwise, my life  
is problem free***

(Marco Pilotto)

In one of his poems, the Russian poet Valery Bryusov said: "You are a woman and this is why you're right". The "power of the weakness", which is a woman's weapon of choice, is a great power. The only thing a man can do fighting this unfair battle, is to admit, maybe only to himself, that he is totally defenceless in the face of this power. That's what the protagonist of the senryu does. And this honest and humbling admission is honourable. The ability to «submit» to love, to something bigger than self, is one step (sometimes a very big one) towards realization that you are part of the Infinite. Only this realization can satisfy the thirst in the boys' heart, which starts beating faster for the first time the moment he sees her smile and her eyes. The Supreme Being talks to us in the language we all understand — it touches us with the sun rays, with the wings of a butterfly, with a hand of another person...

It's worth noting that the protagonist in this senryu declares his love not to a particular woman — he loves them all. This makes us realize once again that very often we love the love itself, but not the object of our affection. Regarding the problems, caused by love... well... who said it would be easy?..

The poem is very brief and meaningful at the same time, which together with a surprise in the third line, are its obvious strengths.

*Nataly Levi*

*in my mailbox*  
*«Life and science»\**  
*with the crossword solved*

(Radka Mindova)

This lovely ku by Radka attracted our attention mostly because it leaves an aftertaste similar to that of a good haiku, though its form and subject matter definitely put it in the senryu category. It is a sketch from daily life, light and unpretentious, but its meaning takes the reader far beyond the boundaries of the poem.

Sometimes, haiku are described as a moment of enlightenment — when the door that separates our life from the mysteries of the universe opens for a split second, and the meaning of life suddenly becomes clear.

People search all their lives for the answers to the eternal questions. When these answers, however, do not result from our own experience, mistakes and failures, but are given by somebody on a silver plate, we feel cheated and disappointed, finally realizing that the meaning of life is not in the answers but in the search for them.

*Vladislav Vassiliev*

\*«Life and science» is a Russian monthly magazine carrying popular science content.

## SENRYU AND KYOKA

first-former —  
around her neck, a cross  
and a house key

*Nikolay Grankin (Russia)*



nice to be a grownup —  
making my own decision  
about a nightlight

*David Oats (USA)*

wee hours hospital ward —  
one of those beeps  
and boops is me

*Barry George (USA)*

next stop  
«Garden of Eden»...  
no one alights

*Milena Veleva (Bulgaria)*

after death  
the gamers go to  
the real world

*Leaves (Russia)*



crisis —  
Santa receives  
a curriculum vitae  
*Marco Pilotto (Italy)*

through my sunglasses  
I look at the Venetian masks  
philosophically  
*Hana (Israel)*

French lessons  
ended with marrying  
the tutor  
*Bakhtiyar Amini (Tajikistan)*

looking at a strange woman's  
expressionless face  
he imagines it smiling  
*David Oats (USA)*

empty canvas —  
each brush stroke,  
a life story  
*Rita Odeh (Israel)*



haiku in my head —  
asking for a pen  
she brings the bill

*Freddy Ben-Arroyo (Israel)*

the moment  
the baby learnt how to smile  
he learnt how to smirk

*Takeshi Mizuno (Japan)*

a journey of 1000 miles  
starts with a strip search  
at the airport

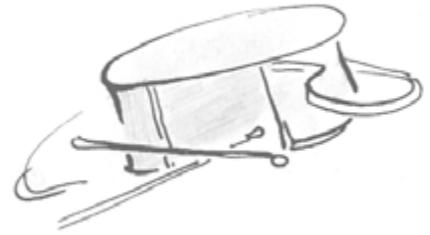
*Mary Sue (USA)*

sweating and cursing  
construction workers build  
the new temple

*Barry George (USA)*

without an iPhone  
she looks around  
timidly

*Maurizio Petruccioli (Italy)*



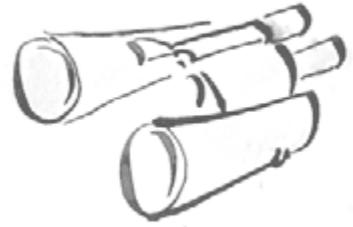
Swaying float  
The cat and its master  
Freeze  
*Miroslava Slavnaya (Russia)*

unfinished building  
a glove under the fence  
shows the finger  
*Nikolay Grankin (Russia)*

through the lit window  
I see my therapist's  
other client  
*Miriam Sagan (USA)*

clinking silence  
unloading empties  
from the lorry  
*Sergey Shpichenko (Ukraine)*

BLACK FRIDAY  
PROMOTIONS  
...a fight breaks out  
in the software  
department  
*Helen Buckingham (UK)*



winter moon —  
the way your eyelashes  
open, close  
*Kanchan Chatterjee (India)*

missing the movie  
silently we watch  
the sleeping cat  
*Agatha (Russia)*

far off thunder  
mother's words strike  
a nerve  
*Shloka Shankar (India)*

bluebells...  
the lonesome sound  
of freight trains  
*Debbie Strange (Canada)*

The bill poster  
«cure from all...» blown further away  
by the wind  
*Marsel March (Russia)*



after a long sleep  
it woke up angry and fresh —  
my wisdom tooth

*Sam Poe (Israel)*

Sunday morning  
pickled cabbage soup with garlic,  
a slice of lard  
and a long aftertaste  
of the freezer cabinet

*Alexey Fan (Russia)*

«dive in!» they shout already  
— but I will enquire once more  
about the depth

*Alexey Fan (Russia)*

The cuckoo song  
Lured me into the woods  
Until I got lost

*Andrey List (Russia)*

backpacks  
on top of each other —  
we crack the third flask

*Radion Khuzin (Russia)*



crisis  
broadening  
politicians' smiles  
*Andrea Cecon (Italy)*

election campaign —  
the holiday greetings  
via intercom  
*Sergey Shpichenko (Ukraine)*

Chinese whispers  
our vows now long  
forgotten  
*Shloka Shankar (India)*

flea market  
someone's paper heart  
among the trinkets  
*Philmore Place (Belarus)*

A snowflake collector  
with a cloak over his shoulder  
waiting for catch  
*Vasa Radovanović (Serbia)*



Duty Free  
New York Yankees cap —  
Made in China  
*Freddy Ben-Arroyo (Israel)*

basket of fake fruit  
and the shop girl's face  
both sloppily painted  
*Shen (Russia)*

for twenty minutes  
this blonde is Buddha, too —  
clay face mask  
*La Pen (Russia)*

smiling at matryoshka  
that looks so much like  
my granddaughter  
*Spring Granddad (Japan)*

the sun in the sea  
whether out of jealousy  
the red sky?  
*Damir Damir (Serbia)*



were they dyed by dawn?  
neighbours adore our roses  
blooming and swaying  
supported by the old rope  
my daughter used to jump with  
*Eiko Yachimoto (Japan)*

nagging  
about the stairs  
while liking to step dance  
*Asaoka Shinji (Taiwan)*

a fat guy taking up sport  
will probably pass for  
a sumo wrestler  
*Iriewani (Japan)*

alumni night  
our beer bellies hug  
before we hug  
*Archana Kapoor Nagpal (India)*

blind date  
a schoolgirl sees  
her teacher  
*Vessislava Savova (Bulgaria)*



at the therapist's —  
talking and talking  
about his problems

*Lavana Kray (Romania)*

water bill  
held by  
the camel magnet

*Nikolay Grankin (Russia)*

Hole in the wallet  
And on the money tree  
New leaves

*Miroslava Slavnaya (Russia)*

a young bride  
the house smells like  
cookies

*Gergana Yaninska (Bulgaria)*

tea time  
my grandma makes  
her 100th birthday cake  
Hristina Pandjaridis

*(Bulgaria)*

I keep the mirror dusty —  
my island  
of eternal youth

*Lavana Kray (Romania)*



All Souls' Day.  
Papa says «Cheers!»  
from his last photo.

*Zornitza Harizanova (Bulgaria)*

a number two cut  
down both sides...  
his eyes  
the same color  
as his Dad's

*Anne Curran (New Zealand)*

sitting  
at my writing desk...  
the movement  
of the sun from  
Esc to End

*Shloka Shankar (India)*

Senryu booklet —  
a fly trying to read  
between the lines

*Vasile Moldovan (Romania)*



my buddy, the dog  
brought his girlfriends, the fleas  
to the bedroom

*Vincenzo Adamo (Italy)*

truck stop —  
«free shower  
with diesel fuel»

*David Oats (USA)*

ice bucket challenge —  
the flash mob spreads  
like the water circles

*Iriewani (Japan)*

without any consequences  
I slept through  
the earthquake

*Iriewani (Japan)*

the librarian  
unbuttons her collar —  
romance section

*Terri French (USA)*



my granddaughter  
teaches me how to read  
the e-books

*Irina Khvoschina (Russia)*

last train —  
on a way out I wake up  
a stranger

*Takeshi Mizuno (Japan)*

a ladybug  
slips into my luggage...  
Israeli borders

*Rita Odeh (Israel)*

brief encounter  
the clock weights  
play for time

*Sergey Shpichenko (Ukraine)*

departing train  
I am waving farewell  
to strangers, too

*Marco Pilotto (Italy)*

Though saying  
«god and country»  
privatizing the army.  
*Asaoka Shinji (Taiwan)*



kicking the tyre  
I ask the mechanic:  
«don't blow it!»  
*Marsel March (Russia)*

after work  
I look so much like you  
the willow tree!  
*Marco Pilotto (Italy)*

my birthday  
remembered only  
by facebook  
*Mary Sue (USA)*

dish du jour  
the waiter serves  
a chesty cough  
*Dina Strelnikova (Russia)*



no matter how hard  
I try to drown my thoughts in the glass  
they keep resurfacing

*Maurizio Petruccioli (Italy)*

a bottle for myself  
and a bottle as a gift  
weigh differently

*Takeshi Mizuno (Japan)*

holiday evening  
the fridge can't hold all  
«what god provided»

*Shen (Russia)*

end of the day —  
if only the remote control  
could mute my wife

*Maurizio Petruccioli (Italy)*

emails  
his initials  
a mirror image of mine

*Vessislava Savova (Bulgaria)*



looking  
for my eyeglasses  
I find my keys

*Freddy Ben-Arroyo (Israel)*

tripped  
over the love stone  
I break my heart

*Grandpa (Japan)*

my students and I  
same from the waist down —  
blue jeans

*Freddy Ben-Arroyo (Israel)*

penniless —  
travelling around the world  
with google maps

*Antonietta Losito (Italy)*

conquered half of Europe  
crushing the enemy armies  
my mosquito repeller

*Sham Poe (Israel)*

sleepless  
all wedding night long...  
her lovely snores  
*Lavana Kray (Romania)*



typing  
with one finger —  
the pianist  
*Takeshi Mizuno (Japan)*

it's harder and harder  
as the years go passing by  
to lift the corners of the lips  
*Clown (Russia)*

grandmother  
patted my head and instantly  
sorrow disappeared  
*Tatjana Debeljački (Serbia)*

evening beach  
a toddler is clutching  
the peach stone  
*Philmore Place (Belarus)*

A flock of star fish  
is floating slowly  
along the blue sky

*Vasa Radovanović (Serbia)*



it dragged on for so long  
but finished so quickly  
patriotic talk-show  
next on the TV schedule  
an American movie

*Alexey Fan (Russia)*

memorials  
on the courthouse plaza —  
room for maybe one more war

*Barry George (USA)*

hot beach babe  
so many stares are stretching  
to shake the sand off

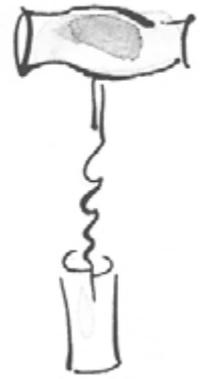
*Philmore Place (Belarus)*

divorce  
the friends are, too  
divided

*Bakhtiyar Amini (Tajikistan)*

house warming  
the cat sniffs around  
the movers bend their elbows

*Elina Vitomskaya (Russia)*



Kitchen argument  
The kettle spits out  
Boiling water

*Marsel March (Russia)*

I'm smiling back  
at the moron  
in the mirror

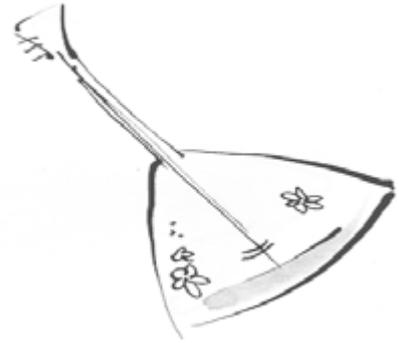
*Maurizio Petruccioli (Italy)*

that one cloud  
not lined in silver —  
eviction notice

*Terri French (USA)*

Depression...  
Calling for help  
Cognac, vodka, home brew...

*Bakhtiyar Amini (Tajikistan)*



saxophone  
left lying on the piano —  
hot night  
*Maurizio Petruccioli (Italy)*

Sunday cleaning  
together with rubbish  
goes an old broom  
*Nikolay Grankin (Russia)*

my eyesight got worse  
but I stopped seeing my wrinkles  
in the mirror  
*Young Pioneer (Russia)*

in my mailbox  
«Life and science»  
with the crossword solved  
*Radka Mindova (Bulgaria)*

hit publication  
another fly  
glued to the newspaper  
*Ivan Krotov (Russia)*



endless rain  
the dry leaves have gathered  
three hundred likes

*Peter Savchenko (Russia)*

choked up  
on second-hand smoke ...  
the old man's laugh

*Anne Curran (New Zealand)*

after making sure  
that my wife is in a good mood  
I shout «make me some tea!»

*Grandpa (Japan)*

museum silence  
Carmen's red skirt  
with a moth hole

*Philmore Place (Belarus)*

On a sight-seeing bus  
the sleeping men awake  
to watch the condors.

*Carol Stein (USA)*



having a clean dream  
about an attractive woman  
damn I'm old

*David Oats (USA)*

only those  
who are uglier than the bride  
are asked to be bridesmaids

*Grandpa (Japan)*

lace lingerie —  
such nonsense until  
it gets banned

*Dina Strelnikova (Russia)*

a gypsy woman  
dangling the golden bracelets  
asks for change

*Marco Pilotto (Italy)*

winter evening,  
between Mercedes and Geo  
cat chooses warm one

*David Oats (USA)*



First night.  
My baby and I  
breathe in the same rhythm.  
*Zornitza Harizanova (Bulgaria)*

woodpecker...  
i turn another page  
of 'The haiku handbook'  
*Kanchan Chatterjee (India)*

A drop of clear water  
trembles on my palm  
in the rhythm of my heart  
*Vasa Radovanović (Serbia)*

good gas price —  
abandoned store  
*David Oats (USA)*

crisis  
men in the café  
are reading papers  
*Diana Petkova (Bulgaria)*



a funeral oration —  
the microphone goes dead  
*Carol Stein (USA)*

calling the theatre  
while waiting on hold  
I start hating Mozart  
*La Pen (Russia)*

men cheat  
even on the  
shopping list  
*Marco Pilotto (Italy)*

Persian rag  
a part of the wall is 40 years  
without wallpaper  
*Alexander Novozhilov (Russia)*

new neighbour —  
my mourning dress  
on the scarecrow  
*Lavana Kray (Romania)*

in the shade  
grandpa is sipping green tea  
grafting the fruit trees

*Tatjana Debeljački (Serbia)*



tattoo  
on the burnt back  
the ink sun

*Maya Kisyova (Bulgaria)*

sea shore  
the footprints  
don't return

*Pepa Odjakova (Bulgaria)*

«I've got a headache»  
telling my wife when I'm back  
from the mistress

*Vincenzo Adamo (Italy)*

radiation  
crosses the border  
without problems

*Iriewani (Japan)*

mother's dementia  
and what I also don't  
want to remember  
*Miriam Sagan (USA)*



measuring time  
minute by minute  
with our heartbeats  
*Gordana Culibrk (Serbia)*

I keep my watch  
showing London Time —  
vacation savour  
*Freddy Ben-Arroyo (Israel)*

«standing  
where they've put me...»  
gate barrier  
*Sergey Shpichenko (Ukraine)*

carnival ride  
must be fifty inches tall —  
boy on tiptoes  
*David Oats (USA)*



I like women  
otherwise, my life  
is problem free  
*Marco Pilotto (Italy)*

getting a kick  
out of senryu, almost like  
out of drugs  
*Japarisian (Japan/France)*

after minor quake  
I break the vase —  
auntie's gift  
*Freddy Ben-Arroyo (Israel)*

the flea jumps  
from a cat to a cat  
into the new world  
*Maurizio Petruccioli (Italy)*

stardust —  
apples  
on the garden path  
*Irina Konovalova (Russia)*



autumn premiere  
coughing  
in the stalls  
*Alexey Fan (Russia)*

I «like» her senryu  
without reading it  
if she is hot  
*Marco Pilotto (Italy)*

home library  
very high up  
the world classics  
*Radka Mindova (Bulgaria)*

wailing wall  
a new-born baby  
next door  
*Sergey Shpichenko (Ukraine)*

moving home  
so many useful things  
are now useless  
*Philmore Place (Belarus)*



the dog  
slowly but surely  
houstrains us  
*David Oats (USA)*

school is out  
parents make out  
stealthily  
*La Pen (Russia)*

daisies...  
I remember when  
you loved me  
*Debbie Strange (Canada)*

we always have  
a good laugh at the mall  
I should have known  
when he tried on  
a red stiletto  
*Christine L. Villa (USA)*

blind date  
another dialogue  
in the dark  
*Archana Kapoor Nagpal (India)*



looking at women  
he tries them on  
like in the store  
*Andrey List (Russia)*

everything melts  
only the shop girl's eyes  
are cold  
*Ivan Krotov (Russia)*

rough morning  
a carton of kefir  
cools my hand  
*Nikolay Grankin (Russia)*

factory gates  
spit out the night shift  
into the mist  
*Philmore Place (Belarus)*

using an expression  
my father used —  
understanding it  
*Norman Darlington (Ireland)*

«nothing  
is set in stone»...  
snowman in the backyard  
*Sergey Shpichenko (Ukraine)*



summer is over  
my love is  
no sweat  
*Radion Khuzin (Russia)*

breathing next to me  
it might be a dream  
or a cat  
*Youyou (Russia)*

biting her lip  
she looks at the price, and then  
again at the shoes  
*Philmore Place (Belarus)*

asst..., temp... —  
behind the ancient walls  
new job cuts\*  
*Shen (Russia)*

\* In Russian, «сокращения» means both abbreviations and redundancies

## Musings over the hodgepodge: Interview with Takeshi Mizuno

Takeshi Mizuno, a Japanese poet and copywriter, was born in 1965 in Tokyo to a copywriter and an illustrator. Inspired by his dad's friend, a copywriter too, he started composing senryu. In 1991, Takeshi started writing for Mainichi Shimbun and became one of the regular contributors to the most popular senryu column in Japan «Nakahata's Banno Senryu». In 1996 he became the editor-in-chief of the «Nakahata Fanbook» — a quarterly magazine published by the Banno Senryu Club sponsored by Mainichi Shimbun.

In 2002, his senryu won the senryu of the year award:

深いのはどっちだろうか愛と憎

*what's deeper —  
hatred  
or love?*

Takeshi is the author of the book «300 Selected Senryu by Takeshi Mizuno» and a co-author (together with Saki Kono) of «Let's start right now! The easiest text book of haiku and senryu».

He is regularly invited to participate in TV shows dedicated to senryu.

In 2014, Takeshi became the editor of the senryu column «Takeshi's Banno Senryu» in the Tokyo newspaper Town News (タウンニュース), and the administrator of the Facebook page «Banno Senryu for Gaijin».

Takeshi-san kindly agreed to share his opinions on modern Japanese senryu, and Banno Senryu in particular.

\*\*\*

*Ėk: To start with, let's make clear what «Banno» actually means...*

**TM:** The word banno has two meanings: «almighty» and «stuff for all occasions». In the case of Banno Senryu, banno does not imply that the authors of these senryu are the best and almighty. It is a metaphor for a nabe cooking pot that can be used for all occasions, in which you can cook whatever you like.

*Ėk: What do you think differentiates Banno Senryu from senryu columns published in other major newspapers? Is there some sort of rivalry among them?*

**TM:** The main characteristic of «Nakahata's Banno Senryu» is its multi-purposeness, its «omnivorousness». You can find all kinds of senryu there from more high-brow haiku-like poems to jokes, grunts and mutterings. All kinds of humour are present in senryu, and Banno accepts them all: from witty comments to funny puns and wordplays, from pokes and nudges to subtle irony.

There are three main newspapers in Japan (Mainichi, Yomiuri and Asahi), and all three of them have their own senryu columns. The senryu column in Asahi is edited by its ex-reporter, and the poems that are published there usually reflect the newspaper's stance on various topics and general tone. The Banno Senryu column, by contrast, has nothing to do with the policy of the newspaper, its leanings and allegiances. Yomiuri Shimbun publishes only senryu on current events and completely ignores poems on personal day-to-day life.

There is no rivalry worth talking about, because Mainichi is far ahead of any other newspaper in the country in terms of submissions it receives (about 50,000 a month!). By the way, Asahi and Yomiuri sometimes cite Banno Senryu, but not the other way round.

*Ēk:* As you mentioned, many newspapers in Japan including the major ones publish senryu. Why did you choose Mainichi? What attracted you there most?

**TM:** I chose Mainichi primarily because of Takashi Nakahata, the editor of the senryu column. Not only is he a copywriter (like me), but he is one of the best and most well-known copywriters in Japan. So I figured that, if the column is edited by such a person, it will definitely be interesting. That's how I started writing for Mainichi in 1991.

*Ēk:* Does the newspaper receive submissions from foreigners? Is it known in your circles at all that people write senryu (and haiku) outside Japan?

**TM:** Japanese poets who live abroad sometimes submit their poems to Mainichi. Apart from that, I only know of Koreans, who submit their senryu (and some of them get published). By the way, one Korean professor uses Banno Senryu as teaching materials in his work. I know that people in other countries are interested in senryu. I wonder how many of them there are. I guess, compared to haiku, senryu must be more difficult for them, because your view of the world depends on where you live. (After Takeshi-san had already given us this interview, we learnt that Mainichi Shimbun published the first senryu by a Western author — our own Ms. Valeria Simonova-Cecon).

*Ēk:* As far as we know, all authors, whose poems are published in Mainichi Shimbun, have a rating. Can you tell us about it in more detail, please?

**TM:** Banno Senryu has its own points system. Every published poem receives 1 point. If the poem is selected as a «senryu of the day» (in which case it is published first and marked by a special sign — a smiley face), it receives 5 points. When the author collects 50 points, (s)he gets the right to select three poems (without Nakahata's approval) to be published in a special mini-column next to the Banno Senryu Column. From that moment (s)he is back to zero and starts all over again. Now every time (s)he has to collect 100 points and each time it happens (s)he can select one senryu to be published in the same way.

In addition to this, Nakahata-san selects a few best senryu poems of the month (one 1st place and three 2nd places) among poems that have been selected as «senryu of the day». Out of twelve senryu of the month Nakahata selects the best senryu of

the year. Senryu of the month and senryu of the year do not receive, however, any additional points — they are outside of the point system.

*Ēk:* How many points have you collected so far?

**TM:** About 1,600, but who counts — at the end of the day it's not that important :).

Ēk: Does Takashi Nakahata write senryu himself?

**TM:** No, he does not. He writes haiku, though, and quite good ones. His motto is «creative selection». Here is Nakahata-san's one and only senryu:

ひとさまの投句で稼ぐ選者です

*I make a living  
selecting  
other people's poems*

*Ēk:* In 1996 you became the editor-in-chief of the Banno Senryu Club's magazine «Nakahata's Fanbook». What is this magazine dedicated to?

**TM:** It's a quarterly magazine (one issue per season). Its main objective is to facilitate a two way dialogue between the column's editor Takashi Nakahata and Banno Senryu fans as well as senryu writers from all over Japan.

In every issue, one of the authors becomes a so-called «hit-maker» — the «star of the issue», and Nakahata himself conducts an interview with him or her. Nakahata also selects 55 senryu by this author that are published in the «Fanbook». It is more prestigious to become one of these hit-makers than to win the «senryu of the year» award. So far, more than 80 people have become hit-makers.

In addition to this interview, the magazine publishes the current rating of the authors and letters from the readers.

*Ēk:* As the editor-in-chief of the Fanbook, you take part in all the interviews with the hit-makers. Who among them, do you think, was the most interesting?

**TM:** My favourite hit-maker, I guess, was Mizuhara Setsuko ( ). She has recently switched to haiku, but before that she wrote wonderful senryu. Mizuhara-san grew up far from Tokyo on one of the islands of the Oki archipelago, where her family still lives. Long ago these islands were used as a place of exile for rebels and deposed emperors. Nowadays, Mizuhara-san lives in Tokyo, but many of her poems contain references to her homeland and happy moments from her childhood, which will never come back.

流しびなくるりところら振り返り

*drifting off  
she suddenly looks back —  
a paper doll*

(This poem is about the dolls «nagashibina», which children make by themselves for the Girls Festival Hinamatsuri. They are placed in special straw baskets and sent off into the open sea. According to legend, these dolls take away with them all illnesses and misfortunes together with the evil spirits that caused them — Ėk).

彼と居た昨日がまわる洗濯機

*yours and mine  
spinning in the washing machine  
the previous day*

友だちの児を抱く私見てる父

*my dad watches  
how I hug  
someone else's child*

息止めて父の素潜り見てた夏

*every summer  
I hold my breath  
watching my father dive*

孫うたう祖母うたいだす母うたう

*granddaughter's song —  
granny joins in  
mummy continues*

**Ėk:** You mentioned that the Fanbook is published quarterly. Is there some sort of connection with the seasons? Can you tell us about the importance of seasons in senryu, please?

**TM:** Senryu is a completely free genre when it comes to topics. Therefore, one can write about nature too, of course. However, if haiku is written having in mind that «people are part of nature», one of senryu's principles is that «nature can be like people». For example, here is one of my senryu:

花が好きお金を借りに来ないから

*I like flowers  
they never ask  
for a loan*

Here, flowers is a metaphor for people.

**Ėk:** Does Banno Senryu have its own branded promotional items?

**TM:** Yes, it does. It has, for example, specially lined notepads, where one can write five senryu per page in traditional Japanese style (the number 5 is symbolic for Banno Senryu)

because it is customary to submit up to five senryu at a time on a postcard — Ėk). We also have plastic folders with Banno's logo — a smiley face — on them and pencils, as well as special annual charts with authors' ratings, drawn with the calligraphy brush. By the way, it was me who came up with ideas for all these items.

**Ėk:** *Some members of the clubs promoting traditional senryu, or «true» senryu, as they call them, are not big fans of masukomi-senryu (senryu published in «mass communications» — newspapers, social networks and internet forums — Ėk). They believe that they are not deep enough. What do you think about that? Have you come across similar opinions from other senryu poets?*

**TM:** You are right, there are many people among those writing «true senryu», who think that way. I do not want to criticise them. I think that there are interesting and boring senryu both among «true» senryu and masukomi-senryu. And what does «true» senryu even mean? I think that labels like that (true haiku, true ramen, true anime, etc.) are quite questionable.

**Ėk:** *The majority of the members of the traditional senryu clubs are senior citizens. Young people are considerably outnumbered there. What's the situation among the masukomi-senryu writers? Do young people submit their works to the Banno Senryu column?*

**TM:** That's true, Japanese society in general is getting older, and this has already become a national problem. Among the authors of Banno Senryu there are both old and young. For example, the age range of the attendees of the dedicated senryu workshops that I host regularly is between 30 and 70.

And I am already forty nine. But it is still considered young, right?

**Ėk:** *Of course! There are a lot of haiku contests in Japan for children. Some of the adult haiku contests (national and international) also have separate children's sections. One can easily notice that the children's haiku are quite different to the adults' ones — they are more direct and perceptive. Are there any children's senryu contests in Japan, and if so, do you think that children's senryu are different to adults' ones?*

**TM:** The children's senryu are very natural, devoid of any affectation; they describe the world as it is. Sometimes there are good ones, but generally it's an exception. It's important that senryu contain some irony or sarcasm, which children usually do not have. There are no kids among the Banno Senryu contributors.

**Ėk:** *Does it mean that you think that sarcasm is mandatory in senryu?*

**TM:** No, some senryu are sarcastic or poking, some of them are not, but children normally do not have sarcasm at all.

**Ėk:** *Besides senryu, you also write haiku and tanka. Which of these genres is your favourite?*

**TM:** For me, the most important thing is my poetic individuality. It does not matter that much, what form I use: tanka, haiku or senryu. What matters for me is that I am able to express myself in any of these forms. If you count my works, however, the majority of them will be senryu, of course. Perhaps they better suit my individuality.

**Ēk:** The line between haiku and senryu in the West is often blurred and many magazines publish them together. In Japan, the distinction, as far as we know, is clearer. Despite that you recently wrote a book about distinctions between haiku and senryu.

**TM:** My book is titled «Let's start right now! The easiest text book of haiku and senryu» (これから 始める俳句・川柳いちばんやさしい入門書). My co-author was a young poet Saki Kono (神野紗希), who is 31 years old. Those who want to look her up can visit her page in Wikipedia. To be honest with you, there are not that many people in Japan, who know exactly the distinctions between haiku and senryu. The target audience of our book are people who are about fifty years old. In Japan people retire when they are sixty, so they start thinking about what to do, when they do not have to go to work anymore, already in their fifties. That's the audience we wrote our book for. Our book contains two check-lists that can help determine whether you lean more towards haiku or towards senryu.

Haijin	Senryuist
花や植物の名前に関心がある You are interested in the names of plants and flowers	つい人間観察をしてしまう You subconsciously observe human behaviour
写真の構図が気になる You take photography seriously	毒舌家だと言われることがある People say that you are a quick wit
季節には敏感なほうだ You are sensitive to the changes of seasons	流行には敏感なほうだ You are sensitive to changes in fashion, current events, fads and popular stuff
小説を読んでいると映像が目に浮かぶ When you read a book you visualise the scenes and characters	小説を読んでもと配役（キャスト）が浮かぶ When you read a book you imagine which actors you would cast for the movie
好きなものは最後に食べる You eat the things you like most at the end	好きなものは最初に食べる You eat the things you like most before everything else
聞き上手と言われることがある You are considered to be a good listener	会話が途切れると気になる You do not like when people interrupt you

嫌なことは忘れてしまえるほうだ You try to forget things that you do not like, things that upset you	嫌なことは嫌だと言える If you do not like something, you say so openly
口けんかは苦手だ You do not like arguments and fights	初恋の人を覚えている You remember your first love very well

Officially, there are about two million *haijin* in Japan (every fifth person), about 300,000 *tanka* poets and 300,000 *senryu* writers. However, according to the unofficial statistics, there are way more than two million people who occasionally write *senryu* and participate in various *senryu* contests.

By the way, one of the topics of our book is «erotic *senryu*», which used to be called *suetsumuhana* (末摘花 — jp. «safflower»). There are quite a few of them among Banno *Senryu*. Here are some of mine:

自由にと言われて困るラブシーン

*how difficult it is  
to improvise  
in the bed scenes*

交合をしながら飛ぶという哀れ

*for dragonflies  
it's not easy to love each other  
while flying*

Nowadays, these poems are called *bareku* (破礼句 — jp. «dirty poems»). Despite quite risky topics, all these poems have been published in one of the major Japanese newspapers. Well, yeah, it's not a very common thing to come across such poems in the text books. The *sensei* of the «true» *senryu*, I guess, will be cross.

**Ēk:** *You are also the editor of the monthly *senryu* column «Takeshi's Banno *Senryu*» in the Tokyo newspaper *Town News* (タウンニュース). Can you tell us about your criteria for choosing *senryu* for publication, please?*

**TM:** Above all, I'd like to see original *senryu* in my column. According to Takashi Nakahata, «It does not make much sense to write *senryu* about something that has been already written about a long time ago. Let's write about something that only we can only now write about».

For example, the so-called *otaku senryu* (*senryu* for geeks obsessed with *manga*, *anime* and *video games* — Ēk), seem to reflect the reality of the day-to-day life of modern young people very well. I think that they are quite unique in the way they provide a fresh perspective.

**Ēk:** *It has become customary since the death of Karai Senryu (d.1790) to give the title «Senryu» to the most distinguished senryu poet of the generation. Two sons of Karai Senryu were called «Senryu II» and «Senryu III». Who is the current holder of this title and what is his role in the senryu community?*

**TM:** The name of the current, fifteenth, holder of this title is Wakia Senryu. He is an advisor to the association «Tokyo Senryukai» (東京川柳会) and the president of the Society for Senryu Studies (川柳学会, Senryu Gakkai). He is quite old and dedicates more of his time to studying senryu, than writing senryu. As a matter of fact, not many people, even in Japan, know of a person with such a title and what he does for the senryu community.

**Ēk:** *There are many senryu clubs, associations and study groups in Japan; a lot of books and TV programs are dedicated to this genre, while in the West not much information is widely available about senryu. What would you recommend to our readers, who are interested in senryu?*

**TM:** There are three main things that everyone needs to become better: read senryu, write senryu and discuss senryu. I would advise to exchange opinions about senryu not only via the Internet, but also in real life. Only two people are needed to start a group, then others will join, and the group will grow gradually. That would be ideal.

**Ēk:** *Do you think it makes sense to promote senryu outside the usual circle of senryu writers and readers?*

**TM:** Yes, by all means. For example, I co-operate with one dentist, who uses my senryu to decorate his surgery (project «Hahaha Teeth» — «Hahaha no ha» in Japanese — Ēk). When you sit in the dentist's chair, you lie almost horizontally in it. This dentist has attached the cards with my senryu on everything to deal with teeth, toothache and dentist's visits to the ceiling and the walls.

Here is a couple of them:

痛みより痛み想像するつらさ

*more unbearable  
than the toothache  
anticipation*

合コンでまず歯並びをみる歯医者

*blind date  
the dentist checks out  
the bite first*

**Ēk:** *You also participate in the new Facebook project «Banno Senryu for Gaijin», where selected poems from the Mainichi senryu column are published with Russian, English and Italian translations. What expectations do you have regarding this project?*

**TM:** I think it would be great if more «gaijin» participated in this project, so that it becomes even more popular. We can also take a look at the «senryu of the month» competitions and publish the results.

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In conclusion, we would like to present translations of one hundred senryu from the book «300 Selected Senryu by Takeshi Mizuno», some with commentaries by Ērshik. All these senryu have been published in the Mainichi Shimbun's Banno Senryu column.

どう見ても居眠りしてる仏様

*whenever I look  
he sleeps at work —  
Great Buddha*

Inemuri (居眠り — jp. «sleeping while present») — a widely accepted practice of taking a nap at work. Not only is it allowed, people are even encouraged to sleep at their place of work, as it demonstrates how hardworking and dedicated they really are.

日に一度議員バッジを磨くクセ

*once a day  
he polishes his badge  
member of the parliament*

巨悪には突撃しないレポーター

*even the reporters  
don't lash out at him —  
dangerous criminal*

すぐそばに元恋人が住む不安

*it's kinda unsettling  
when your ex-  
moves into the neighbourhood*

愛犬へ幼児言葉になる組長

*yakuza boss  
talks babyish  
to his doggy*

コタツ掛けデザインしてるP・カルダン

*kotatsu  
designed by  
Pierre Cardin*

Kotatsu (コタツ, 炬燵) — a traditional piece of Japanese furniture, a low wooden table frame covered by a futon or a heavy blanket and a table top. Underneath is a heat source, often built into the table itself.

行ったことないけど好きな街はパリ

*Paris  
I've never been there  
but I love it so much*

Japanese people idealise Paris — they consider it to be the most wonderful city in the entire world. When they come to visit it, though, the reality can be too overwhelming for them, and many Japanese tourists suffer from an acute psychiatric disorder, which is called Paris syndrome. The Japanese embassy in Paris operates a 24-hour hot line for the most severe cases.

並んでる絵より立派な美術館

*more beautiful  
than the masterpieces in it —  
the museum building*

番台のおばちゃん意外と背が高い

*when she stood up  
she turned out to be quite tall  
an old watchwoman*

先輩と呼ぶとやな顔する女性

*women take offense  
when you address them  
«sempai!»*

Sempai (先輩) is a polite way to address superiors and seniors (at work, at school, etc.). Some women, however, may consider it to be an inappropriate reference to their age...

美人とは喋り疲れたことがない

*chit-chat  
of a hot woman  
is never tiring*

彼女からもらった風邪が治っちゃう

*what a pity!  
the flu I caught from her  
is now gone*

正常位以外は異常なんだろうか

*normal position  
and what's so abnormal  
about the others?*

What is meant is the «missionary position». In Christianity, for example, all other positions were considered «from the Beast» and were punishable by expiation. For example, the position «woman on top» was punishable by penances for three years and numerous daily prostrations.

放心の裸体を照らす冷蔵庫

*after lovemaking  
my satisfied body is illuminated  
by the fridge light*

初夢で済んでしまった姫始

*the first sex of the year  
turned out to be  
the first dream of the year*

«First dream of the year» and «first sex of the year» — are official kigo (season words) used in haiku writing.

鏡から説教されてしまう朝

*in the morning  
the mirror delivers me  
a sermon*

男らしくズバッと妻に土下座する

*like a real man  
without any excuses  
I prostrate before my wife*

Dogeza (土下座 — jp. «sitting right on the ground») — a pose of prostration, when one kneels and bows to touch the floor with one's forehead. The purpose of *dogeza* is to demonstrate one's deepest remorse and apology.

よくやった抱きしめたいが俺自身

*well done me!  
if I could I would  
embrace myself*

新社員もう転職誌読んでおり

*already going  
through job vacancies —  
the new employee*

枕の毛5本以下なら今日は吉

*it's my lucky day  
fewer than five hairs  
on my pillow*

写真みて見合いを譲り合う姉妹

*the sisters  
having glanced at the photos  
swapped their dates*

This senryu talks about the practice of so-called omiai (お見合い — jp. «matchmaking»), a pre-arranged (usually by the parents) introductory meeting of a young woman and a young man.

Having looked at the photos of their potential husbands, the sisters corrected the parents' choice.

二人より先にキスする影と影

*our shadows  
meet  
before we do*

プレゼントした花束で殴られる

*beaten up  
by the bouquet  
I gave her*

うれしさは人づてに聞く褒め言葉

*such a pleasure  
to hear flattering gossip  
about myself*

会ってすぐ口臭ガムをくれた友

*the moment we meet  
my friend offers me  
a minty chewing gum*

にんにくを食べましたねと占師

*recently  
you ate garlic  
the fortune teller mouths*

新妻の得意料理の名は長い

*the young wife's menu  
contains only dishes  
with complex names*

The new wife does not have a lot of cooking experience, but she has a thing for fashionable and exotic dishes. Even though her menu boasts delicacies like risotto alla milanese and bistecca fiorentina, they all taste pretty much the same...

すき焼きがご馳走じゃない子どもたち

*sukiyaki  
is no longer a delicacy  
for children*

Sukiyaki (すき焼き) — a traditional stew-type Japanese dish, prepared and served in the nabe pot. All the odds and ends found in the fridge go there. Years ago, when Japan was not such a prosperous country, sukiyaki was considered to be a real feast, especially by children. Nowadays, it does not impress anybody.

飯炊きも核ミサイルも指一本

*both so easy...  
to boil rice and to push  
the nuclear button*

演説のあの絶妙の間がきらい

*unbearable  
those meaningful pauses  
in the politician's speech*

Japanese culture is the culture of «*ma*», of the empty space and suggestiveness. The pauses between the words can be more meaningful than the words themselves.

Pauses in the speeches of politicians, however, are meaningless and annoying.

味方だが敵より仲が悪いヒト

*relationships with friends  
are worse than relationships  
with my enemies*

大仏の歩く姿を想像す

*how would  
a walking Buddha look,  
I wonder?*

Daibutsu (大仏 — jp. «Giant Buddha») is the Japanese term for large statues of Buddha, the largest of which can be found at Asuka-dera temple. All these sculptures are of a sitting Buddha.

タクシーで芭蕉句碑まで乗り付ける

*driving up to  
the Basho memorials  
in a taxi*

During his journeys across Japan, Matsuo Basho experienced cold, hunger and many other challenges. Many places that he visited during his travels have little memorials or plaques with haiku that he wrote there. It is very popular among modern haijin to travel along his routes, but not many of them literally «follow his steps» and do it on foot.

風雲児めざしてたのに風来坊

*a vagabond  
who once wanted to become  
an adventurer*

外人に道を教えてお辞儀する

*showing the way  
to the foreigner  
I thank him*

It is customary in Japan not only to thank the person who did a favour, but also to thank the person who received one.

曖昧は日本語でなく日本人

*it's not the Japanese language  
that is ambiguous —  
it's the Japanese*

歳時記という面白い死語辞典

*saijiki  
is an interesting dictionary  
of a dead language*

Saijiki (歳時記) — a reference book of season words (kigo) used by haiku writers.

たたずまいアートのような鰹節

*katsuobushi*  
*looks like*  
*a piece of art*

Katsuobushi (鰹節) dried and smoked bonito tuna. The cooking process is very long and complicated — first the fish fillet is boiled, then it's dry-cured, then processed with a special fungus. The result is a dry and hard stick with polished sides.

デザイン賞とった居心地悪いビル

*so unhomely*  
*this house that has won*  
*the «best design» award*

こんなにも背中がかゆいのに独り

*my back*  
*itching so terribly —*  
*and no one's around*

自販機の陰でたばこを吸うサンタ

*Santa Claus*  
*is smoking in the shadow*  
*of a vending machine*

ある意味でビジュアル系の演歌歌手

*true*  
*visual kei —*  
*enka singers*

Visual Kei (ビジュアル系) literally mean «visual style». It's the name of the Japanese rock-music style, characterised by extensive use of makeup, complicated hairdos, bright costumes and often androgynous aesthetics. The musicians try to convey their message not only through music and lyrics, but also through their appearance. Enka (演歌) — a genre of a Japanese song that appeared after WWII, similar to American country music. Nowadays *enka* can often mean any traditional romantic song.

While *visual kei* targets mostly young people, *enka* is typically enjoyed by older people. The performers of *enka* are also usually people of the older generation, who nevertheless like to dress extravagantly and use bright makeup.

女子高生メイク拭うと若くなり

*without makeup  
this senior schoolgirl looks  
so much younger*

遅刻したわけを聞かない初デート

*first date  
I do not ask  
why she is late*

夜景より窓に映った君の顔

*prettier  
than the view from the window  
your reflection*

川に石投げる言いたいと言えず

*without saying what I wanted to say  
I just threw a stone  
in the river*

無口だがうるさいバイク乗っている

*this guy  
on a roaring bike  
is so quiet*

女房が睨んだだけで蚊が落ちた

*dropped dead  
from one look of my wife —  
the mosquito*

初キスは人工呼吸だったのよ

*mouth-to-mouth resuscitation  
became  
my first kiss*

へらず口戻り全快間近なり

*if he starts being cocky  
it means that  
he is recovering from his illness*

月と星そのほかも観る望遠鏡

*a telescope  
can also be used to look at  
the stars and the moon*

...And not only at the hot babe in the house across the road.

女好きだからもちろん妻も好き

*I like women  
which means I like  
my wife too*

ブラジャーになりたい生まれ変わったら

*in the next life  
I'd like to be born  
as a bra*

ぽつねんと混浴にいる俺と月

*alone  
in the mixed-sex bath house  
the moon and I*

どことなく淡谷のり子に似てる猫

*a cat  
howling somewhere  
like Noriko Awaya*

Noriko Awaya — a soprano singer, called «the queen of blues» in Japan.

サングラスかけるほどでもない芸人

*a celebrity  
but not big enough  
to wear sunglasses*

女っ気ないのね女性ばかりだと

*she doesn't  
look like a woman  
just like a female*

バスガイド雨女っていう不幸

*bad luck  
the guide in the tourist bus  
is dark and gloomy*

There is an expression in the Japanese language — «a woman / a man, whose mere appearance causes rain» (雨女/雨男) and an opposite one — «a woman / a man, whose presence improves the weather» (晴れ女/晴れ男).

If your tourist guide looks gloomier than the rain cloud, the entire trip is doomed.

外人の中にもNOと言えぬヒト

*there are people  
among foreigners, too  
who don't say NO*

The Japanese people usually do not say directly «YES» or «NO» — they imply it indirectly. Because of this, many foreigners say that it is very difficult to understand what Japanese people actually mean.

オレならばオレにお金を貸すだろか

*if I were in my shoes  
I would not lend money  
to someone like me*

俺じゃなく金にお辞儀をした行員

*the bank clerk  
bows greeting  
my wallet*

通帳を見つめる妻に声かけず

*I hold my breath  
while my wife examines  
the bank statement*

前向きな訳は後ろががけだから

*the abyss  
behind my back  
pushes me forward*

抱き合えばそこがベッドになった頃

*there was a time  
a bed appeared  
whenever we hugged*

置き手紙結婚指輪重しにし

*like a paperweight  
on the farewell note  
a wedding ring*

大海を知ってしまった蛙の目

*eyes  
of the frog  
who saw the ocean*

There is an old saying in Japan — «a frog who lives in a well knows nothing about the ocean» (井戸の中の蛙大海を知らず), which is often used to encourage someone to broaden his or her horizons.

冷蔵庫裏という名の大秘境

*uncharted territory  
the space  
behind the fridge*

いつ来ても気まぐれサラダ同じだし

*whenever I come  
it's always the same  
salad of the day*

This senryu is about the «dish of the day» in the restaurant, where the author is a regular.

居酒屋に社長の靴を取りに行く

*my job is  
to go back to the bar  
for my boss's shoes*

猫よりも絶対悩み多い犬

*a dog  
is much busier  
than a cat*

寒かったから結婚をしてしまう

*to keep myself  
warm at night  
I got married*

Japanese people often switch off heating at night to save on the energy bills.

3年後ダブルベッドを後悔し

*3 years after the wedding  
I started to regret buying  
a double bed*

喧嘩しに夢の中まで来た女房

*my wife  
comes even to my dreams  
to start a fight*

酔っ払い同士は会話成立し

*if both are drunk  
they immediately start to speak  
the same language*

日本語に英語訛があるDJ

*Japanese DJ  
with a British  
accent*

背が低いわりにとっても頭が高い

*the shorter the person  
the higher  
his head*

世界一派手なレフェリーだな行司

*sumo wrestlers have  
the most stylish referees  
in the world*

Gyoji (行司) are referees in professional sumo wrestling in Japan. Even nowadays they dress in traditional medieval outfits and hold a special fan. Google the pictures!

一番の座席は父の肩車

*my daughter's  
favourite chair —  
dad's shoulders*

マッサージされてるときのアホな顔

*during massage  
we all have  
dumb faces*

混浴の戸が開くたび振り返る

*mixed-sex bath house  
my head turns  
to every door squeak*

外人はみな大きいと思ってた

*and I thought  
that all foreigners  
have big ones*

Hearts, of course...

日本のおしりは世界一きれい

*cleanest  
in the world —  
Japanese bums*

政治家に握られた手をよく洗う

*I scrub my hand  
shaken  
by a politician*

見送りが去って恥ずかし電車内

*already in the train car  
I suddenly feel embarrassed  
about passionate farewells*

After a passionate parting with friends and relatives at the railway station, the author is embarrassed about his expression of feelings.

哀れなり上手に薬のむ幼児

*it breaks my heart...  
to see how obediently my daughter  
takes her medicine*

玄関の靴だけ見れば大家族

*big family  
judging by the shoes  
in the hallway*

二人より一人のほうがパズル解け

*as for the puzzles  
it's better to solve them alone  
than with someone else*

宇宙行く時代に君がわからない

*we conquered space  
but we still can't manage  
to understand each other*

神様の返事のような鳩の糞

*from heaven  
like the gods' message  
pigeon crap*

In Japanese mythology, birds are the messengers between the world of people and the world of gods.

爆弾もこんぺいとうも人の作

*both  
atom bomb and candy  
invented by people*

たもとから電卓を出すご住職

*sticking out  
of the bishop's sleeve  
a calculator*

妻の癖いつか夫の癖になり

*wife's bad habits  
as the years pass become  
man's bad habits*

見栄はったLのスキンが生みの親

*the reason*

*I became a father was my vanity  
in using the L-sized condom*

算数は俺に聞かないやさしい子

*how kind of my daughter!*

*she never asks me to help her  
with maths*

今ボクの心があるの右奥歯

*my soul?*

*right now it's in  
my left molar*

本当は奥に行きたいビデオ店

*in the video store*

*I am immediately drawn  
to the darkest corner*

Unlike regular shops, video stores keep their best stuff (adult movies) out of sight.

朝刊にウチが倒産したとある

*I learn*

*that my company went bust  
from the morning paper*

失業のおかげで持病完治する

*my occupational disease*

*cured  
by unemployment*

戦争をしている国もある正月

*New Year*

*also in the countries  
torn by the war*

落書も千年たてば世の遺産

*in a thousand years*

*these graffiti will become  
cultural heritage*

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Banno Senryu website: <http://mainichi.jp/feature/senryu/>

Banno Senryu on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/banryuu.club](http://www.facebook.com/banryuu.club)

Banno Senryu for Gaijin: [www.facebook.com/gaijinbannosenryu](http://www.facebook.com/gaijinbannosenryu)

## Submission Guidelines

The journal of senryu and kyoka Ershik is published in Russian on a quarterly basis. In addition to this, once a year we publish a special issue, where we present selected English versions (or English originals as the case may be) of the poems previously published in the regular issues.

We consider original senryu and kyoka as well as essays and articles on the related topics in English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Ukrainian that have not previously appeared in edited publications or in public internet forums, groups and communities. Poems previously published on personal web-sites, blogs or in closed internet forums, groups and communities are welcome.

One poem in every regular issue is awarded an Editor's Choice prize of 575 roubles (approximately 17 USD) or equivalent in other currencies.

Please submit your works (not more than 10 per issue) in the body of an e-mail to [info@ershik.com](mailto:info@ershik.com) together with your name or pen-name. If you would like your poems to be published anonymously, please let us know accordingly. Acceptance notifications are sent to the authors by 1 March, 1 June, 1 September and 1 December for the regular issues and by 15 March for the special English issue.

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