

Creation and Development of Old *Renga* Commentaries: A Focused Analysis of the Works of Sōgi's Students

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This paper discusses old *renga* (連歌) commentaries with a focus on their creation and development. It examines the period of Sōgi's (宗祇) students, when *renga* flourished and old commentaries were added to various works, and aims to describe systematically the nature of *renga* and the commentaries on them by organically linking their characteristics using specific examples.

This paper consists of five chapters (Introduction, Chapters 1 to 3, and the Final Chapter).

In the Introduction, I summarize previous studies and discuss the specific ways in which the research proceeds in relation to the characteristics of *renga* commentaries.

The following four perspectives are examined: the relationship between the characteristics of *renga* itself and commentaries (Chapter 1), the teaching of *renga* commentaries to readers (Chapter 2), the circumstances surrounding the establishment of *renga* commentaries (Chapters 2 and 3), and the activities of *renga* poets and their relationships with their students (Chapter 3).

In Chapter 1, I examine the problem of understanding *tsukeai* (付合) from the perspectives of the forms of old commentaries and the way in which phrases are interpreted. In the process, I also examine the relation between *renga* composition and commentaries. Specifically, I discuss the method of understanding *tsukeai* that the old commentaries aim to achieve, based on a method of commentary that focuses on “one-phrase” rather than “two-phrase” units of *tsukeai*. As *renga* consists of *tsukeai* and requires poets to compose phrases in *za* (座), I show that commentaries of *renga* also have a practical and pragmatic function in cultivating the perspective necessary for composing such phrases. I also clarify the method of understanding *renga* by extracting a phrase from the *tsukeai* and interpreting it for the purpose of composition, and confirm the way in which commentaries are closely related to the *za* of *renga*.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the idea of learning about the poems of *renga* poets through commentaries in *kushū* (句集). I clarify that the purpose of commentaries is to provide readers with knowledge of *renga* and *waka* (和歌) poetry, and I also clarify the process by which *kushū* and its commentaries are produced by students of *renga* poets. In the first section, I focus on the first and third types of commentaries in “Shunmusou (春夢草)”. I point out that although the commentators and the relationship between the commentaries are unknown, they share common source materials for writing. Even though the commentaries are for the same collection of *renga* poems and use the same materials, there are differences in the commentaries depending on the commentator's awareness of the reader and the purpose of the commentaries.

In the second section, I discuss the formation of “Kochiku (孤竹),” the collection of Sōboku's (宗牧) *renga* poems. First, I confirm that the student collected direct writings from Sōboku, writings from other Sōboku's students, small collections of phrases, and phrase extracts. In addition, from the

commentaries, it was possible to understand that the commentator (the student) had a desire to preserve Sōboku's discourse and writings as much as possible. By analyzing the commentaries, I confirm that the students were enthusiastic about collecting writing materials and creating annotated collections of poems, and that Sōboku was instructing them in *renga* in a concrete and practical way, with an eye toward actual production. It is not unusual for a master's commentaries to be created by his students, but in the case of "Kochiku," the materials for writing commentaries, which are estimated in section 1, can be seen in specific forms, such as multiple writings, extracts of poems, and letters exchanged with Sōboku.

What was once a simple relationship of a *renga* poet giving commentaries on his own works to beginners, *renga* learners, and students upon request, had expanded to include the sharing of writings and other materials among the students of the *renga* poet, and the giving of commentaries by the students of the *renga* poet to their own students. In this way, both the target and the content of the commentaries expanded. Throughout Chapters 1 and 2, I confirm that the content of *renga* instruction through commentaries is both practical and pragmatic, and point out the existence of a demand for the knowledge and know-how required to participate in *renga*.

In Chapter 3, I categorize the character of the Sōboku's *hyakuin* (百韻) commentaries into three categories, and point out that even within the activities of a single *renga* poet, the character of the *hyakuin* commentaries demanded by and given to the public shifted from commentaries on the works of his predecessors to commentaries on works in which he participated, and then to solo commentaries, depending on his social status at the time and the environment.

The Final Chapter summarizes the discussion in Chapters 1 to 3 and provides the conclusions of my analysis.

In this paper, I show that the old commentaries on *renga* had a great deal to do with the production of the poems, and that the way in which they were used developed in response to the changing and expanding demands of the people. During the period when Sōgi's students were active, the practice of learning and teaching *renga* through commentaries became widespread, and a variety of commentaries were needed and produced. I believe that this paper provides new insights into the creation and development of *renga* commentaries in relation to their characteristics.