

Japan
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Japanese Travel Poetry: An Introduction

Class: Creative Writing **Duration:** 10 Days (All period, every day)

Grade Level: High School – 11th and 12th Grades

TIP Summary

In this creative writing class, students will study Japanese travel poetry from the classical and medieval age focusing on the works of Saigyō and Bashō. Students will study the poems through the linkages across time by different poets visiting the same or similar places; second, by reading travel and renga (linked verse) sequences, and through discussions of specific waka (long poems) and haiku (short poems) from nikki (diaries). Poets activities and utamakura (allusions, particularly to historically and poetically significant places) will be mapped using a google earth-based tool that contains audio, video and text.

As the class reads and discusses Japanese waka and haiku, each will create a short travel diary using the nikki (diary) format. The poems will be mapped into the google earth mapping tool. The sequence will be work shopped by the class and then revised and submitted for publication on the fhsphanthers creative space page.

Goals

- Students can describe, provide examples and express the importance of nikki and its place in Japanese literature.
- Students can analyze nikki with haiku and waka for travel sequences using Saigyō and Bashō as points of reference.
- Students can adapt the nikki, haiku and waka forms into English poetic forms.
- Students can describe and analyze emotional elements of haiku and waka and can create poems using these elements in a travel setting.
- Students can spatially map places and add text and media files related to Japanese writers as well as mapping their own travel poetry.

Essential Questions

- What role did Japanese Travel Poetry have in the life and literature of the Japanese in the classic and medieval periods? Why? For what classes of people?
- In what ways did Buddhist thought and social structures contribute to travel poetry? Does the quote from Varley (pg. 96) summarize this influence?

- How do the aesthetic concepts of wabi-sabi, yugen, and mono no aware contribute to the poetical and emotional haiku and waka? In what ways do these concepts affect the traveler's response to place and life as depicted in travel poems?
- In what ways do utamakura (allusions found in classical poetry) and haimakura (allusions found in the new haiku poetry) strengthen the nikki and associated poems? In what ways can the use of these places limit the haiku and waka? Are poems better because the poet visits the place he or she writes about? How did Saigyō and Bashō handle the issue of utamakura?
- What is Bashō's relationship to Saigyō in *The Narrow Road to Oku*? How does this affect his journey, his form and his use of utamakura? Does Bashō's fictionalizing of his journey trouble you?
- What are the technical structures of waka, renga, renku and haiku. How is haiku related to the renga form? Are haiku and waka strengthened or weakened by the prose introductions?
- In writing haiku and waka in English, how important are technical aspects such as syllable count, turning point and utamakura? How important are wabi-sabi, yugen and mono no aware?

Vocabulary

Many poetic and aesthetic terms are found in wikipedia and in other internet sources. Resources listed below contain glossaries and indexes placing these terms in context.

emaki, engo, haikai no renga, haiku,inja, kake-kobota, kana, makota, miyabi, mono no aware, mujo, nikki, nikki bungaku, okashi, renga, renku, ronin, sabi (wabi-sabi), wabi, waka, yojo, yugen, zuihitsu

Poets and Poems

Selecting poems and poets is a highly personal choice driven by your involvement with the students and their interests. Keene's *Travelers of a Hundred Years* provides guidance to travel diaries. Both poetry anthologies listed below identify travel poems and support Keene's book. I recommend Saigyō and Bashō not only for the quality of their poetry, but also for their impact on poetry and travel. Ueda's breakdown of Bashō's *A Winter Shower* is an effective introduction to form and technique, aesthetics and mood. Bashō's *Narrow Road to Oku* is generally well-received by my students, but I find many students react best to individual diary entries (prose and poem) that link across time through mood, metaphor or place. I will share the web site I use with my students upon request. erebmann@fairbanks.k12.ak.us The poets Ki no Tsurayuki, Noin, Jūkaren, Princess Shikishi, Fujiwara no Teika, Tonna, and Sōgi. Keene's *Traveler's* provides an introduction to many of these writers. Carter's anthology provides biographical details and poems for each. Both sources may be used for the period following Bashō. Consider using Plutschow's work as well for poets and travelers after Bashō. It includes a road map of the Edo period.

Culminating Products and Performances

Group

Workshop
Project to the web
Renga (Extension)

Individual

Spatial map of individual travel sequence

Draft Workshop Teacher Review Journal Response	Revision	Revision Journal response.	Mapping Journey Share Sequences Haiku response to work of others.	Mapping Journey Journal Response
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Supporting Resources

“Basho, Plodding After Saigyō.” *Hermitary: the hermit, Hermits, Eremitism, Solitude, Silence,*

Anchorites, Recluses, Simplicity. Web 09 June 2011.

http://www.hermitary.com/articles/basho_saigyō.html.

Carter, Steven D. *Traditional Japanese Poetry: an Anthology.* Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1991. Print.

Deal, William E. *Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan.* New York NY: Facts On File, 2006. Print.

Dunn, Charles James. *Everyday Life in Traditional Japan.* Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972. Print.

Fogel, Joshua. *Traditions of East Asia Travel Literature.* Berghahn, 2006. Print.

Kamens, Edward. *Utamakura, Allusion, and Intertextuality in Traditional Japanese Poetry.* New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1997. Print.

Keene, Donald. *Travelers of a Hundred Ages.* New York: Holt, 1989. Print.

LaFleur, William R., and Saigyō. *Awesome Nightfall: the Life, Times, and Poetry of Saigyō.* Boston, MA: Wisdom Pub., 2003. Print.

LaFleur, William. *Saigyō: Mirro for the Moon.* New York: New Directions, 1978. Print.

Matsuo, Bashō, Miyata Masayuki, and Donald Keene. *The Narrow Road to Oku.* Tokyo [u.a.: Kodansha International, 1996. Print.

Plutschow, Herbert E. *A Reader in Edo Period Travel.* Folkestone, Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2006. Print.

Saigyō, and Burton Watson. *Saigyō: Poems of a Mountain Home.* New York: Columbia UP, 1991. Print.

Sato, Hiroaki, and Burton Watson. *From the Country of Eight Islands: an Anthology of Japanese Poetry.* Seattle: University of Washington, 1981. Print.

Shirane, Haruo. *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō.* Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998. Print.

Tames, Richard. *A Traveller's History of Japan.* New York: Interlink, 2002. Print.

Ueda, Makoto, and Matsuo Bashō. *Matsuo Bashō: The Master Haiku Poet.* Tokyo ;New York ;San Francisco: Kodansha Int., 1982. Print.

Varley, H. Paul. *Japanese Culture*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2000. Print.

Watkins, Leah, "Japanese Travel Culture: An Investigation of tthe Links Between Early Japanese Pilgrimage and Modern Japanese Travel Behavior" New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies 10, 2 (December 2008): 93-110.

Standards

Language Arts

Writing Process Standard

- A. Formulate writing ideas and identify a topic appropriate to the purpose and audience.
- B. Select and use an appropriate organizational structure to refine and develop ideas for writing
- C. Use a variety of strategies to revise content, organization and style and to improve word choice, sentence variety, clarity and consistency of writing.
- D. Apply editing strategies to eliminate slang and improve conventions.
- E. Apply tools to judge the quality of the writing.
- F. Prepare writing for publication that follows an appropriate format and uses a variety of techniques to enhance the final product.

Writing Application Standard

- A. Compose reflective writings that balance reflections by using specific personal experiences to draw conclusions about life.
- B. Write responses to literature that provide an interpretation, recognize ambiguities, nuance and complexities and that understand the author's use of stylistic devices and effects.

English – Reference Standard

A through E

Technology

Standard 3 – Technology For Productivity Applications

Benchmark B: Identify, select and apply appropriate technology tools and resources to produce creative works and to construct technology-enhanced models.