BOOK XVII

Miscellaneous Poems II

1588/1586  On the occasion of an imperial excursion to the land of Kii in the Ninth Month of the fifth year of Akamitori

shiranami no white waves roll toward
hamamatsu ga e no the beach where offering streamers
tamukegusa flutter from branches
ikuyo made ni ka of the pines how many are
toshi no henu ran the ages they have passed here

Prince Kawashima

The fifth year of Akamitori (Shuchō) corresponds to 690, the year of Empress Jitō’s excursion to Kii Province (now Wakayama Prefecture).

Streamers of paper or cloth were hung from roadside branches by travelers praying for a safe journey. This poem is a variant of Man’yōshū 34.

1589/1587  Topic unknown

yamashiro no in Yamashiro
ihata no ono no bright must be the oak groves in
hahaso hara fields near Iwata
mitsutsu ya kimi ga does my lord gaze on them as
yamadji koyu ran he travels the mountain roads

Fujiwara no Umakai, Minister of the Ceremonials Ministry

Iwata in Yamashiro, now Fushimi-ku, Kyoto, lay on the road between Nara and Ōmi Prefectures.

The poem is a variant of Man’yōshū 1730.
1590/1588  Topic unknown

ashi no ya no  by reed huts along
nada no shihoyaki  Nada shores  the salt fires burn
itoma nami  constantly  so busy
tsuge no wogushi mo  was I that I’ve come without
sasazu kinikeri  my boxwood comb in my hair

Ariwara no Narihira

The attribution to Narihira is in error: In *Ise monogatari* 87, this poem is cited as “an old poem” about the village of Ashiya in Ubara District in Settsu Province, where “a man” was living on a property he owned.

Nada is a stretch of coast between the present-day cities of Kōbe and Ashiya. The poem is a variant of *Man’yōshū* 278. *Ashinoya* (reed huts) can also be taken as a toponym, an alternative pronunciation of Ashiya.

1591/1589  Topic unknown

haruru yo no  might these be stars in
hoshi ka kahabe no  the clear night sky  or fireflies
hotaru kamo  above the river
waga sumu kata ni  banks  or are they fires lit by
ama no taku hi ka  fisherfolk  near where I live

Ariwara no Narihira

This poem, like the previous one, appears in *Ise monogatari* 87, where it is attributed to “a man.”

1592/1590  Topic unknown

shika no ama no  smoke from the salt fires
shihoyaku keburi  of the Shika fisherfolk
kazu wo itami  is caught by the winds
tachi ha noborade  and trails off to the mountains
yama ni tanabiku  unable to rise to the sky

Anonymous