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Dear *Silva Iaponicarum*,

Please accept my congratulations on your 20th anniversary! Let me extend congratulations and words of gratitude to all the editors, members of the research council, authors, reviewers and everyone who has helped in publishing these 70 fascicles (and counting!). I am happy to have been there from the very beginning in 2004, when Arkadiusz Jabłoński and Maciej Kanert invited Iwona Kordzińska-Nawrocka and me to work together on publishing *Silva*.

Such an occasion calls for a poem. No, not mine, of course. In the 2nd and 3rd fascicle of *Silva* my translation into Polish of the first chapter of *Nampōroku*, or *The Southern Records* (a 17th century *chasho*, tea treatise, ascribed to Nambō Sōkei, who might be a fictive character) was published and in episode 33 there is a record that the famous tea master, Takeno Jōō, cited the following poem by Fujiwara Teika to express the spirit of the way of tea (Nanbō Sōkei 2005: 44).

*Miwataseba
hana-mo momiji-mo
nakarikeri
ura-no tomaya-no
aki-no yūgure*

*As I gaze far about –
there's neither blossom
nor crimson leaf.
At sea's edge: a rush hut
in autumn dusk.*

(transl. Dennis Hirota 1995: 233)

The poem starts with quite a flamboyant image of flowers and colorful leaves, which soon turns into a dark and melancholy one, with a solitary hut in autumn. Choosing it, Jōō shows the different forms of beauty in tea and perhaps his preference for wabi as simply opposed to a more expressive beauty?

In the same episode it is also explained that tea master Sen no Rikyū replied to it with another poem, by Fujiwara Ietaka (Nanbō Sōkei 2005: 45):

*Hana-o nomi
matsuran hito-ni
yamazato-no
yukima-no kusa-no*

*To one who awaits
only the cherry's blossoming
I would show:
spring in the mountain village*

*haru-o misebaya**with new herbs amid snow*

(transl. Dennis Hirota 1995: 234)

The contrast between two images is less pronounced than in the previous poem and shows appreciation of a less apparent beauty.

Through poems and poetic dialogue, tea masters attempted to express their understanding of tea. This exchange is quite well known and often referred to, but there is more to it: later I learned that certain Seki Chikusen noted in his *Chawa mamuki-no okina* (*Tea stories of old man looking straight*, 1718) a poem supposedly composed by Nambō Sōkei, as his answer to the previous two (Tsutsui 2003: 14).

*Hana momiji**There are no flowers**tomaya-mo uta-mo**No rush hut, no colorful leaves**nakarikeri**And even no poem**tada miwataseba**Gazing far about**roji-no yūgure**There is only an evening on the dewy path*

(transl. AZ)

This poem is different on many levels: first of all, it is clearly composed by a tea practitioner and the landscape it shows is a *roji* (dewy path) – a path leading towards the tea room. It obviously refers to the Teika poem by simply negating everything in it and in this negation, it also includes the poem itself. This poetics based on a paradox of a poem negating itself resembles *kōans*, used in Zen Buddhism to stimulate the practice of meditation. Moreover, negating the poem means also negating of the existence of the poet himself: no ego, only *roji*, a path, which may be understood as showing chanoyu as a practice leading towards enlightenment.

Let us conclude with one last poem:

*Hana momiji**There are no flowers**tomaya-mo usa-mo**No rush hut, no colorful leaves**nakarikeri**And even no sadness**tada miwataseba**Gazing far about**roji-no yūgure**There is only an evening on the dewy path*

(transl. AZ)

Can you spot the difference? In the Japanese text it is only in one letter: instead of *uta*, a poem, there is *usa*, sadness. Or rather, there is no sadness!

Some sources say that Gengensai Sōshitsu, who was the 11th *iemoto*, or head of the Urasenke tea school, copied the poem himself, with this one change in wording, and made a scroll with this calligraphy (Tsutsui 2003: 15). In the first chapter of *Nanpōroku* (episode 19, 3rd fascicle of *Silva*, Nanbō Sōkei 2005: 34) it is said that no other tea utensil is more important than the scroll. Although one should not hang in the tokonoma a scroll brushed by a lay person, only by the Buddhist masters, exceptions can be made for a scroll with a *dōka*, poem of the way, and this certainly is a *dōka*. It shows there is no need to be sad or too serious when practicing the way of tea (*chadō*) and the way of Buddhas (*butsudō*, Buddhism): just see the world around you as it is.

While the first two poems appear in the first chapter of *Nanpōroku*, the latter two I encountered only much later. Thank you, *Silva Iaponicarum*, for starting me on the way of translating poetry and the way of tea texts. *Kuregure-mo yoroshiku onegaishimasu*.

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