

# Fragments.

Letter from Saburo Hasegawa to Isamu Noguchi, August 24, 1950.  
The Noguchi Museum Archive.

have thus classical grandiose beauty and charm.

Ryokan respected Basho and made Haiku too but much less than Kanshi and Waka.

Ryokan liked folk songs and knew many of them well and tried to make some new ones too.

Ryokan was learned in Chinese Classics of both Confucius and Lao-tze schools and Japanese Classics beside Buddhist texts.

Ryokan admired Innocent and Fool. His name Ryokan means Good and Generous. The pen name he used very often was Tai-ju which means Big(great) Fool.

Ryokan liked to play with children. He was very good at Mari-Tenki (Ball play) and Chaji-kei (a game to scatter and collect small shells or stones), and was proud of the fact. He played eagerly. One day he was playing hide and seek, he was hiding behind a straw heap, children went home without finding him. Ryokan stayed there over night. Next morning a farmer found him and wanted to talk to him, then Ryokan stopped him "Shia -- I am playing hide and seek".

Ryokan preached very seldom, still people liked to have him and invited him often to stay. The whole atmosphere

**Ryokan (1758-1831.)**  
Son of a town mayor and Shinto priest. Born Echigo - northern and darker side of Honshu (main island facing Japan Sea).  
One day, when he was a boy, his father scolded him rather severely, and Ryokan stared at father reproachfully, then father told him that a child who stare at parents reproachfully will become a turbot. Very late that evening Ryokan was lost, whole family was very anxious, at last his mother found him sitting lonesomely on a rock at sea shore. Seeing his mother, Ryokan asked her - "Have I not become a turbot yet?"  
Ryokan's father was very good at Haiku but not at business.  
At the closing years of his teenage Ryokan became a Zen priest by his own will. He has been away from home for twenty years. He respected and admired Dogen - the most profoundly philosophical priest of Soto (1200-1253)  
Japanese Zen, founder of Soto (Soto) sect.  
"Contemplation for contemplation's sake" was the leading doctrine of Soto sect. Most severe on one's own self - especially on one's behaviors.  
Shinkai (Rules for daily life) must be obeyed till the minutest details - manners to eat, cook, handle foods and drinks, to take bath, to clean the room, how to wash, how to clean teeth, how to do in water closet, etc... (Most of the origin of Tenmei and other manners of Chano-yu you come from this Shinkai.) Dogen (author of Shobo-gezo) was the deepest thinker, most learned man and the hardest self-tormenting priest.  
Ryokan had hard twenty years in the tradition of Dogen, some times in big temples and some times lonely in a hermitage.

1796 Ryokan came back to his country, and stayed there through the rest of his life. Always in a simple hermitage (moved twice). Contemplation in living is the ideal of Zen, meaning contemplation in sitting, walking, working, playing, eating, drinking, writing, reading, so forth. Ryokan seems to be a man who realized this ideal.

Ryokan disliked the poems by professional poet, cooking by professional cook, writing by professional calligrapher, and a priest who's smile priestlike.

Ryokan liked the poems of Kanzan (a crazy man who lived near a big temple and who came to the temple often to fool the priests. His poems scattered about in the mountain forest

were collected and edited as Kanzan-shi.  
(Chinese Tang Dynasty)  
Ryokan's poems (Chinese Kan-shi) are in the manner of Kanzan. Ryokan disobeyed the rules of poems very often.  
Ryokan liked 'Manyo-shu' Japanese poems - collection of poems by Emperors, princes, officials, soldiers, peoples... by every body, and folk songs etc... from same epoch as Hanwa (same kind of charm and beauty of Hanwa).  
Few people paid any attention to Manyo-shu at the time of Ryokan, people preferred more elaborate modern style.  
Ryokan's poems (Japanese Han-shi Waka)

became so agreeable any time and place when he is there. He keeps quite quiet and comes and goes as he likes.  
A family asked Ryokan to come and give advice to the son who was a naughty play boy. Ryokan came, stayed a few days, said nothing to the son and was going to leave, the son came to help Ryokan to bind the waraji (straw shoe), then the son felt some drops of water falling on his back, he looked up and found Ryokan's eyes full of tears, the son and Ryokan looked at each other a while, and R. gone.  
The son became a gentle and agreeable young man. (Ryokan himself had been a play boy before he became a priest)  
People used to ask him to write, and he did whenever he feels at any place with any brush on any paper. When he doesn't feel to write he didn't.  
His style of writing derives from Kana of Togu-wara-period and Seisho (free quick manner) of Kaiyo (Chinese Tang dynasty). He used to write with finger in the air. He wrote a very long beautiful sign board for an Ameya (Candy shop).

One night a burglar came to his hermitage, Ryokan pretended to be fast asleep, having found anything else the burglar pulled the quilt off, Ryokan let him to do. Ryokan stayed in bed without quilt and began to feel very cold. He got up, looked at the moon and made a Haiku:

Nusubito ni tori-noko sare shi  
mado no tanuki.  
(Oh, the burglar forgot to rob the moon  
of my window.)

A bamboo grew through a broken part of his cabinet, it reached the ceiling, and Ryokan wanted to make a hole there so that the bamboo grow through it.

He took a candle and tried to burn a part of ceiling, as the result he burnt the whole cabinet.

Near the end of Ryokan's life a young and pretty nun came to visit. She admired him devotedly. She looked after Ryokan who became old and ill. They made poems together - questions and answers in verses.  
Ryokan was asked to live down town, he accepted, and there he died peacefully. After a century passed, people of Echigo speak about 'Ryokan-sama' as though he is living forever with them.

## HOCHO = Kitchen knife

HO means a cook  
CHO is name of a man  
HOCHO literally means Mr. CHO a cook, but today, Kitchen knife is called HOCHO in Japan. (Seldom, kitchen knife is called Nagatana - Vegetable sword)

Story of HOCHO is written in SOSHI (#3) (Chinese classic in the line of Lao-tze (#3))

When CHO disect and carve a cow, the sound was music and the poses and gestures were a dance. An emperor saw him and asked him the secret. CHO replied that he never forces.

Blade of a knife is very thin, and if one knows well, he can always find enough place to put this thin blade in, he never needs to force. Some cooks use out his knife in one month, but CHO's knife stayed sharp and brilliant for years. When CHO sees a cow, he sees where to put the blade...

To-day, few Japanese knows why they call their kitchen knife HOCHO, - hence the tragedy of modern Japan and perhaps that of modern World..)

## Basho. (1644-1694)

"Learn from pine about pine,  
learn from bamboo about bamboo."

Being asked about the secret to give lightness to Haiku:

"Look at what children do."

"My art is same like a fireplace in summer and a fan in winter."

It is useless."

Zé ame (or Seami) (15th cent.)  
Greatest "NOH" player and composer.  
About the ideal of beauty to be expressed in NOH.

"Aim at a flower blooming from a massive rock."

Rikyu (1522-1591)  
About the secret of good CHA-NO-YU.  
"Warm in winter and cool in summer." That's all!

## MO NO KAITE OHGI HIKISAKU WAKARE KANA, BASHO.

(Having written some lines on a fan, and tear it in two,  
this is a departure in early autumn: Basho.)

24.8.1950.

SABRO HASEGAWA,  
5955, FUJIMIGA-OKA,  
TSUJIDO, FUJISAWA CITY,  
KANAGAWA-KEN,  
JAPAN.



CHANGING AND UNCHANGING THINGS: NOGUCHI AND HASEGAWA IN POSTWAR JAPAN

THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM MAY 1-JULY 14, 2019

Saburo Hasegawa and Isamu Noguchi at Shisen-do Temple, Kyoto, 1950. Photograph by Michio Noguchi. The Noguchi Museum Archive.