JAPANESE POETRY AND THE CLIENT-CENTERED APPROACH

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ABSTRACT. A form of Japanese linked poetry style, renku, is composed by two or more people as a group. In this paper the authors illuminate the therapeutic aspect of the renku-composing process. Renku allows participants to demonstrate their distinctiveness while maintaining the sense of togetherness, or "vacuum." Personality changes take place in the "vacuum." The significance of the renku setting and vacuum is discussed from the viewpoint of Taoistic philosophy. A renku group offers us a unique setting in which individuals can free their intuition and engage in dialogue among their whole personalities. Authors then compare a renku group with an intensive group and with Focusing. Renku is a metaphor and circumlocution of our experiencing relationships with other persons and with nature.
Japanese Poetry and the Client-Centered Approach

This paper introduces developmental and therapeutic aspects of Japanese poetry, Renku, a verse form established by haiku poet, Matsuo Basho (1644-1694). In composing renku, two or more people take part in turn and each write a short verse. Each verse is independent and complete by itself while being linked to the preceding verse and maintaining a harmony with it. It is written in accord with strict conventions including images or associations. While renku is enjoyed as a pastime, it can also help bring about a person's psychological growth and healing. In fact, renku is used in growth groups as well as in clinical settings.

I. The Outline of Renku

Renku literally means "linked verses," and consists of a chain of two types of verses--a long verse with three lines and a short verse with two lines. In renku composition, two or more people take part in writing long and short verses alternately, while maintaining harmony with or shift from the preceding verse. Established by Matsuo Basho, renku generally consists of 36 verses or 18 long and 18 short verses.

In renku there is no theme or story as a whole. Instead, a given verse or stanza, as in a chain, joins with the one before and the one after, but no other. To facilitate the rich development in renku, there are strict conventions designed to maintain the harmony of renku as one piece of work while helping avoid its becoming monotonous or stagnant. While each verse creates its own poetical universe, the addition of the next verse widens its horizon and promotes its new development. The widely known haiku is this first verse which has been separated from the rest and made completely independent. (For more about renku and its conventions refer to Basho's 1694 classic translated by Sato, 1996; Higashi, 1978; Hoffmann, 1990; Miner, 1979; and Sato, 1976.)

In verse-making, what is deemed important is a realistic description. This means writing the truth and describing things as they are (Masaoka, 1987/1955). The appeal of renku resides in having a number of people with various personalities contributing their differing perceptions in making up and sharing a rich poetical universe, something which is not possible for one individual to accomplish. Thus, one is rewarded with unexpected surprise and joy of discovery, which leads to further development.

Torahiko Terada (1996/1948) compares the charm of renku with orchestral music. Participants with different characteristics are like musical instruments each playing a wide variety of tones. Whereas music is apt to be uninteresting in a solo recital unless the performer is of outstanding talent, performance by various kinds of musical instruments will add depth and richness to the music. Similarly, renku solo tends to be flat and uninteresting. Likewise, when people of similar personalities and inclinations get together to make verses, the outcome is likely to be too smooth and dull. However, varying characteristics of verse composers have effects similar to musical instruments of a variety of sounds. In short, making a superb renku requires a group of outstanding individuals of widely different characters and interests.
Therapeutic aspects of renku are found in the fact that in a renku group participants are expected to express their own unique universes and, at the same time, to understand and respond to the others' universes. In a renku group members can experience understanding and acceptance by others and thus can proceed on an inner search to discover expressions that most suitably signify what they encounter. Because of these self-discovery and self-healing aspects, renku is used in growth groups (Tomoda, 1990a) and in hospitals as renku therapy (Tokuda, limori & Asano, 1990). Gathering for these purposes is voluntary and the constraints of renku are loosely interpreted. In renku therapy, correspondence by mail or homework is allowed. Regulations which appear at first glance to be binding are actually useful in invoking the natural and unrestrained perceptiveness of the participants. Furthermore, they serve as safety valves in preventing the morbid aspect of participants inadvertently coming to surface (Tokuda et al.1990). Verses written in renku are short and rhythmic and so are easy to create and repeat. Thus, anyone can write a verse on his or her own level.

II. Renku and Vacuum (Yoshihiko Morotomi)

Tomoda conceptualizes that personality change in clients occurs when they are in a “vacuum” which is a certain kind of altered state of consciousness where all relationships disappear. In Tomoda’s way of thinking, acceptance, empathy and congruence, which Rogers emphasized, are not themselves sufficient conditions for therapeutic personality change. They are instead prerequisites of the “vacuum” state. According to Tomoda, the essence of client-centered therapy (CCT) lies in a paradoxical relationship where a person becomes “utterly alone.” through another person's acceptance and empathic understanding (Hayashi, Kuno, Morotmi, Osawa, Shimizu , & Suetake, 1998).

The “vacuum” state takes place not only in individual counseling but also in various group approaches, one of which is renku. A renku group has a unique atmosphere which brings each member to the “vacuum.” Kandabashi (1990) pointed out that the atmosphere of renku is similar to the following experience which took place accidentally in a group psychotherapy session (Izumi & Tsubone,1988). Both clients and therapists were released from the heavy load of “relationship” (p. 57). There was an atmosphere full of relief, where all participants forgot that they were in a therapy setting. They were all participants together, but they forgot that they were in such a relationship. All of the members became lost in their own feelings but each member appeared to be in the same state of mind. All participants appeared to be enveloped in a vague atmosphere of “togetherness;” they shared the same state of mind.

Not only in renku, but also in various group approaches in Japan, participants are often enveloped in a vague atmosphere of “togetherness” where they forget being in relationship and become lost in their own feelings. This process, which parallels Tomoda’s “vacuum” state, is perhaps the primary element explaining the power for approaches in Japan to facilitate growth.

According to Kandabashi (1990), it is the structure of renku which enables a “relationship” and “his/her own world” to be compatible in the participant's consciousness (p. 58). For instance, there are fixed rules or the strict conventions in renku. Their functions are
1) to avoid or prevent frequent appearance of specific themes arising from participant's personal attachments, and 2) to facilitate the development of good sense. Such rules are "formulas which lead one to be free through being set in conventional patterns" (p. 58). The structure of renku is an artificial device that ensures that the group always remains in a therapeutic atmosphere.

Furthermore, Kandabashi says "The methodology of renku is common to various kinds of Japanese arts. They say that first go into patterns and then go out of 'patterns.' Patterns of Japanese arts act as restraints that lead one to be free" (pp. 57-58). Therefore, renku is a unique group approach making the most of the wisdom contained in Japanese traditional arts which have been transmitted from long ago-- that is, procedures which lead one to be truly free ("vacuum") through setting up artificial patterns of restraint.

III. The Meaning of Taoistic Emptiness in Renku-Making and Client-Centered Therapy (Sachiko Hayashi)

In renku-making, the participants need to maintain an objective attitude so that they can understand and appreciate the poetic world as it is presented by the other. At the same time, they can demonstrate their creativity and individuality while pursuing their inner search. One appreciates and enjoys the image provided in the previous verse and lets it flow until their own images, either progressed or shifted, come to mind. Then one concentrates on seeking the most suitable expressions which manifest one's ideas or feelings. This is a process in which one's awareness flows back and forth between the sense of aloneness and of being with others.

What kind of experiences are taking place in the mind of a participant in this type of renku group? In understanding and grasping the meanings and images presented in the former stanza correctly, it is primarily important to have an attitude of relating to them sincerely with full respect. This relates to the state of genuineness used in the client-centered approach. The second stage is to receive the previous poetic image as it is. This literal reception then extends to appreciating as faithfully as possible the scenes and reverberations woven into the image. This stage parallels the absolute acceptance, or the unconditional positive regard referred to by Rogers. In the third stage, the participant proceeds to the state of empathic understanding. The understanding amounts to feeling the other's poetic world as if it were ones own.

The three stages above take place in the individual who tries to connect a stanza. They are, as pointed out above, closely related to Rogers' necessary and sufficient conditions for personality change. The series of stages taking place in the above process appears to be brought about by the sensibility of the individual in a short period rather than by deliberate thinking; because to understand is to feel.

How does the renku-composition process occur in an individual? Basho taught his disciples saying, "learn about a pine tree from a pine tree, and about a bamboo stalk from a bamboo stalk" (Eihara, 1939; Stryk, 1985; Tomoda, 1981).
Stryk wrote,

what he meant was that the poet should detach his mind from self ... and enter into the object, sharing its delicate life and its feelings, whereupon a poem forms itself. Description of the object is not enough; unless a poem contains feelings which have come from the object, the object and the poet's self will be separate things (p. 14).

It is important that poets free themselves from the ego, enter the object, and identify themselves with the object to understand and learn about its true meaning. By doing so, poetry comes to be spontaneously formed (Stryk, 1985). The art of Basho was under a strong influence of the philosophy of Chuang-tzu. The more the disciples learned from Basho, the more they deepened their philosophical understandings of Chuang-tzu (Hirota, 1979). Based on the perusal of Chuang-tzu, Basho said that the understanding of the true meaning of an object could be achieved by “leaving himself,” that is, by becoming kyo (emptiness) in the sense of the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu schools of thought.

With respect to emptiness, Chuang-tzu describes the supposedly fictitious words of Confucius:

Concentrate and make your mind one. Listen by your heart, not by ears. No, listen by your mind, not by heart. No, listen by your ki (spirit), not by mind. The ears only hear sounds, the mind only responds to objects. On the other hand, ki stays in the state of emptiness and accepts all things. The Tao gathers only towards this emptiness. This emptiness of mind is nothing but the feast of mind (Mori, 1994, p.195).

In order to accept the object, kyo, or a state of emptiness is needed. Individuals must leave their existing selves. This concept must also be necessary for a counselor to be thorough in accord with Rogers' empathic understanding. Counselors can achieve empathic understanding only when they free themselves from their roles, professionalism, and even the selves. At that time, the client can be left alone at ease for the first time. Then, the client can begin an inner search and meet a new self.

Kyo is appreciated in Zen therapy as well. Brazier states:

In Buddhism, a particular form of ‘being alone’ is highly valued. This is the kind of aloneness in which one is not troubled by visitations from either seductive or troubling memories from the past, in which one is not hanging on to ‘unfinished business’, in which one is not living in hope or longing, nor waiting for real life to begin (Brazier, 1995, p. 27).

The commonality between the mushin (innocence) in Zen and kyo of Chuang-tzu was also pointed out by Ito (1995/1959), who is one of the major contributors to the introduction of CCT in Japan. He explains mushin by quoting the Fudochi Shinmyoroku, a classic of Japanese Zen, as follows: “Senjyu Kan-non (Goddess of Mercy with thousand hands) can extend the mind to all of the hands just because she does not let her mind stick to one hand.
When the mind is caught in any one hand, all of the other 999 hands become useless” (pp. 135-136).

This description, Ito continues, is similar in idea to the one in Chihokuyu (book 22) of Chuang-tzu: “doing nothing and nothing left undone.” Nothing will be left undone when there is no stagnation in mind. This is the state of “doing mui (not-doing)” (Ito, 1995/1959, p. 136).

Tomoda, on the other hand, considers vacuum, a word uttered by Harbert Brian, as the essence of human growth and change (Hayashi et al, 1998). The observation led him to the study of the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu school of thought. Tomoda’s understanding of the work of Basho led him to consider renku as a place for experiential study which would bring human growth and spiritual leaps (Tomoda, 1990a). Tomoda thinks that renku-composing begins with expressing the “faint feelings” which are felt when one is identified with the object, using as accurate words as possible. In his renku workshop, renku-making is a place for the sensitivity training of how to understand and appreciate the previous verses. Moreover, he regards the workshop as a place for the participant to learn how to respond to former verses while giving consideration to the connectedness with the next verse (Tomoda, 1990b).

The dual significance of kyo in each of the settings of renku and counseling becomes clear from the above. Counselors can understand and accept the client in a true sense when they are in the state of kyo or null and void. The client is then left alone for the first time. Clients will hear their new voice to which they have not been able to listen till then. It is in this situation that the awareness takes place in the client. Similarly, kyo is necessary in renku so that the poet who tries to compose a verse learns the poetic world of former verses. In addition, kyo is necessary for poets to feel the object which they try to describe in renku. Furthermore, kyo is essential for them to be genuine in regarding themselves as the object itself when writing a verse.

What meaning does the existence of others have in the inner world or awareness of an individual? Sodo collaborated with Basho in renku-making. Sodo and Basho mutually influenced one another, not only in literature but also in philosophy and attitudes toward life through studying Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu schools of thought. When the association with Basho ceased, Sodo had to study Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu alone. However, without the interaction with the other, Sodo’s understanding of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu soon fell into a mere self-contented one, with idealistic and abstractionism biases (Hirota, 1979). There is always a danger of falling into solipsism and idealism when ones “awareness” is left without the close examination in relation to others. As is true for the settings in counseling, renku has significance as being a place to examine the awareness and inspiration obtained by becoming totally alone through relation with others.
IV. Some Features of a Renku Group as an Intensive Group Experience (Mikio Shimizu)

This is to report the writer's personal experience of a renku group. Renku groups seem to possess the psychological functions of cure and healing, along with the following features: 1) high verbal symbolization functioning from personal inner experiences through the verse formation process; 2) growing group cohesiveness; 3) high mentality in the process of verse linkage with all the members under the renku rules; and 4) exchanging frank inner descriptions among members.

The following task-oriented features as a growth group are observed:

1. **Normality of the members**: Renku group members are generally ordinary people who are involved with their daily life.

2. **Coordinator**: In the renku-composing group, a member functions as a coordinator. The coordinator highly regards group members by providing them a free and safe atmosphere, letting them flow their verses after appreciating the poem created by the preceding member, rearranging some expressions with more suitable words, or selecting appropriate verses under the renku rules. The coordinator also pays attention to each verse—describing scenes, feelings, and impressions; considering the balance of verse linkage; and selecting a verse created by a member whose verse has not been selected before (giving impartiality to verse selection). It is more important to give impartiality to the verse selection than to evaluating the verse. The coordinator exists in the renku group as a judge or referee with knowledge of and experience in the renku rules, rather than a leader exercising authority over the group. Compared with the basic encounter group, the renku coordinator has clearer roles and functions in the group process. In a matured renku group, however, the coordinator's function tends to be dispersed among its members.

3. **The task-oriented tendency of a renku group**: The main tasks for renku members are to enjoy the personal process of making verses, and to participate in the group process of selecting verses and linking a set of verses. A set of verses composed by a group is not typically evaluated as good or bad. The coordinator simply reads aloud all of the verses at the end. The inter-relationships among the group members is concentrated on the verses with the purpose of conveying meanings or feelings that the verses express and contain.

4. **An inter-exchange of personal inner fantasy and integration of group fantasy**: As renku is a process of verse linking under a fair judge in a safe atmosphere, it is very rare to see negative situations or scenes similar to those observed in basic encounter groups. Milling around, tangling around, revealing negative feelings, directing criticisms to other members or to the judge, and so forth, are rarely observed.
V. Rogers' Intuition and "Za" in Renku (Toru Kuno)

Rogers (1970) described an incident in his encounter group with a high school girl. He wrote that the group paused for quite a time in silence; and after some very moving feelings were expressed, a sincere and serious girl named Sue broke into it with some highly intellectual questions -- perfectly reasonable, but somehow not at all appropriate to what was going on. Rogers continued as follows:

I felt, at some intuitive level, that she was not saying what she wanted to say, but she gave no clue as to what her real message might be. I found myself wanting to go over and sit next to her, but it seemed a crazy impulse, since she was not in any obvious way asking for help. The impulse was so strong, however, that I took the risk, crossed the room, and asked if I could sit by her on the couch, feeling that there was a large chance I would be rebuffed. She made room me, and as soon as I sat down she leaped into my lap, threw her head over my shoulder, and burst into sobs (p. 122).

Taking advantage of his action, the group proceeded forward and began to help her. Rogers continues: "Evidently by intuition I had acted wisely, but I have no idea of how this came about" (p. 123).

Intuition plays a significant part in renku composition. Poets, when trying to grasp the realm of the verse created by the preceding composer, do not demand to receive any explanatory comments from him. They are expected to perceive the realm as the preceding composer does, including the sphere beyond the verbal expression. Composers are required to step into a scene of the author's sentiment, and to see and feel it in exactly the same way as he did. Thus they compose responding poems from their independent realms, maintaining harmony with that of the predecessor's. Here, again, poets do not give tedious explanation of their own creation. Poets understand each piece in link composition at an intuitive level, and through composing pieces, engage in dialogues with their whole personalities. Herein lies a decisive difference between renku and an encounter group, the former of which tries to enhance understanding among group members by means of clear verbal communication.

The Japanese term "mi" is now introduced to enhance an understanding of renku. "Mi" is akin to "body," but we use the term strictly in distinction from another term "karada," the flesh. "Mi" is defined as "the body not as the object" but "the body as the phenomenon" which integrates both the conscious and unconscious spheres of human nature. For instance, in Japanese expression empathic understanding is "aite no mi ni naru" (placing oneself in another position), or literally "becoming another's body." This expression skillfully displays the function of our "body as the phenomenon," which, though being an independent substance as flesh, is still capable of perceiving another's realm as if it were ones own.

"Za" is another Japanese term that is central to understanding the meaning of renku. It originated from trade or craft organizations (Reischauer & Kato, 1993), but gradually its meaning changed to signify "psychological field" where people share a common objective and collaborate to create one product. Each verse in renku is independent and complete by itself, and renku as a whole is also appreciated as a work of art. Thus, renku is called "the literature of za."
Collaborating in a “za” tacitly prescribes a participant to “aite no mi ni naru,” to place oneself in another’s position. There lies the confidence among collaborators that others react with their “mi.” Needless to say, reactions are not always appropriate. However, witnessing the more optimal reply from other participants, each one becomes aware of the lag ones own “mi” has in response, and makes it an occasion to improve oneself. This process of taking part in “za” of renku enhances cultivation of character.

Rogers’ earlier quoted group experience would be re-described as follows: Before the encounter between Sue and Rogers occurred, the group must have spent more than one day together, and it had cultivated “za” or a psychological field where the group members came to “aite no mi ni naru,” or place themselves in each others’ place and to have better awareness of others’ realms. The fact that Sue broke into the silence after some very moving feeling were expressed, with some highly intellectual but “not at all appropriate” questions suggests that she was not open to the “za,” whereas Rogers’ “mi” had already showed the optimal reaction to the “za.” Rogers had keenly sensed Sue was not saying what she wanted to say. When Rogers went over and sat next to her, overcoming his fear that he would be rebuffed, he at this moment chose to trust the response his “mi” cultivated by the “za” of his group.

VI. Verse-Making and Focusing (Mieko Osawa)

Similarities between Tomoda and Gendlin were presented at the Third International Conference on Client Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy in Austria (Hayashi et al. 1998). Both Tomoda and Gendlin say that clients can be utterly alone and find themselves facing their inner selves if a counselor is simply with them with acceptance and empathic understanding. Space for renku constitutes the set as a safe space. Members do not have to delve into deep personal or emotional relationships, but can be utterly alone, feel free to enjoy the process of renku, and make their own verses. In the process of renku-making, like a focuser in a focusing process, participants take enough time to feel a vague feeling deep inside themselves. They may wait until the image becomes clearer and able to be manifested by the most appropriate expression. This section compares the process of renku-making to the focusing process.

Gendlin (1981) originally developed focusing theory and method as six steps. Cornell (1993, 1994) follows Gendlin’s method but makes the process easy to conceptualize by articulating five steps and five skills. The third step of these five steps, also Gendlin’s third step, is “getting a handle.” Cornell explains this step as “description.” In the last three years she has been elaborating on the steps in workshops in Germany in 1996 and in Japan in 1997 and 1998. Here she emphasizes “inner relationship” between “I” and “inner self.”

Cornell metaphorically explains inner felt-sense as a shy animal or a small child in fear. It is important to pay attention to our inner felt-sense to allow it to be as free as possible. She says that the key of focusing is to keep a good relationship between “I” and “inner felt-sense.” This inner felt-sense sometimes becomes alive with “its wants and needs and its own point of view.” She calls this the “Living It” (1993, 1994).
Now let's go back to the scene of renku-making, and more specifically the process of verse making in renku. As a way of verse making, objective description has been fundamental since Basho. In haiku, established as one of the short verse literatures in Meiji era, the attitude of sketching or delineating in Western painting became popular. This kind of description is very similar to the process and attitude of finding symbols in the focusing process. Related to these similarities between verse making and focusing is the work of Kaneko, an avant-garde haiku poet who says:

Here is a glass. How to describe this glass, how to explain the feeling about this glass, or go one step further, how to communicate the content of the thought concerning this glass -- these three ways are most common in haiku-making. These are more or less the way a poet directly connects himself and a glass. There is another way, that is, a glass is just a stimulus, gives me a chance to acknowledge and awake a sense inside my body, evokes imagination, creates the perfect expression through wholeness. In this process a glass is sometimes described, sometimes not mentioned at all. It is not important. Delicate shades of consciousness and the contents of imagination are created inside of myself, and these are not necessarily about this glass. It is completely free... I want to call it "a creative self," which stimulates myself through a glass and creates some expressions. Because of "a creative self" the relationship between a glass and myself becomes indirect (Kaneko, 1957a, pp. 26-31).

In this explanation, Kaneko illustrates three common methods of modern haiku-making, 1) sketching, 2) expressing direct personal feeling about a glass, and 3) abstract communication with a glass. These three methods are all ways of expressing the direct relationship between a creator and an object. "Forming" refers to a more objective operation to set up a "creative self" as a mediator between the self and an object in order to avoid the direct relationship. Kaneko's (1957b) "Forming Theory" is summarized as follows:

1. *A specific sense precedes* in haiku-making.

2. The content of the sense is examined with *consciousness*, and/or the sense evokes and creates some fresh consciousness. A creative self, which wants to create expressions for haiku, brings about *this complicated inner procedure*.

3. As a result of the procedure called "forming," examining the sense with consciousness and evoking new consciousness, the "creative self" gets one or more images.

4. Therefore images often ask for *metaphor* because the procedure is not dependent on the duality between the self and the object but on the object in the self through the sense.

5. *Forming* is certainly the method to express the *reality*. In a traditional way poets consider the objective materials as reality, or consider only their inner imagery as reality. In forming, however, poets, through their inner sense, pay serious attention to both their environment or society and see themselves as an objective existence, and then express something accumulated in their consciousness as reality. (authors' italics) (pp. 12-17).
Examining the above italic expressions and comparing them to those in focusing we first see that the “specific sense” compares to Gendlin’s “felt-sense.” Also, “consciousness” is comparable to the “subjective self” of focusing. “This complicated inner procedure,” or “forming,” is tantamount to the focusing process; to “resonating,” and/or to “inner relationship.” Additionally, “images” are focusing symbols, while the “creative self” truly parallels Cornell’s “Living It.” The specific sense or felt-sense becomes alive and begins to act with its own will.

In the theory of haiku, the forming, stated as “expression,” is the way of expressing reality, that is, the way of expressing how verse makers consider their own real life and how they make haiku expressing their way of living. The reality is mainly the continual activities of the vivid physical consciousness (Kaneko & Okai, 1994/1963). The process of verse making by Kaneko is like the process of experiencing described by Gendlin and to the process of inner relationship described by Cornell. The focal point for both Kaneko and Cornell is not merely making verses or doing focusing, but is a way of living subjectively, paying deep attention to the senses felt directly in the situation, in the moment.

VII. The Creation of Meanings and Forms in Renku
(Yasuhiro Suetake)

What takes place through the process of renku composition is not merely the composition of verses but also the creation of meanings and forms deeply concerned with the reality that we are alive. Renku is a metaphor and circumlocution of our experiencing relationships with other persons and nature. This section tries to clarify the characteristics of renku by adapting Gendlin’s theory (1962) for the functional relationships between experiencing and symbols.

Renku is composed conforming to its unique rules which include what is possibly the world's shortest poetic expression and is created by not only one person but also a group of poets. In addition, one verse creates its own realm jointly with the preceding verse, but then the next verse again absorbs it into a totally different scene and realm. Because renku consists of linked verses, there is not a consistent story or a clear theme. This might be a reason why, on the face of it, renku appears an odd method of poetry composition. However, it is thought to contain something more than a mere wordy recreation—something which is more essential to the nature of human beings.

What, then, occurs through the process of renku composition? As pointed out in the former section, a poetry composition is an extremely metaphorical work. Gendlin states, “A metaphor achieves a new meaning...the metaphor applies the symbols and their ordinary felt meaning to a new area of experience, and thereby creates a new meaning, and a new vehicle of expression” (Gendlin 1962, p.113). Verse composition based on direct reference to experiencing, or focusing on felt sense, could be said to be a metaphor itself for the way to create new meanings.

Then what does replying to the preceding verse indicate? On the surface, what takes place might look like metonymy; i.e., skidding to the adjoining term. Undoubtedly, replying
in verse more or less contains part of the metonymy function of words. This tendency appears relatively often in reply verses composed by beginners and people with serious psychological problems. However, composition of a reply verse, an essential part of work in renku, cannot be explained exclusively by metonymy. "Circumlocution," which Gendlin generalized as the final phase of the functional relationship between experiencing and symbols, helps us comprehend this process. He states:

A felt meaning is created in a person by means of symbols that do not symbolize that felt meaning. ...All experience (of things, persons, situations and so on) may be seen as circumlocution although presumably no one sets these experiences up in order to communicate a felt meaning. ...Art may be viewed as circumlocution in which someone actually does arrange experiences for someone else in order to create in him a given felt meaning (pp. 135-136).

This description reminds the writer of works of art (paintings and literature) depicting the atomic bomb explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and on Guernica by Picasso. In many cases, when expressing grief and anger, circumlocution cannot be avoided. However, the circumlocutional form does help convey some deep felt meaning to those who come across to the work (Gendlin, 1962). Meanings ascribed to the work may then be shared; reply verses composed (though not necessarily in a clear manner). In addition to these obvious examples, our existence itself might be equal to composing a reply verse to persons and situations we come across.

Replying in verse in renku composition is linking circumlocution developed in a fixed framework of rules. A verse is created from a diversified context including not only the here-and-now feelings among persons involved but also nature, social conditions, culture, classical works and so on. Renku, which looks on the surface like linked metonymy, or trifling of significant detached from signifie, without a consistent and clear story, in fact is one appearance of experiential intricacy expressed through metaphor and circumlocution.

Tomoda, who introduced and advocated CCT in Japan, came to immerse himself in the world of Renku. About 15 years ago this writer learned about CCT while attending a workshop by Tomoda on Renku. The following is the verse this writer composed on that occasion:

Syuchaku no Reaching
eki ni kitari te a terminal station
haru no kaze a spring wind blew

The workshop was held at a village in the folds of the hills with a terminal station of some route. I, feeling expectant and anxious, got off the train, and a reviving spring breeze blew through. Tomoda replied to this first stanza as follows:

Tara no me toran Let's pick angelica buds
hi no ochinu ma ni before the sun sets
This was the author's first encounter with Tomoda and CCT, and this current writing is in part reply verse to the stanza by Tomoda quoted here.

The forms of renku completed by Basho are sublime and must be respected. However, there seems to be an aspect of Renku form that is not easy to apply outside of Japan. Renku composition traditionally encouraged modification and new creation of the forms. It seems meaningful and interesting to seek out the possibility of creating a new form, for instance, composing renku in languages other than Japanese.

Conclusion

Renku is a group process in which participants can present their distinctiveness while maintaining a sense of relatedness to the other. Various rules of renku enable participants to share the same time and space, or za, and experience the feeling of togetherness. Individuals in this environment are encouraged to demonstrate their creativity, originality, and sensibility to the others. Thus renku allows individuals to find and confirm a comfortable niche; participants are given a place to live, and simultaneously give the same to the others. Renku can be applied in a wide variety of developmental and educational programs and therapeutic settings.

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REFERENCES


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