Introduction

This paper is the third in a series of studies on the poetry of *Nihon Kakyoku*, and forms a sequel to two previous papers. The main objective of the present work is to explain the process of translation of the poems of three further representative works of the early twentieth century genre of *Nihon Kakyoku*, or Japanese Song, and thereby to introduce the linguistic and cultural background to the poems. The original inspiration for the study was the occasion of A Recital of Japanese Song, London, March 2002, (in which the writer was privileged to participate, giving readings of her translations of the poems), and further incentive was subsequently afforded by a new series of classes entitled ‘An Appreciation of the Lyrical Songs of Japan’ (日本抒情歌の鑑賞), jointly established in April 2003 by the Departments of Japanese Language and Literature and English Language and Literature at Shimane Prefectural Shimane Women’s College, the team-teaching of which was shared by the writer.

As in the two previous papers (hereafter referred to as Paper 1 and Paper 2), all three songs in the present work are still today included in various publications of Ministry of Education-recognised music textbooks for use in Primary Schools (*Furusato*, *Oborozuki Yo*, and *Hotaru no Hikari*), Junior High Schools (*Furusato* and *Hotaru no Hikari*), and High Schools (*Furusato*, *Oborozuki Yo*, and *Hotaru no Hikari*). The transcription of the poems of *Nihon Kakyoku* has tended to undergo changes, in terms of the choice of the various possible uses of Kanji characters and the Hiragana phonetic script, depending on the publication and period of publication. For the purpose of this paper, however, the Japanese versions of the poems have been reproduced as transcribed in the collection of Japanese lyrical songs, *Nihon Jojōka Zensha*, in which all three appear – *Furusato* and *Oborozuki Yo* being included in volume 1, and *Hotaru no Hikari* in volume 2 – which happen to contain a
greater use of Kanji than other versions.

As explained in Paper 1 and Paper 2, the same fascinating challenges presented themselves in the process of translation into English of the poems in the present paper, in terms of attempting an interpretation of the ambiguous, the unstated or understated, which is so often the nature of the Japanese language, while at the same time endeavouring to retain as much as possible of the original mood and atmosphere of the poems. While in the present paper, the writer has not (as in Paper 2) attempted to produce translations faithful rhythm-wise to the original syllable-count of the Japanese, or which could be sung, (another possible future challenge), a further similar pleasure was again afforded by the task of trying to create translations which might be accepted as English poems in their own right, from the point of view of rhythm and aural effect. As has been the case in the previous two papers, whereas the original Japanese poems tend not to make use of punctuation, either in the middle or at the end of lines, and while potential punctuation within a line is often substituted by the convention of leaving a space in between two phrases, the writer has chosen to insert punctuation in the translations, where this has felt necessary from the point of view of clarity of meaning in English.

A Word on Monbushō Shōka

An established part of the Nihon Kakyōka repertoire, all three songs in the present paper were originally composed as so-called Gakkō Shōka, or ‘School Songs’, as also in the case of Kojō no Tsuki (Moon Over the Ruined Castle) in Paper 1, and Sō Shun Fu (Ode to Early Spring) in Paper 2, examples of the many songs which were either commissioned by, or designated for inclusion in the music textbooks appointed by, the respective Ministries of Education of the Meiji and Taishō periods — (and, in the case of later works, in the first part of the Shōwa period). Gakkō Shōka came about as an essential part of the process, with the emergence of the Meiji Restoration, of Japan’s looking to European methods in the sphere of education, and of its seeking to acquire and apply knowledge of European traditions and their developing concepts and trends in, among other fields, that of music. The three songs in the present paper are, in fact, examples of specific Gakkō Shōka which were presented in the music textbooks under the title of Monbushō Shōka, or ‘Ministry of Education Songs’.

The teaching of music, including singing, as a school subject in Japan first began in earnest a few years after the establishment, in 1872, of school education and the primary and middle school system. In order to prepare this completely new syllabus, the Ministry of Education set up, in 1879, the Monbushō Ongaku Torishirabe Kakari (文部省音楽取調掛), or Music Research Bureau, (which was later to become Tōkyō Ongaku Gakkō, the Tokyo School of Music, and eventually the present-day Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku Ongakubu, the Faculty of Music of the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, composed of selected teachers and scholars, to make a study of the methods of Western school music education, and to collect possible songs which could be used in Japan’s new schools, sending one of its members, Izawa Shūji (1851-1917), to study in America, and consequently inviting his teacher, Luther Whiting Mason (1828-1897), to Japan to act as adviser on musical education. The initial result was the compilation of a large number of songs with Japanese words, but set mainly to the melodies of already-existing European classical and folk songs, and hymns, and gradually newly-composed songs, but based on, or influenced by, what were at first often very hymn-like European-style melodies. The process of the composition of the words to the songs, often written to a prescribed theme, morally edifying in nature, frequently involved revision and the contribution of the combined effort of several members of the Bureau, before it received final approval from the Ministry of Education. A consequence of this process, where it became difficult to specify the original poet, was the tendency for the earlier songs in particular to appear in the music textbooks either as ‘Anonymous’, or with the description of Monbushō Shōka (Ministry of Education Song).
Translation and Interpretation

1. (My Childhood Home)

Poem by 高野辰之 Takano Tatsuyuki (1876-1947)
Song by 岡野貞一 Okano Teiichi (1878-1941)

 NIGHTS, I chased hares among its hills,
I fished small carp there in its stream.
Though my dream yet draws me on,
I cannot forget my childhood home.

I wonder how my parents fare?
I trust my friends are well?
Whether faced by rain or storm,
I think fondly on my childhood home.

When I have attained my dream,
I will return at last to my home,
My home, where the hills are green,
My home, where the stream runs clear.
BACKGROUND

This song, *Furusato*, together with *Aka Tonbo* (Red Dragonfly) and *Kōjō no Tsuki* (Moon Over the Ruined Castle), presented in Paper 1, is one of the greatest loved, and most representative, of all *Nihon Kakyoku*. It was first published twenty-five years after the beginnings of the teaching of music in schools, in the third year of the Taishō period (1914), in a music textbook entitled *Jinjō Shōgaku Shōka* 6 (『尋常小學唱歌（六）』Songs for Primary Schools (6)), for use in the sixth year of primary school. By this time, the emphasis had come to be placed more on the teaching of songs of a greater ‘Japanese’ flavour:

By consolidating the trends of the time, *Jinjō Shōgaku Shōka* (Songs for Primary Schools) in effect strongly presented itself as a songbook by Japanese, with Japanese themes, and which penetrated the Japanese spirit, [compiled] for the purpose of educating Japanese children.⁴

The song, *Furusato*, has continued to be included in primary school music textbooks throughout the ninety years since its first publication, performed regularly in choral concerts and solo recitals, and sung widely in many spheres.

The identity of the poet and composer of the song is, in the case of this song, well established, the poet being Takano Tatsuyuki and the composer, Okano Teiichi, both of whom taught at Tokyō Ongaku Gakkō, were appointed members of the School Songbook Editorial Board, and who worked also on other compositions together. (See *Oborozuki Yo*, below.)

The poet, a scholar of Japanese literature, was born in the Shinshū region, Nagano prefecture, in central Japan. The scene and inspiration of the poem is the childhood village home of the poet, which was at the time known as Nagae, in Nagatamura, (now known as Toyota-mura), and which he left in order to move to Tokyo, to pursue his career. The song setting of the poem, by Okano Teiichi, who had been a church organist, and was baptized into the Church, is, as with many Gakkō Shōka, reminiscent of the melody of a hymn.

The song *Furusato* can be said to embody Takano Tatsuyuki’s own life in poem-form, and, with its naturally-flowing, easy-to-sing melody, it is a song which deeply moves the Japanese heart.⁵

NOTES

(1) 故郷 *furusato* (my childhood home) Possibly the most difficult expression in this poem from the point of view of translation, is the *furusato* of the title and the pervading theme. It represents an excellent example of the close relationship between language and cultural background, in as much as it exists not only as a linguistic term, but as a deep-rooted traditional ‘concept’ in the Japanese mind. It can be pronounced also as *kokyo*, the Japanese pronunciation of the same term in Chinese (gūxiāng), and, when pronounced solely as *furusato*, can be written also with the alternative characters 古里, or in the Hiragana phonetic script, whereby it immediately retains its Japanese pronunciation. Indeed, as mentioned above in the Introduction, where there often tends to be a discrepancy in the choice of Kanji or Hiragana in the different publications of *Nihon Kakyoku*, this is likewise the case with *Furusato*. In many of the publications of *Furusato* which have appeared at different stages since its initial composition, however, the term is given in Hiragana — presumably to ensure the Japanese pronunciation and ‘flavour’ of the term. The song was, though, originally published with the term *furusato* written in its Kanji form, as above. The expression *furusato* is variously translated in Japanese-English dictionaries as ‘one’s hometown’, ‘one’s native village’, ‘one’s (old) home’, or ‘one’s birthplace’, the traditional image being that it relates to the countryside. As the *furusato* of the song is depicted, with its natural scenery, as being in the countryside, it was obviously not appropriate
to translate it as ‘hometown’. While ‘native village’ felt slightly too cumbersome, in terms of the content of the song, ‘birthplace’ seemed too restrictive. Eventually, after further deliberation as to other possibilities, and taking into consideration also the rhythm and aural effect in English, I decided on ‘my childhood home’ as being the most suitable translation here. Though, in contemporary Japanese society, people no longer tend to live their whole lives in, or relate solely to, one place, and expressions such as Dai ni no furusato (one’s second furusato) or Kokoro no furusato (the furusato in/of one’s heart) have grown up, the majority of Japanese still nevertheless feel a strong sense of affinity with the concept of furusato, and with the sentiment of the song:

The pervading emotion which relates to the furusato, is greatly connected with the way of life of the Japanese as fundamentally rural people. The older they get, the more the Japanese feel a sense of attachment to the place where they were born and grew up, becoming filled with a sense of Bōkyō, ‘longing for their furusato’ and a ‘desire to return’.  

Again, though inspired by the poet’s own furusato:

The greatest merit of this song is that it sings not of one particular place, but of the furusato which exists in the hearts of everyone. The song contains what might be considered to be the archetypal landscape imprinted in the heart of the Japanese.

(ii) 児追いし usagi oishi (I chased hares) Though the subject of the chasing is not actually stated in the Japanese, the overall mood of the poem is that of a narrative in the first person. Strictly speaking, the Japanese for ‘hare’ is no-usagi, whereas usagi is usually translated into English as ‘rabbit’. As, however, the term usagi can also be used to include the idea of no-usagi, and as it would seem that the general concept of usagi as it is found in the wild is that of a ‘hare’ — with what one would think of in English as a ‘rabbit’ applying more usually to the usagi kept as a pet — I decided here upon the choice of ‘hare’.

(iii) かの山 kano yama (among its hills) The kano here is a literary usage of the contemporary ano, the literal translation of which is ‘that’ or ‘those’. Combined with yama, mountain/s, or hill/s, it therefore denotes ‘that/those mountain/s or hill/s’.

I felt, however, the use of ‘its’ better to express the sense of intimacy embodied in the tone of the poem. Apart from the necessary decision on the part of the translator as to singular or plural in terms of ‘mountain’ or ‘mountains’, or ‘hill’ or ‘hills’ here, and whether the unstated preposition should be interpreted as ‘in’, ‘on’ or ‘among’ (→ ‘in the mountains/ hills’, ‘on the mountain/s/ hill/s’, ‘among the mountains/ hills’), the inevitable decision as to the translation of yama, literally ‘mountain’, presented itself. Strictly speaking, the term for ‘hill’ is oka, but, although the word exists, it is very rarely used to refer to the scenery of Japan, which is known as a land of yama, or ‘mountains’. The apparent height of the mountains, however, inevitably depends, not only upon the actual height, but upon the height which a particular area is above sea level. Whereas in some parts of Japan, the yama are, and do appear as, very high ‘mountains’, as in the English concept of ‘mountains’, conveying the idea that they would, for example, be extremely difficult even to climb, in certain areas they are far more accessible. Though Nagano prefecture is known for its mountainous landscape, referred to collectively as the Japan Alps (see the song Sō Shun Fū, presented in Paper 2), the poet’s village in the northern part of the prefecture, actually lies in a plain. Considering the fact that the poet (or the speaker in the poem) did in fact ‘chase hares among (in)’ the particular yama in question, it would seem that at least the yama which were in close vicinity with the village where he lived were more ‘hills’, than ‘mountains’. Consequently, bearing in mind the distinction which I felt to be made in English between the concepts of
'mountain' and 'hill', after long consideration, I made the decision of choosing the term 'hill'. (It is noteworthy that in certain of the current school music textbooks which bear illustrations for Furusato, though these inevitably reflect the image of the individual artists, and are not necessarily related to the particular furusato which was the inspiration of the poem, the yama
do appear more as 'hills' than 'mountains'.

I also felt that the choice of 'among', rather than 'in', created more of a sense of movement, in connection with the image of the boy 'chasing the hares', and also worked better from the point of view of syllable-count.

(iv) 小鰊釣りし kobuna tsurishi (Fished small carp) The term kobuna here, strictly refers to 'small funa', or, according to the dictionary, small (implying still young) 'crucian carp'. The funa is in fact a member of the carp family, grows eventually to approximately ten to fifteen centimetres in length, and is either silvery-white or golden in colour. It is always very difficult to know how to translate the name of a bird, fish or plant that does not exist, or is not known, in another culture — as explained in Paper 2, in connection with the translation of the bird uguisu (bush warbler) which appears in the song Sō Shun Fa. I eventually decided simply to use 'carp', qualified by 'small', which also worked well from the point of view of syllable-count.

(v) かの川 kano kawa (there in its stream) As in note (iii), while the literal translation of kano is 'that/those', I preferred the use of 'its' — here preceded by 'there', which is implied in the meaning, and which I felt read more smoothly from the point of view of rhythm, and with the subsequent creation of alliteration with the word 'though' at the beginning of the following line. As to the necessary choice between singular or plural in terms of the word kawa, 'stream/s', I felt that, even if there happened to be more than one 'stream' in the vicinity of the furusato concerned, it was most likely that the speaker would have had the custom of fishing in one stream in particular — therefore still allowing for the singular. I also took the liberty here of translating kawa as 'stream', rather than as 'river', its literal meaning. Though, strictly speaking, the term for 'stream' is 'ogawa' (small river), kawa can also be taken as a general term to refer to 'rivers' of varying sizes. As a result of kawa appearing in the translation in juxtaposition with 'hills', and the personal overall image of the landscape subsequently afforded by the translator — and even taking into consideration the fact that this particular 'stream' contained 'small crucian carp', prompting the translator to ponder further on the degree of flexibility of size implied in the image of the word 'stream' in English — 'stream' felt more appropriate, and at the same time worked well aurally, in creating a rhyme with the word 'dream' in the middle of the next line, and assonance with the word 'home' at the end of the fourth line. (It is noteworthy that in certain of the current school music textbooks which bear illustrations for Furusato, as mentioned in connection with yama above in note (iii), though these inevitably reflect the image of the individual artists, and do not necessarily bear any relation to the actual furusato of the poet which was the inspiration of the song, the kawa does appear to be depicted as a 'small river', or a 'stream'. Further evidence of the reasonably small scale of the 'river' in question can be found in the illustrated map of Toyota-mura given in the official Website for Toyota-mura, where the actual 'river' where the poet is said to have fished, the Madara Gawa, is depicted.)

(vi) 夢は今 もむDirty yume wa ima mo megurite (though my dream yet draws me on) This expression literally means '(my/the/a) dream now still revolves/goes round and round', or 'dreams still revolve/go round and round', with the phrase megurite, though open to interpretation, seeming to imply here 'revolve(s)/go(es) round and round in my mind'. It is, of course, necessary in translation to qualify the 'dream/s', or to specify to whom the 'dream/s' belong(s), unstated in the Japanese, but in keeping with the idea of the poem as a whole as a narrative in the first person, I have inserted the possessive, 'my'. There are, however, two possible interpretations of this line, either of which is acceptable to the Japanese singer or audience, and which will vary according to the image held by the individual. One immediate interpretation is that the 'dream' — either a dream while asleep, or a dream-like memory when awake — refers to that of the poet's childhood home and the
life he enjoyed there as a boy, as just referred to in the previous first two lines of the song, and which he is at present far away from, but which, as stated in the following, fourth line of the verse, he can never forget. The other interpretation is that the ‘dream’ is the dream he is now pursuing in life, in terms of his future career, the dream for the pursuit of which he has now left his furusato, having come to the capital. This being the case, this ‘dream’ still fills his mind, ‘drawing (him) on’, not letting him return to his furusato until he has realized it. (See notes (xi) and (xii) below.)

(vii) 如何に在ます 父母 Ikani imasu chichi haha (I wonder how my parents fare?) Literally, ‘How are my father and mother? / How do my father and mother fare?’

(viii) 恥がなしや 友がき Tsutsuga nashi ya tomogaki (I trust my friends are well?) The expression tsutsuga is a literary term meaning ‘illness’ or ‘calamity’, and, when followed by nashi (without), implies ‘well’, or ‘without harm’. The final particle ya here indicates the interrogative. However, as in the previous line, the poet would seem to be asking himself the question, in the hope that his friends are indeed well, I have tried to express this idea with the use of the expression ‘I trust’, followed by a question mark. The expression tomogaki is a literary term for the contemporary tomodachi. The latter part, gaki (kaki), literally meaning a ‘fence’ or a ‘hedge’, apparently bears the association with the expression ‘bind a hedge’ (kaki o musubu), which is used as a metaphor for ‘binding friendship’.

(ix) 雨に風に ついても ame ni kaze ni tsuketemochi (whether faced by rain or storm) The tsuketemo here literally means ‘even if touching’, or ‘concerning’, while kaze literally means ‘wind’, the whole expression thus literally meaning ‘even if touched by rain or wind’. I preferred to use ‘storm’ rather than ‘wind’, for aural effect, to create a sense of alliteration, and partial assonance with the word ‘home’ at the end of the next line. As this phrase describes the state of the poet in the following line, the two lines together can be interpreted to mean, whether (or regardless of whether) it is rainy or windy, or, in other words, whatever the weather or the circumstances where he at present is, the poet still always ‘thinks fondly’ of his ‘childhood home’.

(x) 思い出する omoiizuru (I think fondly (on)) The expression omoiizuru also appears in the poem of the song Hatsu Koi (First Love), presented in Paper 2, though with a variant use of the Hiragana inflection. It is the literary term for the modern omoidasu, or ‘remember’/‘recall’, but bears the implication or association of ‘fondly’.

(xi) 志を はたして Kokorozashi o hatashite (When I have attained my dream) The term kokorozashi embodies the various meanings of ‘aim’, ‘ambition’, ‘aspiration’, or ‘desire’, or, by extension, the translation I have chosen, ‘dream’. The term hatashite, from the verb hatasu, ‘attain’, ‘accomplish’, ‘realize’, literally means ‘(I) will attain (my) dream, and . . .’ As, however, specifically what ‘dream’ is meant here is not made clear, this phrase could possibly, at first sight, particularly when combined with the idea in the following line, ‘I will return at last to my home’, be taken to mean the dream of the poet to return to his childhood home. In other words, ‘I will attain my dream, and return at last to my home’. From the Japanese point of view, however, the association of ‘attaining (one’s) dream’ and ‘returning home’ presents a different, immediately recognized interpretation. This is based on the concept of Kokyō ni nishiki o kazaru, ‘Display a brocade banner in one’s village’, or Nishiki o kita kokyō ni kaeru, ‘Return home clad in fine brocade’ — derived from the Chinese Yì jīn huán xiāng — the idea of ‘Returning home in glory to one’s village, after achieving fame, or successfully achieving the goal which one left home to move to the capital to achieve, and being greeted with great applause and cheer and celebration’ — the Kanji for furusato, here being pronounced as kokyō.

Furusato sings of Nature, diligence, and life itself, and the concept of Kokyō ni nishiki o kazaru, ‘Displaying a brocade banner in one’s village’, is perfectly embodied in the work. 11)

(xii) いつの日にか 帰らん Itsuno hi ni ka kaeran (I will return at last to my home) A very similar expression to this
appears in the last line of the song *Yashii no Mi* (Coconut), presented in Paper 1, the line being *izureno hi ni ka kuni ni kaeran*, which I translated as ‘When, I wonder, might I return to my land!’ The terms *izureno hi ni ka* and *itsuno hi ni ka* possess the more or less same meaning of ‘one day’, or ‘some time’, which I translated in *Yashii no Mi* as ‘When?’ and here in *Furusato* as ‘at last’. These two different translations arise, however, from the two very different possible interpretations of the latter part of both lines — namely, (*kuni ni kaeran*) — in terms of the final particle ‘n’. In the case of *Yashii no Mi*, this is interpreted in the sense of ‘expressing whether something will happen or otherwise as being outside one’s control’ and in *Furusato*, in the very opposite sense of ‘emphasizing a feeling of certainty that something will happen’ — in other words, indicating ‘I will definitely return’. The interpretation of this very ambiguous term therefore depends greatly on the context. While in *Yashii no Mi*, the tone is one of pessimistic longing, in *Furusato* it is one of optimistic determination. (See note (xi) above.)

(xi) 山は青き故郷 *yama wa aoki furusato* (my home, where the hills are green) The *aoki* in this line, the literary form of the modern *aoi* (or *ao*), literally means ‘blue’, as it would naturally be translated in the expression *aozora* (blue sky), with the word *midori* usually translated into English as ‘green’. This, however, is an example of the different cultural interpretation of ‘colour’. The concept of the colour *aoi* in fact embodies the two colours blue and green, or is a blend of the various tones of the two, and tends to be used to describe the colour of things in Nature, such as grass, trees, and mountains (hills), in which case it is inevitably translated into English as ‘green’. An exception to its tendency to be used to describe natural colours is in the case of ‘traffic lights’, which again illustrates the fascinating discrepancy in the appearance of things in terms of different cultures, where the ‘green light’ is referred to in Japanese as *aoshingō*, or ‘blue light’. The term *midori*, which is more specifically what would be considered to be ‘green’ to the Western mind, is similarly used to describe the colour of things in Nature, though not exclusively. The term *aoi*, or its derivative *ao*, is also used to describe the colour of the willow trees in spring in verse two of the song *Hana*, ‘How could I not delight in the green willow trees’ (*aoyagi*) presented in Paper 2. The same concept of the colours *ao* and *midori* exists in the Chinese terms *qing* and *lì*.

2. (i) *Oborozuki Yo* Misty Moonlit Night

Poem by 高野辰之Takano Tatsuyuki (1876-1947)
Song by 岡野貞一Okano Teiichi (1878-1941)

On the fields of rape flowers, the setting sun grows dim.
On the folds of the far-off hills, *a hazy veil falls,*
In the sky beyond, where a spring breeze gently stirs,
The evening moon appears, glowing faintly.

The flickering lights of the village, the hue of the forest trees,
The figure tracing the narrow path through the fields;
The croaking of the frogs, and the echo of the temple bell,
All become obscure, in this misty moonlit night.

BACKGROUND

Like the previous poem, Furusato, Oborozuki Yo was first published in the third year of the Taishō period (1914), in the same school music songbook, Jinjo Shōgaku Shōka (Songs for Primary Schools (6)), for use in the sixth year of primary school. It is in fact another work by the same poet and composer, Takano Tatsuyuki and Okano Teiichi. The scene and inspiration of the poem is the same furusato (childhood home) of the poet, at the time known as Nagae, in Nagata-mura, in Shimominoki-gun — now known as Toyota-mura (village) — in Nagano prefecture. This song is, therefore, also based on the theme of 'fondness for the furusato'. (See note (i) of the song, Furusato.)

The appeal of Oborozuki Yo, and the reason why it has been so loved, is surely that it sings of a spring landscape such as used to be seen anywhere in Japan. It is with regret, however, that it is necessary to say 'as used to be seen anywhere in Japan', in the past tense.

We have now lost our furusato. Though each one of us must have a furusato where we were born, the scenery that exists there now will be quite different from how it was when we lived there. The beautiful expression 'Bokyō', or 'longing for one's furusato' [see quotation (i), above], is something which now only exists in the heart.

It is in the image of 'Bokyō', that the wonderful song Oborozuki Yo continues to live on. Or rather, it is perhaps because of the existence of this song that we manage at least to keep the furusato in our hearts alive.²)

In a different mode from that of the narrative song Furusato, however, it paints, what is to the writer, an almost Haiku-like scene, a eulogy to the landscape of the village and the life therein, a descriptive portrayal of a transitory moment captured one spring night. Like Furusato, Oborozuki Yo has continued to be included in primary school music textbooks throughout the ninety years since its first publication, and, with its beautiful, lilting, again somewhat hymn-like, melody, this much-loved song also constantly features as part of the Nihon Kakyoku recital repertoire.

NOTES

(i) 鏡月夜  oborozuki yo (misty moonlit night) The oboro of oborozuki of the title and pervading theme of the poem, conveys the meaning of 'obscure', 'faint', 'dim', or 'indistinct', and when combined with tsuki (zuki), moon, it denotes the image of a moon vaguely concealed by a thin layer of, often gently moving, clouds — a 'hazy moon', or what I have chosen, for the sake of the alliterative effect thereby produced, to call a 'misty moon'. When this expression is further combined with yo, or 'night', it refers to a night sky which bears a 'misty moon' — what I have chosen to call a 'misty moonlit night'. The term oborozuki generally implies the idea of a 'full moon', and, in particular, such as can be seen on a spring night. The expression does in fact conjure up the image of 'spring', and frequently appears in Japanese literature as a symbol of such. It appears similarly in the third verse of the song Hana, in the line 'In the night sky slowly climbs, a misty full moon' (Kureeba noboru
oborozuki), presented in Paper 2.

(ii) 菜の花畑 na no hanabatake (fields of rape flowers) A symbol of early spring, the yellow na, or rape flower, which blooms in March, was once a common sight all over Japan, when it was grown in abundance as a source of food, in the case of its leaves and stalk, and for the manufacture of oil, not only for cooking, but also very importantly for lamps. At the very mention of ‘fields of rape flowers’, there is conjured up the image of a vast expanse of carpet of bright, golden yellow:

[At night,] "When the moon appears, the gentle petals seem to absorb its light, glowing faintly, so that all around is constantly bright."  

(iii) 見渡す山の端 miwatasu yama no ha (on the folds of the far-off hills) The expression miwatasu literally means ‘look out over / glance over (a landscape)’, while yama no ha refers to ‘the ridge of the tops of mountains/hills when seen in the distance’. I chose to combine these two ideas, conveying the nuance of miwatasu with the adjective ‘far-off’, adding the implicit preposition ‘on’, to connect with what I interpreted as the gradual sense of movement in the following phrase (note iv), and to create a conscious repetition with the wording of the previous (first) line. I also chose the more poetic expression ‘folds’ to convey the idea of ‘ridge’, which in turn creates an alliterative effect with ‘far-off’ and with the ‘fields’ and ‘flowers’ of the preceding (first) line. Again, here, I chose to translate yama as ‘hills’, rather than as ‘mountains’. (See note (iii) of Poem 1, Furusato.)

(iv) 霞深し kasumi fukashi (a hazy veil falls) This phrase literally means ‘the mist is thick’, fukashi being the literary form of the modern fukai. Having used ‘misty’ in juxtaposition with ‘moonlit’ in the title and in the last line of the poem, I here chose to use the adjective ‘hazy’ with the metaphor ‘veil’, creating an effect of assonance, and with a sense of the gradual process of the passage of time from evening to night, I took the further liberty of combining it with the verbal ‘falls’, for the purpose of creating a balance with the ‘the setting sun grows dim’, at the end of the preceding (first) line.

(v) 春風そよ吹く 空を見れば harakaze soyo fuku sora o mireba (In the sky beyond, where a spring breeze gently stirs) This line literally means ‘if you look / one looks at the sky (in which / where) a spring wind gently blows’. I decided to insert ‘beyond’ to describe the sky here, to incorporate the idea of ‘if you look’, to convey the sense that, ‘in looking’, one would ‘look up’, ‘above’ or ‘beyond’ the hills, and to create a balance with my choice of wording in ‘on the folds of the far-off hills’, in the preceding (first) line.

(vi) 夕月かえりて yuzuki kakarite (the evening moon appears) This expression literally means ‘the evening moon hangs (suspended) is suspended’, but I have chosen to interpret it, in the process of events following after ‘the setting sun grows dim’ in line one, as it now being the turn of the moon to appear (and consequently ‘hang suspended’) in the sky.

(vii) くい暖し nioi awashi (glowing faintly) The nioi here refers to a ‘light’, or a ‘glow’, while awashi is the literary form of awai, ‘faint’ or ‘pale’. The phrase thus literally means ‘the/its glow/light (is) faint/pale’. I felt the choice of the verb and adverb here, in ‘glowing faintly’ to work better linguistically in qualifying the ‘appearance of the moon’, and from an aural point of view.

(viii) 里わの灯影も satowa no hokage mo (the flickering light(s) of the village) The expression hokage here, while meaning ‘lamplight’, embodies the idea of the ‘shadow-like’, hence ‘flickering’, lights of lamps — presumably seen in the windows of the rice-straw-thatched wooden cottages, and, in this case, undoubtedly fuelled by rape oil — while the expression satowa conveys the idea of ‘all around the village’. I have chosen the more condensed ‘the flickering lights of the village’, in an attempt to achieve a balance of syllable-count and rhythm in the line and the verse as a whole. The particle mo expresses emphasis, in this case with several images mentioned together — ie, ‘also’, with the nuance of ‘even’. Feeling that the
repeated insertion of the word ‘also’ in English would appear too cumbersome, I decided to express this sense of emphasis simply with the insertion of a series of commas, followed by the final ‘and’, and with the inclusion of the word ‘all’, in ‘All become obscure’, in the last line, following the various images described.

(ix) 森の色も mori no iro mo (the hue of the forest trees) Literally, ‘also the colour of the forest’. I chose the more abstract ‘hue’ rather than ‘colour’, as it seemed more appropriate from the point of view of the ‘indistinct’ tone of the scene. I further chose to insert the word ‘trees’, from the point of view of syllable-count and rhythm, and also to create an alliterative effect with the word ‘tracing’, and a suggestion of assonance with the word ‘fields’ in the following line.

(x) 田中の小道を 迪る人も tanaka no komichi o tadoru hito mo (the figure tracing the narrow path through the fields) The hito of this line in fact means ‘person’ or ‘people’. I chose to use ‘figure’ here, again, as in the previous note (ix), I felt it to blend more suitably with the ‘indistinct’ atmosphere of the scene, the whole appearing almost as if in an impressionist painting. It further enhances the alliterative effect of the ‘I’ consonant, created also by ‘flickering’ and ‘forest’ in the preceding line, together with ‘fields’ in the same line, and with ‘frogs’ in the following line. While I did consider the choice of the plural, in terms of ‘a few / several people (figures)’, I eventually chose to interpret hito in the singular, as ‘figure’, with the image of a solitary figure, seen indistinctly in the distance, perhaps determinedly making his way home rather late at the end of the day, after working in the fields. It is noteworthy that in each of the illustrations to Oborozuki Yo in three primary school music textbooks47, though these inevitably reflect the image of the individual artists, there appears only one figure.

(xi) 蛙の鳴く音も kawazu no naku ne mo (the croaking of the frogs) Literally, ‘the crying (croaking) sound of (the) frog(s)’. Here, however, there is no confusion as to the use of the singular or plural, as the croaking chorus of frogs is a very common sound of the Japanese countryside at night, and, as with the ‘misty moon’ and the ‘rape flower’, when found in literature, bears an immediate association with the spring.

(xii) 鐘の音も kane no oto mo (the echo of the temple bell) In contrast to the use of the plural ‘frogs’ above in note (x), there is no doubt here that the ‘temple bell’ should be in the singular. Literally, this expression means ‘also the sound of the temple bell’, the actual sound of which is readily imagined in the Japanese mind. Unlike the church bells of the West, the huge, single bell of the Japanese Buddhist temple, is struck manually with a large wooden pole-like stick, suspended on a piece of rope from the roof of a small wooden-framed, open platformed building in which the bell itself is suspended. The sound produced by each single strike is in effect a sonorous ‘booming’. As, however, the image of ‘booming’ seemed too ‘loud’, or ‘distinct’ for the mood of the scene of the poem, I chose to use the word ‘echo’, which felt more in keeping with the ‘hazy’ atmosphere of the scene, and which, together with the other ‘aural’ element of the ‘croaking of the frogs’, merges with the visual elements under the ‘misty moonlit’ sky. The actual temple bell to which the poet is referring is in fact the bell of Shinhōji Temple, in present-day Toyota Village.48 (See also Background to Furusato.)

3. **Hotaru no Hikari By the Glow of Fireflies**

**(i) 蟻の光**

Poem: Anonymous

Song: Traditional Scottish

(i) 蟻の光 (ii) 窓の雪

(ii) 書よむ月日 かさねつつ

(iii) いつしか年も (iv) すきの戸を

(v) あけてぞ けさは (vi) 別れゆく

(iii) Hotaru no hikari (iv) mado no yuki

(vi) Fumi yomu tsukihi kasane tsutsu

(vi) Itsushika toshi no (v) sugi no to o

(vi) Akete zo kesa wa (vi) wakare yuki
The glow of fireflies, bright snow at the window,
The months and days of study grow in number.
All at once, the years too pass, and we open,
For upon this morn we say farewell, and go upon our way.
All we who stay, and we who leave, on this last day,
From 'midst the many thoughts we fondly share
But find these simple words to turn to song,
Oh, fare thee well, wholeheartedly we sing.

BACKGROUND
This song was first published, under the title of Hotaru (Fireflies), in the fourteenth year of the Meiji Era (1881), two years after the establishment of the Music Research Bureau, in Shōgaku Shōka Shū (Shō) (『小学唱歌集 (初)』Songbook for Primary Schools, (One)), the very first volume of Gakkō Shōka.

This songbook came to serve as the model for later songbooks to follow, and, when one considers that it paved the way to the music education of the present day, it is by no means an exaggeration to say that the three editions of Shōgaku Shōka Shū represent a landmark which heralded the establishment of modern music education in Japan.

The song Hotaru is an example of a Gakkō Shōka, the identity of the poet of which is unclear (See A Word on Mongushō Shōka), and consequently it originally appeared, and often still appears today, described, as above, as Anonymous. However, it is now generally thought that it was, in fact, for the most part composed by the scholar of Japanese literature, and member of the Music Research Bureau, Inagaki Chikai (稲垣千載), who wrote many of the poems for the very first songs to be produced by the Bureau, and thus does nowadays tend to bear his name. It is also an example of a song, the melody of which is in fact that of an already-existent song in English, or other European language, with Japanese words set to it. In this case, the melody is the Scottish folk tune to which Robert Burns set his poem Auld Lang Syne, as arranged by George Thomson, and included, in 1799, in his Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for Voice, (1793-1811). However, quite different from the tone of Burns’ poem, in which a hearty toast is made to ‘times gone by’ (literally, ‘old long since’) and the precious joy of friendship, the Japanese version, addressed to primary school children, while emphasizing the importance of mutual friendship and goodwill, has, particularly in the first verse, a stoically moral tone, praising the merit of diligent scholarship pursued in the face of hardship. For reference, two verses and the chorus of Auld Lang Syne are given below. These are actually Verse One and Verse Four of what is originally a five verse poem, which two verses are also now included in certain high school music textbooks, side-by-side with the Japanese — though with the third line of the original verse four given instead as a repeat of the third line of the chorus.
Auld Lang Syne
by Robert Burns (1759-1796)

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min’?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We’ll tak a cup o’ kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And here’s a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie’s a hand o’ thine:
And we’ll tak a right guid-willie waught,
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We’ll tak a cup o’ kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.\(^\text{17}\)

Again, whereas Auld Lang Syne was traditionally sung at the end of a jovial gathering of friends, and whereas, of course, the first verse and chorus in particular are still sung extensively at the chiming of midnight on New Year’s Eve, *Hotaru no Hikari* has not only continued to be included in school music textbooks for the more than a hundred and twenty years since it first appeared, but remains an essential part of Graduation Ceremonies in many schools and universities.

It is of interest that, inasmuch as the Japanese words are set to a piece of music which was originally composed or arranged to be sung in another language, with a different system of accent, the opening line of *Hotaru no Hikari* does not actually fit very well, with the second syllable of the word *hotaru* placed on the first beat of the bar:

According to the system of accentuation in standard spoken Japanese, in the word *hotaru* (firefly), the accent is placed on the first syllable *ho*, which is pitched high, and in the word *hikari* (light), the second syllable *ka* is pitched high, bearing the accent. In the song, however, the accent is not so placed. It is of great interest that this kind of unnatural accentuation tends to appear in the case of Western melodies, to which [Japanese] words were later set.\(^\text{18}\)

It is of further interest, however, that the reason why several Scottish, and also Irish, folk tunes must have appealed in the very beginnings of looking to Western-style music, as the most suitable melodies to be used for the settings of Japanese words, was most probably that they were based on the Pentatonic scale, as is traditional Japanese music, and thus appeared to possess a certain sense of similarity, or affinity, in tone.
The poem of Hotaru no Hikari is composed in a very classical style of language, the tone of which it was regrettably not possible to do complete justice to in English.

NOTES
(i) 蜻の光 hotaru no hikari (By the glow of fireflies) This expression, which came to be used as the title of the poem, and which, together with the following phrase, is its underlying theme, is a reference to an episode in the Ji Shū, a Chinese Tang dynasty historical chronicle of the Jin period (3rd to 5th centuries A.D.), completed in 646 A.D., which tells of Sha In (車胤, Chē Yìn in Chinese), who was so poor that he could not afford to buy lamp oil, but who was so devoted to study, that he collected fireflies, and studied by their light.

(ii) 窓の雪 mado no yuki (The bright snow at the window) This expression appears in the same Chinese work as mentioned above in note (i), in the same episode, which also tells of Son Kō (孫康, Sūn Kāng in Chinese), who was similarly so poor that he could not afford to buy lamp oil, but who so wished to study that he managed to do so by the light of the snow outside his window. The combination of the two expressions in Japanese, Keisetsu (蛻雪 fireflies and snow), is used as a metaphor for ‘struggling to study despite very difficult circumstances’.

(iii) 書よむ月日 かさねつつ fumi yomu tsukiki kasane tsutsu (The months and days of study grow in number) This line literally means ‘the months and days of reading books increase’, the final tsutsu conveying a sense of continuation.

(iv) いつしか年もすぎ isushika toshi mo sugi (All at once, the years too pass) See following note (v).

(v) すぎの戸を sugi no to o (the cedar door) This phrase is very cleverly linked to the previous one, creating, with a pun on the word sugi, a ‘play on words’. When combined with to (door), it is automatically interpreted as ‘cedar’, as in the material of which the door is made. When combined with the previous toshi mo (the years too), sugi is automatically interpreted as the verb ‘pass’, which has the same pronunciation. Though the Kanji characters for ‘cedar’ and the verb ‘pass’ are naturally different, when the two words are written in the Hiragana phonetic script, as they are here, the pronunciation and the context are the only indication of meaning. Whereas in the Japanese, because of the same pronunciation of the two possible meanings, both interpretations can be understood at the same time, regrettably this effect cannot be reproduced in English. I have consequently chosen to give both meanings. The particle o, following to (door) indicates the object, the verb of which, ‘open’, in fact comes at the beginning of the next line in the original. It is very possible that the school doors of the time, if not the entire school buildings, were in fact made of cedar.

(vi) あけてぞ akete zo (I we open) The object of the verb ‘open’ here, is the to (door), at the end of the previous line, the subject of which, while not clearly stated, is understood as being ‘we’, referring to those (the children) — as are mentioned again in the next verse — who have completed their prescribed number of school years, and who are consequently about to set off on the next phase of their life. The form akete of the verb akeru here, implies the idea of leading on to the next action, as in ‘open and . . .’ The particle zo here conveys emphasis, or decisiveness, in ‘opening the door and going on one’s way’.

(vii) 別れゆく wakare yaku (we say farewell, and go upon our way) This phrase literally means ‘separate, and go’.

(viii) とまるも行くも 限りとて tomaru mo yaku mo kagiri tote (All we who stay, and we who leave, on this last day) The meaning of the first phrase, tomaru mo yaku mo, is literally, ‘stay too, go too’, the unstated subject of which is understood as being ‘we, the singers of the song’, or, in the case of the latter, ‘we, the children who are leaving’ (see note (vi) above), and, in the case of the former, ‘we, the children and the teachers’ who are remaining at the school. The phrase kagiri tote literally means, ‘being a limit’, referring to the idea of ‘final’ or ‘last’. I have translated this as ‘on this last day’, connecting it with the kesa ((upon) this morn), of the previous line, (verse one, line four), in terms of the last day ‘we’ (the children) will all be together.

(ix) かたみにおもう ちょろずの katami ni omou chyorozu no 心のはしを kokoro no hashi o (From midst the many
thoughts we fondly share) This phrase literally means 'mutually thinking (of)', but is used here adjectively to describe the chiyo ro zu ‘many’, which in turn describes the kokoro no hash i o, literally ‘the edge of the heart’, but by association, ‘a fraction of (our) thoughts’, of the next line of the original. The o here renders the phrase objective, so that the whole, i.e. literally ‘a fraction of the many thoughts that we have for one another’, is, as mentioned in the last line, what is being sung.

(x) 一言に hitokoto ni (But find these simple words to turn to song) Literally, ‘in a word’. This phrase connects with the idea of the previous one and a half lines (see note (ix) above), and of the following, last line (see note (xi) below). The sentiment is that of all the (most probably complicated) feelings which ‘we’ (the children) share on this day of parting, ‘but’ (just) one (most important) feeling — that of ‘wishing happiness, or well-being’ — is somehow ‘found’, and turned into expression in song. I have inserted ‘turn to song’, to connect it with, and reinforce, the ‘we sing’ at the end of the following, last line.

(xi) さきくとばかり 歌うなり sakiku tobakari utau nari (Oh, fare thee well, wholeheartedly we sing) The beginning of the first phrase, sakiku, means ‘happiness’, or ‘well-being’, and I chose to express these two connected ideas with the phrase ‘fare thee well’, as a parting message of well-wishing. The expression tobakari means ‘only’ or ‘solely’, and by association, ‘concentratedly’, which I chose to express as ‘wholeheartedly’, before utau nari, ‘we sing’.

Conclusion

As expressed in the Conclusion of the previous two papers, it is the hope of the writer that the above translations might contribute a little towards making the genre of Nihon Kakyoku better known outside the Japanese-speaking world, and that they will perhaps serve to provide a new insight into the spirit of the Japanese people. At the same time, I trust that the explanation of the process of translation will help to elucidate the cultural background which lies behind, and which is so intrinsically connected with, the language, the subject-matter, and the sentiment of the works.

Footnotes

1) See Bibliography (Kano, Caroline Elizabeth.)


4) 『尋常小学唱歌』は当時の呟を結集し、結果としては日本人による、日本をテーマとした、日本精神に貫かれた、日本の子どもを教えるための唱歌教科書としての性格を強化していった。Iwai, Masahiro. Kodomo no Uta no Bunkashi — Nijit Seiki Zennhanki no Nihon, p.129.

5) 唱歌「故郷」は、高野辰之自身の生きざまを詩に託しているともいわれ、シンプルで歌いやすい旋律にのせ日本人の感情を震撼させる歌となっている。Iwai, Masahiro. Kodomo no Uta no Bunkashi, p.156.

6) ふるさとこだわる感情は、定着農耕民としての日本人の生き方に大きく関わっている。歳を累ねるとともに日本人はふるさとこだわり、望郷・帰郷の念にかかれる。Iwai, Masahiro. Kodomo no Uta no Bunkashi, p.156.

7) この歌のよろしい、特定の場所を歌ったものではなく、謡の心も宿っている故郷を歌いあげているということである。日本人の心の原風景といったものがここにある。Yokoyama, Tarō. Dōyo e no Osasoi, p.123.


11)「故郷」も自然・動機・人生を歌っており、「故郷に誌を飾る」という発想はこの曲の中にいかんで入っている。
Iwai, Masahiro. *Kodomo no Uta no Bunkashi*, p.156.

12) 日本のどこにでもあった農村の春景色。それがこの『おぼろ月夜』の魅力であり、人々に愛された理由であろう。「日本のどこにでもあった」と過去形で書かなければならないことを誤念に思う。

いま私たちは自分の故郷を喪失してしまっている。誰もが生まれた故郷をもっているはずなのに、そこには自分が過ごしたときとは、かなりちがってしまった風景があるだけ。「望郷」という美しい言葉は、心の中だけにしか存在しなくなっている。

そして「望郷」というイメージの中で、この『おぼろ月夜』の名曲が生きつづけているのである。というよりむしろ、この歌があったから、私たちは心の中の故郷まで喪失しないですんでいるのかも知れない。Yokoyama, Taro. *Dōyō e no Osasoi*, p.118.

13) 「月が出てれば、その柔かな花びらが光を吸ったようにほんのり舞き、あたりはいつまでも明るい。」


16) ...この歌集が以後の音楽教科書編集の規範としての役割を果たし、それによって現在の音楽教育にもたらされた啓を考えると、この三篇の『小学唱歌集』こそは、わが国近代音楽教育の創設を告げる“金字塔”であったといっても差し支えではない。Tomoda, Takekatsu. *Nihon Ongaku Kyōiku-shi*, p. 292.


18) 日本語の標準的なアクセントとでは「昼」は「ホ」を高く発音し、「光」は「カ」で高くなりますが、歌ではそうなくありません。外国のメロディーにあたから詩をあてた歌にはこのような不自然な部分が見受けられるのも興味深いことです。DeAgostini ed. *Nihon no Uta - Kokoro no Uta ~ Ashita e Nakoshitai Meikyoku Sen*, vol. 5, p.96

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