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III. THE MODERN READER AND CLASSIC LITERATURE



JAPANESE POETRY AND DRAMATURGY OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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Summary. The article is devoted to the analysis of 17th century Japanese poetry, theatre and their stages of development. The author shows the process of popularization of haikai poetry through the activities of Teimon, Danrin, Shofu poetry schools, and the stages of formation of joruri and kabuki theaters.

Keywords: genroku period; haikai; renga; Japanese poetry; “urban literature”; kabuki; joruri; Japanese dramaturgy.

The seventeenth century was one of the most important periods in the life of the country, when Japanese urban culture emerged. On the basis of this culture, Japanese urban literature, which embodied various genres, developed and flourished in the period of 1688–1704, known as Genroku. The development of this literature led to the creation of haikai poetry, kabuki and joruri theatres.

In particular, the poetry of Genroku period is characterized by the emergence and development of “haikai” – “comic poems” which combined satire and parody [1, p. 54]. In the 5-7-5 sequence, 17 syllable verses is the result of the division of the “tanka” (“short poetry”) verses into tercet (5-7-5) and distich (7-7), a trend that was reinforced in the widespread “renga” (“linked verses”) poetry of the fourteenth century [2, p. 5–6]. The tradition of tercet and distich being composed by different poets in renga hastened the division of the five into two in terms of theme and composition. The humorous tercet poems “haikai” which quickly separated from renga become an independent and central poetic genre of Genroku period poetry [3, p. 10]. The authors of the first haikai were poets in the field of renga, who still had a strong tradition of medieval classical poetry. From the 17th century onwards, the emergence of the poetry schools played a key role in the flourishing of haikai genre during this period, its transcendence of social class and elitist circles.

The first and largest school of poetry, Teimon, founded in 1619 in Kyoto by the poet Matsunaga Teitoku (1572–1653), tried to bring the existing traditions and canons of medieval poetry into haikai. Teitoku brought haikai closer to renga and even tried to give it a didactic tone [5, p. 171]. As he brought haikai closer to renga, Teitoku tried to develop it and turn it as a worthy pursuit for a true poet. Teitoku school of poetry published more than 260 collections of

haikai and was active until the 19th century. In general, the Teimon school organized haikai and promoted conservative views, directing it to the core of the classical poetic tradition. In this, Teitoku's theoretical works on haikai poetry served as a base.

Danrin school (1675–1685), founded by the poet Nishiyama Soin (1605–1682), the path of further renewal of poetry. Activities of the school's innovative poets played a key role in the development of the art of haikai composing. They put opposite the freedom of the creator in the choice of means of artistic expression to the traditional canons. The material for haikai poems was found in the lives of ordinary townsmen, and often reflected scenes of everyday life through them. Unlike Teimon school, Danrin sought not for the technical perfection of poetry, but for the self-realization of reality without direct and indirect influences. Aiming to achieve the expressiveness of the poem, the main focus was on humorous words and phrases, calling for the abandonment of all the rules that bound the creation, and lengthening or reducing the number of verses in the poem as desired. They parodied the methods and themes of classical poetry, combining high and low styles [1, p. 55].

Matsuo Basho (1644–1694) took the issue of radical reforms in haikai poetry seriously, and in about 1677 he founded Shofu school of haikai. Basho's innovation is based on a return to tradition, rather than abandoning the rules of poetry, as the representatives of the Danrin school aspire to. Combining innovation with a careful and creative approach to tradition, he transformed haikai from a play of words into a means of expressing the poet's delicate feelings and thoughts, seriously and essentially the leading poetic genre of his time. Filled with deep philosophical content, Basho's lyrics address the issues of understanding reality in terms of life and love for man, with a serious focus on the inner world of man, an attempt to reach the essence of natural phenomena [4, p. 152].

A similar situation is observed in the theatrical arts and dramaturgy of the Genroku period, as well as in the field of poetry. In seventeenth century Japan, the gagaku, a form of music and choreography that had become an integral part of the official ceremonies of the imperial palace. Another important type of theatrical art is No theater, which has been fully formed by this time, and any important event in the residences of shoguns, daimyos has not passed without the solemn performances of this theater [6, p. 322–341]. Comic interludes – “kyogen” played a special role in the development of urban theatrical culture [7, p. 62–64]. In addition, the so-called “joruri-katari” or “chanters of joruri” became very popular among the people [8, p. 15–28] and they served to spread the ancient legends to the general public, mainly accompanied by a three-stringed musical instrument – shamisen [9, p. 533]. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the performances of joruri katari began to be performed in conjunction with puppet shows. They performed ancient legends in a unique tone, in a tune, and puppets described it. Thus, by this time, one of the unique and remarkable achievements of ancient urban culture in Japan – the puppet theater “ningyo

zoruri” appeared [10, p. 42–43]. Simultaneously with the ningyo zoruri, another theatrical genre emerged was “kabuki”. Originally kabuki that began with the performance of simplified variations of plays of No theater and kyogen, later become an art form that reflects the mood of the people [11, p. 48–50].

The typical noisy neighborhoods of Osaka, Kyoto, Edo, and other cities, have produced more than a dozen theaters. Significant progress has also been made in the construction of theater buildings. For the first time, zoruri brought stage curtains to the theater, the scenery, the full theatrical props emerged. The technical embellishments of his performances gradually became more complex. If, at first, the puppeteers worked behind the scenes, as the theater developed, these “means of camouflage” were abolished [12, p. 14–15]. A new class of artists was formed, consisting of actors, chanters, puppeteers, and musicians who grew up among the townspeople. New, unique ways of performing roles and plays are closely related to the activities of talented people like Ichikawa Danjuro I, Sakata Tojuro , Uji Kaganojyo, Takemoto Gidayu. However, no matter how skillful they were, zoruri and kabuki theaters reached the peak of their development only when a truly great drama emerged [3, p. 164]. Because zoruri dramas were still in the process of formation, the focus was not on dialogue but on how skillfully the puppeteer portrays the situation, while kabuki dramas were built on song and dialogue, not on the text, but on the successful improvisation of the actor. This is explained by the fact that the first plays were created not by professional playwrights, but directly by actors and chanters. During Genroku period, the departure from the actor-playwrights tradition and the establishment of cooperation between theater and playwright played an important role in the transformation of these theaters into a high art form.

The spectators of Genroku period enjoyed dramatic works with sharp plots, strong impressions, tragic events intertwined with exciting situations, as well as touching scenes, complex conflicts. It was in response to this demand that “jidaimono” – “historical dramas” first appeared. [13, p. 14] However, because bloody revenge, civil wars, complicated conflicts were all considered events that are not normally encountered in ordinary people’s daily lives, historical dramas did not hold the attention of the townspeople for a long time. Spectators wanted to see ordinary people like them as the protagonists of plays. Playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724), who created plays for both kabuki and zoruri, succeeded in this task and was the first to introduce domestic dramas called “sewamono” – “dramas about real life” into Japanese theatrical art. The high classical dramas were intertwined with humorous comic interludes, delicate lyricism with grotesque. He laid the foundation for Japanese folk drama by boldly incorporating the venerable language of all social class of his time.

In the seventeenth century, especially during Genroku period, Japanese urban culture went a really big way. A new generation of writers, poets, playwrights began to create works for the townspeople that addressed their interests, concerns, and gave them moral and aesthetic pleasure. The process of democratization of culture has brought to life new forms of theater, fine art and

others. In the seventeenth century every form of art has learned to see and depict the world around a man in a new way.

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