

Two Verses by Miyoshi Tatsuji

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Miyoshi Tatsuji is one of the most famous poets of modern Japan. For a number of years, several of his works were included in high school textbooks. As a result, many people were familiar with Miyoshi's poetry. However, both scholars of modern Japanese poetry and professional poets of the generation following Miyoshi have been highly critical of Miyoshi's works, often ignoring them or rejecting them out of hand, because Miyoshi mass-produced his poems in order to exalt Japan's national prestige and to unjustly slander Anglo-Saxons during World War II. In addition, Miyoshi's poems were criticized as being outdated and conventional in terms of both theme and style.

When undertaking a scholarly analysis of a poem, the most important thing is to clarify its structure through analysis and interpretation. Hence, in this study, I attach no importance to the social and political situation in which Miyoshi worked nor to the various incidents of his personal life as he wrote his poems. However, I do consider the intellectual trends of Miyoshi's time, such as modernism, for example.

Miyoshi's poetry has many characteristics. In this paper, I focus on his use of two verses. With the popularity of modernist style in the Japanese world of poetry from the last years of Taisho period to the early years of Showa period, almost all of the ambitious young poets produced poems consisting of one verse. Miyoshi was an exception. Instead of one verse, Miyoshi produced poems of two verses. They included his poem "Yuki" ("Snow"), one of the masterpieces of Japanese modern poetry. Starting from the poem of "Yuki," I investigate several

of Miyoshi's poems (including prose poems), focusing on those found in *Sokuryō-sen* (A Surveying Ship), his first poetry anthology, and compare them with poems in the same style by several other poets in the same period. The two verses style gave Miyoshi an original techniques and a graceful noble imagination, and showed him the way to the unique parallel world of poetry.