

A New Japanese Verse Translation of *The Canterbury Tales*

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In this paper, I will try to have a new translation of Chaucer's works. The 14th century, the period named as the Chaucer's (1343?-1400) period in the history of English literature, is the Nanbokucyo era in Japan. Tanka is the current version of Waka that was one of the Japanese literatures in Chaucer's period, and is well known as a verse that consists of five lines and thirty-one syllables. It does not require a season word like Haiku, but we will not mention about it here. This research aims at how to translate the rhymes of the verses in *The Canterbury Tales*, the most important work of Chaucer, into the meter of Tanka. Karibe *et al.* (2000) said that they translated Chaucer's works regarding one paragraph or one sentence as one unit of translation because it was difficult to translate them line by line. In fact, it could be inevitable to have enjambment of line and enjambment of phrase when we try to translate them line by line. Then, I would like to try a line by line translation as much as possible while taking care not to be out of the original text. I focused on "The Clerk's Tale" because this tale seemed to resemble Japanese pure literature, and it would be acceptable easily for every generation, and Grisilde's sorrowful patience is felt as her dignified way of life. That prompted my continuous interest. And my aims in this work can be summarized as follows.

1) I tried to translate the original faithfully, but I found that there were many cases in which the same meaning was repeated. Therefore I omitted repetition in order to smooth the pronunciation in the cases that we could guess it easily from the context.

2) In order to align syllables, I used inversion, replacement of synonyms replacement of words of 3 syllables with words of 2 syllables.

3) Combinating the use of archaic and literary and colloquial form.

4) Inversion for the purpose of rhyme.

5) Enjambment.

6) Repeating phrases and words.

7) Combining use of a voiceless sound and a dull sound in rhyme.

8) Adding words in the lines in which rhyme was impossible.

And also, as I found it was quite difficult to fit the phrases to the form of 5, 7, 5,

7, 7 syllables respectively in all lines, I tried several methods from the above mentioned methods in order to make 7 and 7 syllables at least in the second half of the last line of rhyme royal. The aim of this paper is focused on translating 1212 lines while being conscious of the characteristics of Tanka, and it is interesting that this story ends at 1212 lines by coincidence. It is as if the march of the story starts from here again the manner of “one, two, one, two.”

In contemporary Tanka, there is an unspoken rule that authors do not express all of the lyrics in the 31 syllables but leave interpretation of the poetry to some extent to readers. I think the 1212 lines of the “The Clerk’s tale” might suggest the possibility of a sequel though it may be a coincidence.