

奥の細道発句英訳

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1 . 草の戸も住みかはる代ぞ雛の家

kusa no to mo sumikawaru yo zo hina no ie

a new generation  
in the old thatched hut—  
this house of dolls

season: spring (dolls)

notes: While preparing for the journey, Basho moved out his place into Sanpu's cottage. His old hut was taken over by a family. The dolls imply that the family has a daughter.

2 . 行く春や鳥啼き魚の目は涙

yuku haru ya tori naki uo no me wa namida

passing spring...  
birds cry, fish's eyes  
with tears

season: spring (passing spring)

3 . あらたふと青葉若葉の日の光

ara touto aoba wakaba no hi no hikari

how glorious!  
the green leaves, young leaves  
the sun sparkling

season: summer (green leaves, young leaves)

note: Basho and Sora arrived at Nikko on the day when summer began.

4 . 剃り捨てて黒髪山に衣更 曾良  
sorisutete kurokamiyama ni koromogae

with my head shaved off  
at Black Hair Mountain  
time to shed clothes

season: summer (shed clothes, or changing into summer clothes)  
note: Black Hair Mountain, kurokamiyama, is the tallest mountain in Nikko.

5 . しばらくは滝にこもるや夏の初め  
shibaraku ha taki ni komoru ya ge no hajime

for a while  
I meditate inside the falls—  
summer retreat begins

season: summer (summer retreat begins)  
note: you can hide behind the curtain of the falling waters.

6 . かさねとは八重撫子の名なるべし 曾良  
kasane towa yae-nadeshiko no na naru beshi

her name, Layers  
must mimick  
the double pink

season: summer (pink)  
note: Layers (Kasane) is a girl's name, the sound of which associates with the eight-layer pink (yae-nadeshiko)

7 . 夏山に足駄を拝む首途かな

natsu-yama ni ashida wo ogamu kadode kana

in summer mountain  
bowing before the high clogs  
just beginning the journey

season: summer (summer mountains)

note: High clogs are used by the monks who train themselves in the mountains.

8 . 木啄も庵は破らず夏木立

kitsutsuki mo io wa yaburazu natsu-kodachi

even the woodpeckers  
never tear this grass hut...  
the summer trees

season: summer (summer trees)

note: The hut used to belong to Bishop Buccho.

豎横の五尺にたらぬ草の庵結ぶもくやし雨なかりせば 仏頂和尚

less than five-feet square this grass hut

I regret to make one if it were not for the rain

9 . 野を横に馬引き向けよほととぎす

no wo yoko ni uma hikimukeyo hototogisu

turn the horse around  
across the field—  
that hototogisu

season: summer (hototogisu)

note: Hototogisu is a bird which looks like a cuckoo but cries in a sharp intense sound. They usually cry on their wings, and it is not easy to find them. The poem depicts Basho's urgent reaction to the sudden sound of hototogisu.

10 . 田一枚植ゑて立ち去る柳かな  
ta ichimai uete tachisaru yanagi kana

a patch of rice field  
the planting finished,  
I leave the willow

season: summer (rice planting)  
note: This willow tree is named after Saigyô's famous episode.

みちのべに清水ながるる柳かげしばしとてこそ立ち止まりつれ 西行  
on the roadside clear water flows in the willow's shade  
I stopped to rest, thinking just for a little while Saigyô

11 . 卯の花をかざしに関の晴れ着かな 曾良  
unohana wo kazashi ni seki no haregi kana by Sora

the rabbit flowers  
on my hat for the barrier's  
ceremonial costume by Sora

season: summer (rabbit flowers, or unohana)  
note: Shirakawa no seki (Shirakawa barrier) marks the entrance to the northern territory. Unohana (deutzia) is a bush with white flowers.

12 . 風流の初めや奥の田植歌  
fuuryuu no hajime ya oku no taue-uta

the beginning  
of poetic elegance – this rice-planting  
song in the interior

season: summer (rice-planting song)  
note: Poetic elegance or furyu represents the core of Bashô's aesthetics.

13 . 世の人の見付けぬ花や軒の栗

yo no hito no mitsukenu hana ya noki no kuri

people of this world  
do not see these flowers—  
chestnuts by the eaves

season: summer (chestnut flowers)

note: The Chinese character for chestnut consists of two parts standing for west and tree.

14 . 早苗とる手もとや昔しのぶ摺り

sanae toru temoto ya mukashi shinobuzuri

seedling-plucking hands,  
once they impressed  
patterns from the stones

season: summer (seedling plucking)

notes: Shinobuzuri is a print pattern carved on a stone. Shinobu is a pun for longing for the past.

15 . 笈も太刀も五月に飾れ紙幟

oi mo tachi mo satsuki ni kazare kami-nobori

both sword and satchel,  
display them in May—  
paper streamers

season: summer (May, streamers)

notes: Streamers in May implies the Boy's Festival of May 5<sup>th</sup>. The sword and satchel are mementoes of Yoshitsune (1159-1189), a tragic hero who was Basho's favorite. Yoshitsune appears again later in the poem of summer grass.

16 . 笠島はいづこ五月のぬかり道

kasajima wa izuko satsuki no nukari michi

the Rain Hat Island  
where can we find it?  
May's muddy roads

season: summer (May's muddy roads)

notes: The Rain Hat Island or Kasajima is a place name, which is not actually an island.

17 . 武隈の松見せ申せ遅桜

拳白

takekuma no matsu misemouse osozakura Kyohaku

show him at least  
the pine of Takekuma—  
late-blooming cherry

season: summer (late-blooming cherry)

notes: The pine of Takekuma is a landmark for classical poetry

18 . 桜より松は二木を三月越し

sakura yori matsu ha futaki wo mitsukigoshi

since the cherry season  
I waited for three months  
for this twin pine tree

season: summer (three months after the cherry blossoms)

notes: Matsu, a pine tree, is a pun for waiting.

19 . あやめ草足に結ばん草鞋の緒  
ayamegusa ashi ni musuban waraji no o

irises in bloom  
let me tie around my feet  
the cords of the sandals

season: summer (irises)

notes: On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May eaves are decorated with iris blades to keep off the evil spirits. It sounds like the iris blades and the sandal cords are braded and tied around his feet.

20 . 松島や鶴に身を借れほととぎす 曾良  
matsushima ya tsuru ni mi wo kare hototogisu Sora

Pine Islands—  
borrow the crane's body,  
you hototogisu

season: summer (hototogisu)

notes: Matsushima (lit. pine islands) is a famous scenic coast with hundreds of scattered islands. He would rather have a crane which is elegantly visible than hear the hototogisu which is usually just heard.

21 . 夏草や兵どもが夢の跡  
natsukusa ya tsuwamono domo ga yume no ato

summer grass—  
site of dreams  
of old warriors

season: summer (summer grass)

notes: The five hundred year old site of the ancient dream capital buried under the thick summer grass reminds him of the three generations of the feudal lords who are the tragic heroes in the Tale of Heike.

22 . 卯の花に兼房見ゆる白毛かな 曾良  
unohana ni kanefusa miyuru shiraga kana

these rabbit flowers  
make me see Kanefusa's  
white hair

season: summer (rabbit flowers or verbena)  
notes: Kanefusa was an old stalwart soldier who fought to protect Yoshitune in vain.

23 . 五月雨の降り残してや光堂  
samidareno furi-nokoshite ya hikari-do

summer rains  
have never touched?  
the Shining Hall

season: summer (summer rains)  
notes: The Shining Hall, which is decorated with gold, enshrines the bodies of three feudal lords; Kiyohira, Motohira, and Hidehira of the Fujiwaras.

24 . 蚤虱馬の尿する枕もと  
nomi shirami uma no bari suru makuramoto

fleas and lice...  
a horse pissing  
by my pillow

season: summer (fleas and lice)  
notes: A rural farmhouse in the north used to be designed to keep horses indoors to protect them from the cold climate. A colt or a filly might have been freely walking around the house.



25 . 涼しさをわが宿にしてねまるなり  
suzushisa wo waga yado ni shite nemaru nari

the coolness  
is my dwelling...  
sprawling about

season: summer (coolness)  
notes: nemaru is a local dialect for nesoberu or to sprawl

26 . 這い出でよ飼家が下の蟾の声  
haiide yo kaiya ga shita no hiki no koe

come crawling out—  
under the silkworm hut  
the voice of a toad

season: summer (toad)  
note: This area used to be well known for its silk product.

27 . 眉掃きを俤にして紅粉の花  
mayuhaki wo omokage ni shite beni no hana

the image of  
lady's powder puffs...  
these saffron flowers

season: summer (saffron flower)  
notes: This area has been famous for saffron flowers which are used for rouge and dye

28 . 蚕飼ひする人は古代の姿かな 曾良  
kogai suru hito wa kodai no sugata kana Sora

people tending silkworms  
are clad like those  
in the ancient time

season: summer (tending silkworm)  
notes:

29 . 閑かさや岩にしみ入る蝉の声  
shizukasa ya iwa ni shimiiru semi no koe

how silent!  
the cicada's voice  
soaks into the rocks

season: summer (cicada)  
notes: The temple is located in a rocky mountain. Japanese cicadas are appreciated because of their sounds, and they are not considered as harmful insects like locusts.

30 . 五月雨を集めて早し最上川  
samidare wo atsumete hayashi mogamigawa

the summer rains  
gathering into swift flows—  
Mogami River

season: summer (summer rains)  
notes: Mogami River is the major river in the Yamagata area. Basho had a ride on the boat in the rainy season.

31 . ありがたや雪をかをらす南谷  
arigata ya yuki wo kaorasu minamidani

how thankful !  
the sweet-scented snow  
at Southern Valley

season: summer (fragrant south wind)

notes: the season word (fragrant south wind) is partly hidden in the place name minamidani). Minami or the south wind comes over the remaining snow, making the place cool and fragrant.

32 . 涼しさやほの三日月の羽黒山  
suzushisa ya hono mikazuki no hagurosan

how cool—  
the faint crescent moon  
over Mount Haguro

season: summer (cool)

notes: Mount Hagurosan, Mount Gassan, and Mount Yudonosan are the three deities representing the Shinto religion of this area.

33 . 雲の峰いくつ崩れて月の山  
kumonomine ikutsu kuzurete tsuki no yama

how many  
cumulus peaks have crumbled—  
the moon mountain

season: summer (cumulus)

notes: Gassan (literally Moon Mountain) is called “tsuki no yama” (mountain with the moon), implying that the cool moon is shining after a long summer day.

34 . 語られぬ湯殿にぬらす袂かな

katararenu yudono ni nurasu tamoto kana

taboo to talk

about Yudono, yet I get

my sleeves wet

season: summer (pilgrim to Yudonosan)

notes: You are not allowed to tell anyone the details of what you see in the mountain. Yudono literally means a bathing house, and actually you have a hot spring there. The wet sleeves means both getting wet in the hot spring and getting wet from wiping his tears which implies he was so touched by the holy spirit of the mountain.

35 . 湯殿山銭踏む道の涙かな

曾良

yudonosan zeni fumu michi no namida kana Sora

Mount Yudono—

treading on the coins along the path

my tears

season: summer (pilgrim to Yudonosan)

notes: Pilgrims just throw coins anywhere, since there is no donation box. People are not allowed to pick anything from the ground in this holy mountain.

36 . あつみ山や吹浦かけて夕涼み

atsumiyama ya fukuura kakete yuusuzumi

from Mount Hot Sea

all the way to Blowing Bay—

the evening cool

season: summer (evening cool)

notes: Basho is playing with the meanings of the place names; Atsumiyama or Mount Hot Sea and Fukuura or Blowing Bay, which are in the coastal view where he is enjoying the cool evening.

37 . 暑き日を海に入れたり最上川  
atsuki hi wo umi ni iretari mogamigawa

the burning day  
washed into the sea—  
Mogami River

season: summer (burning sun/day)

notes: “Hi” means both the sun and the day, so the first line can mean a day of the burning sun. It is apparent that “hot” and “sea,” are derived from the place name Atsumi in the preceding verse.

38 . 象潟や雨に西施がねぶの花  
kisakata ya ame ni seishi ga nebu no hana

Kisakata Bay—  
in the rain Seishi asleep  
mimosa blossoms

season: summer (mimosa blossoms)

notes: Seishi is one of the three beautiful ladies in China. An allusion to her beauty is used to project the beautiful landscape of Kisakata Bay which used to be compared with Matsushima on the east coast near Sendai. “Nebu” (mimosa) is a pun for sleep.

39 . 汐越や鶴脛ぬれて海涼し  
shiogoshi ya tsuru hagi nurete umi suzushi

Tide Crossing—  
the crane wets its legs  
the cool sea

season: summer (coolness)

notes: Shiogoshi or Tide Crossing used to be a shallow neck of the bay. The whole place was raised above the sea later in the earthquake.

40 . 象潟や料理何食ふ神祭 曾良  
kisakata ya ryouri nani kuu kami matsuri Sora

Kisakata—  
what kind of food to eat  
at the festival?

Season: summer (festival)  
Notes:

41 . 蟹の家や戸板を敷きて夕涼み 低耳  
ama no ya ya toita wo shikite yuusuzumi Teiji

fisherman's hut—  
laying out the door  
for the cool of evening

season: summer (cool)  
notes: The door could be removed easily and used for bench, table, or stretcher.

42 . 波越えぬ契りありてや睺鳩の巢 曾良  
nami koenu chigiri arite ya misago no su Sora

have the waves  
ever vowed not to go over ?  
the osprey's nest

season: summer (osprey's nest)  
notes: He found a nest on the rock.

43 . 文月や六日も常の夜には似ず

fumitsuki ya muika mo tsune no yo ni wa nizu

the seventh month—  
even the sixth night  
doesn't seem usual

season: autumn (seventh month)

notes: The next day, July 7<sup>th</sup>, is the star festival, when two lovers represented by Altair and Vega meet once a year crossing the Milky Way.

44 . 荒海や佐渡に横たふ天の河

araumi ya sado ni yokotau amanogawa

the fierce sea—  
stretching across to Sado Island  
the Milky Way

season: autumn (the Milky Way)

notes: Sado Island used produce gold, and was strictly controlled by the central government. Prisoners were sent to work in the mine, and many political exiles spent their lives of agony.

45 . 一つ家に遊女も寝たり萩と月

hitotsu ya ni yuujo mo netari hagi to tsuki

under one roof  
play girls also asleep—  
bush clover and the moon

season: autumn (bush clover; moon)

notes: Bush clover is a feminine plant. The parallelism of men and women under the same roof and the cosmic romance of Altair and Vega implies the love of universe.

46 . 早稲の香や分け入る右は有磯海  
wase no ka ya wakeiru migi wa arisoumi

fragrance of early rice—  
pressing forward, to our right  
Ariso Beach

season: autumn (early rice)

notes: This is a compliment to the local landscape and history by referring to the rich harvest and Ariso Beach which is a well known poetic scene. The waves in the rice fields echo the waves along the rough coast.

47 . 塚も動けわが泣く声は秋の風  
tsuka mo ugoke waga naku koe wa aki no kaze

shake the grave—  
the sound of my weeping  
is the autumn wind

season: autumn (autumn wind)

notes: Basho came to visit Isshou, who he found died in the past winter.

48 . 秋涼し手ごとにむけや瓜茄子  
aki suzushi tegoto ni muke ya uri nasubi

autumn cool—  
each of you peel for yourself  
melons and eggplants

season: autumn (autumn cool)

notes: Melons and eggplants belong to the summer season.



49 . あかあかと日はつれなくも秋の風  
akaaka to hi wa tsurenaku mo aki no kaze

red, red is the sun  
relentless, still  
the autumn wind

season: autumn (autumn wind)  
notes: The seasons are crisscrossing at the setting sun.

50 . しをらしき名や小松吹く萩薄  
shiorashiki na ya komatsu fuku hagi susuki

pliant name Little Pine—  
among the pines, wind-blown  
bush clovers and eulalia

season: autumn (bush clover, susuki or eulalia)  
notes: Komatu (literally Little Pine) is the place name, serving also as a pun for the pine woods. Bush clovers and eulalia (usually translated as pampas grass), which are swaying in the winds in the short pine woods, designate the loving quality of obedient objects.

51 . むざんやな甲の下のきりぎりす  
muzan yana kabuto no shita no kirigirisu

oh, pitiful!  
under the warrior's helmet  
the katydid

season: autumn (katydid)  
notes: Basho refers to Sanemori, an old warrior in The Tale of Heike, who dyed his white hair black to join the battle against Yoshinaka. "Muzan yana" is a direct quote from The Tale of Heike, in which the man who killed Sanemori unexpectedly finds an old man's head under the brightly decorated armor.

52 . 石山の石より白し秋の風  
ishiyama no ishi yori shiroshi aki no kaze

whiter than the stones  
of Stone Mountain—  
the autumn wind

season: autumn (autumn wind)  
notes: Basho visited Nata temple which is located in Stone Mountain.

53 . 山中や菊はたをらぬ湯の匂ひ  
yamanaka ya kiku wa taoranu yu no nioi

Yamanaka, yes—  
no need to pluck mums  
fragrant hot springs

season: autumn (mums)  
notes: Yamanaka is well known for its hot springs. Mums are commonly put in the bath for its soothing power, but the hot springs in Yamanaka does not need mums. The “yes” stands for the Japanese cutting word “ya.”

54 . 行き行きて倒れ伏すとも萩の原  
yuki yuki te taorefusu tomo hagi no hara

曾良

Sora

going on and on  
even if I should fall  
the field of bush clovers

season: autumn (bush clover)  
notes: The first line reminds me of the last part of the Heart Sutra which ends like “Go, go, go to the enlightened land, go with the seekers, until all of us get enlightened.”

55 . 今日よりや書付消さん笠の露

kyou yori ya kakitsuke kesan kasa no tsuyu

from today —

the words shall be erased

the dew on the hat

season: autumn (dew)

notes: Usually on the hat are written such words as “traveling party of two...”. The grammatical ambiguity implies that the words will be erased either by Basho or by the dew on the hat. The months when Basho traveled with Sora have fled away, and the whole situation seems as transient as the dew.

56 . よもすがら秋風聞くや裏の山 曾良

yomosugara akikaze kiku ya ura no yama Sora

all night long

I hear the autumn wind—

the hills behind

season: autumn (autumn wind)

notes: Sora, who is now traveling one day ahead of Basho, left this poem at the inn.

57 . 庭掃きて出でばや寺に散る柳

niwa hakite idebaya tera ni chiru yanagi

let me sweep the garden

and leave the temple

the falling willow leaves

season: autumn (falling willow leaves)

notes:

よもすがら嵐に波を運ばせて月を垂れたる汐越の松 西行

yomosugara arashi ni nami wo hakobasete

tsukiwo taretaru shiogoshi no matsu Saigyō

all night long the storm brings the waves

the moon dripping on the Tide-over pines

notes: Basho walked oku no hosomichi in 1689, commemorating the five hundred years after Saigyō's death. Basho refers to Saigyō in three places in Oku no Hosomichi, but actually this poem was not made by Saigyō but by priest Rennyō.

58 . 物書きて扇引きさくなごりかな  
mono kakite oogi hikisaku nagori kana

scribbling something  
I tear apart a fan  
sorrow of parting

season: autumn (parting with fan)

notes: Basho is parting with Hokushi, who accompanied Basho from Kanazawa. Life is full of meetings and partings.

59 . 月清し遊行の持てる砂の上  
tsuki kiyoshi yuugyou no moteru suna no ue

the moon so pure  
on the sands brought by  
Priest Yugyo

season: autumn (moon)

notes: Priest Yugyo carried sands from the beach to prepare the passage to the shrine.

60 . 名月や北国日和定めなき  
meigetsu ya hokkoku biyori sadame naki

the harvest moon—  
the weather in the north  
so very changeable

season: autumn (harvest moon)

notes: Hokkoku stands for the area including Fukui prefecture.

61 . 寂しさや須磨に勝ちたる浜の秋  
sabishisa ya suma ni kachitaru hama no aki

such loneliness  
surpasses that of Suma  
autumn on this beach

season: autumn (autumn)

notes: Hama stands for Ironohama, which is known for tiny shells on the beach. Suma is the place where Genji in The Tale of Genji was temporarily displaced.

62 . 波の間や小貝にまじる萩の塵  
nami no ma ya kogai ni majiru hagi no chiri

among the waves  
are fragments of bush clovers  
mixed with tiny shells

season: autumn (bush clover)

notes: This beach is famous for the shells.

63 . 蛤のふたみに別れ行く秋ぞ  
hamaguri no futami ni wakare yuku aki zo

splitting clam shell and meat  
departing for Futami  
autumn passing

season: autumn (autumn)

notes: Futami, an access harbor to the Ise Shrine, is a pun for splitting the meat from its shell, implying a painful separation.