[I fe[lt] a spirit kindred to my own;  
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;  
But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,  
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;  
And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech  
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.  
"Men work together," I told him from the heart.  
"Whether they work together or apart."

Notes

1 The original citation of this poem to this effect was by the great Roman Jakobson in his essay “On the Verbal Art of William Blake and Other Poet-Painters,” Linguistic Inquiry 1 (1970): 1–23. The entire text of the poem can be read at <http://www.blakearchive.org>.

2 Botanical note: The very earliest blooming trees in these parts are forsythias and willows, both of which have yellow buds. The forsythia also has yellow flowers. I believe Frost’s reference was to all early buds, though some are more yellow than others.

Kanji: The Visual Metaphor

1. Introduction

American Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) argues in The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry (as edited by Ezra Pound):

the Chinese written language has not only absorbed the poetic substance of nature and built with it a second work of metaphor, but has, through its very pictorial visibility, been able to retain its original creative poetry with far more vigor and vividness than any phonetic tongue. (24)

The present study tries to reevaluate this sharp insight of Fenollosa into the nature of Chinese logographs as a medium for poetry and to place it in the new context of cognitive poetics. Because of their iconic and metaphoric nature, an examination of Kanji logographs provides a deeper understanding of the cognitive role of written language in poetic texts. The formation of the shape and the meaning of Kanji is seen to be governed by iconic and metaphoric processing. Poetic language therefore exploits these iconic and metaphoric implications of Kanji to enrich the complexity and multiplicity of meaning in the text.

By using the model of blending (see, among others, Turner, Turner and Fauconnier; Fauconnier and Turner, “Principles,” Way), the study first argues that the meaning generation of Kanji is manifested as a conceptual integration through creative blends of the constituents. The blending process is analyzed in terms of iconicity, metaphor, and metonymy. The study further examines orthographical revisions of haiku texts as an evidence to demonstrate the cognitive role of written language in relation to Fenollosa’s thesis.

2. The Japanese Writing System

First, I would like to give a very brief explanation about the Japanese writing system, in which Kanji play a major role. In contrast to the Chinese writing system in which only Chinese logographic characters are used, the Japanese writing system combines both logographic (Kanji) and phonographic (hiragana and katakana) systems. Each character type has its own grammatical characteristics as shown in table 1:

Style: Volume 40, Nos. 1 & 2, Spring/Summer 2006 133
Table 1. Characteristics of Character Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Types</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kanji (Chinese logographic characters)</td>
<td>For words of Chinese origin and for the roots of such content words as nouns, verbs, and adjectives of Japanese origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiragana (syllabary)</td>
<td>For words of Japanese origin for which there are no Kanji, conjugated endings, conjunctions, particles, auxiliary verbs, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katakana (syllabary)</td>
<td>For words of foreign origin other than Chinese and for onomatopoeia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:
- Kanji: 久久 ['ku] (‘of long duration’)
- Hiragana: く [ku]
- Katakana: ク [ku]

Kanji, or Chinese logographic characters, are used mainly for words of Chinese origin and for the roots of such content words as nouns, verbs, and adjectives of Japanese origin. Most Kanji characters are built up from a limited number of basic constituents, called “radicals.” Hiragana, or the moraic alphabet, are used mainly for words of Japanese origin, conjugated endings, conjunctions, particles, and auxiliary verbs. Katakana, another moraic alphabet, are mainly used for words of foreign origin other than Chinese and for onomatopoeia. All three modes of representation—Kanji, hiragana, and katakana—are ordinarily combined and used to write a sentence. Due to this mixed nature of notation, writing in Japanese involves a constant decision-making as to which character type from the three modes of Kanji, hiragana, and katakana as well as which Kanji from an inventory of synonymous Kanji one should choose in order to convey subtle shades of meaning on the visual level.

The mixed nature of the Japanese writing system, indeed, offers psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic evidences in support of the claim that logographic characters and phonographic notations are perceived differently and that the cognitive process of logographs is motivated more by visual orientation (see Haga; Ma; Paradis, Hagiwara, and Hildbrand). In brief, Kanji function as graphic icons both on the generic level and the specific level. On the generic level, the graphic shape of Kanji as a whole bears associations based on imagic iconicity, an immediate link between form and its semantic associations. As Kanji have a more angular and distinctive shape than hiragana, they have masculine associations such as “large,” “heavy,” and “strong” in comparison with hiragana, which have feminine associations such as “small,” “light,” and “weak.” Kanji also manifest diagrammatic iconicity, an analogical relationship between the structure of form and that of meaning. Because Kanji have semantic integrity, they are used to express content words, which generally bear a greater semantic burden than function words. Hence, there is a diagrammatic correspondence between the visual complexity of Kanji and their semantic density. In this way, Kanji often constitute the “figure” and hiragana the “ground” on the page of a text.

On the specific level, each Kanji can be seen as an icon. The degree of iconicity varies from one character to another. In general, the more basic and frequently used characters, such as pictograms and simple and compound ideograms, are more iconic. The vast majority of characters, less frequently used, are a compound of an ideographic constituent and a phonographic constituent. Therefore, some characters strongly retain their pictographic roots, while most other characters are only partially ideographic. To say that Kanji are logographs means that the majority of characters correspond to words (and parts of words). Further, the decomposed parts of Kanji are either pictograms, ideograms, or logographs; and hence, iconicity plays an important role in the generation of their meaning.

3. Iconicity in the Formation of Kanji
Kanji are generally classified into four categories based on the character formation process: (1) shookei-moji ‘pictograms;’ (2) shiji-moji ‘simple ideograms;’ (3) kaii-moji ‘compound ideograms;’ and (4) keisei-moji ‘phonetic-ideographic characters.’

3.1 Pictograms
Shookei-moji ‘pictograms,’ the most basic scripts, maintain their close connection with original pictograms and therefore are mimetic to the things they represent, as indicated in figure 1. In these characters, there is an imagic iconic mapping between the shape of Kanji and the concrete object (and the meaning) that they depict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Form</th>
<th>Modern Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>门</td>
<td>門</td>
<td>‘gate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>月</td>
<td>月</td>
<td>‘the moon’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Shookei-moji of ‘gate’ and ‘the moon’

3.2 Simple Ideograms
Shiji-moji ‘simple ideograms,’ the smallest in number, are closest to ideograms as they represent by themselves abstract ideas. As indicated in figure 2, spatial orientation and basic numerals are graphically represented, such as 上 ‘up,’ 下 ‘down,’ 一 ‘one,’ 二 ‘two,’ 三 ‘three,’ and 亖 ‘ten’.
spatial orientation
上 ‘up’
下 ‘down’

basic numerals
一 ‘one’
二 ‘two’
三 ‘three’
十 ‘ten’

Figure 2. Shiji-moji of spatial orientation and basic numerals
Shiji-moji are also logographs because they correspond to the words expressing the concepts represented by the graphic shape of the characters. There is a diagrammatic mapping (or a structural analogy) between the form of these Kanji and the concepts that they represent.

3.3 Compound ideograms
Kai-moji ‘compound ideograms’ consist of two or more constituents or radicals, which are pictograms or ideograms themselves and contribute to the meaning of the whole. For example, 明 ‘bright’ consists of 日 ‘window’ and 月 ‘the moon’; 古 ‘old’ consists of 十 ‘ten’ and 口 ‘mouth’.

Figure 3. Kai-moji of ‘bright’ and ‘old’
Compound ideograms represent their meaning by way of metaphor and iconicity. Sometimes, the pictographic root of radicals in compound ideograms is traceable and one can easily re-construct the etymology of the character. For example, 明 ‘bright’ consists of 日 ‘window’ and 月 ‘the moon.’ The meanings of the radicals constitute input spaces for the blend by means of iconicity and metonymy. As shown in Figure 4, the meaning of 明 ‘brightness’ comes from the blend of the pictograms of ‘a window’ and ‘the moon.’ The ‘moon’ then functions as a metonymy for ‘moonlight.’ The blend mixes the meaning of ‘window’ and ‘moonlight,’ and produces ‘moonlight through the window.’

Kanji: The Visual Metaphor
blend further elaborates a more abstract meaning of ‘brightness,’ based on the CAUSE-EFFECT metonymy.

Figure 4. Metaphor-icon links in 明
A similar but slightly more complicated account holds for the case of 古 ‘old’ consisting of 十 ‘ten’ and 口 ‘mouth.’ The meaning of 古 comes from the blending of the two input spaces, represented by its radicals, the ideogram of ‘ten’ and the pictogram of ‘mouth.’ The input of ‘ten’ functions as a metonymy for ‘ten generations,’ and hence it acquires an extended meaning ‘a long duration of time.’ The input of ‘mouth’ is a metonymy for ‘speaking.’ The blend mixes the meaning of ‘a long duration of time’ with another input meaning of ‘speaking’ and produces the meaning ‘something spoken over ten generations, or for a long duration of time.’ Based on the inferences on ‘something spoken over ten generations,’ the blend further forges a more abstract meaning of ‘old.’

3.4 Phonetic-ideographic characters
The fourth category of Kanji, keisei-moji ‘phonetic-ideographic characters,’ includes the majority of characters. They consist of two or more constituents, which are often pictograms or ideograms. One of the constituents stands for the sound of a whole character of which it is a part, while the other constituent(s) mainly signal meaning. Just like compound ideograms, all the constituents including the phonetic constituent usually contribute to the generation of meaning. For example, 聞 ‘to hear’ is expressed by the semantic constituent 耳 ‘ear’ and the phonetic constituent [moN], 門 ‘gate.’ Likewise, 聞 ‘to question, to inquire, to ask’ is expressed by the semantic constituent 口 ‘mouth’ and the
The same analysis also applies to 関, in which the feature of 'exit' in the 'gate' input space is activated at the time of the blend to forge the meaning “questioning is 'for sounds exiting out of the mouth cavity.'” At the time of the blend there is also a diagrammatic mapping from the blend to the form 関, assigning the meaning of 'hearing, or receiving sounds in the ear' or to the form 関 ‘questioning, inquiring, or putting sounds out of the mouth' by way of the grammatical metaphor of SPECIFICATION IS JUXTAPOSITION.

To sum up, we have seen how Kanji manifest themselves in workings of metaphor and iconicity to varying degrees. Juxtaposition of ideographic and pictographic radicals is a key aspect of the formation of Kanji. Roughly speaking, there are three geometrical patterns of juxtaposition: (1) left-right (朝); (2) up-down (書); and (3) enclosure (廻). Whichever pattern a certain character takes, however, the meaning generation is manifested as a conceptual integration through creative blends of constituents. Just as what Turner and Fauconnier (1995) argue about the noncompositionality of formal expressions (such as "dolphin-safe" and "child-safe") in English, the meaning of Kanji is not compositional. There is no fixed standard way of reconstructing the meaning out of only the constituents. Every Kanji tells a different story or scenario, which must be discovered imaginatively by the pictographic cues, inferences, and background knowledge at the time of the blend.

4. Kanji As a Poetic Medium in Haiku

When a language has different writing systems to represent a single phonetic text, how a poem looks is as crucial as how it sounds. Both traditional and modern poets explore various possibilities in the visual presentation of their works. Some make overt attempts; others make covert ones. As it has been pointed out, Kanji play a distinct role not only in conveying an iconic meaning visually but also in manifesting a unique mode of representation in the world's writing systems. The essence of such an ideographic mode of representation is the juxtaposition of separate entities so as to evoke a new matrix or constellation of meaning. In this regard, it is an inevitable consequence that Kanji offer endless creativity and imagination in visual and verbal arts, particularly in calligraphy and poetry. The poetic text seeks an optimal use of Kanji both as an iconic and a metaphorical manifestation in the creation and the interpretation of its meaning.

This section, therefore, looks at different orthographical versions of the same poetic texts in order to speculate as to what motivations are behind the different versions and what visual effects they have. I have chosen as data the revisions of 'hataku' made by Basho Matsuo in Ooku no Hosomichi (1694), one of the acknowledged masterpieces of Japanese literature. It is interesting to see how the poet experiments intentionally with orthographical possibilities in his poetic work before hitting on the graphic structure that best represents his conception and imagination. The particular visual revisions the following analysis concerns are the changes between Kanji and hiragana. As discussed
above, Kanji and hiragana give contrasting visual effects in two major ways: (1) the angularity of the Kanji leads to masculine associations such as sharpness, strength, and tension, while the cursive shape of the hiragana to feminine associations such as gentleness, softness, and smoothness; and (2) the integrity of the visual-semantic link is much stronger in the logographic unit of Kanji than in the phonographic unit of hiragana.

A comparison of several drafts and copies of Oku no Hosomichi has made it clear that Basho revised 48 poems out of 50. In each poem, he tended to revise more than once before finalizing the last version. Table 2 shows the distribution of different types of revisions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of revision</th>
<th># of poems</th>
<th>% out of the total of 48</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthography</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonology</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantics</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dominance of orthographical revision is obvious as 94% of the revisions pertain to orthography, as opposed to phonological, semantic, and syntactic revisions. A total of 86 items in 45 poems were orthographically revised. This means that in each poem an average of two items had their character changed.

In what follows, two haiku texts are to be examined in detail as illustrative examples of Basho’s orthographical revisions.

4.1 The Milky Way poem

Example 1

荒海や佐渡によこたふ天河  
araumi ya Sado ni yokotou ama no gawa  
rough sea: Sado in lie heaven of river’

‘Rough sea: lying toward Sado Island the River of Heaven’  
(Basho’s 109)

The poem at first glance describes a natural scene. On the one hand, the sea is rough; and on the other hand, over one’s head, there is the Milky Way arching toward the island of Sado. Even if one does not have much pragmatic knowledge about Sado Island or the Milky Way in Japanese history and culture, one may sense the grandness of scale depicted by this haiku. It is a starry night. The Milky Way is magnificent. The grandeur of the Milky Way is put in contrast to the dark rough sea. The waves are terrifying; the water churns and moans, as if it would not allow the boats to cross. It is dangerous and fearful in the night. This dark sea does indeed separate the people living on the island of Sado from the mainland. The island is visible across the troubled waves, perhaps with its scattered house-lights. Human beings (including the poet) are very small in the face of this spectacular pageant of powerful nature. And yet there are thousands of human lives and stories embedded in the scene.

The island of Sado and the Milky Way have rich cultural implications. Sado Island has a long history. The island is geographically separated from the mainland by the Sea of Japan. Because the rough waves prevented people from crossing the sea by boat, the island functioned as a place of exile for felons and traitors from the tenth century up to the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time, gold mines were discovered there in the early seventeenth century and attracted all kinds of people. At the time of Basho (1664–1694), the Tokugawa Shogunate had control of the gold mines, and the people imprisoned in the island were forced to serve as free labor there. Thus, the metonymy of a rough sea with Sado Island activates the cultural and historical meanings of the island. Also, the roughness of the waves is consonant with the roughness of life on the island, which involves violence, cruelty, and despair. In addition, there is a sad legend about the Milky Way, which originated in China and was brought to Japan. The date on which this poem was composed, the night before the seventh night of the seventh month of the lunar calendar, suggests that the poet had this legend in mind. For the seventh night of the seventh month (i.e., the 7th of July) is known and celebrated as the Star Festival, after the Chinese story. There were two bright stars on either side of the Milky Way, or the River of Heaven. These stars, Vega and Altair, were believed to be Princess Weaver and Oxherd. They faced each other across the Milky Way, but the Milky Way was so wide and vast that they could not meet easily. One day the god of heaven pitted Princess Weaver’s lonely life and arranged for her to marry Oxherd. After they married, the Princess became too lazy to weave. The angry god punished her and allowed her to visit her husband only once a year, the night of the 7th of July, but only if the night was fair. The separation of this legendary couple is mapped onto the people imprisoned in Sado Island. Both the Milky Way and the island of Sado with their cultural connotations share event frames for confinement—spatial confinement, limited freedom, limited means of travel, and the mental state of being separated.

With this metaphorical reading, let us take a look at the visual elements of this text. In the context of the present discussion, logographs are of particular importance because they function as a cognitive medium for poetry. Basho revised this poem orthographically from example 2a to 2b.

Example 2

(a) 荒海や佐渡に横たふ天河  
araumi ya: Sado ni yokotou ama no gawa  

(b) 荒海や佐渡によこたふ天河  
araumi ya: Sado ni yokotou ama no gawa  

The poem’s three noun phrases, araumi, Sado, and ama no gawa, were all spelled in Kanji in both the first (2a) and the revised (2b) versions. The boxed part, the verb of lying, was revised from Kanji to hiragana.
It can be argued that there are two effects in the change of the character type of the verb yokosu ‘to lie’ from 橋 in Kanji to いこ in hiragana. One is that the hiragana writing in two characters of いこ physically stretches longer than the Kanji 橋, hence, there is a diagrammatic correspondence between the visual shape and the meaning (i.e., to lie with one’s body stretching). The second effect of the change from Kanji to hiragana is even more compelling. It is to make the part in hiragana a ground for the conspicuous profile of 激海 ‘rough sea’ and 天河 (literally ‘heaven’ and ‘river’; i.e., ‘Milky Way’ in English translation). As discussed above, because Kanji, being logographic characters, have a distinct angular form and semantic integrity, they differentiate themselves visually and cognitively as the figure while the remaining hiragana function as the ground.

This differentiation of Kanji is particularly prominent in the words 激海 ‘rough sea,’ 佐渡 ‘island of Sado,’ and 天河 ‘Milky Way.’ These three nouns are all written in two Kanji.

Figure 7. Three nouns in Kanji and water radical

All of them include Kanji (underlined in examples 2a and 2b), such as 海 ‘sea,’ 涯 ‘to cross water,’ and 河 ‘river,’ that are made up with the same radical, an icon of three water-drops, signifying water. Both 激海 ‘rough sea’ and 天河 ‘Milky Way’ relate to water, as described above. The semantic similarity between 激海 ‘rough sea’ and 天河 ‘Milky Way’ in terms of ‘waterness’ and the obstacle (in the real life and in the legend explained above) and their dissimilarity (violence in the ‘rough sea’ and peacefulness in the ‘river of heaven’) are also foregrounded. This is a case of diagrammatic iconic effect, intensifying the meaning of the foregrounded elements by the repetitive use of similar visual elements—two-character nouns and the same radical. Besides, 涯 ‘to cross water,’ in Sado 佐渡, the name of the island, seems important, because this logographic means ‘to cross.’ As the background history and the legend show, both ‘rough sea’ and ‘the Milky Way’ are obstacles for the loved ones “crossing” for their meeting. This character is placed in the middle of the poem as if it signaled the crossing.

In sum, the orthographical revision from Kanji to hiragana in the visual representation for [yonosu] results in reinforcing the connection between the poem’s visual form and its semantic configuration. First, the hiragana notation for [yonosu] suggests the ‘lengthened’ form for the ‘arching’ Milky Way; and second, it makes the three nouns written in Kanji foregrounded. These foregrounded forms, sharing Kanji with the water radical, then contribute to strengthening the element of water as a metaphor for obstacle in the interpretation of the text.

4.2 The Cicada poem

Example 3 (Matsuo Basho Shu 169)

shizuka ya iwa ni shiniru semi no koe
‘Quietness: sleeping into the rocks, the cicada’s voice’
(Basho’s 95)

It is believed that, before reaching the final version of this famous haiku about the cicada’s voice, Basho made three revisions as in the following:

Example 4

(a) 山寺や石にしみくつ蝉の聲
yamadera ya iwa ni shinitsuku semi no koe
mountain temple: rock to sleep:stick cicada of voice

(b) 潮しさの岩にし込み込みの聲
sabish часа no iwa ni shinikomu
loneliness SUBJ see include cicada of voice

(c) さびしさや岩にし込み込むのこえ
sabish часа ya iwa ni shinikomu
loneliness: see include cicada of voice

(d) 潮しさや岩にしみくつ蝉の聲
shizuka ya iwa ni shiniru
stillness: see pierce cicada of voice

(Sora’s and Somyo’s Copies [1694])

The poem crystallizes the moment of eternal stillness prevailing at the temple in the rocky mountain. This is clearly done with a metaphor of the voice of the cicada piercing into the rocks. The phonological and lexical revisions characteristically charge the text with the onomatopoeic and sound-symbolic effects of becoming silent. Namely, the revisions of lexical entities result in increasing phonological manifestations of ‘stillness’ by the sound-symbolism of [l], sibilant and voiceless sounds, and by parallelism of such sound patterns. Thus, a global metaphor of the text, that is, the metaphor of the cicada’s voice for the silence, acquires its iconic interpretation that the textual form is an icon for the silence it represents.

Three orthographical revisions in terms of character choices seem to add another iconic dimension to the text. Interestingly enough, all the orthographical revisions occurred in the lexical items that have not undergone any other revisions, ‘rock,’ ‘cicada,’ and ‘voice.’ In other words, these three items show a persistent line of original semantic images in the text, and the poet wanted to
increase their impact graphically by changing the characters representing them. First, Basho changed 石 ‘stone’ in version a to 岩 ‘rock’ in versions b, c, and d. Both are pronounced as [wa], but the size of the stone associated with the respective Kanji is different. 石 is a pictograph, meaning a mouth-shaped stone at the foot of a cliff. 岩 is a compound ideogram, which consists of 山 ‘mountain’ and 石 ‘stone,’ and thus meaning a rock. Usually 石 signifies small stones, whereas 岩 is used for larger ones. The choice of 岩 instead of 石 highlights the visual contrast between the large size of the rocks and the small size of the cicada. It might also imply graphically that the rocks are in the mountains. The other two revisions concern the phrase, seminokoe ‘the cicada’s voice.’ The poet seemed to experiment with which symbols, in Kanji or in hiragana, he should spell out ‘the cicada’ and ‘the voice.’ The genitive marker, no ‘of’ can only be written in hiragana. The two Kanji involved in the revisions are 鳴 ('cicada') and 聲 (‘voice.’) 鳴 consists of a semantic constituent, 鳴 (‘insect’), and a phonetic constituent, 声 (‘simple’). Although the etymology of 鳴 is not very clear, its ideographic connotation of (‘a simple insect’) is visible. On the other hand, 聲 consists of a semantic constituent, 聲 (‘ear’), and a phonetic constituent, 声 (‘sound’ as a metonymy of a stone drum represented by this character). Hence, 聲 means a ‘voice’ or ‘sound’ that the ears receive. The revision goes from 鳴の声 in version a, to せみの声 in version b, to 鳴のこえ in version c, and then back to 鳴の声 in the last version d.

Two iconic implications can be pointed out in the revisions of 鳴の声. First, iconic imagery is working in the interplay between the associations of the visual shape of characters and the meaning they express. As the Kanji chosen for seminokoe in the final version d are complicated ones, they stand out as a conspicuous figure. Compared to the versions b and c, which only use one Kanji, the density and complexity of two Kanji in combination corresponds nicely with the vividness and sharpness of the sound of the cicada breaking the prevailing silence of the mountain temple. Second, there is a diagrammatic iconicity between the place of characters and the effects they produce. The textual implications of the visual revisions are buttressed by the fact that the change of characters functions as a means of equating the beginning and the end characters of the poem. In versions a, b, and d, the poem begins with Kanji and ends with another Kanji, while in version c, it begins and ends with hiragana. Thus, the character choice also provides a bracketing function to the poem.

One last consideration that should be added to an orthographic treatment of this haiku is the use of the Kanji 鳴 to denote ‘stillness.’ In Japanese, the most common Kanji for ‘stillness’ is 嘘, which etymologically means ‘to end the fight’ and thereby no sound and no motion. In this sense, it implies physical silence rather than mental calmness. 鳴, on the other hand, suggests a mental aspect of silence—‘leisure time,’ ‘calmness,’ and ‘easiness.’ What is interesting is its etymological meaning: ‘to bar the gate,’ derived from the constituents of this Kanji, i.e., 鳴 ‘a gate’ and 木 ‘a bar made of wood.’ Notice how Basho described in his travel diary the mountain temple where he composed this haiku: “The doors of the shrines built on the rocks were firmly barred.” (“The Narrow” 122, my emphasis).

鳴 is an iconic ideogram for a barred gate; at the same time, it is a metaphor for ‘stillness.’ 岩 also is an iconic ideogram for rocks; at the same time, it is a metaphor for ‘silence,’ as it is in the rocks that absorbs the cicada’s voice. As Fenollosa says, the unseen ‘stillness’ is thus materialized in physical and natural objects in Kanji: 鳴 and 岩, on the one hand, and 鳴の声 on the other. Basho’s text never ceases to bespeak the enormous associative power of poetry.

5. Concluding Remarks
It has been claimed (1) that each Kanji tells a different “semantic” story, which must be discovered imaginatively by the interplay of metaphor and iconicity, activated by pictographic cues, inferences, and background knowledge at the time of the blend, and (2) that the poetic text seeks an optimal use of Kanji both as an iconic and a metaphorical manifestation in the creation and the interpretation of its meaning.

Fenollosa claims that the essentially poetic nature of Chinese ideographic characters is that they combine what is seen in pictographic potentials (i.e., iconicity in the terminology of the present study) with what is unseen in the metaphorical process of meaning production. According to him, metaphor is a process in which material images are used to suggest immaterial relations. He insists that Chinese characters visibly maintain the ancient roots of such metaphors in themselves. What Fenollosa observed in the ideographic nature of Chinese characters is no less meaningful to Imagist poets than to a cognitive linguist who sees the interplay of metaphor and iconicity in the formation of Kanji and its role in poetic texts. The discussion above has clarified the fact that iconicity of Kanji is a key factor for a full understanding of the Japanese writing systems and that it further provides profound insights into the mode of representation in a general theory of written language in addition to a theory of poetic creativity.

Notes

1 There are two additional categories, tenchuu-moji ‘derivative characters’ and kasha-moji ‘phonetic loans,’ based on usage, but they are rather few in number.

2 Kanji usually have more than one pronunciation. 呼 has [buN], [moN], and [ki], while 嘘 has [moN], [to], and [toN].

3 Although calligraphy is outside the scope of this study, it is worth noting that there is a close relation between the development of calligraphy and the development of poetry in the Chinese and Japanese literary tradition.

4 I have chosen the poems in Oku no Hosomichi for three reasons. First, Oku no Hosomichi, written as a travel sketch, consists of a main narrative body, fifty
haiku poems by Basho, and a few poems by other authors. The totality of the fifty haiku poems is considered an integrated text in its own right, as they conform to general principles of composition and structural congruence. Second, the analysis of the haiku revision process will contribute to the current controversy over the authenticity of the major copies of Oku no Hosomichi (see Muramatsu; for further discussion on the palaeographical evaluation of the copies, see Hiraga “Vision”). To trace the revision process, I have used Sora’s draft (1689), Basho’s draft (1693–49), Sora’s copy (1694), Basho’s correction (1694) of Sora’s copy, Soro’s copy (1694) and the anthologies of Basho’s haiku compiled until the wide publication of the printed copy (1698) of Oku no Hosomichi. Third, it was demonstrated in my pilot study (“External Stillness”) that Basho consciously and unconsciously used iconicity in the process of phonological, semantic, syntactic, and orthographical revisions.

5 Word-for-word translation is mine, based on the editions of The Narrow Road edited and translated by Yasuda and Sato.

6 For a detailed phonological analysis of this haiku, see Hiraga “How Metaphor.”

7 For a detailed analysis of this haiku, see Hiraga “External Stillness.”

Works Cited


