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# “The Blessing of Living in a Country Where There Are *Senryū*!”

## Humor in the Response to Aum Shinrikyō

### Abstract

Following the sarin gas attack on Tokyo's subways in March of 1995, considerable effort has been devoted to explaining the rise of Aum Shinrikyō and its turn to violence. This paper aims to provide a contribution to efforts to understand how Aum has been perceived and interpreted in Japan by focusing on one aspect of the reaction to Aum that has received almost no attention either within or without Japan: the humor, joking, parody, and satire that formed a major part of efforts to understand and come to terms with Aum. It is argued that the reaction to Aum in Japan cannot be understood without taking into account the range of humor, parody, and satire relating to Aum that appeared throughout Japanese mass media. As a means of introducing this aspect of the reaction to Aum, *senryū* (comic or satiric verse) related to Aum and contributed by readers of two major Japanese daily newspapers are translated and analyzed.

**Keywords:** Aum Shinrikyō—comic verse—humor—mass media—religion—*senryū*

CONSIDERABLE EFFORT has been devoted, quite naturally, to attempting to explain the rise of Aum Shinrikyō オウム真理教 and its subsequent turn to violence that culminated in the sarin gas attack on Tokyo subway lines on March 20, 1995. Several books have appeared in English. Over a hundred books and thousands of essays have appeared in Japanese.<sup>1</sup> Less, though not inconsiderable, attention has been given to analyzing the response to Aum in Japan. How Aum has been interpreted in Japan has had considerable impact on the legal system, government agencies, the media, the police system, attitudes to religion, and attitudes to youth.<sup>2</sup> The responses to Aum will continue, to some extent at any rate, to influence Japanese perceptions and behavior in years to come. The aim of this paper is to provide a contribution to the effort to understand how Aum was perceived and interpreted in Japan in the months immediately following the sarin gas attack.

Humor is one topic that has received particularly little attention in analyses of the reaction to Aum. One possible explanation for the neglect of the topic is the perception that there was little or no humor involved. In his study of Aum, Robert Jay LIFTON noted the following in regard to the reaction to Aum: “With absolutized evil, there was no room for humor, or even metaphor” (1999, 234). The case can be made, however, that humor in a variety of forms permeated the reaction to Aum. Those living in Japan in the spring of 1995 may well recall how discussions of Aum frequently overheard in bars, restaurants, and casual conversation were punctuated by jokes, ironic comments, and laughter. Weekly and monthly magazines, sports newspapers, and even mainstream newspapers carried not infrequent parodies of Aum as well as parodies of Japanese institutions and personalities that were likened to Aum. Media coverage of Aum was so overdone at times that the coverage of Aum itself became a subject of humor, ridicule, and satire.

That some commentators were not aware of the amount of humor generated in the reaction to Aum, however, serves as only a partial explanation for the neglect of the topic. Japanese scholars (or anyone reading popular

Japanese publications at the time) were fully cognizant of the amount of joking, satire, and parody surrounding Aum. Then why has humor not been a topic of explicit discussion, especially since nearly every aspect of Aum and the reaction to Aum has received extensive treatment within Japan? The only plausible explanation seems to be that humor, however interesting or amusing it might be, is simply not deemed to be of importance in understanding a serious matter such as the reaction to Aum in Japan.

It is possible to view humor, however, as having been a central part of the effort to make sense of Aum within Japan. The amount of humor related to Aum is not difficult to account for. Given the general contours of Japanese common sense at the time, Aum and what its members did were unexpected, incongruous, unbelievable, horrifying, and—let it be said—just plain strange and weird. While a perception of tragic incongruity quite naturally dominated the understanding of Aum's attack on the subway and the subsequent deaths and injuries, certain aspects of Aum, such as Aum founder Asahara Shōkō's 麻原彰晃 claim to be able to levitate, struck many as humorous and laughable. The implausible beliefs, hypocrisy, and obvious lies of Aum members gave rise to laughter and became the subject of various forms of ridicule, satire, and parody.

In addition, Aum had adopted in 1994 a structure of government ministries modeled on those of the Japanese government and had attempted to become in many ways a self-sufficient, alternative mini-society or mini-state. As such, Aum struck many as in one way or another incorporating or mirroring, if in distorted form, most aspects of Japanese government, culture, and society. A common question for discussion throughout the spring and summer of 1995 was "Is Aum a mirror of Japanese society?"

In attempting to interpret Aum, people were thus confronted with the task of examining how Aum was similar to and yet different from Japanese society in nearly all its aspects. Not only major institutions and general cultural practices but nearly every aspect of daily life was interrogated as to whether it had some possible relation to Aum. This effort to bring Aum into some sort of focus by comparing it with the surrounding society produced startling incongruities, both unexpected similarities and unexpected differences, which gave rise to a considerable range of joking, parody, and satire.<sup>3</sup> Humor was used here not just to critique Aum but also to criticize aspects of Japanese culture and society by likening them to Aum. Jokes about Aum began to appear almost immediately following the sarin attack and often seem to have anticipated, if not motivated, the more "serious" critiques of Aum and Japanese society that were to emerge.

A comic, satiric verse form of 5-7-5 syllables that originated in eighteenth century Edo, *senryū* 川柳 provide a convenient means of sampling

and beginning to explore the role of humor in interpreting Aum.<sup>4</sup> Most major Japanese newspapers, as well as many weekly and monthly magazines, regularly publish selections of *senryū* submitted by their readers. In the years immediately following the sarin gas attack, one major Japanese newspaper, *Yomiuri shimbun*, received over one thousand *senryū* daily from its readers (UEDA 1999, 39). From April through the end of June 1995, Aum was one of the major topics treated by the *senryū* that appeared in newspapers, and *senryū* related to Aum continued to appear not infrequently until at least the end of 1995. Collected and translated here are the *senryū* that appeared between the end of March and the end of May 1995 in *Asahi shimbun* and *Yomiuri shimbun*, two of Japan's major daily newspapers.<sup>5</sup>

The title of this essay incorporates a *senryū*, probably composed before the sarin attack, which appeared in *Asahi shimbun* on March 22, 1995. In some regards, the insight the poem expresses represents a minority position. While *senryū* have received relatively little attention outside Japan, poetic modes such as *waka* 和歌 and what is now known as haiku are taken as one of the fundamental blessings of being Japanese, regarded by Japanese and non-Japanese alike as representative of Japanese culture and sensibilities, and frequently used, at a variety of levels of sophistication, to introduce Japanese culture to the outside world.<sup>6</sup>

Though both poetic forms have long and complex histories, neither *waka* nor haiku have a very strong comic, and especially satiric, bent in current practice. This can be seen, for instance, by surveying the *waka* and haiku contributed to major newspapers in Japan during the spring and summer of 1995. Among the *waka* I could find no references to Aum or to any other current social and political problems. This is not surprising since *waka* currently exclude, almost by definition, any reference to social and political issues. Haiku have more of a tradition of dealing with the comic, and there were a few haiku making reference to Aum that did appear. For the most part, however, few haiku make use of humor in relation to political and social problems.

To attempt to understand the reaction to Aum without looking at humor is analogous, I would suggest, to attempting to understand Japanese sensibilities by looking at "serious" modes such as *waka* and haiku while ignoring comic modes such as *senryū*. To move towards understanding anything Japanese, attention must obviously be given to a range of modes of expression. In certain cases at least, it might even make sense to give greater attention to comic than to serious modes. While *waka* and haiku appear once a week in most major newspapers, *senryū* are published five times a week in a number of papers. Newspaper editors seem to have concluded that their readers can get by with *waka* and haiku once a week or so but that they

need a nearly daily offering of *senryū*.

Unlike some humorous reactions to Aum that appeared in less prominent publications, the *senryū* published in newspapers were no doubt read by a sizeable percentage of the Japanese population (though the writers and connoisseurs of *senryū* seem to be older rather than younger). A full argument cannot be presented here, but it seems to me that newspaper *senryū*, in their themes, are fairly representative of the humor generated by Aum, which appeared in other sorts of sources and which emerged spontaneously in the course of daily life. Many of the *senryū* simply replicate the sorts of jokes and satiric comments that could be heard when daily conversation turned to Aum. In this sense, *senryū* provide a good source for folkloric studies of modern Japanese society. Some of the *senryū*, however, are truly ingenious and original, reflecting an insight not commonly found elsewhere.

Appearing in major newspapers, these *senryū* also represent humor sanctioned by major mass media institutions. It should be noted, however, that *senryū*, like many forms of humor, have at least a bit of an anarchic orientation and tradition. The humor in *senryū* is often utilized for political and social critique, and at times in the past *senryū* have been censored and suppressed. As far as I am aware, *senryū* have not been censored by the government in the postwar period. Since the *senryū* published in newspapers are only a fraction of those submitted, it would not be surprising, however, if there were not some, either conscious or unconscious, suppressing of some *senryū*. *Senryū* columns seem to remain, however, a space within newspapers where social and political critique may be expressed with a bit more freedom than elsewhere within the paper.<sup>7</sup>

*Senryū* related to Aum illustrate a number of general characteristics of the humor related to Aum. Much of the humor generated by Aum, and thus the perception of Aum, was dependent on a range of contingencies and chance resemblances embedded in Japanese language, culture, and society. One of the more important such contingencies relates to the word “Aum” itself, which is a rendering into English of the Japanese “*oumu*” (オウム). This in turn is a rendering of “*om*” or “*aum*,” the most sacred syllable in Sanskrit into Japanese. By chance, the pronunciation of *om* in Japanese (*oumu*) is the same as that for the Japanese word “parrot” (鸚鵡, *oumu*). As illustrated below, this gave rise to a widespread perception of Aum members as parrots or of Aum as a parrot. The equivalent of the English “to parrot” (to repeat mindlessly what one has heard or been told) conveniently also exists in Japanese (鸚鵡返し, *oumu-gaeshi*) and proved handy in characterizing the performance of Aum members on television.

This chance linkage of Aum with parrots illustrates the way a seemingly insignificant resemblance can generate a series of associations and interpre-

tations. The focus on Aum as parrots was exacerbated by the prominence of canaries, carried by the police to detect poison gas when raiding Aum facilities, in the Aum drama. The confrontation between Aum and the police became a confrontation of parrots and canaries. As illustrated in the translations below, the focus on parrots and canaries also set the stage for the appearance of a number of other birds. In what might be taken as an illustration of LEVI-STRAUSS's dictum, roughly paraphrased, that "animals are good to think with," one level of interpretation of Aum proceeded by way of a comparison of parrots and other birds (1963, 89).

Much of the humor generated by Aum consisted of attacks on Aum by way of irony, satire, and ridicule. As illustrated by *senryū*, such humor generally pointed to some sort of incongruity between Aum's identification of itself as a religion and the behavior, ideas, and practices of Aum members.

I can find neither gods nor Buddhas in Aum. *Akahata shimbun*, 4/16

Behind preaching the truth, they were running a poison gas factory.  
*Hokkaidō shimbun*, 4/5

Relying on the power generated by the incongruity of unexpected resemblance, many *senryū*, however, pointed to similarities between Aum and various aspects of Japanese society in order to formulate a critique not of Aum but of Japanese society itself. *Senryū* in several newspapers pointed to the similarities between Aum and the militarized Japan of the war period.

Aum is imitating the Imperial Japanese Army in waging bacteriological warfare.<sup>8</sup> *Hokkaidō shimbun*, 4/6

Parallels with Aum were used to critique a number of different aspects of contemporary Japanese culture and society. The number of prominent Aum members with elite educational backgrounds and training led to a critique of the importance granted in Japanese society to a good school record.

I am perfectly happy with my grandchild of only average intelligence who is incapable of making sarin.<sup>9</sup> *Hokkaidō shimbun*, 4/19

The nature of Japanese politics and social policy were also critiqued by suggesting parallels with Aum.

Rather than relying on gods, relying on politicians as if they were gods.  
*Hokkaidō shimbun*, 4/18

Coverage of Aum was so sensationalized that the mass media, particularly television, was also subjected to considerable ridicule.

Brainwashed by Aum specials with high ratings. *Hokkaidō shimbun*, 6/9

*Senryū* also illustrate how Japanese companies, the Self Defense Forces, the practice of medicine, the constitution, religion, and the family were critiqued by way of drawing some sort of parallel between them and Aum.

Where possible I have tried to translate the poems as literally as possible and, for the most part, refrained from adding information within the translations to render them more immediately intelligible. Nowhere have I attempted to replicate the 5-7-5 syllabic count of *senryū* or render them as three-line poems. I have tried, rather, to capture the basic incongruity the poem is pointing to as clearly as possible as a one-liner in a single sentence or a phrase or two with no distinction of lines.

Reading and translating *senryū* present various problems. They are terse, often highly elliptical, and make use of a variety of types of puns and plays on words and Chinese characters not easily transferred into English. At other times there are explicit and implicit references to elements of Japanese culture that most non-Japanese (and not a few Japanese) readers cannot be counted on to pick up easily. At other times, the poems assume that the reader has in mind the news relating to Aum that occurred in the last week or so. Many of these once current events are now obscure even to those who followed closely the unfolding of the Aum story. As evidenced by the practice of *senryū* editors in sometimes supplying clues to suggest what certain *senryū* are about, some *senryū* were judged to be at least a bit obscure even at the time of their initial publication.

In confronting these difficulties, I have received considerable help. Takeda Mitsuyo has been my collaborator throughout and deserves, indeed, to be considered a co-translator. In addition, I have also received considerable feedback from friends and colleagues in completing these translations.<sup>10</sup> In addition to simply correcting some clear mistakes on my part, the feedback I received from native speakers (who did not always agree) clearly revealed an important dimension of *senryū*: they are sometimes difficult for even native speakers to decipher and are sometimes open to multiple readings.

For all of these reasons, many of the translations presented here are heavily annotated in the notes and are not intended to stand independent of the annotations. I would hope that this mode of presentation would add to the enjoyment and interest of this material rather than detract from it. It allows, indeed, for the translations to be approached as a puzzle or test. How many of these translations are immediately intelligible? If not intelligible, what sort of missing information is needed to render them intelligible? How close can one approach the common sense of a Japanese during the spring and summer of 1995?

By way of conclusion, I would suggest that greater attention to the comic elements in Japanese culture might serve to increase our understanding not only of the reaction to Aum but of a range of topics related to Japan. If one were to take contemporary *waka* and haiku as an index to Japanese sensibilities and attitudes, some disturbing conclusions would have to be drawn: Japanese are deficient in at least certain types of humor, incapable of perceiving and expressing the incongruities of social and political life, prone to avoiding conflict, etc. Such conclusions have, of course, often been drawn about “the Japanese” and have served, indeed, to portray Japanese people as alien, in need of outside guidance, and even as a bit inhuman at times. They have even contributed to the perception that Japanese people, unlike ourselves, are brainwashed or mind controlled by their culture. A familiarity with *senryū* renders such simplistic conclusions implausible and restores to the Japanese the ability to perceive incongruities and the very human quality of being able to laugh at both others and themselves.

#### NOTES TO PREFACE

1. For an introduction to the Japanese literature on the response to Aum, see GARDNER 1999.

2. See here the essays on the reaction to Aum collected in KISALA and MULLINS 2001.

3. I am indebted here to SMITH 1978, 209–301.

4. For an overview of the history of *senryū*, see UEDA 1999.

5. My comments on Aum and *senryū* are also based, however, on a reading and translation of the *senryū* that appeared in *Akahata shimbun*, *Hokkaidō shimbun*, *Maimichi shimbun*, *Sankei shimbun*, and *Tōkyō shimbun*. The *Asahi* might be characterized as the most liberal of Japan’s major newspapers and has at least a bit of an association with “intellectuals.” The *Yomiuri* is more centrist, probably appealing more to the “average citizen” than the *Asahi*.

6. At a symposium held in 2001, both Donald Keene and Kawai Hayao extolled the virtues of haiku, both as providing a window on Japanese sensibilities and providing a poetic form that might be practiced by many throughout the world.

7. *Senryū* are not alone in occupying the space granted to satire, irony, and humor in newspapers. In addition, most major newspapers regularly carry *manga* or cartoons, small anonymous columns on the first page that often contain satiric comments, and what might be termed short, comic “verbal *manga*” on the letters to the editor page. Here is an example from *Tōkyō shimbun* entitled “pithy barbs” (寸鉄, *suntetsu*): “An earthquake, financial scandals, sarin terror. Prime Minister get your eyebrows out of your eyes and look around.” Prime Minister Murayama was not in the habit of trimming his eyebrows, and they were always accentuated in cartoon depictions of him.

8. Illustrating the way editors sometimes set themes, the *senryū* editor for *Hokkaidō shimbun* contributed the following *senryū* on March 30, 1995: “Fifty years, from poison gas up to sarin.” This poem also illustrates the sort of ambiguity characterizing some *senryū*. Since it was quickly and widely reported that sarin gas was developed in Germany in 1942, this may be the association this *senryū* seeks to evoke. Reference might also be being made to the use

of poison gas by the Japanese army during the war period. Since 1995 was the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, there was also fairly widespread coverage of the use of chemical weapons by the Japanese army.

9. Aum specifically targeted for recruitment people with advanced degrees in science and technology, and a number of prominent Aum members had training at the graduate school level in science, technology, or medicine.

10. I am indebted to suggestions received from Maurice Bairy, Robert J. Ballon, Itoh Rena, Itoh Risa, William LaFleur, Motohashi Tatsushi, Nagano Naomi, Nakano Koichi, Kate Nakai, Royall Tyler, Lawrence Sullivan, and Watanabe Manabu.

## TRANSLATIONS

### *Asahi*

地下鉄の通勤に要るガスマスク

Gas masks are needed now for commuting on the subway. 3/23

カナリアがオウムの中に放たれる

Canaries released amidst the parrots.<sup>1</sup> 3/26

網棚の新聞気にし位置変える

Noticing some newspapers on the overhead rack, I change my seat.<sup>2</sup> 3/28

一面に異臭漂う大活字

A strange odor floating up as the headlines.<sup>3</sup> 3/30

裾野では巻狩かねと頼朝公

Lord Yoritomo asking, "Are they hunting in the foothills?"<sup>4</sup>

青い鳥追ってオウムに迷いこみ

Looking for the bluebird, they went astray and got involved with a bunch of parrots.<sup>5</sup> 3/31

降ってわく出番が回る薬学者

Their turn on stage having unexpectedly come, a profusion of pharmacologists.<sup>6</sup>

### *Yomiuri*

啓蟄[けいちつ]にゲリラ都心で目を覚まし

On Awakening of Insects Day, guerrillas open their eyes and awake in the heart of the city.<sup>7</sup> 3/29

春眠を地獄へ落とすサリンガス

A delightful spring's sleep turned into hell by sarin gas.<sup>8</sup> 3/30

遊説を防毒マスクをつけて聴き

Putting on a gas mask to listen to the campaign speakers.<sup>9</sup> 3/31

*Asahi*

震災見舞いサリンを見舞われる

Just as we are paying our visits to inquire after the victims of the earthquake, we are visited by sarin.<sup>10</sup> 4/2

霊峰の裾野に異国の行政府

At the foot of our sacred mountain, the government of an alien country.<sup>11</sup>

貧乏に拉致され政府に見捨てられ

I have been abducted by poverty and abandoned by the government.<sup>12</sup>

地下鉄の忘れ物すぐとどけられ

Items forgotten on the subway are now returned immediately.<sup>13</sup> 4/5

パンドラの箱開いてきた世紀末

Pandora's box has started opening at the end of the century.<sup>14</sup> 4/6

易々と自転車逃がす警備力

Lax security, allowing a criminal to flee easily on a bicycle.<sup>15</sup>

平成の御用提灯籠の鳥

Caged canaries: the "official business" lanterns of the Heisei era.<sup>16</sup>

ウグイスの声もオウムにかき消され

The voices of the nightingales have also been drowned out by the parrots.<sup>17</sup> 4/7

号外が週刊となる恐ろしさ

The fear that special editions of the newspapers will become weeklies.

天災と人災あつてない政治

A government that can handle neither natural disasters nor man-made disasters.<sup>18</sup>

ありふれた朝が素直になつかしい

I honestly long for boring, run-of-the-mill mornings.

カルガモの出番を奪うオウム教

The parrots have even snatched the baby ducklings turn on the stage.<sup>19</sup>

カナリヤのかご持ち地下鉄通勤し

Commuting on the subway carrying a canary in a cage. 4/8

兵庫県上九一色に乗っ取られ

The concern about the Kobe earthquake has been abducted to Kamikuishiki. 4/9

木の芽時ハルマゲドンと鳴くオウム

In the season when the trees are budding, the parrots sing "Harumagedon."<sup>20</sup> 4/11

チューハイを作るわが家の科学庁

Our house's Science Agency makes mixed drinks.<sup>21</sup>

へぼ探偵パートで雇うワイドショー

Wide shows hiring lousy detectives as part-timers.<sup>22</sup>

次々とまさかがほんとなる今年

A year where “no way” becomes “for sure” time and time again. 4/13

全国の村を紹介するオウム

Aum has introduced us to all the villages in Japan.<sup>23</sup>

狙われる頭脳を持たぬ子で安堵

The security of having a child who does not have the sort of brain they aimed for.<sup>24</sup>  
4/14

宗教論ゼミに加える理系大

Technical colleges adding seminars on religion.<sup>25</sup> 4/16

地下鉄の階段駆けたら皆つられ

When you run up the stairs in the subway station now, everyone follows you.

隅っこで閣議をしている留置場

A cabinet meeting being held in a corner at the detention center.<sup>26</sup> 4/18

読み捨ての新聞なくて出費増え

With no one leaving their newspaper on the train anymore, my daily expenses have gone up.

都市博も300億も不審物

The Tokyo World City Expo and the 30 billion yen are also suspicious objects.<sup>27</sup> 4/20

チャンネルを上九一色に拉致される

All the television channels have been abducted to Kamikuishiki.

浮揚より上手に潜行してみせる

They are showing us they can travel in disguise even better than they levitate.<sup>28</sup>

エリートコース逸れ豪快に並んでいる

Having strayed from the elite course, I am just an ordinary, large-hearted type of guy.<sup>29</sup>

円高がわが社に迫るハルマゲドン

Harumagedon is our company coming under pressure from the high yen.<sup>30</sup> 4/21

オウムにも困ったもんだとシバと釈迦

Both Shiva and the Buddha say they are troubled by Aum too.<sup>31</sup>

ヘッドギア外して人の子に戻り

With their headgear removed, they return to being the children of humans.<sup>32</sup>

鬼平が欲しい平成江戸の春

Spring in Heisei Edo, everyone wishing for an Onihei.<sup>33</sup> 4/23

狭い島なのに迷路の多い国  
 Though it is a narrow island-country, Japan is riddled with mazes.<sup>34</sup>

風邪で咳きこめば駅員駆けつける  
 When I cough with a cold, the station employees come running.<sup>35</sup>

借りに行く人でもめてるレンタカー  
 Quarreling about which one of us will go rent the car.<sup>36</sup>

大捜査分かったようで分からない  
 Massive search of and reporting on Aum: it seems like I understand but I don't understand anything. 4/25

とばっちり受けて御用になる空き巣  
 A burglar arrested by chance in the search for Aum suspects.

恐ろしいニュースの慣れが恐ろしい  
 It is frightening to have become accustomed to such frightening news. 4/27

ただいまを言えば今日もご無事で  
 When I say "I'm home," my wife replies "you're back safely again today too."

人間は諦めモグラに布教中  
 Giving up on people, they preach underground to the moles.<sup>37</sup> 4/28

まんじゅうをつくるわけにもいかぬ村  
 A village where they can't even make commemorative bean jam buns, though something big has happened.<sup>38</sup> 4/28

ワイドショー帰りの付き人捜査官  
 Returning home from the wide show with police investigators as personal assistants.<sup>39</sup> 4/30

日常に戻ろうとしてテレビ切る  
 Trying to return to daily life by turning off the television.

### *Yomiuri*

地図開く上九一色がここにある  
 I open a map: here is Kamikuishiki. 4/1

暴かれていく末法の隠れみの  
 The lawlessness hidden by the cloak of invisibility is being revealed.<sup>40</sup>

地価よりも地下が不安な狭い国  
 A narrow country: even more than land prices, the underground is unsettling.<sup>41</sup> 4/5

山梨を迂回してくるけもの道  
 Detouring around Yamanashi on animal paths.<sup>42</sup>

駅弁の包みやっぱり持ち返り

The now empty, rewrapped box lunch I bought at the station ... I guess I should take it home with me.<sup>43</sup>

富士山に着せてやりたい防護服

Wanting to outfit Mt. Fuji with protective clothing and gear.<sup>44</sup> 4/6

地下鉄の狸寝入りがぐんと減り

The number of people pretending to be asleep on the subway has suddenly decreased.<sup>45</sup>

十大ニュース残りは七つ程となり

Only seven places for the top ten stories of the year left.

地下鉄が富士までのびる点と線

A connect-the-dots puzzle linking the subway and Mt. Fuji.<sup>46</sup> 4/7

世紀末富士のすそ野のオウム狩り

At the end of the century, parrot hunting at the foot of Mt. Fuji.

地下売り場肩身が狭い弁当箱

Box lunches, looking abashed in the underground subway shop.<sup>47</sup>

とんだ人飛んでる人も出馬する

Terrible people, flying people, both running in the elections.<sup>48</sup>

古い二人わがサティアンは平和なり

An old couple: "Our Satian is peaceful."<sup>49</sup>

あの日からねむ気がさめてくる電車

Ever since that day, I never get sleepy on the train. 4/8

隣席に目をやるだけの自衛策

The only self-defense strategy I have is to check out the people in the seats around me.

地下鉄で無事に着いたと電話来る

Phone calls saying "I arrived safely on the subway."

夜道より怖い日本の通勤路

Japan, where a crowded commuting route is more frightening than a lonely street at night. 4/9

出家より家出で親もホッとする

Parents heave a sigh of relief when children run away from home instead of renouncing the householder's life.<sup>50</sup> 4/11

鳥肌を立てて観ているワイドショー

Watching wide shows and getting goose bumps.

何事ぞ花の都にガスマスク  
What is this? Gas masks in the flowery capital?<sup>51</sup> 4/12

打ち止めのない拳[けん]銃の恐ろしさ  
The fear of handguns without automatic stops like on the pachinko machines.<sup>52</sup>

テレビより一歩進んだミステリー  
A mystery story more sophisticated than television dramas. 4/13

大事件あってもヘアは不滅です  
Even though something horrendous has happened, there are as many hair nude photos as ever.<sup>53</sup>

オウムより警備の甘い警察庁  
Rather than Aum, the lax attentiveness of the police.

カナリヤは警察庁の御用達  
Canaries, Official Purveyors for the police.<sup>54</sup> 4/14

静止画とオウムの嘘を聞くテレビ  
Television, listening to Aum's lies and politicians hiding behind still pictures.<sup>55</sup>

遠回りしてそつと行く富士登山  
Wanting to climb Mt. Fuji, I go stealthily taking the long way around.<sup>56</sup>

出演にお布施を渡すテレビ局  
Television stations offering religious contributions for television appearances.<sup>57</sup> 4/15

女房がタンスに仕舞う不審物  
My wife hides her suspicious objects in the dresser.<sup>58</sup>

安全は崩れ治安は撃ち抜かれ  
Safety destroyed, public security shot through.<sup>59</sup>

不信心ばかり揃って我が家無事  
Our household, nothing but unbelievers, is safe.

健忘症だから弁当持たず  
Being prone to forgetfulness, I do not take a box lunch along anymore. 4/16

役に立たない父さんの化学力  
Papa's knowledge of chemistry is not enough to be helpful.<sup>60</sup>

地下鉄に勇気を出して乗ってみる  
I will gather together my courage and try riding the subway. 4/17

カナリヤの籠に御用と書いてある  
Canary cages with "official business" written on them.

日本地図勉強させるオウム教  
Aum has caused me to study my map of Japan more carefully.

富士の山麓をガスの上に出し  
Mt. Fuji, lift your foothills above the gas.<sup>61</sup> 4/18

気に掛かる押収品の保管場所  
I am worried about where the police are storing all the dangerous substances seized from Aum.<sup>62</sup>

朝帰り妻に出家を促され  
When I get home early in the morning, my wife urges me to renounce the householder's life. 4/19

いま流行り探偵ごっこ隠れんぼ  
Pretending to be detectives and hide and seek are popular now. 4/20

環境庁だけはなかったオウム教  
Aum: the only agency it was lacking was an environmental agency.<sup>63</sup> 4/21

一面を見て芸能紙かと思ひ  
Looking at page one, I wonder whether I bought the *National Inquirer* by mistake.<sup>64</sup>

大臣もオウムの方が名を知られ  
The names of Aum cabinet ministers are more famous than even those of the real cabinet ministers.<sup>65</sup> 4/22

お茶の間で学ぶ化学と日本地理  
In my living room, studying chemistry and Japanese geography. 4/23

オウム教手かえ品かえ顔もかえ  
Magically doing things one after another, Aum members can even change their faces.<sup>66</sup>

カナリアの申し送りは異常なし  
A note from canaries to the next shift: "nothing irregular."

ひょうたんと駒を並べる警察庁  
The police and gourds laying out chess pieces on the board.<sup>67</sup> 4/24

新宿にオウムが招く閑古鳥  
The parrots have invited the cuckoos to Shinjuku.<sup>68</sup>

大臣もオウムの方をよく覚え  
I remember the names of the Aum cabinet ministers and even our own cabinet ministers too. 4/25

サティアンを慌てて畳むホームレス  
Homeless people, hurriedly folding up their Satians.<sup>69</sup> 4/26

オウムの子ホームシックが気にかかり

I am worried that the Aum children are homesick for their Satians. 4/27

バードデー先ずカナリヤに感謝状

On Bird Day, we first need to send a letter of thanks to the canaries.<sup>70</sup>

一二面オウム三面隅総理

Pages one and two are Aum, page three in the corner the prime minister.<sup>71</sup> 4/29

駅前で相乗りをする救急車

In front of the station, sharing an ambulance.<sup>72</sup>

子の遊び電車ごっこが恐くなり

Children's games: playing train has become scary.

テレビから電極帽を被せられ

Television has put headgear on us.

### *Asahi*

逮捕理由適用できる我が亭主

They could find a reason to arrest my husband too.<sup>73</sup> 5/2

オウム去り雲雀さえずる空を待つ

I am waiting for the parrots to be gone and the sky to be full of singing larks.

風貌がなぜか気になるホームレス

Why do I feel uneasy looking at that homeless man?<sup>74</sup> 5/4

電極をかぶって降りる落下傘

A parachutist floating down with headgear on.<sup>75</sup>

SPにゆっくり休めと外遊し

Setting out to journey abroad, the Prime Minister tells his personal security agents that they can relax now.<sup>76</sup>

富士怒り噴火せぬかと苦労性

Worry warts are thinking maybe Mt. Fuji will get angry and erupt. 5/5

モノカネの果てはオウムの住む社会

As a result of the love of money and material things, we have a society where Aum lives. 5/7

映像の顔に自分のヒゲを剃る

Shocked seeing his face on television, I shave my beard.<sup>77</sup>

偏差値が高いオウムにない理性

There is no rationality in Aum even with all the education elites. 5/9

弁護士が弁護士を待つ荒川署  
A lawyer waiting for a lawyer at Arakawa Detention Center.<sup>78</sup>

法治国とところによって放置国 5/11  
It's a law-governed country but in places the law is neglected and things are just let be.<sup>79</sup>

今の世に山椒大夫のいる恐ろしさ  
It is frightening that a Sanshō Dayū exists in this world now.<sup>80</sup>

おどおどとメロンを買えば尾行され  
If you buy a melon and seem nervous, you will be tailed by the police.<sup>81</sup>

安全がガラスでできている都会  
A city where safety has been constructed with glass. 5/12

一網といかずオウムの一羽ずつ  
Rather than using a net to get them all at once, they are gathering the parrots up one by one.<sup>82</sup>

日本が指名手配で広く見え  
With the search for all the suspects, Japan now seems vast. 5/16

霧の朝オウム注意報と聞き違え  
I misunderstood the warning about thick fog as a warning about Aum.<sup>83</sup>

炭小屋がなくてひそんだ中二階  
Hiding not in a charcoal hut but in a room between the first and second floors.<sup>84</sup> 5/18

芸能人オウムの陰で羽のばし  
Thanks to Aum, the stars usually on television are able to stretch their wings and relax a bit.<sup>85</sup>

まずオウムときどき信組のち政治  
First Aum, now and again the credit unions, later politics.<sup>86</sup> 5/19

小包が届いても誰も開かない  
When a package is delivered, no one will open it now.<sup>87</sup> 5/21

信者には部屋ごと浮揚したと言う  
He tells the believers that Asahara levitated up with the room.<sup>88</sup>

三千世界に弁護人なし  
Not a lawyer to be had in all of the three thousand worlds.<sup>89</sup>

一億が洗脳された時もあり  
There was a time when all one hundred million Japanese were brainwashed.<sup>90</sup> 5/23

それぞれに目には見えないヘッドギア  
There is invisible headgear on many people in many places.

ヘッドギアつけてやりたし巨人軍  
I want to attach headgear to the Giants baseball team.<sup>91</sup>

薬学が終わり出番の精神科  
The chemistry lesson is over, and now it is time for psychiatry to take the stage.<sup>92</sup> 5/25

新緑でチャンネル漬けの目を洗い  
I wash my eyes, pickled with TV viewing, with some fresh green scenery.

五十年見なくていいものを見せ  
They have shown me all the things I didn't want to see that have built up over these past fifty years.<sup>93</sup>

こんな年でも花は咲き花は散る  
Even this year, the flowers will bloom and then fall.

職安へオウム評論家が並び  
Aum experts and commentators lined up at the unemployment office.<sup>94</sup> 5/26

弁当は黙秘の口を開けて食い  
Having vowed silence, he opens his mouth to eat a box lunch.<sup>95</sup> 5/28

謝罪する国をオウムは又増やし  
Aum is increasing the countries we need to apologize to.<sup>96</sup> 5/30

さみだれの上九一色三宅坂  
Early summer rain, Kamikuishiki and Miyakezaka.<sup>97</sup>

いつの日かオウムの里に閑古鳥  
I wish the cuckoos will come to Parrot Village someday.

### *Yomiuri*

サリン後は家に籠[こも]りて春惜しむ  
After the sarin attack, I seclude myself at home and rue the spoiled spring. 5/1

一列にオウムが並ぶワイドショー  
All the wide shows the same, parrots lined up in a row.

スイッチを押せば茶の間で富士が見え  
If I push the button, I can see Mt. Fuji in my living room.

解散も辞任もしないオウム教  
Aum leaders, they neither resign nor dissolve their cabinet.<sup>98</sup> 5/2

弁護士と信者の顔と二つ見せ  
Showing two faces, that of a believer and that of a lawyer.<sup>99</sup>

毎日が在家で妻に嫌がられ  
Home every day now as a householder, I am hated by my wife.<sup>100</sup>

お茶の間に巨人オウムの刺し違い  
In my living room, the Giants and Aum stabbing each other.<sup>101</sup>

政治家が羨むほどのお布施金  
Aum got enough religious donations to make even a politician jealous. 5/3

自由に歩けぬガスの通り道  
We can no longer walk freely in the underground passageways which seem made for poison gas.

沈黙は金 完黙は真理なり  
Silence is golden, clamming up is the Truth.<sup>102</sup>

日本列島異臭悪臭刺激臭  
The Japanese archipelago, strange odors, bad odors, noxious odors.

連休は家族揃ってゴロ寝する  
The whole family, just napping throughout Golden Week.

本丸がなかなか見えぬオウム教  
Aum: we cannot see their castle's inner circle of defense. 5/4

女房へお布施をねだる濡れ落葉  
Retired husbands, clinging to their wives like wet fallen leaves and begging them for religious contributions.<sup>103</sup>

天国への階段がある総本部  
There is a stairway to heaven at Aum's headquarters.<sup>104</sup>

大都会蓋[ふた]が出来ない臭い物  
A big city where a lid cannot be kept on smelly things.<sup>105</sup> 5/5

オウム会見USO放送のようになり  
The Aum press conference ends up like a Broadcast of Lies.<sup>106</sup> 5/7

嗅覚が鋭くなって帰宅する  
My sense of smell having grown too keen, I return home.<sup>107</sup>

ヘッドギアつけても合わぬ夫婦仲  
A married couple who cannot get along even if they wear headgear. 5/8

道楽も困るが出家なお困り  
I'm troubled that he leads a dissolute life but I'd be even more so if he renounced the world.

チャンネルで競うオウムの化学式  
TV channels competing to explain Aum chemical formulas.

教団の虫喰いがある自衛隊  
Aum has eaten worm holes in the Self Defense Forces.<sup>108</sup> 5/9

またオウムされどオウムの視聴率  
Though people complain “Aum again,” the ratings are high.

警察の脳波オウムにテストされ  
The police’s brain waves are being tested by Aum.<sup>109</sup> 5/10

指紋なき指名手配で逃走し  
On the most wanted list, fleeing without fingerprints.<sup>110</sup>

無党派とオウムで描く日本地図  
I redraw a map of Japan taking into account Aum and candidates unaffiliated with parties.<sup>111</sup>

オウムには不戦決議は通じない  
Aum cannot understand a resolution renouncing and apologizing for war.<sup>112</sup> 5/11

長寿国要らぬカタカナまで覚え  
Blessed with living in a country where the life expectancy is high, I’ve ended up memorizing all sorts of unnecessary *katakana* words.<sup>113</sup>

東京が修学旅行から消える  
Tokyo has disappeared from the list of possible sites for school excursions.

優秀な子と言われずにホッとする  
I relax when they don’t praise my child for being an excellent student. 5/12

二ツ目の村の名前を又覚え  
I have to learn the name of yet another village.<sup>114</sup>

オウムよりカラスと一緒に帰ります  
I will return home with the crows rather than the parrots.<sup>115</sup>

マスコミに大事にされる元信者  
Former Aum believers, treasured by the mass media.<sup>116</sup> 5/13

無信心でと仲人にほめられる  
Being praised by a matchmaker for having no religious faith.

サティアンにカメラを向ける平和ボケ  
Peace senility: taking pictures of Satians.<sup>117</sup> 5/14

テレビは喋りすぎ警察黙りすぎ  
There is too much talk on television, too little talk from the police.

拘置所はオウム一色村となり  
The detention center has become a village of one color: nothing but Aum believers.<sup>118</sup>

世紀末カミと薬が人を喰う  
At the end of the century, “gods” and drugs killing and making fun of people.<sup>119</sup>

連休に財布の中身出家する  
 During Golden Week, the contents of my wallet also renounced the world and left home.<sup>120</sup> 5/15

行楽地迷彩服の子もまじり  
 At pleasure spots, children in camouflage gear.<sup>121</sup> 5/16

オウムには勝てぬスターの不倫花  
 Even flowery talk of stars' affairs cannot beat out Aum.

喫茶室隣もサリン評論家  
 At a coffee shop, the people next to me are also sarin commentators and experts.

流行語上九一色で造られる  
 All the new popular expressions are coined at Kamikuishiki.<sup>122</sup> 5/17

オウム社の大全集が出来上がり  
 Aum Publications is coming out with Aum's Great Collected Works.<sup>123</sup>

ヘッドギアなしでも妻に慣らされる  
 Even without headgear, I am controlled by my wife.

野次馬に拉致されそうな新名所  
 A new famous place where it feels like I might be abducted by the hordes of curiosity seekers.<sup>124</sup>

オウムではない番組を視る勇氣  
 The courage to watch television programs that are not about Aum. 5/18

連休はテレビで富士を見て過ごし  
 I spent Golden Week looking at Mt. Fuji on television.

火炎ビン守るも攻めるも自衛隊  
 A Self Defense Forces which defends us and yet attacks us with molotov cocktails.<sup>125</sup>

十日間在家で妻に呪われる  
 Cursed by my wife after ten days of the householder's life.<sup>126</sup>

臭い物蓋より先にガスマスク  
 Strange smells: first put on a gas mask, then the lid.<sup>127</sup> 5/19

これからは出家が増える社会党  
 The Socialist Democratic Party: renouncing the party will increase from here on.<sup>128</sup>

訪中も裏番組のまま終わり  
 The great visit to China also ended up as an *urabangumi*.<sup>129</sup>

首相だけ居ないオウムの合理性  
 The rationality of Aum, a cabinet with no prime minister.<sup>130</sup>

神様のギネスブックに載るオウム  
Aum will have a place in the Guinness Book of Gods. 5/20

窮すればヘッドギアよりヘルメット  
When in trouble, a helmet rather than headgear.<sup>131</sup>

小遣いの値上げに出家ちらつかせ  
My child hints at renouncing the world when asking for a raise in allowance.

野次馬を飼育しているテレビ局  
The television stations are rearing curiosity seekers.

病院もオウムに負けず薬くれ  
The hospitals, not to be outdone, give out more drugs than Aum.<sup>132</sup> 5/21

裏番が要らなくなったテレビ局  
Television stations no longer need *urabangumi*.<sup>133</sup>

チャンネルの出会い頭に啼[な]くオウム  
As soon as one switches on a channel, a parrot is singing. 5/22

党員が無党派層へ出家する  
Party members are renouncing the world and entering the ranks of the unaffiliated.<sup>134</sup>

日米のヘッドギアがかみ合わず  
American headgear and Japanese headgear are not in tune.<sup>135</sup>

ゲイバーも経営してたオウム教  
Aum was even running a gay bar.<sup>136</sup> 5/23

岸壁の母は待ってる出家の子  
A mother at the wharf, awaiting a child who renounced the world.<sup>137</sup>

時筋がら家までガマンするトイレ  
Recently I've been holding it in until I get home to use the toilet.<sup>138</sup> 5/24

県名がなくても届く上九一色  
Mail is delivered to Kamikuishiki even without the name of the prefecture in the address.

父さんの自作自演はすぐにばれ  
Father's performances are quickly exposed.<sup>139</sup>

宗教の壁カッターをてこずらせ  
Even armed with chain saws, the wall of religion drives the police to their wits' end.<sup>140</sup>

崩壊の秒読みオウム社会党  
Count down to collapse, Aum and the Socialist Party.<sup>141</sup> 5/25

紫の霧が消えてく富士ヶ嶺

Mt. Fuji: the purple mist has disappeared.<sup>142</sup>

霧をぬけ唐丸籠がひた走る

Piercing the mist, a bamboo cage for transporting criminals speeds along as fast as it can.<sup>143</sup> 5/26

一億を早起きさせた陣太鼓

A war drum causing all one hundred million to wake up early.<sup>144</sup>

地下鉄が横付けとなる警視庁

The Metropolitan Police Headquarters, where the subway train pulls right up to the entrance like a limousine.<sup>145</sup>

瞑想の中になかった逮捕劇

The arrest drama did not appear in his prophetic meditations.<sup>146</sup> 5/27

拘置所に四十七士の部屋が出来

Rooms are prepared for 47 warriors in the detention center.<sup>147</sup>

六度目の号外が出て春終わる

Spring comes to an end with the sixth special edition of the newspapers.

天井に浮揚していた教祖様

The Reverend Founder was levitating up to the ceiling.<sup>148</sup> 5/28

隠し部屋など作れない2DK

I live in a three room apartment where I don't have the space to make a secret room.

奪われた春眠初夏に取り戻す

I'll take back at the start of the summer the spring naps that were stolen from me.

拘置所へ届く今年の新語賞

The prize for new popular expressions this year will be delivered to the detention center.

秒読みが終わり棒読み顔を出し

Now that the tense countdown is over, he comes out and reads a statement deadpan.<sup>149</sup>

地下鉄の客はかからぬ五月病

Subway passengers did not come down with May sickness this year.<sup>150</sup> 5/30

清流を濁す精舎の鐘の声

The voice of the Buddhist temple bell muddies the pure stream.<sup>151</sup> 5/31

瞑想と惰眠と野党使い分け

The opposition party and party in power really know how to use meditation and idle slumber.<sup>152</sup>

## NOTES TO TRANSLATION

1. The police carried caged canaries to detect poison gas in their initial raids on Aum facilities.

2. At least some of the vinyl bags of sarin solution placed on the subway trains were wrapped in newspaper. The common practice of leaving newspapers on the trains came under scrutiny, and announcements on trains urging people not to leave behind newspapers and other objects were common.

3. A reference to headlines about sarin.

4. Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–1199), founder of the Kamakura Bakufu, possessed lands near Mt. Fuji and fought a famous battle at Fuji River to the west of Mt. Fuji in 1180. Yoritomo is thus associated with the area near Mt. Fuji. As a local land owner, Yoritomo would naturally be watching what was going on nearby. Seeing the massive police search of Aum taking place, he asks if they are hunting in the foothills. The type of hunt referred to here (*makigari*, 巻狩り) consists of a great number of hunters surrounding and driving animals to an area where they are then killed.

5. Reference is made here to *The Blue Bird* (1909), a play by Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949) that seems to be relatively well known in Japan. The play presents the adventures of Tyltyl and Mytyl, children of a poor woodcutter, who are sent on a quest for the Blue Bird of Happiness by a fairy. Accompanied by a dog and in possession of a magic diamond, the children visit a number of fantastic lands and places in the course of their quest. “But nowhere do they find the Blue Bird until they return home and discover the Blue Bird has been in their cage all the time. When Tyltyl gives it to a neighbor’s little girl, who has been ill, the bird escapes and flies away. The implication is that happiness lies in the search, not in the possession, and though sought for in distant places, it is usually found close by, and is the result of unselfish acts” (HAYDN and FULLER 1949, 94).

6. Pharmacologists and chemists suddenly became featured guests on many television programs and offered detailed (some said incomprehensible) explanations of the nature and effect of sarin, other poisonous gasses, and bacteriological agents. The phrase 降ってわく (*futte waku*) is made up of two verbs, 降る (*furu*, to rain) and 沸く (*waku*; boil, seethe, gush out, grow, breed, be infested with). Together the verbs suggest rain falling and a sudden growth of plants such as mushrooms. Because of the rapidity and profusion of growth in such cases, the phrase 降ってわいた (*futte waita*) can also mean “unexpected.”

7. “Awakening of Insects Day” 啓蟄の日 (*keichitsu no hi*) was originally part of the Chinese lunar calendar but now falls sometime in March and refers to the day when hibernating insects emerge from the earth. It is still frequently referred to in weather reports as a sign of the arrival of spring.

8. The words “spring’s sleep” 春眠 (*shunmin*) make reference to the following saying derived from Confucius: 春眠暁を覚えず (*shunmin akatsuki o oboezu*). The saying might be glossed as “spring nights are so delightful and brief you do not even notice the coming of the dawn.”

9. In the spring of 1995 when prefectural and municipal assembly elections were being held, there was considerable dissatisfaction with politicians in Japan, particularly with the traditional Japanese political parties. For at least some, it seems, the campaign speeches of politicians came to be regarded as another type of noxious gas being released on the public.

10. Reference here is made to the Kobe or Hanshin earthquake of January 17, 1995. The verb *mimau* 見舞う, meaning “to pay a visit of inquiry to a sick person,” may mean in its passive form “to be visited by a disaster.” Up until March 20, coverage of the earthquake and the efforts of people to recover from the disaster were constantly in the news. While recognizing

that Aum was an important news event, many complained that the media, following the sarin attack, lost all interest in reporting on the victims of the earthquake and efforts to help them.

11. Aum's main headquarters was located in the village of Kamikuishiki in the foothills of Mt. Fuji, long considered a sacred mountain. In 1994, Aum adopted a structure of ministries modeled after that of the Japanese government and even developed plans to take over Japan. Each ministry had a head analogous to the cabinet members in the Japanese government responsible for different ministries.

12. Since great attention had been given to a number of abductions (拉致, *rachi*) carried out by Aum, any mention of "abduction" inevitably brought Aum to mind.

13. Immediately following the Tokyo sarin attack, all forms of public transportation began warning people to be on the look out for suspicious objects 不審物 (*fushinbutsu*) and to report them immediately.

14. A number of experts on terrorism pointed out that Aum was the first terrorist group to make use of chemical weapons. Aum had also attempted to make use of bacteriological weapons and even had some interest in developing nuclear weapons. Experts worried that once one group had crossed the line and made use of such weapons, other groups would follow. The media thus referred to Aum's use of such weapons as the opening of Pandora's box. More generally, reference may be being made to all the problems revealed about Aum and Japanese society.

15. Kunimatsu Takaji 国松孝次, the head of the National Police Agency, was shot several times outside his apartment building on the morning of March 30, 1995. Witnesses reported a man in a blue coat fleeing the scene on a bicycle. Kunimatsu eventually recovered from his wounds. A police officer, possibly having a connection with Aum, later confessed. Charges were never brought against him, however, since the weapon used in the attack was never found. Some wondered how the head of the National Police Agency could be shot and the perpetrator escape so easily.

16. "Official business' lanterns" (御用提灯, *goyō chōchin*) are paper lanterns, with a candle inside and marked "official business," which were carried in the Edo period by the rough equivalent of the modern municipal police. "Heisei" (Realization of Peace) is the current imperial era name. One of my readers suggested the police might also be portrayed here as "caged canaries."

17. *Uguisu*, a type of nightingale, are particularly celebrated in Japan and traditionally associated with spring. They are rare now in most urban areas. As noted above, prefectural and municipal assembly elections were held in many places throughout Japan. One of the many annoying features of Japanese election campaigns is the widespread use of cars and small trucks equipped with sound systems to air, often at loud volume, the name and good intentions of candidates. When not manned by the candidate himself (it is almost always a man), young women often take over the task of reiterating the name of the candidate and declaring his good intentions. Such women are referred to as "nightingales." Aum managed to drown out both types of nightingales.

18. "Natural disasters" refers to the Kobe earthquake of January 17, 1995.

19. Refers to a media, and more local, spring rite. In the last ten years or so, ducks have made a practice of nesting near a small pond which is part of the green area surrounding a major corporate building in downtown Tokyo. The ducks seem to have realized that Tokyoites will do their best to protect the eggs and young ducklings from predators such as cats and crows. The corporation even seems to assign one of its office ladies to look after the ducks. When the ducklings have reached an appropriate degree of maturity, the mother leads them across a major downtown thoroughfare to the inner moat surrounding the imperial palace. This crossing, as well as the countdown to its occurrence, has developed into a media

event in the last decade or so. Members of the Metropolitan Police have even been mobilized to stop traffic to allow the mother and her ducklings to cross safely. One of the many aspects of contemporary Japanese culture that have yet to be thoroughly investigated. Because of the preoccupation with Aum, this event seems, at least in the opinion of some, to not have been adequately covered by the media in the spring of 1995.

20. “The time when the trees are budding” (木の芽時, *ki no me doki*) also carries a sense of a time of spring fever and can thus be used to explain strange actions, sexual attacks on women by men, etc. “Harumagedon” is the Japanese pronunciation of Armageddon. Aum was preoccupied with a number of scenarios of a coming apocalypse.

21. As noted, Aum had organized itself into a number of ministries and agencies in imitation of the Japanese government. Its Ministry of Science was responsible, among other things, for the production of sarin gas. The mixed drink specifically referred to here is *chūhai*. The *chū* refers to *shōchū* (焼酎), a liquor distilled from potatoes, rice, or barley. “*Hai*” seems to derive from “high ball,” and to be used to indicate that the *shōchū* is mixed with soda.

22. Wide shows are morning and afternoon talk shows, which are featured by most Japanese television channels in one form or another. They usually devote most of their attention to the lives, loves, successes, failures, scandals, and heartbreaks of the stars of the movie, music, and television industries. From the time of the Tokyo sarin attack until the arrest of Asahara on May 16, most of their attention was devoted to the coverage of Aum. Such extensive coverage was given to Aum that “expert” commentators were in short supply. Wide shows, as well as the commentators they relied on, came to be fairly widely ridiculed.

23. Kamikuishiki, the site of Aum’s main facilities, was little known before attention was focused on Aum. The search for Aum fugitives and the location of other Aum facilities throughout Japan brought the names of other somewhat obscure villages to national attention.

24. Because of its interests in science and technology and its goal of becoming self-sufficient, Aum at times targeted people with backgrounds in science and technology for special recruiting efforts. Because of their educational background, a number of prominent Aum members came to be referred to as “education elites.”

25. A number of Aum members who were involved in the crimes committed by Aum were graduates of science departments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Japanese colleges are not known for offering a liberal arts education on the American model. Not a few commentators argued that one of the causes of Aum was to be found in the nature of Japanese higher education, particularly its over specialization and failure to expose students to a full liberal arts education. Some even suggested that Aum members would not have ended up committing acts of violence and terror if they had been exposed more fully to the study of subjects in the humanities such as religion and literature.

26. Several Aum “cabinet ministers” had been arrested.

27. Under the leadership of Suzuki Shun’ichi 鈴木俊一 (governor of Tokyo until the election on April 9, 1995), the city of Tokyo had ambitious plans to develop one of the water front areas in Tokyo. As a part of this plan, a World City Expo was scheduled to take place in the spring of 1996. On April 9 Aoshima Yukio 青島幸男, who had run an informal grass roots campaign, was elected governor of Tokyo as part of the backlash against established politicians. In his campaign, Aoshima pledged to cancel both the development project and the World City Expo. Despite some intense opposition from city officials and some businessmen, Aoshima eventually fulfilled his promise. The “30 billion yen” refers to public money that Tokyo officials planned to use to bail out two failing credit unions. Once elected, Aoshima also canceled this pledge of support. The two credit unions were investigated and a number of questionable activities on the part of their heads and some government officials emerged.

28. A picture of Asahara levitating, which originally appeared in an occult magazine in 1984, was widely reproduced following the sarin attack. Levitation was one of a number of supernatural powers that Aum claimed its members could develop. In the weeks following the sarin attack, a number of Aum members went underground to elude arrest. One fugitive, Matsumoto Takeshi 松本剛, was said to have had his fingerprints removed, to have had plastic surgery on his face, and to be disguised as a woman.

29. A number of prominent Aum members were graduates of elite universities and thus had successfully followed the “elite course.” This fact added fuel to the ongoing criticism of the Japanese education system with its emphasis on success and entering elite universities. As some of the *senryū* translated here indicate, some came to place greater value on having normal, healthy children rather than children succeeding in an overly competitive educational system. This *senryū* also brings to mind a traditional type of Japanese hero, the hero who has strayed from the “elite course” or system and still been a success. One example would be the samurai in the movie *Seven Samurai* or the famed swordsman Miyamoto Musashi 宮本武蔵. All were 浪人 (*rōnin*), samurai without a master or lord and thus out of the system. High school graduates who fail their college entrance exams are commonly referred to as *rōnin* with a negative connotation. This *senryū* reverses that valuation.

30. The spring of 1995 also witnessed the yen attaining its highest valuation ever at less than 80 yen to the dollar. Japanese companies dependent on exports faced serious financial difficulties.

31. Uncharacteristically for a Buddhist group, Aum gave the Hindu deity Shiva a special place in its pantheon.

32. Aum developed headgear equipped with a battery pack to deliver electrical stimulus to the wearer’s brain. They were sold to members at a high price and were intended to attune the wearer’s brain waves with those of Asahara. Aum headgear drew considerable media coverage and commentary and were soon taken as emblematic of the gullible, deluded, or mind controlled state of Aum members. The Japanese police forcibly removed a number of children from Aum facilities for their own protection. Extensive coverage was given to the removing of the Aum headgear some of the children wore and to the question of whether and when they would be able to return to normalcy.

33. Onihei 鬼平 is a fictional character appearing in a series of historical novels written by Ikenami Shōtarō 池波正太郎. The character is loosely based on the Edo period figure Hasegawa Heizō 長谷川平藏 (1745–1795) who was known for his ability at catching criminals. In recent years, a television series has also featured the exploits of Onihei.

34. “Mazes” suggests the problems presented by Aum, political turmoil, and the crises facing financial institutions.

35. Coughing was one of the symptoms of exposure to sarin gas.

36. On February 28, 1995, members of Aum abducted Kariya Kiyoshi 仮谷清志 on a street in Tokyo. Mr. Kariya’s sister was a member of Aum and was being pressured to sign over her financial holdings to the group. Mr. Kariya was opposing this. Members of Aum thus decided to abduct him and also force him to sign over his financial resources. Mr. Kariya died in captivity. One of the first leads in the case came when police were able to trace the minivan used in the abduction to a rental agency where they learned that the minivan had been rented by someone using someone else’s ID. Police were able, however, to recover fingerprints from the rental documents and identify them as belonging to Matsumoto Takeshi, a member of Aum. The link between Aum and the disappearance of Kariya was one of the legal grounds used to justify the massive raid of Aum facilities on March 22. At the order of Aum leaders, Matsumoto had his finger prints surgically removed by an Aum doctor around March 18 or 19.

37. Many Aum members wanted by the police for questioning had gone underground.

38. When a notable event occurs in a village, local makers of *manjū* (buns filled with sweet bean paste) often make special *manjū* stamped with a name relating to the event. I know of no controversies surrounding *manjū* in relation to Aum. Controversy did arise, however, concerning a maker of *donburi* 丼 in Kamikuishiki. *Donburi* refers to a dish of rice with a topping of some sort. Common examples include *oyaŕo-don* (親子丼, chicken and egg over rice) and *katsu-don* (カツ丼, fried pork over rice). The *donburi* maker had the idea of marketing a new type of *donburi* which he called *harumage-don*, in imitation of Aum's notion of Harumagedon. He came under considerable criticism for bad taste and soon withdrew the new offering.

39. Television personalities and stars frequently have personal assistants 付き人 (*tsukibito*) who follow them around and attend to their needs. After appearing on television shows, Aum members were frequently "attended" not by personal assistants but by members of the police. One top Aum member, Hayakawa Kiyohide 早川紀代秀 was arrested on April 20 immediately following his appearance on television.

40. "Cloak of invisibility" is a translation of 隠れみの (*kaŕuremino*), which includes the following dictionary meanings: 1) a magical robe rendering its wearer invisible, and 2) a sort of cape constructed of straw. The first meaning is metaphorically extended to signify something used to hide, render invisible, or cover up something. More specifically, *kaŕuremino* had come to be used to refer to the Religious Persons Law (宗教法人法, *shūkyōhōjinhō*). Because of the oppression of some religious freedom during the war period, the postwar Religious Persons Law was enacted to ensure freedom of religion. Because of the law itself and a more general reluctance to be perceived as not respecting religious freedom, the police and other government agencies have often been reluctant to take action against or to inquire too carefully into the activities of religious organizations. Critics of the Religious Persons Law regarded it as a *kaŕuremino* for covering up the illegal activities of religious organizations. The law was revised towards the end of 1995. "Lawlessness" is a translation of *mappō* (末法), a Buddhist term for the third stage in the decline of the Buddhist teaching following the historical Buddha's entry into Nirvana.

41. There is a pun here: "land prices" (地価 *chika*) and "underground" (地下, *chika*). *Chika* (underground) refers to both subway stations themselves and the many underground passages linked with them in Tokyo. Japan being a "narrow country" (*semai kuni*, 狭い国) is a commonly cited reason for the high land prices in Japan. "Underground" might also possibly suggest the dangers posed by earthquakes.

42. Yamanashi is the prefecture where Aum's headquarters was located in the village of Kamikuishiki. The *senryū* seems to be referring to the necessity of detouring around the area on animal paths or back roads because of the security checks and crowds of media and curiosity seekers. Perhaps also included is the suggestion that even animals are avoiding the area.

43. Empty lunch boxes left on trains became another sort of "suspicious object." Even if such empty lunch boxes are rather discourteously left on trains, they are almost always carefully rewrapped, thus making it difficult to tell whether there is anything inside or not.

44. In their search of Aum facilities in March and April, many police were shown wearing "protective gear" (riot gear, camouflage fatigues, gas masks, etc.). Aum's main facility at Kamikuishiki was located in the foothills of Mt. Fuji. At least several cartoons in the popular press depicted Mt. Fuji dressed in such protective gear.

45. "Pretending to be asleep" is a translation of 狸寝入り (*tanuki neiri*, badger sleeping). Like foxes, badgers have a reputation in Japanese folklore for tricking people. Sleep is feigned by some on trains to avoid having to give up one's seat to pregnant women, the elderly, the disabled, etc.

46. “Connect-the-dots puzzle” refers to a mystery novel of that title by Matsumoto Seichō 松本清張. *Ten to sen* 点と線 (Tokyo: Shinchō bunko, 1958). In the novel, the murderer devises an alibi by fabricating evidence that he has traveled by train to a place of considerable distance from the site of the murder. In addition, part of the illusion created by the murderer hinges on a skillful use of an intricate knowledge of train schedules. The detective investigating the case also spends considerable time examining and reflecting on train schedules. The metaphor of a “connect-the-dots puzzle” appears in the book. Aum’s Tokyo sarin attack involved intricate planning concerning subway train schedules. Sarin was placed on a number of trains in such a way that the gas would be released at roughly the same time at Kasumigaseki Station, the location of the National Police Agency and a number of other government offices.

47. Shops and kiosks of a variety of sorts are found in subway stations as well as in the underground passages and shopping areas linked to some major subway shops. As noted, box lunches had become one of the prominent suspicious objects on subway and train lines.

48. There is a pun here. “*Tonda*” (とんだ, unbelievable) has a range of meanings: different from the ordinary, unexpectedly important, unthinkable, absurd, seemingly important but not, etc. “*Tonderu*” (飛んでる) basically means “flying.” With the translation of Erica Jong’s *Fear of Flying* into Japanese, the expression “flying woman” (飛んでる女) came to be used to refer, in a negative sense, to a woman who was active outside the house, overly assertive, sexually promiscuous, etc. This sense of “*tonderu*” seems to have become more generalized, being used, much like *tonda*, to refer to someone who has departed from accepted norms. As noted above, prefectural and municipal assembly elections were held on April 9, 1995. Aoshima Yukio was elected governor of Tokyo and Yokoyama Nokku 横山ノック (“Knock”) governor of Osaka. While both had served in elected office earlier, both had also had careers as comedians before entering politics. This gave rise to predictable jokes. Reference is also probably being made to the House of Councillors election in January 1990 when a number of Aum members, including Asahara, ran in the election and lost. Scenes of Aum’s election campaign were often rebroadcast in the coverage of Aum following the Tokyo sarin attack. “*Tonderu*” here picks up the additional meaning of “levitating” because Asahara had claimed the ability to levitate and fly. Given the range of candidates running in the April election, some readers might be reminded of yet other “odd” candidates.

49. “*Satian*” (サティアン) is Aum’s transliteration of a Sanskrit word that includes the meaning of “truth.” Aum named its buildings at Kamikuishiki as *Satian* No. 1, *Satian* No. 2, etc., and the media was constantly making reference to them. Within a week or so of the Tokyo sarin attack, almost everyone in Japan was aware that there were people in Japan who lived in houses, apartments, etc. and then also people who lived in *Satians*. Much of the discussion of Aum was centered, indeed, around an opposition of people who live in *Satians* and people who live in “normal” dwellings. One of the more shocking revelations about Aum was that *Satians* were dirty. Not a few television programs focused on the dirtiness and messiness of Aum’s *Satians*. Scenes of cockroaches found at Aum facilities seemed to confirm the worst (though one suspects that it might not be difficult to locate “normal” dwellings in Japan which also have a cockroach problem). This in short is the background against which this *senryū* should be read. Questions still remain. Is the old couple here implying that their dwelling also is a bit dilapidated, not so clean, and perhaps not up to standard? Many Japanese, and not a few old people, do have the sense they are living in sub-standard housing. Or is the old couple simply suggesting that everyone in Japan, in one sense or another, lives in *Satians*?

50. There is a play on words here which frequently appeared in other *senryū* and jokes. “Renouncing the householder’s life” (出家, *shukke*) is the traditional Buddhist term for leav-

ing home or renouncing the world to become a monk or nun. Aum put great emphasis on encouraging its members to renounce the world. By reversing the order of the Chinese characters in *shukūke*, one gets the expression “to run away from home” (家出, *iede*).

51. “Flowery capital” (花の都, *hana no miyako*) is a widely used phrase appearing throughout classical Japanese literature where it was applied to both Nara and Kyoto. It is still commonly in use and has been extended to apply to any beautiful city. Flowers did also happen to be literally in bloom in the wake of Aum’s sarin attack.

52. The “automatic stop” (打ち止め, *uchitome*) referred to here is an automatic stop used on pachinko machines (a Japanese version of pinball) so that customers do not win too much. Reference seems to be being made here to the shooting of Kunimatsu, the head of the National Police Agency on March 30. A high school girl, however, was also murdered with a handgun in the robbery of a convenience store around this time. The general point seems to be that the use of handguns has gotten out of control.

53. In the postwar period, there has been strict censorship of the display of pubic hair in pictures and art in Japan. Sexual scenes without pubic hair visible are seen as unproblematic and regularly exposed to the users, including children, of public transportation who catch a glance at the sports newspapers being read by some male commuters. About ten years ago, censorship was somewhat relaxed when popular weekly magazines began publishing, as a special feature every week, “hair nude” pictures.

54. “Official Purveyors” is a translation of 御用達 (*goyōtashi*). The dictionary *Kōjien* indicates it has the same meaning as 御用商人 (*goyōshōnin*) which it defines as follows: 1) merchants with special rights in the Edo period who were allowed exit and entrance to and from different *han* (feudal domains) to act as agents of trade, and 2) merchants granted license to supply goods to the imperial court or government agencies. At present, only the Imperial Household Agency seems to make use of *goyōtashi* and the term seems to be primarily associated with the emperor and Imperial Household Agency. In all meanings, a *goyōtashi* is someone who can enter and exit a usually restricted place in order to conduct business of some sort. This calls to mind the practice of the police, in the early stages of the investigation of Aum, of only entering Aum facilities accompanied by caged canaries. Here the police seem to have been substituted for the Imperial Household Agency and canaries for the merchants serving the Imperial Household Agency.

55. “Politicians hiding behind still pictures” is a translation for “still pictures” (静止画, *seishiga*). When people who are not government officials give testimony at Diet proceedings, a still picture of the Diet hall, taken at an earlier date, is broadcast on television along with the live audio coverage. This practice seems to date from the time of the Lockheed Scandal when a live broadcast caught one of the witnesses’ hands shaking wildly when he had to sign a document testifying to the truth of the evidence given. There still seems to linger the sense that the use of still pictures allows politicians to hide things.

56. The author seems to want to avoid being taken as a suspicious person either by the police or the members of the media gathered at Kamikuishiki near Mt. Fuji.

57. Aum was well known for pressuring and coercing members to make large “religious contributions” (布施, *fuse*) to the group. Television stations were suspected of having paid considerable sums of money to get Aum members to appear on television.

58. The suspicious object here is probably *hesokuri* (臍繰り, a secret stash of money) that the wife is setting aside for her own use.

59. Reference to the Kobe earthquake and Aum’s violence, particularly the shooting of Kunimatsu.

60. In the first couple of weeks following the sarin attack, television programs featured seemingly endless detailed explanations by chemists and chemical weapons experts about the

chemical composition, modes of production, and effects of sarin and other poisonous gases. Most of these explanations served as filler, were difficult to understand, and were probably considered by most as besides the point.

61. Reference is made here to a popular children's song entitled "Fuji-san" or "Mt. Fuji." The words of the song are drawn from a poem by Iwaya Sazanami 巖谷小波 (1870–1933). Iwaya was involved in editing textbooks and writing children's stories. The song was first included in a book of songs for grade school children in 1910. The composer of the music is unknown. The words to the song go as follows: "With its head above the clouds, looking down on all the mountains in the four directions, and listening to the god of thunder below, Fuji is the number one mountain in Japan. Soaring into the blue sky, with snow for clothes, and sleeves of mist trailing into the distance, Fuji is the number one mountain in Japan."

62. In its initial raids on Aum facilities, the police seized considerable quantities of a range of chemicals. Seeking to become self-sufficient, Aum was engaged in the production of foodstuffs, fertilizer (so it was claimed), etc. Some of these chemicals were necessary for the production of sarin. The general impression, at the time, was quite naturally that Aum had stockpiled a vast quantity of "dangerous" chemicals that might be used in the productions of chemical weapons such as sarin.

63. One of the major criticisms of Aum was that its buildings and facilities were dirty. This was implicitly taken to contrast with the inevitable cleanliness of normal people in Japan. The production and release of sarin gas and other chemicals can also, of course, be easily deemed as environmentally inappropriate.

64. A more literal translation might read: Looking at page one, I wonder "Is this a newspaper about entertainers?" For readers who have not had the experience of shopping at American supermarkets, it should be explained that the *National Inquirer* is a paper sold in supermarkets that focuses on, for the most part, fabricated scandals about media stars of various sorts. Stories about alien abductions, sightings of Elvis, and the possibility of the end of the world are also not uncommon.

65. Surveys were conducted which indicated that the general public did in fact recognize the names of leading Aum figures more frequently than they did the names of the current cabinet ministers in the Japanese government.

66. Contains a number of plays on words. 手かえ品かえ (*te kae shina kae*) literally suggests "changing hands and changing things" but metaphorically means "doing various things one after another." The phrase also suggests 手品 (*tejina*, magic). "Change their faces" (顔もかえ, *kao mo kae*) refers to one Aum fugitive, Matsumoto Takeshi, who had plastic surgery on his face performed by an Aum doctor. *Kao mo kae* echoes *te kae* and *shina kae* but unexpectedly moves from the metaphoric to the literal.

67. "Laying out chess pieces" (駒を並べる, *koma o naraberu*) refers to playing a game of *shōgi* (将棋), usually explained as a type of chess, and may also more generally be used in the meaning of plotting a strategy. *Shōgi* pieces are known as 駒 (*koma*) or horses. This poem also refers to the proverb "horses come out of gourds" (瓢箪から駒が出る, *hyōtan kara koma ga deru*) which means "unexpected things happen." The police, in other words, are facing an opponent who may do unexpected things.

68. The phrase "the cuckoos sing" (閑古鳥が鳴く, *kankōdori ga naku*) is used to refer to a quiet, lonely, desolate setting. More particularly it is used to refer to an area where businesses have no customers, such as resort areas in the off season. Towards the end of April, some Aum members reported that Asahara had prophesied that something terrible might well occur in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo during the series of holidays falling at the beginning of May. There was some drop off in the number of people going to Shinjuku and security in the area was increased. Cuckoos coming to Shinjuku means that it has become a lonely place

without people. A cleaning lady did find chemicals set to let off poisonous gas in a men's room in the subway station. The chemicals did not combine to emit gas and no one was hurt.

69. With the bursting of the Japanese economic bubble in the late 1980s, the number of homeless people, in Tokyo at least, significantly increased. In the spring of 1995, many homeless people were living in the near vicinity of Shinjuku Station in Tokyo and of the offices of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. Many of the homeless constructed shelters, some fairly elaborate, using cardboard boxes. Such shelters could be easily folded up and moved. The spring of 1995 witnessed one of a series of ongoing police efforts to "relocate" the homeless.

70. There does not seem to be a Bird Day in Japan. The week beginning May 10 is, however, Bird Lovers' Week (愛鳥週間, *aichō shūkan*).

71. "Page three" does not literally refer to page three but to the two next to the last pages of most newspapers, which contain human interest stories, police news, local news, obituaries, etc., that are of some interest but do not count as major news. Such stories are referred to as "page three stories" (三面記事, *sanmen kiji*). The poem might be read as implying Aum dominated all of these pages (as it often did) and that the Prime Minister is relegated to a small corner article on "page three."

72. In major Japanese cities, it is not terribly unusual for colleagues or friends, especially late at night, to share a taxi ride home from train stations. In the wake of the Tokyo sarin gas attack, there were at least two incidents of irritating gases being released in train stations. There were also a number of cases of panics when someone at a train station suddenly imagined they had been exposed to a gas of some sort. In both of these types of cases, some people were evacuated from the train stations in ambulances. There were, however, no serious injuries reported.

73. A number of members of Aum were arrested on less than legally compelling grounds. One member was arrested for being in possession of a paper-cutter (a violation of the law banning the possession of swords and other dangerous weapons). Another was arrested for having an overdue library book. While there was some protest and questioning of this apparent disregard of the law and the rights of Aum members, it never, as far as I am aware, became an issue that many, including the courts, took seriously.

74. One of Asahara's most distinctive features was his long, full beard. An unshaven homeless man reminds the writer of the bearded Asahara. Beards are relatively rare in Japan.

75. It was discovered that a number of members of the Self Defense Forces had joined Aum. One of the first to be discovered was a member of an airborne division.

76. Aum has destroyed the view that Japan is safer than other countries.

77. A number of people are reported to have shaved their beards because others thought they resembled Asahara.

78. At the beginning of May, Aum's main lawyer and "Justice Minister," Aoyama Yoshinobu 青山吉伸, was arrested for libel on the grounds that he had brought a court case against the president of a fertilizer company and accused him of attempted murder. This was part of Aum's effort to make it appear that they had been attacked with poison gas in 1994. Aoyama had appeared frequently on television following the Tokyo sarin attack and was thus well known among the general public at the time. He was one of Aum's "education elites" and had passed the bar exam while still an undergraduate at Kyoto University. The Japanese bar exam is notoriously difficult to pass. To have passed the bar exam at such a young age is about as difficult to believe as Aum's claims that some of its members possessed supernatural powers.

79. Refers to the selective enforcement of the law in Japan. The editor added a brief explanation to this *senryū*: "Aum was allowed to do anything" (何でもやっていたオウム). Though the police arrested some members of Aum for land fraud in the fall of 1990, there are

some indications that the police and other government agencies were reluctant at times to move against Aum because of its status as a religious organization. While villagers at Kamikuishiki where Aum had its headquarters frequently complained about Aum's activities, they felt the police and government agencies failed to do anything. There is a pun on 法治国, *hōchikoku* (law-governed country) with the word 放置 (*hōchi*) substituted for "law-governed" to create a new word meaning a country where things are neglected or just left to be as they are.

80. Sanshō Dayū, a character in a novel of the same name by Mori Ōgai 森鷗外, kidnapped and sold people as slaves.

81. During the period when the whereabouts of Asahara were unknown prior to his arrest, it was noticed that Aum believers in Kamikuishiki were regularly buying melons in village shops. Astute observers connected this with the following two facts: 1) the official Aum diet did not usually include high-priced items such as melons, and 2) Asahara was known for not sticking to the official Aum diet and for having a fondness for melons.

82. "A net" (一網, *ichimō*) suggests the phrase *ichimōdajin* (一網打尽), which means to use a net to take a whole lot of fish at once. By extension, this phrase is commonly used to mean arresting a number of suspects at once. Most of the prominent Aum members arrested were arrested one by one.

83. The word for thick or dense fog in Japanese is *nōmu* (濃霧). If one misses the *n*-sound, a warning about heavy fog sounds like a warning about Aum (*ōmu*).

84. A reference to *Chūshingura* (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers), perhaps the most well-known play in Japan. Based on an historical incident and written by Takeda Izumo II 竹田出雲, Miyoshi Shōraku 三好松洛, and Namiki Senryū 並木川柳 as a puppet play, it was first performed in 1748. The play was also adopted to the Kabuki stage and is still performed regularly towards the end of the year when the historical event occurred. In recent years, versions of the play have been broadcast on television at New Years. In the play, a feudal lord, Enya, is forced to commit suicide at the order of the Shogun for attacking another lord, Moronao, within Edo castle. Moronao was assigned to teach Enya the intricacies of court ceremonial. When Enya does not pay an expected bribe to Moronao, Moronao insults him until Enya attacks and wounds him. After Enya's death, his then masterless retainers formulate an elaborate plot which culminates in the retainers attacking Moronao at his mansion in Edo and then killing him when they find him hiding in a charcoal hut on the grounds. When Asahara was arrested, he was found hiding in a hidden room built into the ceiling of the first floor of an Aum building.

85. As noted earlier, wide shows devoted almost all their air time for weeks to coverage of Aum. Media stars of various sorts, the usual featured guests on such shows, thus found themselves with free time on their hands.

86. Imitates a brief weather forecast such as "sunny with occasional clouds, later rain."

87. On May 16, the day of Asahara's arrest, a member of Aum sent a parcel bomb to Tokyo Governor Aoshima Yukio. The parcel was opened by one of Aoshima's assistants who lost part of his left hand when the bomb exploded.

88. As noted, Asahara was arrested hiding in a hidden room or space built into the ceiling of the first floor of an Aum building at Kamikuishiki. The *senryū* imagines an Aum leader explaining to rank and file Aum members that Asahara actually levitated up to the ceiling with the hidden room.

89. "The three thousand worlds" is a Buddhist formulation of the cosmos in its totality. In every day usage it simply means "the whole world." In the days following the arrest of Asahara, there was considerable difficulty finding a lawyer who was willing to defend him.

90. "One hundred million" was an expression used to refer to all Japanese in militaristic

propaganda during the war period. The population of Japan at the time was roughly a hundred million. Usage examples listed in *Kōjien* include: 1) 一億一心, *ichioku issin*, or “one hundred million united in one spirit,” and 2) 一億玉碎, *ichioku gyokusai*, or “valuing honor and loyalty, all one hundred million will give their lives like beautiful jewels being shattered.” The parallel between the mind control of Aum members and the mind control of Japanese during the war period was taken up by not a few commentators on Aum.

91. The Tokyo Yomiuri Giants, financially linked with the newspaper *Yomiuri shimbun*, are the most popular baseball team in Japan. The team got off to a bad start in the spring of 1995, compelling this writer to wish that headgear could be put on them so they could be controlled much like Asahara controlled his followers.

92. The chemists and pharmacologists appearing on television soon gave way to psychiatrists and other “expert” commentators on the thinking of Aum members. Some of these experts were less than totally convincing. The psychiatrist who probably appeared most often on television, as well as in newspapers and magazines, was Takahashi Shingo 高橋紳吾. Takahashi’s services were in demand because, among his other accomplishments, he had published a book advising readers on how they could mind control their lovers, spouses, and subordinates. In one of Takahashi’s television appearances, he was shown video clips of several Aum members and offered his estimation of what degree the members were mind controlled. Some, for instance, were judged to be 85% mind controlled and others only 60%.

93. This is an example of a *senryū* inviting various associations. What exactly is it that has built up in Japan over the last fifty years that Aum has revealed? A range of possibilities, sometimes conflicting, were discussed in the media: too much emphasis on material things, an overly rigid education system, a lax enforcement of laws, a refusal to adequately police religious groups, too much individualism as a result of American influence, a neglect of true spiritual values, the influence of the emperor system, government corruption, etc.

94. Following the arrest of Asahara, interest in Aum began to wane and the demand for Aum experts diminished.

95. After his arrest, Asahara is reported to have said he would “become a clam” (貝になる), which means basically “to clam up.” Most Aum members who lived on Aum communes were required to follow a strict and unappetizing vegetarian diet. Great attention was given in the media to documenting Asahara’s fondness for food of all sorts by reporting specific instances where he was reported to have eaten steak, melons, etc.

96. Throughout the spring and summer of 1995 there was considerable debate within Japan about whether and how to apologize to other Asian countries about its war time activities. Aum had an estimated 30,000 followers in Russia who came to be viewed as a menace by the Russian government. Aum was also discovered to have carried out poison gas experiments in Australia. Aum was thus increasing the number of countries Japan had to consider apologizing to.

97. When Asahara was arrested at Kamikuishiki he was transported by a police van back to central Tokyo where the van passed along Miyakezaka, a slope where the Supreme Court Building is located. Asahara is finally being brought to justice. “Early summer rain” (*samidare*) is a seasonal word (季語, *kigo*) used in Japanese poetry, especially haiku, to indicate the season. There are haiku that consist, as does this *senryū*, simply of a *kigo* and then two place names. “*Samidare*” is a long, light, quiet, and misty rain of the sort that often falls during the rainy season in Japan and marks the shift from spring to summer. The use of “*samidare*” probably suggests that the arrest of Asahara marks a change in the seasons and that the “violent storm” prior to Asahara’s arrest has given way to a more gentle type of rain.

98. When individual Japanese cabinet ministers are caught up in a scandal or make politically unacceptable remarks, they resign their position as a cabinet minister. When a prime

minister and his cabinet are caught up in a broader scandal or political difficulties, the cabinet will sometimes be dissolved. Despite the arrest of several of Aum's cabinet ministers, none of the Aum members had offered to resign nor had the cabinet itself been dissolved.

99. Another reference to Aum's lawyer Aoyama Yoshinobu.

100. Japanese husbands are known for hardly ever being home from work. The Buddhist term for being a householder (在家, *zaike*, literally meaning "being at home or in the house") is used here and stands in opposition to *shukke*, the term for having renounced family and the world. Aum classified its members into *shukke* and *zaike*. The poem may refer either to a husband who is at home for the Golden Week holidays or to a husband who is now retired. Since they are so unaccustomed to spending time together, married couples in Japan often face a stressful time, if not crisis, when the husband retires.

101. Aum and the Tokyo Giants baseball team were competing for viewers on television.

102. "Clamming up" is a translation not of *kai ni naru* but of *kanmoqu* (完黙), which is a contraction of *kanzen moquhi* (完全黙秘), meaning "complete silence." "*Moquhiken*" (黙秘権) is the term for the right to remain silent. "*Kanmoqu*" is what prisoners and detainees commonly reply when questioned by the police. "Truth" is capitalized as it refers not just to the concept of truth but to the Aum's full name, Aum Shinrikyō (The Teaching of the Supreme Truth).

103. "Wet fallen leaves" (濡れ落葉, *nureochiba*) is an expression referring to husbands who, once they have retired and do not know what to do with themselves, cling to their wives as wet leaves stick to the ground, shoes, or other objects. It is also not uncommon in Japan for wives, rather than husbands, to have control of family finances.

104. At one level, this poem seems to present a positive evaluation of Aum as a religion where there is a way prepared to go to heaven. "Heaven" here is 天国 (*tengoku*), which usually refers to the Christian heaven. Reference is probably being made, however, to the murder of Murai Hideo 村井秀夫, Aum's minister of science and technology, as he tried to make his way through members of the media and enter Aum's headquarters in Tokyo on the evening of April 23.

105. This *senryū* plays on a Japanese proverb: 臭い物に蓋をする (*kusai mono ni futa o suru*) or "to put a lid on something that stinks." A number of meanings seem to be suggested here. On April 19 over 300 people were taken to hospitals for treatment and examination after complaining of being exposed to acrid fumes at a train station in Yokohama. Many were initially concerned this was yet another sarin attack. No one was seriously injured, and patients did not show symptoms of exposure to sarin. What people were exposed to was never clearly determined. While people do seem to have been exposed to something in this case, there were other instances of panics at train stations where it is not clear at all whether people were actually exposed to anything out of the ordinary. The poem here seems to suggest that Tokyo is a city where a lid cannot be kept on the release of noxious gases or things that stink. The phrase "to put a lid on" (蓋をする, *futa o suru*) means "cover up" and is also suggested here. The poem thus might also refer to the inability to cover up a number of smelly things: 1) Aum's crimes, 2) the illegal and shady dealings of two credit unions, 3) the shortcomings of the planned World City Expo, etc. Ironically, the day this poem appeared there was a failed effort by a member of Aum to release cyanide gas in Shinjuku Station in Tokyo.

106. "Broadcast of Lies" appears in *Yomiuri shimbun* and is an example of the "verbal manga" discussed in note 7 of the preface of this article.

107. As noted, there were a number of cases of panics at train stations in which people noticed or thought they noticed a strange odor and reacted as if they were being exposed to poison gas.

108. A number of members of the Self Defense Forces had become members of Aum.

109. This poem calls to mind the headgear developed by Aum which were said to attune

the wearer's brain waves to those of Asahara.

110. Another reference to Aum member Matsumoto Takeshi.

111. Refers first of all to the sometimes obscure or not well-known villages and areas of Japan introduced by the investigation of Aum and the pursuit of Aum fugitives. The growing number of unaffiliated candidates in Japanese elections also called for a rethinking of the electoral map in Japan.

112. Some drew a parallel between the reluctance of Aum members to acknowledge and apologize for its actions and the reluctance on the part of some Japanese politicians to apologize for Japan's war time activities.

113. Japan has one of the highest life expectancies in the world. *Katakana* is the phonetic script used for transliterating foreign words into Japanese. In the first two weeks following the sarin attack, there were seemingly endless discussions on television and numerous articles in the newspapers about the chemicals used to make sarin. The names of chemical compounds were usually transliterated from foreign languages and many of them could be easily used as tongue twisters. A number of *senryū* in other papers, as well as newspaper cartoons, made a theme of the effort to pronounce and memorize such terms. More generally, this *senryū* may simply refer to the penchant of many aspects of Japanese society, including the government, for constantly introducing new words transliterated from foreign languages.

114. Kamikuishiki was the first village whose name everyone inevitably had to remember. Reference here is probably being made to the village of Namino 波野村 in Kyushu where Aum had a commune. In the course of the investigation of Aum, it was discovered that Aum had produced chemical weapons there in the early 1990s.

115. Reference is made here to a song written in 1919 and first published in 1923, "Sunset" (夕焼け小焼け, *yūyake, koyake*) (words by Nakamura Ukō 中村雨紅, lyrics by Kusakawa Makoto 草川信). The opening verse goes as follows: "As the day ends with the setting sun, the mountain temple bell sounds, let's go home together holding hands, let's go home together with the crows." Being included in song books for grade school children and played over the public address system in some neighborhoods to signal children to go home, the song is still well known in Japan.

116. Former Aum members willing to appear on television were in high demand. To hide their identities, their faces were usually hidden and their voices electronically distorted.

117. Hordes of curiosity seekers descended on Kamikuishiki and, of course, were eager to take pictures of Aum's buildings or Satians.

118. The "*ishiki*" 一色 of Kamikuishiki 上九一色 may also be read as "*ishoku*" 一色 as it is used in every day speech to mean "one color." It was frequently said that television had become all "one color," meaning there was nothing but news of Aum on television. This poem also implies that by arresting Aum members and moving them to the detention center from the village of Kamikuishiki, the detention center has been transformed into the village of Oumuishiki.

119. The word "gods" is in quotation marks because it appears not, as would be usual, as the Chinese character 神 (*kami*), but in *katakana* script as カミ to indicate that we are not talking about real gods. Aum made use of a range of drugs (LSD, truth serum, etc.) in its religious "practices." At least one person died because of Aum's use of such drugs. "Drugs" (*kusuri*) also at least suggests the meaning of chemicals. Some association, in other words, would quite naturally be made with Aum's use of sarin. Reference is probably also being made here to a major scandal which broke in the spring of 1995. In 1983 a committee within the Ministry of Health and Welfare approved the sale of unheated blood products in Japan despite having evidence that unheated blood products might well contain and transmit the HIV virus. As it turned out, these blood products did end up infecting a number of people,

particularly hemophiliacs, with HIV.

120. As noted above, Golden Week is a string of holidays falling at the very end of April into the first week of May. There are only two other periods in Japan when workers, laborers, salary men, and most anybody can hope for a week's stretch of holidays: New Years and Obon (roughly the middle of August). Golden Week is thus a chance to do something. Expenses quite naturally, but not inevitably, go up.

121. Many of the police raiding Aum facilities were dressed in camouflage gear. Camouflage clothes were growing popular, however, among youth even before the Aum incident.

122. Every year in Japan, awards are given for the most popular new expressions of the year. It is a bit unclear who the awards are given to. Is it to the words themselves? Given the intense preoccupation with Aum and the number of new expressions (such as "Satian") that Aum had made known, it was natural to expect that some of these Aum "words" would rank high at the end of the year in terms of popular, well-known expressions. As it turned out, many did not want to award any of these prizes to Aum words because Aum was, after all, Aum.

123. Aum had its own press which published a considerable array of books and magazines, many on sale in major and not so major book stores. What is of interest here is the notion of "collected works" or 全集 (*zenshū*). In terms of English language publications, the notion of collected works is usually reserved for writers of clearly major importance and usually appear considerably after the writer's death. In Japan, it sometimes seems that almost any writer nearing the end of his career has his "collected works" published however ephemeral his "thought" might be. Whether these considerations are included in the intention of the author of this poem I am uncertain. But they would surely enter into the reaction of at least some readers.

124. The conceit of this poem seems to be that a place where the author lives, works, or frequently goes has become a famous place through some sort of linkage with Aum. The author feels as if he might be abducted by the hordes of curiosity seekers now flocking to the place. One such place was Aum's Tokyo headquarters in the Aoyama neighborhood. Local residents had their daily life severely disrupted by the hordes of media and curiosity seekers that descended on the neighborhood.

125. Reference is made here to a song by the title of "Man-of-War March" (軍艦マーチ, *gunkan māchi*), words by Toriyama Kei 鳥山啓. The song was included in music books for primary school children in the prewar period. New music was written for the song by Setoguchi Tōkichi 瀬戸口藤吉 during the war period. This second version of the song, which was very clearly a march, was often played in pachinko parlors in the postwar period. The first verse of the song might be translated as follows: "We rely on them to be a floating castle of steel to both defend and attack. Attack our enemy countries, you ships of steel!" Towards the end of April it was discovered that a member of the Self Defense Forces, who was also a member of Aum, had thrown a firebomb or molotov cocktail at Aum's Tokyo headquarters on the night of March 19, the evening before the sarin attack. Other Aum members ordered and participated in the attack. The aim was to present Aum as a victim and create the illusion that another group was responsible for the violence to take place. On the same night, a bomb also exploded at an apartment building where Shimada Hiromi 島田裕巳, a scholar of religion, had formerly lived. When sarin residue was discovered at Aum's headquarters in Kamikuishiki in January of 1995, Shimada toured the Aum facilities and later wrote that he did not think Aum was involved with the production or use of sarin. After the Tokyo sarin attack, Shimada frequently appeared as a commentator on television. Though he eventually admitted to having been duped by Aum, many saw him as having been sympathetic to Aum and thus irrespon-

sible. He was later forced to resign his teaching position at a private university in Tokyo. Aum staged the attack on Shimada to create the impression that Aum, and Aum sympathizers, were under attack. Mention of Molotov cocktails also brings back memories of their use by radical students during the 1960s.

126. The Golden Week holidays allows a husband to be at home for up to ten straight days, an unusual and for some seemingly stressful situation. Again the Buddhist and Aum expression for householder (在家, *zaike*) is used.

127. This *senryū* also plays on the Japanese proverb “to put a lid on something that stinks” (臭い物に蓋をする, *kusai mono ni futa o suru*). Given that “stinky things” might now be poisonous gas of some sort, proverbial wisdom has also had to adapt. Though it is a bit of a stretch, reference might also be being made here to the explanations offered on airplanes to first put on, in the case of a loss of oxygen, one’s own oxygen mask before helping children and others less capable than oneself. This suggestion, however, may well only illustrate the difficulties involved in figuring out what reference is being made to in some *senryū*.

128. The expression “renounce the party” is more literally “renounce the world or the householder’s life” (*shukūke*), a term used frequently by Aum. In the spring of 1995 the ruling coalition was made up of the Liberal Democratic Party (actually the conservatives), the Social Democratic Party, and New Party Sakigake (Pioneers). The Prime Minister was Murayama Tomiichi 村山富市 of the Social Democratic Party, a socialist party that quite naturally stood in opposition to the LDP throughout most of the postwar period. The New Party Sakigake was formed mainly by politicians who had decided to leave the LDP. It was thus an odd coalition and the socialists came under considerable criticism, both from within and without, for compromising their principles to form the coalition. A growing number of SDP party members were choosing to renounce their party affiliation.

129. “*Urabangumi*” refers to a television program broadcast to compete, with no hope of winning, with a more popular program on another channel. Even coverage of Prime Minister Murayama’s visit to China could not compete with coverage of Aum.

130. While Aum had a number of ministries with heads analogous to the members of the Japanese cabinet who serve as heads of various ministries, there was no position analogous to that of prime minister. Asahara’s title within Aum’s quasi-governmental structure was *hōō* (法皇, the Japanese expression for the Catholic Pope). Asahara’s position was thus more similar to that of the emperor than the prime minister. The author suggests that Aum had at least one good idea, a government structure without the position of prime minister.

131. Following the murder of Murai Hideo on April 23 in front of Aum’s Tokyo headquarters, Aum took security measures to protect its main spokesperson, Jōyū Fumihiko 上祐史浩. These precautions, widely covered in the media, included Jōyū wearing a motorcycle helmet.

132. One criticism of the Japanese medical system is the over reliance of doctors on prescribing drugs to generate income.

133. Television stations no longer need, in other words, to offer programs to compete with the more popular programs on other stations because all of the television programs were about Aum.

134. See note 128 above.

135. Japan and the U.S. were in the midst of negotiations on auto and auto parts trade. When negotiations collapsed in the second week of May, the U.S. declared it would impose punitive tariffs on Japan.

136. Reports appeared that an Aum member, Matsumoto Takeshi, had worked part-time at a gay bar as a transvestite. Matsumoto had rented the car that was used to abduct Kariya Kiyoshi on February 28, 1995 and was wanted by the police in connection with Kariya’s dis-

appearance. In flight from the police, Matsumoto had his finger prints surgically removed by an Aum doctor. There were also reports that he was disguised as a woman. Aum itself, however, does not seem to have been involved in the management of the gay bar where Matsumoto is said to have worked. The report of Aum's involvement in the world of gay bars is one of numerous reports that seemed to indicate that Aum was involved in nearly every aspect of Japanese society or that someone from nearly every part of Japanese society was involved in Aum. The involvement of members of the Self Defense Forces in Aum has already been noted. Aum also does seem to have been involved in running a telephone club (a shop where men wait to receive calls from women in hopes of arranging a sexual rendezvous). Both a fairly well-known singer and a former actress in pornographic films became Aum members.

137. "A mother at the wharf" (岸壁の母, *ganpeki no haha*) is the name of a song about a Japanese mother, after the end of the war, awaiting the ships repatriating Japanese soldiers to see if her son will return. The song was first recorded in 1954 by the singer Kikuchi Akiko 菊池章子 and was then redone in 1975 by Futaba Yuriko 二葉百合子. It is a bit unclear here to what extent a parallel is suggested between Aum members and members of the Japanese military during the war period.

138. Evokes the memory of the crudely constructed cyanide gas "bomb" left in a toilet in the Shinjuku subway station during Golden Week. More generally plays on the danger associated with all Japanese train stations during this time.

139. "Performances" is a translation of 自作自演 (*jisakujiien*) which originally refers to writing a play and acting the main role oneself. By extension, it is used much in the same way that the English word "performance" is sometimes used to indicate some form of social behavior that is judged to be staged or performed for some strategic end. Aum had become known for engaging in a series of such "performances." When chemical residue related to sarin was discovered near Aum's headquarters in Kamikuishiki early in January of 1995, Aum held news conferences and offered "evidence" that it had been attacked with chemical weapons by American forces stationed in Japan.

140. When the police raided Aum facilities on March 22, prominent coverage was given to the image of police in riot gear using a chain saw to cut their way through a door of an Aum building in Kamikuishiki. Because of state suppression of religion during the war period, government agencies such as the police have been very reluctant to move against any religious groups even when they are suspected of illegal activities.

141. Dissatisfaction with Murayama as Prime Minister and divisiveness within the Social Democratic Party were growing. On May 27 the SDP held an extraordinary party convention in which the party leadership and steering committee, with little attention to other opinions within the party, forced approval of a resolution to disband and then form a new party following the House of Councillors election in July.

142. On the morning of Asahara's arrest, a thick mist had settled on Kamikuishiki in the foothills of Mt. Fuji. The mist obscured the television coverage to the point that television commentators openly expressed concern about whether any part of the arrest would be visible. Television cameras were only able to catch a glimpse or two of Asahara, dressed in purple, in the police van that took him to Tokyo. Purple is a color traditionally associated with royalty and high rank in Japan. In Aum, only members of the highest rank were permitted to wear purple. The "purple mist" also suggests the aura of sanctity and all the other factors that hid Asahara and Aum from direct view. The "mist has disappeared" (霧が消えてく, *kiri ga kiete ku*) calls to mind the more common 霧が晴れる (*kiri ga hareru*, the mist clears) which is frequently used in a metaphorical sense. The clearing of the mist thus also suggests the dispelling of doubts about Asahara's location, which had been a matter of intense speculation for weeks. Most centrally, the poem indicates that the mist, uncertainty, and Asahara are now

all absent from the vicinity of Mt. Fuji.

143. Bamboo cages (唐丸籠, *tōmarukago*) were used in the pre-modern period to transport criminals.

144. To a large extent, the Aum drama culminated with the arrest of Asahara on the morning of May 16. Referred to as “X-day,” the arrest of Asahara had been anticipated and speculated about for weeks. Though the police did not officially reveal the date of the arrest before hand, they no doubt desired that it be well covered and had leaked the date to at least some members of the media ahead of time. By the middle of May, commentators were suggesting that the arrest was imminent, tomorrow or the next day. Coverage of the arrest began as early as six in the morning and many people seemed to have gotten up early in expectation of the arrest. The use of “one hundred million” (一億, *ichioku*) suggests, to some extent any way, an association between present-day Japanese and the Japanese of the war period.

145. This is one of the more opaque of the *senryū* presented here. I could not locate anyone who was terribly certain about its meaning. The expression 横付け (*yoko-zuke*) means roughly “alongside” and evokes here the image of a fancy car or limousine pulling right up to or alongside the entrance to a building. The irony here seems to be generated by the opposition of this image and the image of the subway car, carrying sarin gas, arriving right under police headquarters at Kasumigaseki Station. Though it was long suspected that one of the targets of the sarin attack was police headquarters, this was confirmed only when Aum members began confessing in the middle of May. These confessions may have thus served as inspiration for this poem.

146. Asahara was well known for his prophecies about the end of the world and other minor events. One of the major criticisms of Asahara in the mass media was that his prophecies did not come true. Many made fun of Asahara for not prophesying his own arrest.

147. Another reference to *Chūshingura*. Though only forty-six retainers participated in the attack on Moronao, the number of loyal retainers is counted as forty-seven through the inclusion of another participant in the overall plot. The sense of this *senryū* is a bit unclear. While the prior *senryū* makes reference to *Chūshingura* by identifying Asahara with the villain Moronao, this one seems to identify arrested Aum members with the loyal retainers. While popular sentiment has always overwhelmingly sided with the loyal retainers, there were thinkers, mainly Confucian, in the Edo period who viewed them as in the wrong for opposing the authority of the Shogun.

148. Refers to the arrest of Asahara when he was found hiding in a hidden room between the first and second floors of an Aum building.

149. There is a pun here on 秒読み (*byōyomi*, a countdown) and 棒読み (*bōyomi*, to read a text straight on, to read in a deadpan manner). The countdown refers to the countdown to X-day, the arrest of Asahara on May 16. Asahara’s arrest had been eagerly awaited and anticipated for near to two months. It was both an exciting and cathartic event for many. The reading of the text probably refers to a very dry statement, contrasting with the excitement of the moment, read from a text by a police official soon following the arrest.

150. April is the start of the new school year as well as the time when new employees usually join companies. “May sickness” (*gogatsu byō*) refers to a condition of lethargy and depression that strikes many when the expectations for the new school year or new job are not met.

151. This poem plays on the opening lines of *Tale of the Heike*, a medieval account of the rise and fall of the Taira warrior clan: “The bell of Jetavanavihāra [*gionshōja* 祇園精舎 lodgings built for the Buddha and his disciples in India] sounds the impermanence of all things.” This passage, which is studied by almost all high school students in Japan, simply reiterates one of the Buddha’s basic teachings, the impermanence of all things. The sound of the bell coming into and then going out of existence illustrates or “preaches” the Buddha’s teaching.

Bells are invariably found in Japanese Buddhist temples and their ringing plays an important role in the religious life. Aum itself built no traditional temples and, as far as I am aware, made little or no use of bells. The sound of a Buddhist temple bell is usually seen as purifying rather than defiling. Most importantly, the poem also incorporates the name of one of Aum's buildings that was named as if it were a temple, Jōryūshōja 清流精舎 or Temple of the Pure Stream. This just happened to be the building that Aum had devoted to the production of machine guns. The poem thus might also be read as implying "The sound of the machinery producing machine guns muddies the pure stream."

152. Pictures of Diet proceedings not infrequently show Japanese politicians sleeping.

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