

### Shishimon Poetry Stones and Yosano Akiko Monument

Poetry stones from 32 generations of poets surround this small waterfall, which flows from Lake Biwa Canal to the east. Each stone is inscribed with a poem by a member of the Mino school of *haikai* (a precursor to modern *haiku*), including Matsuo Bashō's (1644–1694) internationally famous verse, “old pond! / a frog plunges into / watersound.”<sup>1</sup> Six poetry stones were first erected here in 1806 by members of the Shishimon, an association of Mino-school poets in the tradition of Bashō.

The Shishimon was established by Kagami Shikō (1665–1731), one of Bashō's 10 disciples. Shikō had a brilliant analytical mind, and he traveled extensively after Bashō's death, spreading awareness of Bashō's poetic style. Beginning with those first monuments, more poems were added over the following years by various members of the Shishimon. Most recently, 11 new poems were added in 1957 by the thirty-second generation of the Shishimon, Takahashi Seito (1880–1958).

On the far side of Hōjōike Pond is a monument to another great literary figure, Yosano Akiko (1878–1942). Akiko was an influential author, poet, feminist, and social critic who published over 75 works during her lifetime, including a definitive translation of the eleventh-century Japanese classic *The Tale of Genji*. In November of 1900, she visited Eikandō along with her editor and eventual husband, Yosano Tekkan (1873–1935), and fellow poet Yamakawa Tomiko (1879–1909). At the time, the three poets formed a passionate love triangle, but Tomiko was eventually forced to return home for an arranged marriage. The following January, Akiko and Tekkan—now openly in love—visited Eikandō again. On her return, Akiko composed the following poem, which would later be included in the first collection of her poetry, *Tangled Hair*:

|                           |  |
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| <i>Aki wo mitari</i>      | Where are the carp                               |
| <i>Shii no mi nageshi</i> | the three tossed acorns to                       |
| <i>koi ya izuko</i>       | in autumn?                                       |
| <i>ike no asa kaze</i>    | The morning wind moves over the lake             |
| <i>te to te tsumetaki</i> | brushing two clasped hands, so cold <sup>1</sup> |

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Kern, trans. and ed. *The Penguin Book of Haiku*. (London: Penguin Books, 2018)

<sup>2</sup> Janine Beichman, trans. “The Poetry of Yosano Akiko” (unpublished manuscript February 4, 2020). Microsoft Word file.