

Santa Fe Yosegaki — Transcription Working Notes

Sep 30, 2026 · @Jonathan

What the object is

The sheet is a yosegaki (寄せ書き): a collective farewell on which fellow detainees each wrote a haiku or a farewell line and signed, mostly with a haigō (俳号, haiku pen-name) rather than a legal name. The paper was later mounted on silk, which is why it reads as cloth; the wrinkles and glare streaks are in the mounting, not the ink.

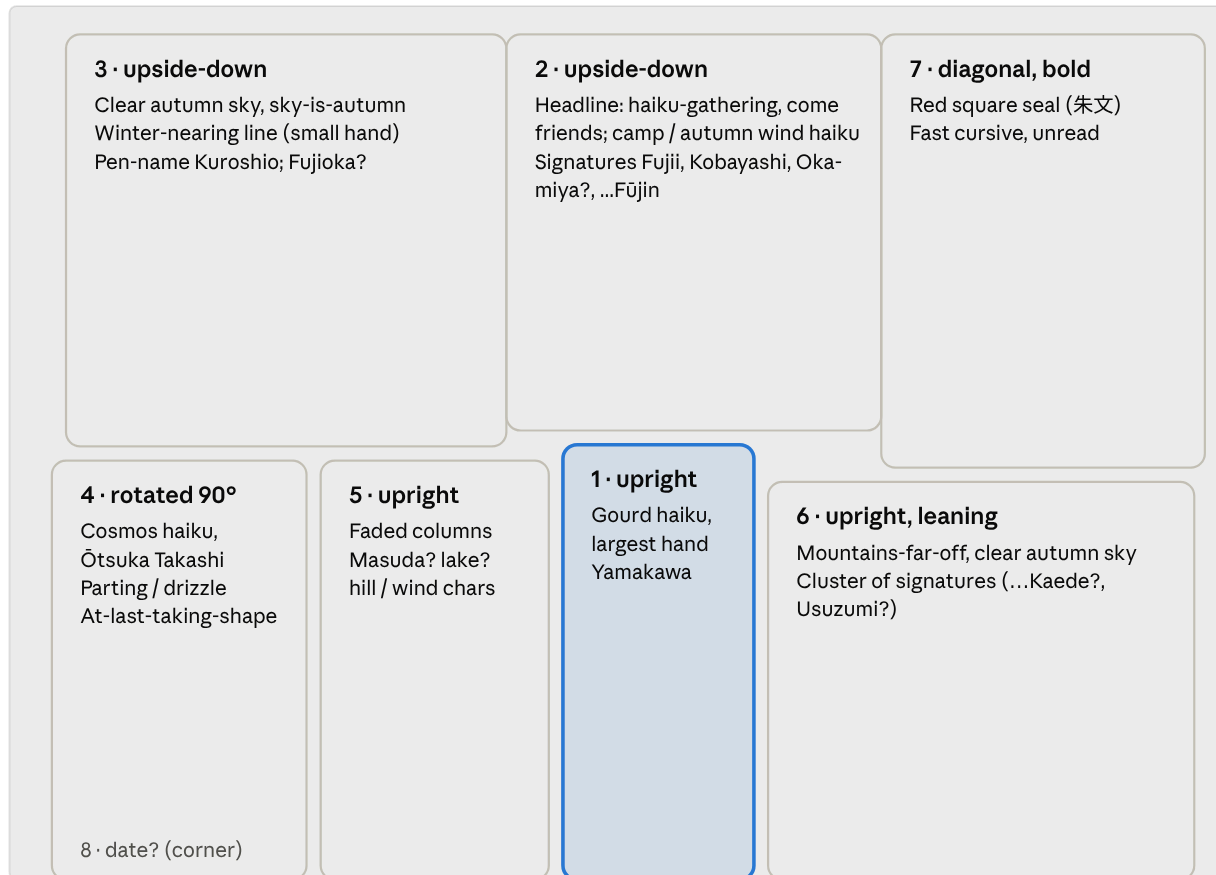
Contributors wrote wherever space remained, so the text runs in four orientations: upright (center, lower right), upside-down (the entire upper band), and rotated 90° (left edge). The red square relief seal (朱文) in the upper right belongs to the bold diagonal cursive beside it.

Readings below come from one photograph (1715 × 1232 px) after grayscale conversion, contrast stretching, and rotation of each zone. Roughly a third to a half of the ink is not recoverable at this resolution. Confidence levels are: **High** (each character resolved, reading grammatical), **Medium** (a kigo or phrase secure, one or two characters open), **Low** (isolated characters only; a guess, not a reading).

Regional map

Eight zones in four orientations, as they sit on the photographed sheet

Zone numbers key to the transcription table. Positions are approximate; the frame is the mounted sheet.



Accent = the one fully resolved poem. Upside-down zones were read after a 180° turn; zone 4 after a 90° counter-clockwise turn.

regional map of the sheet · 8 zones, 4 orientations

The upper half of the sheet is entirely upside-down relative to the center poem, so whoever wrote first (probably zone 1, the largest and most central hand) set the orientation, and later contributors turned the sheet to find room.

Transcription, line by line

One fully resolved haiku (zone 1), five partly resolved ones, and a headline line; the rest are fragments. ○ marks an unread character, ? an uncertain one. Kigo (season words) are noted because they date the sheet.

#	Zone	Transcription	Romanization	Translation	Kigo	Signature (as written)	Confidence
L1	1	百日の瓢に狭し 祭の庭	Hyakunichi no / fukube ni semashi / matsuri no niwa	A hundred days' gourds — too cramped for them, the festival grounds	瓢 gourd (autumn)	山川十計?	High
L2	2	住みふれし キャンプ名残や 秋の風	Sumifureshi / kyanpu nagori ya / aki no kaze	This camp I had grown used to living in — the lingering sadness of leaving it — autumn wind	秋の風 (autumn)	桃○風人	Medium-high
L3	2	も○大びき祝ふ 句選(遊)び友よ いざ	...iwau kusen (ku-asobi) tomo yo iza	...celebrating [the departure?] with a haiku gathering — come, friends!	—	岡宮(富?) 在堤?	Medium (kigo none; opening unread; 選/遊 unresolved)
L4	2	別れ○○し月 / ○ふ○ト法の二	wakare ... tsuki	The parting ... moon / ... the two of the Law?	月 moon (autumn)	藤井○○	Low
L5	2	百萬の白○○○ も○○秋	hyakuman no shiro... aki	A million white ... autumn	秋	小林文○	Low
L6	3	秋晴○戦? ○○ ...	akibare ...	Clear autumn sky ...	秋晴 (autumn)	藤岡? / 希 和?	Low
L7	3	○○空は秋 ...	... sora wa aki	... the sky is autumn	秋	unread	Low
L8	3	冬近き ○○に ...	fuyu chikaki ...	Winter nearing ...	冬近し (late autumn)	unread	Low
L9	4	○○上りつ花壇 に盛る 秋櫻	...noboritsu / kadan ni moru / akizakura	...rising; heaped upon the flower bed, cosmos	秋櫻 cosmos (autumn)	大塚たか し	Medium-high (first line partly cut)

#	Zone	Transcription	Romanization	Translation	Kigo	Signature (as written)	Confidence
L10	4	惜別の○の暮○ 秋時雨	Sekibetsu no / ... no kure... / aki shigure	The sorrow of parting ... at nightfall — autumn drizzle	秋時雨 (autumn)	徳城?○	Medium
L11	4	漸くに形づくり し○○○かな	Yōyaku ni katachi tsukurishi ... kana	At last taking shape ...	—	unread	Medium (middle unread)
L12	6	山はるか○○○ ... 秋晴や?	Yama haruka ... akibare ya	The mountains far off ... clear autumn sky	秋晴 (autumn)	unread	Low-medium
L13	5	群?北鳥の後を 墓?泉晴○空	—	(fragment: birds, spring, clear, sky)	—	増田? (Masuda)	Low
L14	5	... 丘の○○る ... 風	... oka no ... kaze	... of the hill ... wind	—	古女? / 杏 女?	Low
L15	7	bold diagonal cursive beside the seal	—	unread	—	seal, unread	Unread
L16	8	○月○十日 (tiny horizontal hand, bottom- left corner)	—	possible date	—	—	Unread

Signatures and pen-names

Four surnames are secure enough to search rosters for; the pen-names are leads, not readings. Most signers used a haigō, so a roster match will usually come through the surname, and the pen-name through camp haiku anthologies or newsletters.

Zone	As written	Reading	Type	Confidence	Notes
4	大塚たかし	Ōtsuka Takashi	surname + given name (kana)	High	Clearest personal name on the sheet
1	山川 + 十 計?	Yamakawa Jikkei?	surname + haigō	Surname high; haigō low	Small annotation beside it, possibly 田上, unresolved

Zone	As written	Reading	Type	Confidence	Notes
2	藤井○○	Fujii ...	surname + haigō	Surname high	Two characters after the surname unread
2	小林文○	Kobayashi Bun...	surname + haigō	Surname high	Possibly 文吾 or 文吉
2	岡宮(富?) 在堤?	Okamiya? Zaitei?	surname? + haigō	Low	岡 is secure; rest is a guess
2	桃○風人	...Fūjin	haigō	Medium	風人 "wind-person" is legible; first element not
3	黒潮	Kuroshio	haigō	Medium	Isolated, no surname visible
3	藤岡?	Fujioka	surname	Low	
3	希和?	Kiwa?	haigō	Low	
4	徳城?○	Tokujō?	haigō	Low	Written beside L10
5	増田?	Masuda	surname	Low	Faded column
5	古女? / 杏女?	—	haigō	Low	
6	○楓, 薄墨?	...Kaede, Usuzumi?	haigō	Low	Cluster of three to four signatures
7	red seal	—	seal	Unread	Square relief seal; needs macro photograph

Observations

The season is autumn, almost certainly September–November. Every legible kigo agrees: 秋の風, 秋時雨, 秋櫻, 秋晴 (twice), 瓢, 月, and 冬近き ("winter nearing", late autumn). The sheet was written for a transfer in that window; the recipient's case file should show the matching date.

"A hundred days" (百日) in L1 is doing double work. 瓢 is the autumn kigo, but 百日 is not a conventional pairing with it; read against the context, it is the length of the detention. The men grew gourds in camp, and the poem folds the internment into the seasonal image. This is the most finished poem on the sheet and the one worth quoting.

キャンプ in L2 is a katakana loanword. The writer reached for the English word "camp" rather than 収容所 or 抑留所, a small marker of an Issei writing inside an American institution.

L3 reads like the sheet's headline. 句選 (poem selection) or 句遊び (haiku play) with 友よ
いざ ("come, friends") suggests the sheet was produced at an organized haiku gathering
held for the departure, not signed piecemeal. If so, the group had a name and a regular
kukai (句会), which is the thread to pull for identifying the pen-names.

The seal is a lead. A detainee who carried a personal seal into detention and used it on a
farewell sheet was likely a minister, teacher, or community officer; the bold cursive beside
it is the most practiced hand on the page.

Open questions and unread zones

Roughly a third to a half of the ink is unread. The ink is present; the photograph is the limit
(glare band across the center, wrinkle shadows, and a single frame at 1715 × 1232 px for a
sheet with perhaps 350 characters).

- ☐ L1: is the haigō after 山川 really 十計, and what is the small annotation (田上?) beside it?
- ☐ L3: opening two or three characters; 句選 vs 句遊び.
- ☐ L9: the first line is cut by a bolder hand written over it; what precedes 上りつ?
- ☐ L10: the middle seven syllables between 惜別の and 秋時雨.
- ☐ L11: everything between 形つくりし and かな.
- ☐ Zone 5 (lower left): three faded columns, likely two more haiku and signatures.
- ☐ Zone 6: the poem(s) around 山はるか and the signature cluster.
- ☐ Zone 7: the seal and the bold diagonal cursive beside it.
- ☐ Zone 8: the tiny horizontal note in the bottom-left corner, possibly a date.
- ☐ The faded middle band under the glare streak (between zones 1 and 7): unread pencil-like passages, probably one or two full haiku.

Next steps

1. Rephotograph in six to nine overlapping tiles at full camera resolution, no glass, with
raking light from a low angle (a single lamp at 15–20° to the surface, moved around the
sheet; two passes from opposite sides). Include one straight-on shot of the whole
sheet with a scale bar. Contrast stretching on tiles like these recovers far more than it
does on this frame.
2. Run each tile through the National Institute of Japanese Literature's kuzushiji tools
(the *miwo* app, or the KuroNet recognizer) and compare their character candidates
against the table above. Treat their output as candidates, not readings.

3. Search the secure surnames (大塚たかし, 山川, 藤井, 小林) against Santa Fe and Lordsburg internee rosters: Densho's records, NARA RG 85 (INS) and RG 389 (Provost Marshal General) alien-enemy case files, and the camp's own Japanese-language lists.
4. Search the pen-names (風人, 黒潮, 十計, 在堤) in camp haiku anthologies and the Japanese-language camp newsletters; the kukai suggested by L3 would have had a name and a record.
5. Have a specialist in prewar Issei haiku circles review the readings; some pen-names on this sheet may be known from the West Coast Japanese-language press.
6. Update the transcription table as each tile resolves, and log the change below.

Revision log

Date	Line(s)	Change	Basis
2026-09-30	all	First pass from one framed photograph; zones mapped, 16 lines logged, 4 surnames secured	Contrast-enhanced and rotated crops of the original frame