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## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

*A Poetic Guide to an Ancient Capital: Aizu Yaichi and the City of Nara* by Michael F. Marra, Published by MET Press

*A Poetic Guide to an Ancient Capital: Aizu Yaichi and the City of Nara* by Michael F. Marra includes the English translation of all the poetry that the poet, aesthetician and art historian Aizu Yaichi (1881-1956) wrote on the city of Nara and the Nara Basin. Readers of this book will continue Aizu's legacy by keeping alive the ancient heart of what is today the most classical of Japan's super-modern cities.

**Baltimore, Maryland – May 18, 2009** – *A Poetic Guide to an Ancient Capital: Aizu Yaichi and the City of Nara* by Michael F. Marra has been published as a letter-size paperback by MET Press of Baltimore, Maryland. This book includes the English translation of all the poetry that the poet, aesthetician and art historian Aizu Yaichi (1881-1956) wrote on the city of Nara and the Nara Basin during his many trips to the ancient capital from 1908 until he died in 1956. Most poems come from Aizu's poetic collections *Nankyō Shinshō* (New Songs from the Southern Capital, 1924) and *Rokumeishū* (The Deer's Cry, 1940). Together with the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō's (1889-1960) best-seller *Koji Junrei* (Pilgrimage to Ancient Temples, 1919), Aizu's poetry is undoubtedly the most influential writing on the city of Nara in the twentieth century. His efforts to preserve the monuments of the ancient city were powerful contributors to the establishment of Nara as a cultural icon in the modern age. It is not unusual today to see one of Aizu's poems inscribed on a stone monument in front of major temples, usually in the author's unmistakable calligraphic style. Today, over more than half a century after his death, he is still remembered fondly by natives of Nara who proudly display in their houses scrolls of Aizu's poetry.

These poems are Aizu's homage to the city's world-renown monuments--temples, shrines, statues as well as famous natural sites. They are an encouragement to readers to include Nara in their visits to Japan, and discover the beauty of ancient times. Travelers to the ancient capital should bring this book along, and write their own poems as they admire the landmarks of Japan's first capital. Aizu was a distinguished poet with a deep knowledge of the eighth-century language of Nara—a language immortalized in the first anthology of Japanese verses, the *Man'yōshū* (Then Thousand Leaves, 759), which Aizu knew by heart. He recreated in the twentieth century a language that was silent for over a thousand years, restoring life and passion to a past otherwise confined to libraries and museums. Readers of this book will continue Aizu's legacy by keeping alive the ancient heart of what is today the most classical of Japan's super-modern cities.

## About Author:

Michael F. Marra is a professor of Japanese literature, aesthetics, and hermeneutics at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has served on the faculties of Osaka University of Foreign Studies, University of Tokyo, University of Kyoto, and University of Southern California. Among his publications are *The Aesthetics of Discontent: Politics and Reclusion in Medieval Japanese Literature* (1991); *Representations of Power: The Literary Politics of Medieval Japan* (1993); *Modern Japanese Aesthetics: A Reader* (1999); *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics* (2001); *Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation* (2002); *Kuki Shūzō: A Philosopher's Poetry and Poetics* (2004); *The Poetics of Motoori Norinaga: A Hermeneutical Journey* (2007); and *Seasons and Landscapes in Japanese Poetry: An Introduction to Haiku and Waka* (2008). Among his most popular lectures at UCLA is a course dealing with readings and interpretations of poetry by Western and Japanese philosophers. Professor Marra was chosen by the Governor of the Nara Prefecture as goodwill ambassador for the celebrations in 2010 of the 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of Nara as capital of the ancient Yamato state (710-2010).

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This book is available from [www.Lulu.com/modernenglishtanka](http://www.Lulu.com/modernenglishtanka) and from the publisher. Complete information and mail/email order forms are available online at [www.themetpress.com](http://www.themetpress.com) Price: \$25.95 USD. ISBN 978-1-935398-07-3. Letter-size paperback. 164 pages, 8.5" x 11.5", perfect binding, 60# cream interior paper, black and white interior ink, 100# exterior paper, full-color exterior ink.

## About MET Press:

MET Press (Modern English Tanka Press) is an independent publishing house in Baltimore, Maryland, dedicated to producing books and periodicals of lasting literary value, especially poetry. A family business, we treat our customers and partners in publishing like family. We use modern print-on-demand production and distribution methods. Our special mission is to promote the tanka form of poetry and to educate newcomers about this most ancient poetic form.

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