Nijuin
twenty times around
Meiga Higashi (1980s)

Nijuin—20 verses: Description

Despite its compact size, the folio structure of the nijuin is considered analogous to that of the kasen. The movements take their names from the same theoretical pair of writing sheets and correspond to the traditional dynamic pattern. The first four verses are the preface—jo. The following six comprise the first part of the development movement—ha. The nominal front of the second sheet carries the six verses that complete the development, and the four verses of the reverse are the finale—kyu.

Poems start with the season in which composition is begun and finish with a traditional run of spring verses including blossom and a seasonal ageku. Verse distributions for sequences begun in spring are therefore adjusted so that it features both at the opening and the close. Otherwise each season appears once only—spring and autumn as a group of three verses, summer and winter as a pair or, on occasion, as a single verse. Seasons do not cross over between sides or writing sheets. The individual movements are clear-cut.

There are two moon verses, one of which is set in autumn. For sequences begun in autumn, the first will therefore pull up from its default position at #5 in order to figure in either the hokku or daisan. Other constraints of verse distribution oblige the later moon position to roam the front of the second sheet.

With the exception of sequences begun in spring, blossom appears once only—in the conventional penultimate position. Those begun in spring may feature blossom both in the hokku and at the close, but the majority do not. In all cases the expectation is that the topic is treated in a conventional manner. Classical references are applauded.

Love generally appears as a pair of verses somewhere in each half of the development movement. A more extended treatment will typically involve either a set-up verse—koi no yobidashi—or a commentary verse—koi banare (see *Kasen: Description)*. In these circumstances the total run would not exceed three verses, and the topic itself be limited to a single appearance.

Nijuin: Schemas

first sheet, front—preface—jo

	autumn	autumn	spring	spring	summer	winter
hokku	au [mn]	au [mn]	sp [mn]	sp (bl)	su	wi
wakiku	au	au	sp	sp	su	wi
daisan	au [mn]	au [mn]	ns	sp	ns	ns
4 short	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns

first sheet, back—development—ha part 1

5 long	ns	ns	su [mn]	wi mn	au mn	au mn
6 short	ns lv	ns	su lv	wi	au	au
7 long	ns lv	ns lv	ns lv	ns	au lv	au lv
8 short	su/wi	ns lv	ns	ns lv	ns lv	ns lv
9 long	su/wi	wi/su lv	ns/wi	ns lv	ns	ns
10 short	ns	wi/su	wi/ns	su/ns lv	ns	ns

second sheet, front—development/intensification—ha part 2

11 long	ns	ns	ns	ns/su	ns	su [mn]
12 short	ns	ns	ns	ns	wi [mn]	su [mn]
13 long	ns lv	ns	au lv	ns	wi [mn]	ns
14 short	wi/su lv	su/wi	au lv	au	ns	ns lv
15 long	wi/su mn	su/wi mn	au mn	au mn	ns lv	ns lv
16 short	ns	ns	ns	au	ns lv	ns

second sheet, back—finale—kyu

17 long	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
18 short	sp	sp	sp	ns	sp	sp
19 long	sp bl	sp bl	sp bl	sp bl	sp bl	sp bl
ageku	sp	sp	sp	sp	sp	sp

su/wi – whichever is selected first its counterpart is selected after**—**both verses change together

wi/su – likewise

ns/wi – whichever is selected first its counterpart is selected after

su/ns – likewise

Notes   **ns –** non-season (miscellaneous) position

bl – blossom position.

(bl) – additional blossom position, optional

mn – moon position

[mn] – alternate moon position—the choice is either/or

lv – love position, indicative—love verses move as group