



## *Sorairono Hana*—Starting out as a poet

Sakutaro Hagiwara was born on November 1, 1886 in Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture. As he was born on the first day of the month which is called Sakujitsu (day of the new moon) he was named Sakutaro. He was raised by his mother Kei and his father Mitsuzo, a medical doctor who worked at his own clinic. In elementary school, he was unable to fit in with his surroundings and he immersed himself in reading and playing musical instruments.

Sakutaro's literary awakening occurred during his middle school years. Having been taught the basics of tanka from his cousin, Eiji, who had come to visit him from Osaka, and in addition to encountering Akiko Yosano's *Midaregami*, he began to compose them himself. He contributed his tanka to magazines such as *Myojo* which was under the editorial supervision of Akiko and her husband, Tekkan Yosano.

Meanwhile, he repeatedly failed his exams and kept dropping out of school and reentering, only to drop out again that he gave up his academic studies. In 1913, he compiled his tanka into his self-published anthology, *Sorairono Hana*, after which his creative activities transitioned from tanka to writing free verse poetry, and one of his pieces was published in the magazine *Zamboa*, which was presided over by Hakushu Kitahara. His works from this period at the beginning of his career as a poet are included in *Airen Shihen*, the first half of his collection of poems, *Junjo Shokyokushu* (1925, Shinchosha).

Mandolin played by a young me/Chitter-chitter, chitter-chitter, but it's sad  
(From the anthology: *Sorairono Hana*)