

FROGPOND

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OF THEORY AND ANALYSIS

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Foreword

The occasion which warrants the creation of this special theory and critical analysis supplement to *frogpond* is the Second Haiku International Association—Haiku Society of America Joint Haiku Conference, held April 19 & 20, 1997, in Tokyo. Besides genial hospitality, lavish comestibles, varied entertainment and a thoughtful agenda, there was haiku talk—informal, throughout the several days prior to and following the two official days of the conference; and formal, of which this supplement stands as record.

Representatives of the Haiku Society of America, led by President Lee Gurga, travelled to Japan to advance the causes of friendship and understanding in international haiku. Besides the two day-long sessions, during which these talks were given, participants were treated to a *ginko* (poetry walk), a *kukai* (poetry forum and contest), and excursions to Nikko, Mashiko and Matsuyama. Some took other sidetrips as well. Many friendships were renewed, many were kindled, and a feeling of fellowship between the several nationalities represented arose spontaneously, all of which bodes well for this most international of forms.

And, as you will see, the talks were far-ranging, from the exegetical to the anecdotal. All were of interest to the assembled, and provided fodder for the discussions which ensued in the hours and days following the conference sessions. And, while it is impossible to recreate fully the atmosphere in which these talks were given, we hope this supplement will permit you to share the words, and some of the spirit, encountered here. We leave you now to this pleasurable task.

—Jim Kacian
FROGPOND Supplement Editor

America and my Experience

Akito ARIMA

It was 1959 when I first landed in America. The opportunity came through an invitation to work as a Research Associate at the Argonne National Laboratory, in the suburbs of Chicago. At that time, the exchange rate was ¥360 = \$1, and my monthly salary at Tokyo University was little more than ¥10,000, or about \$28. In contrast, my pay at the Argonne Laboratory was \$700 for the first few months, and then rose to \$800, which was 25 times more than my Japanese salary. The difference was enormous. The cost of traveling to America was supported by the Fulbright Committee. It was indeed—as we Japanese say—welcome rain in dry weather.

I was excited about the opportunities in my new research environment. All the 1959 Fulbrighters left Yokohama in August on the *S.S. Hikawa-maru*, and reached Seattle in September. I traveled with my wife, Hiroko, and our baby son—who was still less than a year old, which meant that the journey was quite a demanding experience.

Immediately after landing, we stayed in a Washington State University dormitory for a few days, before catching a train to Chicago. We were greatly impressed with the marvelous environment and I was able to visit a friend of mine, Larry Willet, who was a professor at the university, and discuss many scientific problems of common interest. The wonderful sights I saw on the way to his office are still fresh in my memory and I have vivid recollections of squirrels running around; some of them were eating nuts.

In the 1980s, when I served on Washington State University's Steering Committee for Theoretical Physics Center, the campus seemed to be largely

unchanged and I could reflect upon many happy memories of my first visit. I recall that there was a reception, where I met a professor who spoke Japanese fluently. Referring to the Second World War, he quoted an old Japanese saying about the ground becoming harder after rain; meaning that, following the turbulence caused by rain, the ground becomes more solid than before—thereby providing a better foundation for the future. We also spoke about haiku's influence in America and the contribution of Ezra Pound. And I had my first experience of discussing haiku and poetry in English.

6 After Seattle, we arrived in Chicago and rented an apartment. It took about forty or fifty minutes to commute from my apartment to the Laboratory. Since I could not drive at that time, I used the Argonne Laboratory shuttle bus. On the first morning, I stood on a corner near my apartment and found that I was the only one boarding the bus. Feeling uneasy, I asked the driver, "Is this bus going to Argonne?" The driver answered, "I suppose so." Had he answered "Yes, it goes to Argonne," I might not have felt so uneasy. Why did he say "I suppose so?" His response set me thinking about the use of words in different languages.

In the Argonne Laboratory, one of my colleagues was a second-generation Japanese and there was a native Japanese working in a different field. I felt very helpless. In downtown Chicago, I rarely met a Japanese. Things are very different today!

One day, as I saw a sign saying "flammable", I went on walking, one or two blocks, thinking there must be danger from petroleum or something. Then I saw another sign saying "inflammable". According to my knowledge at the time, the prefix "in-" meant "not", and, thinking that I could smoke there, reached for a match. Instantly, a man came running across shouting "NO! NO!" I stopped, and later checked the dictionary only to learn that the two words have the

same meaning. I made similar mistakes several times. And these experiences taught me that there was a need to reform language education in Japan, with more emphasis on conversational English, as well as reading ability. I am now concerned with how to reform foreign language education in Japan.

After my first stay in the U.S., I had three more long stays and, altogether, these amounted to a total of five years. When added to short stays of three months or so in the U.S., Canada and Europe, my experience of living in a foreign country comes to about eight years. During that time, I learned many things that went far beyond my work in nuclear physics, and I am very grateful for these experiences. I especially appreciate the time spent teaching at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. This showed me how university education could be conducted and the importance of fostering student creativity. My current thinking about the need for educational reform in Japan owes much to lessons learned during my time in the U.S., together with Canada and Europe. And the experience is proving to be extremely valuable in my role as Chairman of Japan's Central Educational Council and Vice Chairman of the University Council. But let me now move on to talk about haiku.

First, I would like to say something about the four seasons. The development of jumbo jets and lower airfares have led to dramatic increases in the number of Japanese traveling overseas. And this has been accompanied by an increase in the incidence of Japanese haiku poets writing about experiences outside Japan. This is causing difficulty with words for capturing feeling of different seasons. Of course many countries—such as the U.S., Canada, Europe, China, and Korea—follow Japan's pattern of four seasons—although there may be slight differences in length. Thus, at one level, there are substantial similarities in human perceptions of the four seasons. However,

differences in history, religion and customs cause differences in the way that people respond to a particular season. And there is a potential for some fine haiku as Japanese come to understand these differences.

The issue of season words becomes a little more difficult in countries that do not have four distinct seasons. Countries near the equator, such as Singapore, illustrate the problem. Even so, it is possible to see differences between rainy and dry seasons, or changes within a day, from a cool morning to scorching mid-day heat. These transitions echo the idea of changes of the season and I think that there is scope to find a way to produce good haiku.

Anyway, there is no problem in North America. If haiku poets in the U.S. or Canada take material from the seasons, it is easy for Japanese poets to understand their poems. Here, I would like to present some examples of my favorite haiku produced in the U.S. by American and visiting Japanese poets, together with a poem of my own.

**Evening star
almost within
the moon's half curve**

William J. Higginson

**Spot of sunlight—
on a blade of grass the dragonfly
changes its grip**

Lee Gurga

**From the skyscraper
the new green leaves of the trees
same size as parsley**

Shugyo Takaha

**Burning bright is
the fire for J.F.K.'s burial ground
and autumn dusk**

Yatsuka Ishihara

**Fills up Bow Lake,
gushes out as Bow River,
the glacier thaw**

Tohta Kaneko

**A hanging rope
captures the dropping autumn sun
in its loop**

Akito Arima

Next, I would like to think about nature in the U.S. and Canada, which contain an impressive range of natural environments. In the case of the U.S. East Coast, there are some similarities with Japan. For example, the splendor of autumnal leaves in New Hampshire and the surrounding area, the beauty of flowers, when snow begins to melt in Long Island in New York State, and weeping golden bells begin to bloom followed by white, then purple, magnolia.

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The U.S. has so much variety. From the beautiful blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean, to the boundless expanse of mid-west corn fields, or the evening-glow by a deserted wharf on the River Mississippi. When I first visited back in 1959, I spent three nights and four days on a Northern Pacific railroad train, traveling from Seattle to Chicago. I was overwhelmed by the continent's vastness: over the Rockies, through Dakota, Minnesota and further eastward to Chicago.

My experience has been of endless contrasts. Contrasts that stretch from the languorous French atmosphere in New Orleans, to Santa Fe's Spanish-style *adobe* clay-built houses (where Mr. Higginson lives), to surrounding American Indian villages, to the Rio Grande flowing through the sublime Grand Canyon, to the Arizona desert and cactus flowers, to the Pacific Ocean's waves rolling onto the California coastline, to Mount Rainier, covered with snow even in summer, to the Rockies, to Yellowstone and on, still further, to

so many other places that hold happy memories. And haiku poets in America and Canada are producing fine poems that resonate with North America's wealth of diversity. I look forward with excitement to some outstanding poetry.

For us Japanese, foreign countries offer new climates and different cultures teeming with new ideas. For people in America and Canada, haiku probably means a short poem, mainly dealing with nature, and differs from traditional poems dealing mainly with the human condition and religion.

Ezra Pound, who had a strong interest in the Orient, was influenced by Ernest Fenallosa's "On Chinese Letters." Pound was no ordinary person. He helped Mussolini with broadcasts from Rome to America. Partly for this reason, he was tried in the U.S. and spent 13 years in St. Elizabeth's Hospital, near Washington D.C. He later went to Italy, where he died in 1972. I was living in Stony Brook at the time and remember that the New York Times paid tribute to his memory with a half-page of memorial writings. Even today, his *ABC of Reading* continues to be a relevant reference source. It is well known that Pound got ideas from Moritake Arakida's haiku. For example, Arakida wrote:

**The fallen blossoms which I saw arise
Returning toward the bough, were butterflies**
Translated by Harold Stewart

And Ezra Pound produced:

**The apparition of these faces in the crowd
Petals on a wet, black bough.**

As you can see, Pound emphasized imagism.

Haiku influenced poets such as Allen Ginsberg, who died on April 5 this year, as illustrated by:

**Snow mountain field
seen through transparent wings
of a fly on the windowpane**

Allen Ginsberg

Traditional Japanese haiku is an interpretation of nature. Octavio Paz, a Mexican poet who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, translated Basho's *Oku-no-hosomichi* (*A Narrow Path into the North*), into Spanish. He also published a collection of renku, entitled "Renka" with his English and Italian friends. Thus, haiku and renku have influenced leading contemporary poets. Here is an example of one of Paz's haiku-like poems.

**Sparrows singing, singing
not knowing what they are singing:
all their brains are in their throats.**

Translated by James Kirkup

Japanese culture is often criticized by analogy with a black hole, that receives from other countries but does not transmit. It is therefore especially gratifying to see haiku gaining international recognition.

Lastly, I would like to draw attention to a remarkable difference in thinking that exists between European or American people, and Oriental people, especially Japanese. It concerns symmetry. For example, when arranging flowers, American and European people prefer symmetrical arrangements, but Japanese feel that this is uninteresting.

In the famous Stone Garden of Ryoanji Temple in Kyoto, fifteen stones, large and small, are arranged asymmetrically. By contrast, formal gardens in Rome or England tend to be completely symmetrical. However, in 1957, two Chinese, Lee and Yang, predicted a slight breach in symmetry, and experimental evidence proved their point. At that time, a great German physicist, W. Pauli, had insisted there could not be such a breach. At a general level, European

people might feel that symmetry equates to perfection. Conversely, Chinese and Japanese see merit in things that are unbalanced. So, Lee and Yang may have felt relieved to think that the laws of nature embrace slight defects. Clearly, variations in historical experience and religion contribute to very different ways of thinking.

Daily life offers some rather more mundane examples of diversity. During my stay in Chicago, I once bought a saw and tried to cut a piece of wood, but in vain. It seemed as if the saw was faulty and I would have to take it back, but—when I pushed the saw against the wood—it cut! Japanese saws cut when pulled, but western saws cut on the forward stroke. There are many similar instances, aren't there? When you enter a house or toilet, do you push the door or pull it? In Japan, we pull it outwards, but in America and Europe, such doors open inward.

In American movies, policemen sometimes force an entry by crashing themselves against a door. In Japan, they would seldom try it that way! The difference is said to come from the Japanese way of defending a castle. And, of course, there are many examples of differences between Japanese and Western ways. However, we have far more things in common, and similarities in human feelings and customs more than overshadow the differences. These commonalities play a vital role in fostering mutual understanding amongst people from different cultures.

While haiku can bring cultures together, there is also scope for misunderstanding. Let me use an example where one of my haiku failed to convey its intended meaning:

**A woodpecker
Occasionally subtle sounds
in a convent**

I composed this in a church on the north coast of Lake Galilee in Israel. I sketched a woodpecker tapping

away on a tree trunk. An Englishman sent me a letter of protest, complaining that: "There are no woodpeckers in a convent, only sheep. You must not tell a lie. Do you really belong to a sketch school?" I did not understand what he was trying to say but a few months, or perhaps a year, later, it suddenly occurred to me that my use of "woodpecker" could have been misunderstood. When I checked with a dictionary of English argot, I found that "woodpecker" can be construed to be a reference to the devil. While my haiku aimed to sketch nature, it seems that there was sufficient cultural difference to cause confusion.

Today, poets in America, Europe and Japan generally adopt a free-style approach, while the number of poets writing sonnets is dwindling. In this modern era, most haiku poets in Japan are adopting a fixed form of 5-7-5 syllables, which seems to go against the Japanese preference for imbalance. Perhaps this predilection for imbalance means that we sometimes yearn for a rigid, fixed form.

As we move toward the twenty-first century the world is becoming ever smaller. Every country and every race must co-exist peacefully and live together with nature. However, it is also essential that the world does not converge into monoculture. We must preserve cultural diversity, and ensure the different traditions from across the world are able to co-exist as well, and prosper. International cooperation is a vital element in recognizing the value of different cultures. And one of the important goals of this International Haiku Conference is to foster grass-root type exchanges amongst enthusiasts from different nations.

A Short History of American Haiku Magazines: The Diversity of Motives for Publishing

Randy M. BROOKS, Ph.D.

American magazines devoted to haiku are a relatively new phenomenon in the history of publishing. The first American haiku magazines were started in the early 1960s, so these magazines have a combined history of 33 years. In this presentation, I do not intend to tell simply the chronology of which magazines and editors came first, but rather the story of the rich intentions, purposes, functions and results of publishing American haiku magazines for the last 33 years. Why are American haiku magazines published? Who do they serve? How have they helped develop deeper understanding and appreciation for the genre?

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When I began reviewing my shelves of magazines in order to prepare this presentation, it was immediately apparent to me that I could not base my history on different “schools” of American haiku. Although American haiku editors have commitments to certain approaches, most have been open to a broad range of writers. So instead of a strong sense of schools of haiku in English, there is a sense of individuality of editors and haiku writers. Most of the American magazines publish a variety of approaches ranging from experimental to traditional haiku, and many of the same haiku writers appear in all magazines because they write in a variety of approaches.

The only American magazine founded by a Japanese school, the Yukuvara Haiku Society’s *Haiku*

Journal is not an exception to this observation that there are no schools of haiku in the United States. The Yuki Teikei approach is emphasized in this journal, but the same American writers are published as in the avant garde haiku magazines. For example, American haiku editor Eric Amann is noted for emphasizing Zen as the essence of haiku. He published experimental haiku, including visual and minimalist haiku, in his two magazines, *Haiku* and *Cicada*. Yet he also won the Yukuharu Grand Prize from *Haiku Journal* in 1978 for his excellent traditional haiku:

**The names of the dead
sinking deeper and deeper
into the autumn leaves**

Eric Amann (*Haiku Journal* 2.1, 1978)

Most American haiku poets and editors write and publish a variety of approaches rather than attempting to follow a leading authority or “school” tradition. Perhaps there are no schools of American haiku because there are no authoritative American haiku masters or “haijin” with devoted followers or students. While several American haiku writers like Raymond Roseliep and Nicholas Virgilio have been noted for excellence and are associated with a certain approach, no schools of American haiku have emerged from such recognition.

Instead of developing a magazine to convey certain aesthetic principles, American haiku magazines have emerged largely from the efforts of individuals in the small press literary tradition of the United States. American haiku magazines in the U.S.A. are, for the most part, independent publications launched through self-initiative and the willpower of individuals or a small group of writers. Printed in small press runs of 200 to 1000 copies, these literary magazines are dedicated to haiku in English, but they often publish a wide range of haiku, senryu,

tanka and short poetry. The majority of these magazines have maintained an open submission policy, instead of restricting submissions to members or subscribers.

A few American haiku magazines have been established by haiku groups or organizations such as the Haiku Society of America, the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society or Haiku Canada, with an obvious motive of serving the members. These magazines provide a forum for educating beginners, sponsor haiku contests or awards, and attempt to establish involvement or participation among the members of the organization. The haiku magazines associated with these organizations, such as haiku Society of America's *frogpond* or the Haiku Appreciation Club's *Portals*, originated as newsletters and evolved into haiku magazines and membership anthologies. Regardless of its origins, the success and longevity of an American haiku magazine depends largely on the effort of an individual editor.

A history of American haiku magazines must include a recognition of the significant lifelong service of several editors including Robert Spiess, Lorraine Ellis Harr, Eric Amann and Randy and Shirley Brooks. Of course, there are many more editors who have given years of themselves to editing a haiku magazine and these few discussed should be considered as representative of different types of service, not as the only American haiku magazine editors worthy of recognition.

Robert Spiess was one of the editors of the very first American haiku magazine, *American Haiku*, and he has served as the main editor of *Modern Haiku* since 1978, so he has been editing haiku for more than thirty years. From his earliest days as an editor to more recent times, Spiess has included a wide range of approaches to haiku, employing guest editors, book reviewers, short essayists and editorial assistants to ensure that he publishes an inclusive magazine.

Throughout his years of editing, Spiess has sought fresh images and the essential, experienced haiku moment as the basis for acceptance.

Lorraine Ellis Harr assisted with Jean Calkin's *Haiku Highlights* before taking over as editor and renaming the magazine *Dragonfly*, which she edited from 1972 until 1984. Harr maintained the contests of *Haiku Highlights* magazine and extended interactive elements such as readers voting on award haiku from each issue. Harr continued editing the *Western World Haiku Society Newsletter* until the early 1990s, so she has contributed more than twenty years of service as editor with an emphasis on democratic participation from all haiku writers and readers.

Eric Amann founded and edited two haiku magazines, the first titled simply *Haiku* [magazine], and the second called *Cicada*. Through his ten years as editor of these magazines, Amann published traditional as well as avant garde or experimental approaches to haiku, including visual haiku. Amann emphasized Zen as an essential element in haiku, publishing a small monograph, *The Wordless Poem*, in 1969. He argued that "a haiku is not a poem in the Western sense of the word...[it is] a manifestation of Zen and hence the expression of a particular state of consciousness...a swift record in words of one moment of 'satori,' of the sudden flash of Enlightenment" (*The Wordless Poem*, page 7).

Randy and Shirley Brooks have been editing haiku publications as a team since 1976 when they founded *High/Coo: A Quarterly of Short Poetry*. This quarterly began as folded broadsheets in an envelope including haiku sequences and a wide range of short poetry such as epigrams, cinquains, senryu, tanka and lyrics. After a few volumes, the magazine became more dedicated to haiku, and the editors published a series of four American haiku bibliographies, *Haiku Review*. Randy and Shirley Brooks

currently publish *Mayfly*, a small, shirt-pocket-sized biennial magazine devoted to the individual haiku. Striving for a high quality reading experience above all else, an issue includes only fourteen haiku, each on its own page.

When I consider how the editors of American haiku magazines became interested in and dedicated to haiku, I discern the following five main avenues that led to haiku publishing: literary studies of short poetry, translations of Japanese literature, Zen and "Beat" writers, hobbyist writing clubs, and teachers.

(1) *Literary Studies of Short Poetry*. Several magazines including *Hummingbird*, *Northeast*, *High/Coo*, *Wind Chimes*, (Amelia's) *Cicada*, *Minnow* and *Janus SCTH* have published haiku as a type of short poetry. For example, the SCTH in *Janus SCTH* is an acronym for sonnets, cinquains, tanka and haiku. These magazines are often published by academics with a fascination with the imagist poets and subsequent minimalist lyric poetry. These editors have a sophisticated understanding of haiku that goes beyond the early modernist writers, but they do not devote their publishing energies exclusively to haiku.

(2) *Translations of Japanese Literature*. Several American haiku journals have followed the lead of Japanese translations by R. H. Blyth, Lucien Stryk, Hiroaki Sato and Harold Henderson. The struggle to translate Japanese haiku into English provides some interesting insights and advice for the development of haiku in English. Both Blyth and Henderson make suggestions for writing haiku in English, although Henderson was the only one to actively encourage and advise the development of American haiku magazines. In the first issue of *American Haiku*, the first magazine devoted to haiku in English, Henderson applauded its creation and encouraged the editors to consider divergent opinions and approaches to haiku in English. He complains about didactic poems and

“purely logical statements” written in 5-7-5 syllables and argues that “The one standard that seems to me important is that haiku be starting points for trains of thoughts and emotions” (*American Haiku* I.1, 1963, page 3).

Harold Henderson was influential in the founding of one of the earliest journals, *Haiku West*. Leroy Kanterman edited *Haiku West* from 1967 until 1975. Higginson describes *Haiku West* as “a strongly traditional approach to haiku, based on a relatively strict count of seventeen syllables in English. . . . Kanterman admired Henderson’s book, and asked him for editorial help with the magazine” (Higginson, *Compass*, page 2). In his book *Introduction to Haiku* Henderson apologizes for employing titles, rhyme, sentence punctuation, plurals and personal pronouns in his translations of Japanese haiku. He cautioned the editors of *American Haiku* and *Haiku West* from imitating these elements in original haiku in English. However, most of the haiku in *Haiku West* are 5-7-5 and usually follow Henderson’s sentence-like punctuation with a capital letter and closing period. Only a few early American haiku employed titles or rhyme.

(3) *Zen and “Beat” Writers*. Several American haiku writers and editors became interested in haiku from the Beat writers and a general interest in Zen during the late sixties and early seventies. The Beat writers and subsequent American haiku editors were attracted to haiku as a means of exploring avant garde, new ways of seeing, of living, of writing (at least it was new to the West). American haiku magazines that clearly espoused either an emphasis on Zen or the avant garde impulse include *Haiku* [magazine], *Cicada*, *Leanfrog*, *Inkstone*, *Raw Nervz Haiku*, *Brussels Sprout*, and *Old Pond*.

For many writers in the late sixties and early seventies, Zen and haiku were part of exploring alternative traditions from the Western traditions—both in

lifestyles and in literary experience. For Amann, participation in this exciting avant garde exploration was a strong motive behind his magazines. Comparing his experience of editing *Haiku* versus *Cicada*, Eric Amann claims that "Publishing *Haiku* was definitely more fun. The late sixties was a period of great enthusiasm for Eastern thought and for nature. People at that time were much more interested in a whole lifestyle approach. They wanted total involvement. A haiku poet then tried to live in the spirit of his haiku" (*Inskstone*, page 12).

(4) *Hobbyist Writing Clubs*. Several American haiku writers have been introduced to haiku through writing clubs. Members of these writing organizations became so intrigued with writing and studying haiku that they started publishing newsletters or magazines to publish their haiku. One example is the Haiku Appreciation Club which was organized by Edna Purviance in 1976 to help beginners learn how to write haiku. The club newsletter eventually became *Portals* magazine and had two types of membership: (1) sponsors were experienced haiku writers and editors who provided examples and commentaries, and (2) members were beginning haiku writers who submitted their work for comments and editorial assistance. Haiku magazines that emerged out of this background include *Haiku Highlights*, *Dragonfly*, *Haiku Headlines*, and *Mirrors*. Taking up haiku writing as an avocation has enriched the lives of thousands of women and men, who appreciate the advice and help available to beginners through these magazines and their affiliated clubs. The frequent contests, awards and short essays on writing haiku create true involvement and participation by the members and subscribers.

This hobbyist approach has been an important part of American haiku magazine publishing from the

very first magazine. When *American Haiku* magazine was founded, one of the first groups of regular contributors were the Los Altos Writers Roundtable, whose anthology of haiku, *Borrowed Water*, was published by Tuttle in 1966.

(5) *Teachers*. Finally, a few American haiku magazines have been published primarily as a means of introducing students to haiku, including the publication of their best attempts to write haiku. Most of these journals are edited by accomplished haiku writers, such as Leroy Gorman's *Anonymous Us* and Darold Braida's *Na Pua'Oli Haiku* anthologies published by Hawaii Education Association. Robert Novak, editor of *The Windless Orchard*, included student haiku in his literary magazine and eventually published an annual haiku calendar (with student assistants). *Mayfly* magazine often employs a student intern editor each year. Clearly the motive of these publications is to include students in the experience and excitement of editing an American haiku magazine.

A history of American haiku magazines based on motives for publishing is, therefore, a history of the motives of individual editors who have participated in the attempt to create an American haiku, an English language genre derived from the Japanese, but necessarily adapted to our own moments of being alive, our own language, our own cultural perspectives. In 1976 Raymond Roseliep wrote in a letter to *Bonsai: A Quarterly of Haiku* that we are seeking an American haiku which exploits "our fabulous native tongue" and "For subject matter we should dig into our own teeming country, God's plenty when it comes to materials." Although American haiku magazine editors have come from different starting points and have taken many different roads in pursuit of their quest, they share a vision of creating an authentic, American haiku.

Haiku as Poetry and Sound

Stephen Henry GILL

As we now live in a jostling but gradually homogenising unity of nations just beginning to address the waning wellbeing of our wondrous planet, it may be worth asking, first of all, “Is there a reason to preserve a regional perspective of haiku?”—haiku, in a sense, the poetry of appreciation of life on Earth. I’m sure that those of you who have had an opportunity to compare will already have recognized that there *is* a regional perspective, and that this perspective is not simply a matter of having different season words in different parts of the globe. It runs deeper than that.

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What is considered “haiku” in Japan, in China, in North America, and in the British Isles, for example, are four overlapping, yet rather distinctive haiku perspectives—and but four of many. Is this a good or a bad thing? Should Haiku International [Association] be priding itself on the variety of haiku expressions around the world, or should it be trying to prescribe haiku as it is presented in the burbling Tower of Babel? Really, the language of haiku is silence. To what extent, then, can we condone haiku as “poetry,” haiku expressed with a love for the phrasing of words and sounds? And what is our experience of presenting the *sound* of haiku?

Send me just one icicle with stars in it from my home up north
Shugyo Takaha, Japan

This representative contemporary Japanese poem meets the criteria of being a “haiku,” not only in its form and in its spirit, but also in its sound. It is beautifully assonant, five of the last ten sounds being either ‘ra,’ ‘ri’ or ‘re.’ In the British Isles, the haiku

“region” I know best, we believe haiku should *sound* good, too. A haiku that does not ‘sound’—that pays no attention to sound—may be nothing more than a short list of ingredients by which a clue to the taste of the cake is given: hardly poetry by Western standards. In Britain and Ireland at present, there is a lively debate as to whether or not haiku is a form of *poetry* by which we are “transported” or of *koan*, which need to be “solved.” Perhaps the answer lies somewhere between the two concepts: you have to make an imaginative effort, but you expect the expression to be recognizably poetic.

For any individual to be able to pronounce on the appropriateness of haiku forms and styles for other cultures, it would first be necessary for him, or her, to be widely read in a number of languages. There are few who could do so. Fortunately, then, what is transmitting itself around the world is not so much a form but a *spirit* of poetry, whose ultimate wellspring (if you think about it) is not Japan, but China. Because the Chinese have the spirit already, what they in their *hanpai* (*kanpai*) have taken from Japanese culture is, naturally enough, the form: but seventeen characters in Chinese is noticeably longer than seventeen sound-symbols in Japanese. The portrayal is fuller; the reader is given more information.

Flower colours; sky full of spring—
Feeling like cutting off a piece of cloud
To make myself a robe.

Lin Lin, China

In a stress-timed language such as English, where, if haiku is to be recognizable as poetry rather than as “poetic recipe,” contrary to what North American *haijin* seem for the best part to have accepted, one sometimes *requires* more than the usual twelve to fifteen English syllables. By way of an example of a representative North American haiku, then:

letting
the dog out—
the stars out

Gary Hotham, U.S.A.

This is good, of course, but is it poetry or formula? I suggest the latter, not intending to disparage it, but to distinguish its style from the slight majority of “haiku poems” written at present in the U.K. and Ireland. A largish minority, it must be said, are constructed in the ultra-terse style inherited from both recent translators of classic haiku and from the few contemporary American haiku books and journals that paddle their way across to the British Isles.

In haiku coming from Britain and Ireland, where the tradition of “a music of words” often brings haiku close to being a “spell” of wonder, one finds alongside three-line, ten-syllable “get it?” type recipes, some slightly longer poems (sometimes as much as twenty-three or twenty-four syllables) also presented as “haiku.” Even if the “syllable count” comes to only seventeen or eighteen, listen to the *sound* of the words: no rhyme, but there is a rhythm to the pattern of stress, a pleasure to be had in the mouthing of those syllables, a cadence. The love of language flows in the veins.

By the brown waterfall
October bracken:
sound of a billion bees

Adele David, U.K.

One megalith
Standing at the edge
Of a valley of wheat—
Still centre of the wind.

Tito, U.K.

There are poets composing in one-line (as in Japanese), two-line (using the caesura image-break as the dividing point), three-line (as in 5-7-5 approximation), and four-line forms. I enjoy two things in particular about my own haiku quatrain form (“haiqua”):

1) the extra line-end hiatus, which slows down the delivery of information (for in the Western poetry tradition one pauses at the end of each line), and 2) the increased possibilities for contrast. In three-line haiku, if you want a mid-poem *kireji*-like emotional pause, you can only contrast one line against two; in “haiqua,” you can oppose one with three or two with two, this last setting up possibilities for the sort of “parallelism” one finds in Chinese *zekku*.

If the effect of *kireji* (cutting words) can be approximated by the judicious use of lineation with punctuation (a dash, an ellipsis, or a colon) or with layout (indenting, line gap or line space), then what about *kigo* (season words)? Well, yes, naturally we use them: we too have our own distinctive seasons and our own cultural associations and festivities to go with them, but in Britain and Ireland no one has yet attempted to collect them and catalogue them for posterity. We certainly believe that there is no mileage in trying to fit things into ancient *saijiki*--type patterns, which can only be of academic interest. We don't believe a season word is always necessary, or even desirable, in order for a poem to qualify as a haiku. *Kikan* (*kisetsukan*, seasonal feeling) is not the only type of natural feeling we record.

**They sing at night
the blackbirds of Rialto
never to be seen**

Jim Norton, Ireland

Are blackbirds (rather like the *kurostumugi* you have in Japan) spring or summer or autumn or winter birds? All year round, actually. To change “at night” to “on spring nights” would place the focus onto an experience of *kikan* and take it off the true one—an experience of natural *secrecy* that tells us something about Rialto, one of Dublin's rowdier, rougher neighborhoods.

We all know what haiku spirit is, otherwise we wouldn't be here today, but have we decided, do we want to decide, what haiku form or content should be in the various regions and cultures of the world? The form of 5-7-5 (or thereabouts, with or without *kigo*) is a happy one for Japan and China. For more than a thousand years their traditional poetry has naturally fallen (but in different ways) into the metre of the numbers seven and five. For North America, where Zen Buddhism has, over the past four decades, exerted a strong influence on the haiku world, ultra-short "formulaic" presentation has become the norm. Both of these views have impacted on the British Isles, but neither has yet held sway, and is unlikely to, I feel. The poets of the British Isles are likely to continue to find inspiration in whatever they want (same as the North Americans), to phrase it succinctly in whatever type of lineation or layout they choose, but to ensure it has a proper haiku spirit. The final arbiters, I suppose, are the editors of our various haiku journals and the judges of our haiku contests.

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I should like to end with some further comments on the *sound* of haiku. With our regional emphasis on "the music of words" and on the aural properties of haiku, over the years we have held a number of haiku readings and kindred events. Haiku are so short as to pose a problem at poetry readings: even if read twice, after three or four have been intoned, one tends to feel satiated. Read too many one after the other and the eyes begin to glaze over! It's rather like "pigging out" on a box of chocolates. There is a need for a flask of water with which to wash them down—a narrative line, as in *haibun* or *kikobun*, for example—or a pregnant space in which the listener's mind is allowed to turn over the implications of the haiku and have it truly resonate. But silence alone in a packed room won't do.

One successful way: the striking of a singing-bowl (*sho?*) after each verse, the next verse being read only after the last faint resonations of the tick metal bowl have died away. This way is known in Britain as a “haiku meditation,” and was developed by Brian Tasker. For open-air events of the special kind, the launching of a small helium-filled balloon bearing a poem card on which the just-read-verse is written, a “haiku & helium ceremony,” was devised by myself and carried out at the top of Primrose Hill in London in a reading of fifty verses by Basho in his tercentenary year. The next haiku is read when the previous one has diminished to a small dot in the sky. As in Japan and North America, no doubt, we have recently witnessed many other experiments with haiku performance, musical (Colin Blundell), dramatic (George Marsh), and so forth.

I have made many radio programmes featuring haiku for the BBC. They have ranged from poetic interval, to rhapsody, to documentary, to drama, to comedy (with *kyoku* and *senryu*). One thing all this has taught me: “The old pond—/ A frog leaps in,/ And a splash” will simply not do for the average listener. As it leaves too much to his imagination, it falls flat. The average listener will require things to slow down for the spell to be cast: “Breaking the silence / Of an ancient pond, / A frog jumped into water— / A deep resonance”. Please do not forget that poetry is not only read, it is *listened to*. The sound of haiku is important. Allow us in Britain and Ireland to set some store by this. I believe it was almost as much the *sound* of Basho’s haiku as the images in them that made his works so satisfying.

**In my mind’s eye, the image of a weather-exposed skeleton:
Right through my very body, a cold wind blows.**

Basho

American Haiku Today

Lee GURGA

Haiku occupies a unique position in American culture. While Americans in general have little interest in contemporary poetry, almost every American has had some exposure to haiku. They may not know exactly what haiku is, but they will usually know that it is a somewhat exotic short poem, and that it has something to do with nature. Familiarity with haiku is so widespread, a recent *Sports Illustrated* article suggested that when the contemplative coach of the Chicago Bulls basketball team was ready to retire, he would withdraw to the mountains of Montana and compose haiku! This allusion presupposes a familiarity with haiku in the sports audience, an audience not known for its devotion to literature.

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I will talk about haiku as a cultural phenomenon and try to report on the different cultural groups that make up American haiku. I will talk about what we have and what we don't have. I will address the following topics: Americans composing haiku, magazines and contests, haiku on the Internet, haiku in the schools, and experimentation with form and content. Finally, I will make a few predictions about the future of haiku in America.

What We Have

(1) *People Doing Haiku*. The first thing we have is people doing haiku. I would like to divide these people into three major groups. The first group is composed of people of Japanese ancestry working to preserve their cultural heritage. For example, the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, in its monthly newsletter, has a column in English called "Haiku Corner"

that presents the work of Japanese masters in translation. The Chicago temple also has a Japanese-language senryu-writing club. Together, these two activities enable cultural interchange between the Japanese-language-oriented older members of the temple and the English-language-oriented younger generation. Similar groups exist elsewhere in the country, primarily writing haiku in Japanese.

The second group is composed of people who are not of Japanese ancestry, but who have an interest in Japanese culture. Many of these people were introduced to Japanese culture through the writings of D. T. Suzuki, R. H. Blyth, Harold Henderson or Alan Watts in the great surge of interest in Japanese culture that occurred in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Of course, there is often considerable interaction between these first two groups. Tokutomi Kiyoko's Yuki Teikei Haiku Society is a well-known example. Her group presents haiku to Americans with an emphasis on traditional form and seasonal reference.

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The third group is, I think, the most recent of the three. It is composed of people who are primarily interested in poetry and only secondarily interested in Japanese culture. In other words, haiku is only one of many kinds of poetry in which they have an interest. These people are likely to be writing not only haiku, but also tanka, renku, or other types of short poetry.

There are American haiku poets from all three of these groups who have achieved a high level of accomplishment. However, the degree of relationship of each of these groups to contemporary Japanese haiku will necessarily be different.

(2) *Magazines*. The magazines we have fall into two general categories. The first is association magazines, like the Haiku Society of America's *frogpond*, and Haiku Canada's *Haiku Canada Newsletter*. These

magazines are edited by a member of the organization and usually attempt to be as inclusive as possible as far as form and content are concerned. The second category is composed of magazines like *Modern Haiku*, edited by private individuals. What's in these magazines? In general, they contain a mixture of haiku, senryu, and prose in the form of criticism and haibun, news and book reviews. In addition, they may also contain tanka and renku or some variety of "stream of consciousness" linked verse. Some magazines are edited by recognized experts on haiku, while others are edited by people whose primary credential is their enthusiasm.

30 (3) *Contests*. Contests are one of the most effective methods of making fine haiku widely available. In America, poets can rapidly gain prestige and influence in the haiku movement by winning contests. One factor that gives American contests respect and credibility is that almost all are strictly anonymously judged. Because the results are based on quality rather than reputation, anyone has a chance to win. This allows for very rapid advancement and realignment of reputations in America. I feel that this is one of the strongest aspects of American haiku.

(4) *The Internet*. A recent development that is having an impact on American haiku is the advent of the Internet and the increasing availability of haiku information there. Interaction on the Internet takes a wide variety of forms, including on-line magazines, home pages with poems and essays, and the exchange of information between individual poets. The primary way in which the Internet is proving of value is to provide beginners with the opportunity to immediately access sources of information on haiku. The most up-to-date information on haiku activities is now available to anyone who has access to a computer and a modem. A second area in which the

Internet is of value is in establishing relationships. Haiku in Japan is a social art and it is becoming increasingly so in the United States. The interactive nature of the Internet enables people to come into immediate relationship with others interested in haiku.

(5) *Experimentation*. Experimentation with form and content is an important element of American haiku. American poets today are experimenting with many aspects of traditional Japanese poetry, including renku, tanka, and senryu. Interest in novelty and resistance to authority are both important parts of the American character. Those interested in experimentation or innovation often point to the playfulness that is a part of the haikai tradition. It is true that this playful nature is necessary for the vitality of haiku. However, it is important that we in America find the proper balance between a desire for experimentation and a true understanding of the haiku tradition.

What We Don't Have

(1) *Longstanding Tradition*. In America, we do not have a longstanding haiku tradition. In fact, we have one that has been developing for only about three decades. With your support and understanding, we hope to build a tradition that is as meaningful as your own.

(2) *Schools*. Nearly all American elementary school students receive some exposure to haiku. The Japan Airlines haiku contests have been very effective in promoting awareness of haiku in America. However, not all of what is taught about haiku in American schools is accurate. While we have outstanding individual efforts to promote haiku, we have no coordinated national program to provide students with accurate information. I think it highly desirable that such programs be established in American schools. Multi-

cultural programs are encouraged at all levels of American education, so it is to be expected that such a program would be well received.

(3) *Hokku, Haiku and Senryu*. Another thing we don't have is a mature understanding of the differences between hokku, haiku, and senryu. In part, the confusion as to what is and is not haiku has been amplified by the fact that the most widely available anthology of English-language haiku is a mixture of haiku, senryu and non-haiku free verse, without any attempt to help the reader differentiate between them. While this book has provided the enormous service of introducing haiku to thousands of Americans, it has also confused haiku and free verse, leaving readers to fend for themselves. Another source of confusion is the proliferation of inaccurate information about haiku on the Internet. William J. Higginson's book *Haiku Seasons* has a chapter that very clearly explains the differences between hokku, haiku and senryu. Much confusion could be avoided if Americans would study and absorb the information in this book.

(4) *Awareness of Contemporary Japanese Haiku*. America's poet laureate Robert Hass has recently published a book of translations of Basho, Buson and Issa under the title *The Essential Haiku*. It is to be hoped that his book will bring more Americans to look at haiku seriously, but the book unfortunately reinforces the widely held view in America that haiku is an art of the past rather than a living form. Contributing to this view is the fact that almost all translations of modern Japanese haiku available in English are of poems written in the first half of this century. If contemporary Japanese haiku is to have an influence on the development of haiku in America, we will need to see anthologies give an overview of what is happening in Japan, collections by individual authors to give Americans some idea of the depth of Japanese haiku, and also books of haiku theory and criticism. Books

of Japanese haiku theory and criticism will enable us to understand the context in which Japanese haiku is written and to determine what directions will be fruitful for the further development of American haiku.

The Future of American Haiku

(1) *Changing of the Guard.* I think over the next few years we will be witnessing some interesting changes in American haiku. The first is a changing of the guard. The first generation of truly American haiku poets will be disappearing from the scene. One of the characteristics of American haiku is that haiku is often only one interest among many for these people. It often happens that after some time exploring the potentials of haiku, they move on to other types of poetry or to other arenas altogether. Some, such as Elizabeth Lamb and Robert Spiess, have worked to nurture the next generation of poets by editing haiku magazines, but many do not seem to make any effort to actively influence the course of American haiku.

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(2) *A Change in Who Is Interested in Haiku.* An important change that is occurring in American haiku is the decrease in those being introduced to haiku through Japanese culture and an increase in those discovering haiku from the poetry-writing arena. Originally many people came to haiku through an interest in Zen. They saw in haiku the potential to develop a new sensibility. As a result, haiku became a vehicle for introducing some of the aesthetic concepts of Japanese culture. This led people to understand that aesthetics plays an important role in daily life for many Japanese. Many of these people have a deep and enduring interest in haiku as a manifestation of Japanese culture. On the other hand, people being introduced to haiku by books of American haiku are much less likely to develop an interest and appreciation for

Japanese culture. At the most fundamental level, we are seeing a change from an interest in haiku as a tool of perception to its use as a tool of self-expression.

(3) *Tanka*. In keeping with this trend is a flowering of interest in tanka. A significant number of people who were attracted to short verse forms through haiku are finding that tanka is a more apt medium for them to express their interior state. Some people may think this is unfortunate because it draws interest away from haiku. However, I view it as a positive development. When people have options, they are more likely to find something that is suitable to their individual sensibilities. They are therefore less likely to try to alter haiku to meet their particular needs.

(4) *Renku*. Another facet of the trend toward self-expression is an increasing interest in linked verse. In the 1980s, Americans began exploring the linked-verse tradition from which haiku emerged. However, without access to qualified renku session leaders, Americans quickly became frustrated with the complex and seemingly arbitrary rules of renku, and moved off to explore more playful and unstructured forms. While some find the best expression of their sensibilities in haiku, others seem to feel more at home in tanka, senryu, free verse, or any of the many invented linked-verse forms that are proliferating in North America.

R. H. Blyth once said haiku is Japan's greatest gift to the world. The Haiku International Association's invitation to us to come here today is a continuation of that gift. I think it is important that the world's haiku poets recognize our common heritage in Japanese haiku, and at the same time acknowledge that Japanese and American haiku will likely grow apart, like two branches on the same great tree. We must remember to respect each other's work as poets in different parts of the great haikai world. Your efforts

SUPPLEMENT

here to promote world haiku are an enormously important part of that process. Conferences like the one in Tokyo today will help people understand the vitality of contemporary haiku. Whatever our social, intellectual, artistic and cultural limitations, it is our privilege and our responsibility to create today's haiku and to present it as a gift to the people of tomorrow.

North American Season Words

William J. HIGGINSON

36 First, let me say how honored I am to be here speaking with you today, and how grateful to our two organizations, and to their officers and the conference organizers, especially President Arima and Master Ishihara of the Haiku International Association and President Gurga of the Haiku Society of America and their many colleagues who worked for months to make this gathering possible. I must also apologize at the outset, especially to the members of the Japanese haiku community here, for the following introduction, which contains mainly information they already know far better than I, but which may benefit some of our American participants.

INTRODUCTION: FROM POEMS TO SAJIKI

From at least the eighth century, when seasonal sections were included in the *Manyôshû*, traditional Japanese poems have been organized and appreciated with a good deal of attention to the passage of the seasons. A complex set of associations between certain phrases designating cyclical natural phenomena and the emotions of cultured people grew and developed throughout the next millenium, flowering in three distinct but overlapping phases: First, the organization of imperial and other anthologies of court poetry and the creation of hundred-poem sequences during the era of *waka*, poetry entirely in native Japanese and mainly in the style called *tanka* today.

Second, the complex intertwining of seasonal and non-seasonal verses in the long collaborative poems known as *renga*, largely maintaining the decorum of earlier *waka*, but including codified rules about the use of language appropriate to the seasons. And third, the reinterpretation of that *renga* tradition in terms of phenomena recognized and appreciated by the common people in the Tokugawa era in the popular literary genre known as *haikai*.

I take *haikai* to include not only the well-known literary types so much studied and appreciated today, such as *haikai no renga* and early independent *hokku*—which we now usually call by their modern names of *renku* and *haiku*—but also the brief humorous essays with *haikai* verses called *haibun*, the *haikai*-related diary literature best exemplified in the travel diaries of Matsuo Bashô, and the more popular *maekuzuke* and *senryû* that flourished in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—the latter also enjoying great popularity today.

The main distinguishing features of *haikai* as compared with earlier literature in the tradition seem to be the incorporation of everyday phenomena in the experience of common people into the corpus of recognized seasonal topics, and the acceptability of words of foreign origin—initially Chinese-derived and later from other cultures as well. These two developments apparently separate *haikai* from the earlier literature by incorporating into poetry objects, situations, and language thought wholly inappropriate to the high tradition.

At the same time, however, the deep appreciation of the seasons that characterizes much of Japanese literature in all eras continued to hold an important place in *haikai*. Indeed, the

“rules” of seasonal progression in classical *renga* were retained and may even have taken on a greater importance in *haikai no renga*. And, as the independent *hokku* became more and more common, the tradition of anthologizing these short verses in seasonal groupings shifted to grouping them by general and specific subject matter. Thus, some of the Bashô-school anthologies of the late seventeenth century include *hokku* arranged under headings such as these, from the beginning of the Spring section of *Zoku Sarumino*, “Sequel to Monkey’s Raincoat”, one of the famous “Seven Anthologies” of the Bashô School:

Blossoms, Cherry [Blossoms]

Young Herbs

Plum [Blossoms], also Willow

Birds, also Fish

Spring Grasses and Plants

Cats’ Love

and so on. It is interesting to note that these headings include both specific phenomena, such as cherry blossoms and cats’ love, and more general categories, such as “Birds, also Fish” and “Spring Grasses and Plants”. The poems under “Birds, also Fish” deal with a variety of specific birds and fish, such as bush warbler, pheasant, Japanese robin, whitefish, and the like. And those under the heading “Spring Grasses and Plants” include phrases like “spring grasses” and “young grasses” along with names of specific plants such as “reed sprout”, horsetail, and brier. Since the independent *hokku* of the earlier “Monkey’s Raincoat” anthology were arranged by seasons without topical headings, the contrast between the two

books shows that such arrangements were flexible—and still developing—during Bashô's lifetime.

By the late nineteenth century this development had continued to the point that broad categories such as "animals" and "plants" were divided into more and more carefully distinguished specific topics. These categories also included "livelihood", or "human affairs", and "observances", which demonstrated the age-old view of human activities and holidays as parts of the natural cycle. And while some anthologies were content to list poems under topical headings, others began to explain these headings so that readers might better understand not only the connections between the phenomena and the seasons, but the traditional views of these topics as well. Thus, the *haikai saijiki*, or "poetry almanac", was born.

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With the support of masters such as Masaoka Shiki and Takahama Kyoshi, the *saijiki* soon became the dominant form of *haikai* publication. At the same time, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the writing of linked poems declined in popularity, though a few poets did keep up both the classical *renga* and the more popular *renku* traditions—which are making a comeback in Japan today. Perhaps in part because of the decline of linked poetry, progenitor of both *haiku* and *senryû*, these two types of *haikai* poetry became separated. Whereas disciples of Bashô freely participated in both during the early eighteenth century, by the twentieth century poets of *haiku* and of *senryû* became aloof from one another, and only recently have some members of the two camps begun to recognize their common interests.

In the meantime, one of the primary features of haiku, the seasonal aspect held over from its origin in the starting verse of *hokku* of linked-verse composition, became a bone of contention between the majority of haiku poets and a minority who did not worry themselves about the peculiarities of season words in the heat of composition. The majority, whether intentionally or simply under the pressure of tradition, published most of their poems that survived beyond a first magazine appearance in seasonally organized *saijiki*. Such books obviously omitted poems that did not contain season words. Thus, including season words became almost essential to a haiku poet's gaining any kind of notice, even survival. In the conservative 1930s one could literally be ostracized, even punished, for writing or advocating haiku without season words.

HAIKU BECOMING INTERNATIONAL

During the first half of the twentieth century, when poets in other traditions were first discovering haiku, they did not learn much about haiku's seasonal aspect. Thus, when they tried writing haiku they did not pay much attention to the technical aspects of season words, and produced poems which, while interesting to some Japanese, were not considered true *haiku*. Even today, after more than three decades of intense development outside of Japan, haiku in languages other than Japanese are not usually examined or appreciated in the same way by Japanese critics and readers as are those written in Japanese. We can easily see this from the fact that in many Japanese essays on foreign haiku the word *haiku* appears in the

usual Sino-Japanese characters, or *kanji*, when referring to Japanese-language works, but is almost always spelled out in phonetic *katakana*, or even in Roman letters, when it refers to works in other languages.

I suggest that the main difference perceived by Japanese readers between their haiku and haiku in other languages is the lack of proper season words. To be sure, the Japanese haiku involves a traditional form and literary diction that are also extremely difficult, if not impossible, to duplicate in other languages. But it seems to me that the crucial difference for most Japanese confronting so-called “haiku” in foreign language is the apparent absence of season words.

SEASON WORDS IN NORTH AMERICA

I say “apparent absence of season words” because recognizable season words certainly do appear in non-Japanese haiku. But to properly see them, we must know season words already accepted by the tradition, and must have an understanding of the development of that tradition and its principles. Since these matters are best shown with specific examples, I will present some North American haiku that seem to contain obvious seasonal references, and show how those seasonal references relate to the tradition as developed in Japan. The following poems appear in my international poetry almanac, called *Haiku World*. Since I was writing this talk at the very beginning of spring, perhaps you will forgive me for starting with early spring rather than in the late spring which pleasantly warms us here today. I will preface each poem with its season, traditional category, and seasonal topic.

Spring, The Season, February:

**On Coney Island beach
a snowman scans the sea:
February morning**

Donatella Cardillo-Young

Coney Island is an ocean beach in New York City, famous for crowds of people seeking relief from the summer heat. In New York the heavier snow storms often come in February, but within a day or two there may be a mild breeze. This poem, like those on the topic "February" in Japanese *saijiki*, neatly captures a mixture of winter's pleasures and a yearning for warmth that characterize the days of late winter or early spring. While Ms. Cardillo-Young lives in western New York State, she seems familiar with New York City customs.

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Spring, The Heavens, Hunger Moon:

**hunger moon
watching
as I turn forty**

Jocelyn Villeneuve

"Hunger Moon" is a translation from the Algonquin, a Native American language of the Great Lakes region, which includes Ms. Villeneuve's home province of Ontario, Canada. In pre-Columbian times many Native American groups used a lunar calendar (some still do), so this "hunger moon" corresponds to the first Sino-Japanese lunar month called "Sociable Month", and also refers to the full moon of that month. On the plains around the Great Lakes this can be a bitter time of year; food is scarce and the cold penetrates to the bone. Looking at a face-like moon through that clear, cold air one may well believe that the time of youth has gone.

Spring, The Earth, Snowmelt:

snowmelt . . .
 she enters
 the earth on her knees

Bill Pauly

The classic seasonal topic “snowmelt” is beautifully answered in this striking haiku by Iowan Bill Pauly with the image of a woman eagerly working the garden as early as possible. The poem’s rhythm moves in a way that only a master could risk with success: the two opening lines are very short, one with a caesura indicated by the ellipsis—a practical English-language equivalent for some Japanese cutting words, such as *ya*. The next two lines are enjambed—there is no grammatical break between them—but the shift from one line to the next causes a slight hesitation. And then the longish last line moves so quickly we almost have to do a double-take to get its meaning, just as the author must have done a real double-take to see it in the first place. This small poem dynamically illustrates what our great American poet Denise Levertov calls “organic form”: visually, on the page, the poem captures the rhythm of perception. It also thus captures the very rhythm of snowmelt, its halting beginning and then trickling rush. Finally, the poem uses logopoeia—Ezra Pound’s name for adding meaning to a piece of literature through the connotations words and phrases have picked up through their prior use in life and literature. With the phrase “on her knees” this poem becomes a prayer of thanksgiving for the new growing season about to begin. This poem well demonstrates how a verse can fulfill the most demanding expectatations raised when a

traditional season word appears in a haiku, regardless of the language.

Summer, The Earth, Fountainhead:

**highway construction
a spring trickles from a pipe
in the concrete wall**

Torrey Hansen

44 While he was visiting Paterson, New Jersey, some years back, Mr. Hansen and I walked the area where highway construction was deeply altering the landscape. Here, in one of the oldest working-class districts of the city, we came upon the site of a spring that had provided clear drinking water to the residents for a couple of hundred years, and was still serving that purpose, though now reduced to a narrow pipe sticking out of a concrete wall. Since the spring was at the base of a mountain, we both hoped that it would outlast the highway. Of course, *izumi*, or fountainhead, is a summer topic in Japanese haiku. Since "spring" in English is a homonym for both a season of the year and a fountainhead or wellspring, we must be careful to make clear which "spring" we mean in our haiku. (Mr. Hansen lives in Rhode Island.)

Autumn, Humanity, Canning:

**apple jelly poured . . .
I slip a geranium leaf
into each jar**

Patricia Neubauer

In most English-Japanese dictionaries "canning" is treated as an industrial process, but long before factories processed food into tin cans, people at home packed perishable foods into glass jars with heat, sealing out the elements that spoil food, so that it might be stored

without salting, drying, or freezing. Home canning was and is today usually done by women. My daughter cans many foods from her garden and the surrounding woodland each year—she lives in rural Pennsylvania—and I can always count on two or three different kinds of wildberry preserves and jellies at Christmas. Ms. Neubauer, who also happens to live in Pennsylvania, has told me that the minty geranium leaf was a touch her mother added to each jar of apple jelly she made. Apple jelly is used year-round as a condiment, but “apple jelly poured” is an obvious season word for the autumn topic “home canning”.

Autumn, Observances, State Fair :

**Alaska State Fair
ninety-four pound cabbage
only second place**

Mark Arvid White

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A state fair is an annual exhibition of farm products, from fresh vegetables to preserved (“canned”) and cooked foods, from chickens to cows, and horses—brought to the fair by farm people from all over each state in the autumn. In each of many, many categories, the owners and producers receive prizes for the biggest and the best. Mr. White’s poem expresses the exuberance of the fair, and of his home state of Alaska, which prides itself on largeness. This poem seems to me more of a senryu than a haiku, but for the farmer who missed first place in the cabbage competition, this was obviously serious business.

Autumn, Observances, Yom Kippur:

**Yom Kippur—
round and round
the lake.**

Alexis Rotella

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Yom Kippur is also called the Day of Atonement, and is the most important holy day of Judaism. Of course any regularly recurring holiday fits into the Observances category in the *saijiki*. Since the Jewish calendar is lunar, Yom Kippur moves from late September to early October, ten days after Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Yom Kippur is a twenty-four-hour period of fasting, during which one prays, seeking forgiveness for the sins of the past year. Some Jews observe the holiday in part by taking the lint out of their pockets and throwing it into a body of water—a cleansing ritual. Here California poet Alexis Rotella aptly catches the sense of continuing prayer which characterizes Yom Kippur, while at the same time humorously suggesting that there is much lint in her pockets, much need of purification.

Winter, Animals, Owl:

**northern lights shimmer
a saw-whet piping
on the distant shore
nick avis**

A small owl, only seven or eight inches (20 cm) long, the saw-whet is quite strictly nocturnal and elusive. It has a few different sounds, some approaching a whistle. Its most prominent mating call resembles the sound of a lumber mill saw-blade being sharpened (whetted) with a file, and hence its name.

Researching for this talk, I discovered that one hears the cries of a saw-whet owl almost exclusively from March through May, its mating season, so this poem should have been placed under a new topic, “saw-whet owl calling”, in the spring section of *Haiku World*. Such is the life of this poor cataloguer of the seasons, who should have written to his friend Nick Avis, who lives in Newfoundland, almost three thousand miles (5,000 km) away from my Santa Fe home, to ask what time of year one hears the saw-whet owl. In any case, we can imagine the distant cries of the owl shimmering almost in harmony with the delicate curtains of the aurora borealis.

Winter, Plants, Colored Leaves Fall:

**Entre penumbras
amarillentas caen
las hojas lentas**

**Among yellow
half-shadows fall
the late leaves**

C. Chiesa

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From one of the northernmost points on this brief survey of North American season words I ask you now to come with me to a southern extreme, Puerto Rico, where Señor or Señora Chiesa—I don’t know which—has been marking the passage of the seasons by the actions of leaves. Listen again to the lovely sound of the Spanish original:

**Entre penumbras
amarillentas caen
las hojas lentas**

Most Americans think of falling leaves as autumnal, and it takes quite an adjustment to fit our perceptions into the older agrarian year of traditional haikai. But “late leaves”—*hojas*

lentas—easily fits into an early winter scene for us. A bit below the Tropic of Cancer, Puerto Rico sits on the edge of the tropics, but evidently leaves fall there as well. Here we see them go down among their own yellow penumbras—a glowing light as beautiful in its own way as the light created by the plum or apricot or cherry blossoms of spring.

EVERYWHERE, THESE SEASONS HAVE THEIR WORDS

Whether speaking of things already long documented in Japanese *saijiki*, such as February, snowmelt, a fountainhead, and falling leaves, or entering our own local phenomena into the seasonal register, as with hunger moon, canning, a state fair, Yom Kippur, or the saw-whet owl, North American haiku poets generally take the seasonal changes in their surroundings as seriously as do Japanese haiku poets. What our young tradition has lacked until now has been anything more than beginning attempts to classify and describe these phenomena in a way that might mimic the three-hundred year development of the *haikai saijiki* in Japan. And, looking back over the past three decades of my involvement in haiku in English, I believe that has been good for us. For it has meant that we looked at the phenomena around us with a fresh eye—quite literally “returning to nature”, as Basho urged his contemporaries.

But lately it has seemed to me that there were some artificial barriers between haiku poets in the land of the starting verse and those of us from other cultures attempting to apply a similar love of nature and of language to the task of “learning of the pine”. In my recent books,

The Haiku Seasons and *Haiku World*, I have tried to present the history and theory of the Japanese *saijiki* in such a way that those outside of Japan who might be interested to do so might try arranging their poems in a way similar to the Japanese *saijiki*.

There are those both in Japan and in America who doubt the validity of haiku outside of the Japanese language. So I have also tried to give haiku from all around the world a setting that would help us see haiku from both Japan and elsewhere in a new way—one of the most traditional ways of reading and appreciating haiku in any language, the *saijiki*.

I hope you have enjoyed this brief survey of my stumbling attempts to do this, and that our conference and the events of the next several days will be another step toward mutual appreciation and celebration among haiku poets worldwide.

Informal Replies to Some Haiku Questions

Yatsuka ISHIHARA

Question by **Lee Gurga**:

50 “At the Chicago conference in October, 1995, you made the following statements (as translated by Tadashi Kondo): ‘The dominant haiku theory after Shiki had been that haiku expresses the truth by depicting the facts. This theory is easy to understand, but what is commonly practiced is to say something false as if it were truth. But I believe that it is crucial for haiku to tell about truth as if it were false. This false nature of haiku expression is the essence of haiku.’ I am afraid that I do not understand this completely. Could you explain?”

Ishihara:

The common practice in Japan (more than 60% of poets) is to tell about what is false as if it were true. I know it is difficult for Americans to understand this. I believe the basic nature of haiku is humor, that is, expressing the truth as if it were false. Through the expression of truth with humor, a rich space is created to enjoy a wider meaning. In other words, I think this is true not only in Japan but also in the West. The first line of a poem comes from heaven. Coming from heaven means inspiration or fiction. Haiku itself is the first line of a poem. This proposition applies to my theory *naikan zohkei*, which is “introspective shaping.” This is different from the conventional “sketch” theory

(*shasei*), that is, to copy what actually is. Our reality is in our chest (*mune*).¹ So, instead of looking out at the world, we look with a pair of “haiku glasses” into our chest, where the landscape of truth exists.

The day after tomorrow, you are going to Matsuyama, where you are going to visit the Shiki Museum. There you will find three haiku written by Shiki eight to ten hours before his death. One of them is:

hechima saite tan no tsumarishi hotoke kana

gourd in bloom / phlegm clogged in / the throat of a buddha

The gourd sap is believed to be good to clear phlegm in the chest. The sap is extracted from the vine of the gourd. Another:

tan itto hechima no mizu mo ma ni awazu

five gallons of phlegm / the sap from the gourd / too late

Here Shiki is watching the gourd flowers blooming in front of him. Half of Shiki is watching himself as a dying buddha. He is looking at himself from another’s point of view, detached from himself.²

Let me give you another example from Basho:

tabi ni yande yume wa kareno wo kake meguru

fallen ill on a journey my dream wanders around a withered field

In this haiku, I sense artificial fiction. When I compare this haiku with the ones by Shiki, I think Shiki’s are superior. In Basho’s haiku, there is an artificial manipulation of fiction, while Shiki’s haiku comes directly out of his intuition. The season word “withered field” (*kareno*), the concept of which changes from era to era, might have meant something different in Basho’s time. I would like to stress that season

words (*kigo*) cannot survive if we just try to maintain them. We need “frontier spirit” in order to have living season words. Take for example the season word *risshun* or “beginning of spring.” Instead of just saying *risshun*, we could rephrase it as “water getting warmer” (*mizunurumu*) or “day lengthens” (*hiashinobu*), which reflects objective observation. Another example is *ritto*, “beginning of winter.” This can be rephrased as *fuyuniiru*, “getting into winter.” In this way you can try to rephrase conventional season words to fit in to your own direct experience. We learned about American season words from William J. Higginson. There is true creative spirit there. I hope you won’t be satisfied unless you are creating haiku out of actual experience.

Getting back to telling the truth as if it were false—it is bad to tell about the false as if it were truth—true humor does not have artificial manipulation of fiction.^{3,4}

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Question by **William J. Higginson**:

“What is the best way for beginners to use a *saijiki*?”

Ishihara:

After the theme is captured and you know what you want to say, check the *saijiki* if there is a season word in your haiku. The *saijiki* should be used in the second stage of the creative process.

Question by **Penny Harter**:

“How do you feel about writing a winter haiku in spring?”

Ishihara:

When we are telling truth as truth, we will make a spring verse in spring. But from the point of view of

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telling the truth as if it were false, you must write about what you captured no matter what the season is. If it were shivering cold, you will write about it.

Question by **D. Claire Gallagher**:

“Why did such a conceptual poem (#16) get so many votes from the Japanese selectors in the *kukai*?”

fallen camellias / unstained in the water / karma of various evils
Ryusai Takeshita

Ishihara:

Mr. Takeshita is the karma of evils [*general laughter*]. There is a conventional belief that a fallen camellia designates a fallen head. So it is rare to find a camellia in Japanese *tokonoma* or alcove, since it is a bad omen. Not only in poetry, but also in real life. A camellia was not allowed to go through the gate of a samurai's house. This poem talks about a red camellia floating on the water, without getting affected by various evils. He firmly believes he is absolutely right about what he is doing and can even commit *hara kiri* to prove it. The poem symbolizes such a serious world of humor.⁵

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Question by **Randy Brooks**:

“Please address the difficulty of humans as subjects in haiku?”

Ishihara:

There must be several reasons for this. As I said earlier, there are many people who tell lies as if they were true. Superior or human kinds of people tell the truth as it is. Consequently, the haiku with human affairs

have the problem of false humor. False humor is a mediocre or low level humor. At the end of this century, haiku in human affairs is at wit's end and people are turning to nature to look for a new start in Japan. The other day I had a talk with Mr. Arima, and he agrees with me in that the tension of the end of the century has to do with the difficulties of human topics.

Notes

1. Mr. Ishihara feels things especially in the chest as a result of his personal experience with tuberculosis. (Note by Tadashi Kondo)
2. The third haiku:

ototoi no hechima no mizu mo torazariki

day before yesterday's / sap from the gourd / not harvested

Shiki died on 18 September, and the haiku was written 10 hours before his death, which means the "day before yesterday" was a full moon. The sap harvested at the time of a full moon was believed to be most effective to clear phlegm. (Note by Tadashi Kondo)

3. Ken Leibman recollected a quote from Picasso: "Art is a lie, but it is a lie which leads us to the truth."
4. George Swede suggested that if we substitute the word "metaphor" for the word "false" in the present discussion, Mr. Ishihara's meaning becomes easy to understand. Tadashi Kondo responded "Metaphor and symbolism are included in what Mr. Ishihara calls *uso*, which can mean fabrication, lie, falsehood, fake or fib. Metaphor is one of the techniques of "telling like a lie," but I'm afraid I cannot substitute for *uso*. What Mr. Ishihara is trying to say by "Talk of truth as if it were a lie" comes close to what Picasso said, as Mr. Leibman suggests above.
5. Tadashi Kondo asked Mr. Takeshita about Mr. Ishihara's use of the word "humor" above. Takeshita replied: "Not humor, but ironic humor. A more ironic kind of humor than we saw in the haiku by Shiki."

[Translation by Tadashi Kondo.]

A Technique in Haiku

SUSUMU Nakanishi

In Japanese style painting we have a technique called *rusu-e*, or “absent picture”. For example, hedges and buildings are painted, while people are left out. Many kinds of robes are painted without people. In other words, people are not painted but their existence is implied by the sleeves hanging on a screen or hanger stand. This is called *taga sode byobu* or “whose sleeve screen”.

This viewpoint to capture the main theme as “absence” derives from a theory of painting, in which the main persona is implied in the imagination not by painting the persona but by showing some belongings.

This technique provokes the viewer’s curiosity to see the hidden persona, who arises in various forms in the imagination more vividly than when actually painted. The “whose sleeve screen” can be particularly sensual, and reminds me of this famous haiku:

hanagoromo nugu ya matsuwaru himo iro-iro Sugita Hisajo
(*blossom kimono / undone, then clinging / various cords*)

Certainly this method of haiku actually has the same symbolic nature as absent-picture technique. The main topic is absent, and is called up by association. This technique can convey to readers various images of the main topic more vividly than when it is actually described.

There is also a technique called *kai-keshi* or “paint&erase”. The foreground is realistically and meticulously painted, while the background is only done abstractly. Whatever comes in between

the two scenes is left unpainted.

This may be one of the best techniques to depict a large landscape on one canvas. Perspective is what Japanese learned from the West, and was foreign to Japanese people in former times. Perspective is an excellent method to capture distance on a canvas, and "paint&erase" also aims to do the same.

The difference between the two techniques is, while perspective projects the distance by means of differentiating the sizes of objects which are painted with painstaking realism, "paint&erase" employs an elliptic technique between foreground and background, and even makes use of blank spaces as an omission technique. Japanese style painting tries to capture a large landscape by employing a formal ellipsis from concrete to abstract, as well as using blank spaces with agreed-upon meaning.

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When I come to think this far, it is interesting that haiku technique and "paint&erase" technique resemble each other. In haiku as well, everything is not realistically described. Rather, haiku draws by erasing or by not expressing; that is, everything is not described realistically.

Certainly, when we think about "absent picture" and "paint&erase", we come to understand that realism is the most inferior method of expression which requires the least imagination. It is true that, when we describe things realistically, it is impossible to capture things and events entirely, however precisely, meticulously, and realistically we try to describe them with a zillion words. In this sense we understand that realism is a method of expression of the lowest order.

In addition, what are we trying to express? Suppose we come across an impressive event; it is difficult to convey the wonder by recreating it. Instead of doing that, a more effective way of expression

can be to refer to the event in a mental landscape or one which is reflected in your heart.

The fact that haiku evolved such a short form of writing perhaps implies a tendency of Japanese method of expression, which is similar to the development of the Japanese style painting mentioned above.

Talking about Japanese poetic forms, first we had *choka*, which was eventually discarded and replaced by the dominant *tanka*, which in turn resulted in the independent form of haiku. The process of development of shorter forms of expression seems to reflect the tendency toward higher orders of expression, exemplified by leaving the subject “absent” or expressing by “erasing”.

There are some modern haiku that meet these requirements. A famous haiku:

imo no tsuyu renzan kage o tadashusu Iida Dakotsu
(*dew on potato leaves / a range of mountains / corrects its shadows*)

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This haiku refers to extremely tiny dew drops in the foreground, and the distant mountain range is represented in the abstract expression “corrects its shadows”. The phrase “corrects its shadows” can be interpreted with many kinds of concrete images. This is fine in haiku. By this technique a huge landscape is brilliantly captured in one verse.

Indeed, there are various reasons why the techniques of “absence” and “erase” are possible in haiku. One of the main reasons is the particles in Japanese language, so-called adjunctives such as postpositions and auxiliary verbs. Here is a famous example.

mono arau mae ni hotaru no futatsu mitsu Iida Dakotsu
(*in front of me / doing washing, fireflies / two and three*)

When we say “*mae ni*”, we cannot exclude the possibility that three or four fireflies are lying on the ground in front of you. On the other hand, when you say

“mae o”, they are about to fly past you, and when you say “mae e”, they are just flying into your range of vision. This proves the importance of postpositions. Depending on which postposition is used, what is not described changes its posture, proving the theory that adjunctives determine the expression.

Here is a haiku by Matsuo Basho:

me ni nokoru yoshino o seta no hotaru kana Matsuo Basho
(Yoshino / remaining in my eyes / in the fireflies of Seta)

This haiku has many omissions as follows:

me ni nokoru yoshino [no sakura] o seta no hotaru [to suru] kana
([the blossoms of] Yoshino / remaining in my eyes / [seen]
in the fireflies of Seta)

This is what the poem means. In this case the postposition “o” suggests the absent verb “suru” at the end of the verse.

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Consequently, we should discuss how this technique can be applied in languages other than Japanese. I think it would be interesting to try similar grammatical constructions by making use of prepositions.

Another thing that has to do with “absence” and “erase” is the fact that haiku has expressed feelings and thoughts by means of “absence”. In the case of Basho’s haiku mentioned above, Seta is famous for fireflies, and Basho went there to see them. However, the season was a little early then, and he remembered the cherry blossoms he had seen in Yoshino in springtime. Yoshino in turn is famous for cherry blossoms. Then Basho instantly saw the fireflies in front of him as cherry blossoms. These fireflies are those blossoms.

He did not put this surprising intuition in an explanatory manner such as “cherry blossoms in afterimage superimposed on fireflies”. He simply

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stated “see cherry blossoms as fireflies” (if you supply what is omitted).

This technique of leaving explanation to events and objects is basic to Japanese poetry. This evidential factism, which is of course not a realistic expression of facts but a symbolic and suggestive presentation of facts, is a characteristic of haiku, and is what makes it different from tanka.

This factism is often considered as lack of logic in Japanese people, but it is not so. On the contrary, the idea is that haiku can acquire a larger cosmic or life theory through “absence” and “erase”.

Lastly, I would like to advocate a discussion by introducing what is famous as the shortest haiku.

hi e yamu

(sick for sun).

Ohashi Raboku

A Personal Journey to Haiku

Francine PORAD

The Constitution of the United States guarantees the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Notice it's the *pursuit* of happiness only, that's guaranteed. I've been happily pursuing happiness for years, through creative endeavors. Happiness to me is my children, gardening (at one time I knew the Latin name of every plant in the yard), knitting, painting, and the most recent of joys, writing haiku.

I've been asked to speak about my personal journey to haiku. Two talk show personalities in the United States, Regis & Kathie Lee, don't talk to each other before their television show. They want the conversation to be unrehearsed; the reaction of one to the other, genuine. That's the rapport I would like to establish with you today, that we are having a one-to-one conversation.

A love of nature and scenic beauty was instilled in me at a very young age. Seattle, WA is unbelievably beautiful, with snowy mountain ranges to the east and west, Mount Baker to the north, and the awesome glacial peak of Mount Rainier to the south dominating everything. Visitors are attracted to our area by waterways that can take ocean-going ships, and lakes galore, including Lake Washington which edges the city and neighboring communities. I guess I sound like a walking advertisement, but on a daily basis as a family we stopped whatever we were doing to admire the sunset, a stand of trees, a beautiful garden. It's not surprising I became a painter, although this did not come about until I was forty years old. In fact, my son and I graduated from the University of Washington in the same ceremony.

I was first a visual artist. I preface the word artist with “visual” since someone took offense at my saying “I was an artist before I became a poet”. His retort, “Doesn’t she think a poet *is* an artist?” Actually, it’s not surprising a visual artist would be attracted to a visual poetry form. I’ve been very active in many art organizations, including the Northwest Watercolor Society, Women Painters of Washington and the National League of American Pen Women. When the Seattle Branch of Pen Women sponsored a program on creativity, all the artist members were asked to write a poem and the poets were asked to create a painting for the program. The premise was that artistic disciplines are closely related. If one could paint, one could probably write, and vice versa. I wrote a piece for the program which was applauded, wrote another, received more compliments, and I was hooked! Since my time is my own, being self-employed (and having a husband to support me), I could spend as much time as I wished on writing, and did—fifteen hours a day for three months. Having access to marvelous women poets speeded the learning process. Just as appreciation for the natural environment led to painting, so painting, coupled with a philosophy of harmony and a relaxed pace of life, led to writing haiku.

Driving through town one bitter cold day, I saw an old man bent and pushed by the wind. I only saw him for a few seconds. The man was tall, gaunt, with bony, pale wrists protruding from his wrap...something odd there...and then I realized what was strange about the scene. He was wearing a woman’s fur coat, much too small. My first thought was, “How humiliating! as bitter as the day”. I wrote a short poem about this, and was told I had written a haiku.

That was the first time I heard the word *haiku*. I investigated the form, joined the Haiku Society of

America, and subscribed to a few haiku publications.

All of the poets were unfamiliar to me at first, but I noticed there were certain poets whose work captivated me. I remember looking for the Contributor's List of *frogpond* for a one-syllable name. Was it Dutch? No. Was it French? No. Ah! Swede, George. I sent my first fan mail to George. He writes with compassion, understanding and humor about the human condition—my goal.

Thinking again as a visual artist, I recall being asked: How do you know when a painting is completed? that you've done the last stroke? I study the painting, look deeply, stare at it for weeks. If I can't think of anything that would improve it, it's done. It's pleasant to have the latest painting admired, because I want the latest to be the best. So it is with a haiku. I believe I recognize a haiku moment, the ah-so experience. I might write and rewrite ten different versions of a piece, then go through it word by word. Does it convey the shades of meaning I seek? Has the moment been presented in the proper order? Is it well-crafted as a poem? I've been accused of spending no time at all at writing, that I just jot down whatever comes to mind. I'm glad the struggle doesn't show, but I *do* agonize. Craft enters in when the reader feels not the *effort* of the poet, but the *power* of each word. Simplicity of language gives force to the words. Once a piece is crafted, or even published, we can still ask: Can this be improved?

Right now I have ideas for poems that are not yet converted to haiku or senryu or tanka. These happenings, realizations, moments are assembled in a computer file labeled "Haiku Ideas". I'll share three with you. The first is a horror story: I had worked all day on a large charcoal sketch and wished to preserve it with a fixative. Instead of the fixative I accidentally grabbed and sprayed the drawing with an adhesive. Dust, leaves, and a large piece of paper now hide

the artwork from view forever. The next story contains a moment of surprise: my granddaughter had received permission for me to visit her seventh grade classes. We were to meet in the main office. I arrived early and sat down among a row of chairs, placing my purse and a book on a desk-like shelf. I'm not paranoid, but everyone seemed to be looking at me strangely. When a young boy joined me, I discovered I was seated in the detention area. This third example is nature-based: During a wild wind and snow storm, a tall camellia tree doubled over with the weight of snow turned to ice, and fell against the kitchen window. Each leaf was ice-encased so that frozen drips pointed to the sky. A possible haiku from this could be:

arctic storm
the tree's frozen drips
pointing skyward

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Three times during the writing of this paper I changed those words. Other versions may follow because that image of upside-down icicles on each leaf is so compelling to me.

I believe I have grown into haiku by studying both the Japanese "greats" and the English-language haiku being written today. Since haiku in Japan developed over a period of hundreds of years almost every style and inclination can be found. As Robert Hass pointed out in his foreword to *THE ESSENTIAL HAIKU: Versions of Bashô, Buson & Issa*, the three men represent three types of the poet—Basho the ascetic and seeker, Buson the artist, Issa the humanist. To quote, their poems "have a quality of actuality, of the moment seized on and rendered purely. . .for years I didn't see how deeply personal these poems were or, to say it another way, how much they have the flavor of a particular human life, because I had been told and wanted to believe that haiku were

never subjective". It seems to me that English-language haiku in North America has grown more subjective in recent years, but then, English-language haiku is still in its formation stage. Sad that I won't be around fifty years from now, to see what form haiku has taken.

I've been asked what prompted me to collect my work in book form. As my biography states, fourteen collections of my published haiku, senryu, tanka and renga have been printed. Originally, my reasons for putting a book together were twofold. One, I wanted a record to give my family of what had been published during the year. Another was the challenge of creating an aesthetically pleasing and artistically arranged volume. There was no thought of producing it for sale. However, a lot of people expressed a wish to purchase copies, so I obliged.

64 No one can enjoy my poems as much as I. Each haiku, senryu or tanka contains a memory I wish to hold—the triggered memory comes full-blown with all the details of time, place, color and attitude. Each poem is a story, although I may be the only one who knows the entire plot as it happened. You as the reader will devise your own plot, because each of us can only interpret according to our own experiences. Perhaps I should define myself as a story-teller, rather than a poet. Perhaps I should avoid labels altogether. I've finally resolved the question: Am I a painter or a poet? The deliberation with self went on for ten years with much torment. A tanka (and a dream) explored and answered my debate:

should I paint,
 should I write—
 in the dream
 I stride a sunlit street
 wearing one black shoe, one white
 (*Poet' Market, 1995*)

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Both mediums are important to me. I can't give up either. Does the finished haiku affect what I put down as a visual image? Lately, I've been using the same theme for both disciplines, consciously trying to explore an idea more fully. By way of explanation, here's another tanka:

legend has it
a sorcerer stole
three days of sunshine;
I stumble through dark clouds
to know the storm

(*Windsong*, 1995)

Basho's maxim "to know the pine, go to the pine" I paraphrase: to know the storm, one must live through it. The storm in this case was a hospital stay for me, a lengthy recovery, the life-threatening illness of my sister, the death of my mother. A 20-verse tanka sequence about my mother's final illness and death was therapeutic. A series of ten paintings titled *To Know the Storm* helped me work through my sadness. The first eight paintings are moody, often dark, but by the ninth and tenth, my palette had lightened. I can't paint and remain unhappy. This joy of creating!

A recent gift, *The 20th Century Art Book*, is on my coffee table. It's a gorgeous production in full color—500 pages which offer an A-to-Z guide to the art of an extraordinary century. Art has become more international. Artists have experimented with new media, including oil paint, collage, sculpture, ready-made objects, installation and video. Each image is accompanied by an incisive text, shedding light on the work and its creator. There's also a "Glossary of Terms" and "Glossary of Artistic Movements". It's simply great! What fascinates me most, and remains unstated, is how the editors decided which pieces of artwork to use. I can't imagine selecting one piece of art to exemplify an artist's lifetime. Personally, I don't know what I would choose. A portrait? a landscape? an abstract?

The same problem of choice holds true for editors of an anthology. Jim Kacian of Red Moon Press, and selected editors, are preparing a volume, *The Red Moon Anthology 1996*, containing what they consider the best published haiku and related writings of the year. As with art, haiku/senryu/tanka/renga/haibun have become international forms, with much experimentation going on. Not having seen the completed *Red Moon Anthology* manuscript [at the time of this writing], I'm guessing it will have examples of one-line, two-line, three-line haiku, concrete poetry, haibun, renga, and the new form *rengay* devised by Gary Gay. Since the final selections of haiku and senryu were made from poems anonymously listed, the decision of just one from each artist doesn't apply.

66

Again I'm intrigued by the thought of which one haiku I would choose to be remembered by. Over twelve-hundred of my poems have been published. Would I want it to be humorous? serious? dealing with nature or human beings? about travel, art, the computer world? All of us are multi-dimensional beings. I have *somewhat* decided on one. It's a haiku you may have heard:

**poolside, we chat
about reincarnation
no longer strangers**

(Point Judith Light, 1993;
"Waterways," Haiku Canada Sheet, 1995;
Tea Contest Award, Japan, 1996)

And so I leave you with this question and dilemma—what *one* haiku would you choose from your *oeuvre* to represent the total "you" for posterity? A difficult choice.

Arigato.

American Haiku at the Dawn of a New Millennium

George SWEDE

Many more Canadians and Americans are writing haiku today than in the 1970s when I first became involved with the form. This growth in popularity is best illustrated by the expansion of the two major North American haiku periodicals, *Modern Haiku* and *frogpond*. For instance, the 1977 [volume 8(3)] issue of *Modern Haiku* has 48 pages and 57 contributors while the 1993 [volume 24(2)] issue has 108 pages and 149 contributors. *frogpond* has undergone a similar evolution. The 1981 [volume 4(3)] issue has 48 pages and 38 contributors and the 1992 [volume 15(2)] issue has 88 pages and 114 contributors.

To determine whether haiku content and form had changed as well during this period of growth, I did a survey of the haiku in the four issues.

Haiku Content—Has It Changed?

Before presenting the results of the survey, I need to describe a way of categorizing haiku on the basis of content that I developed a few years ago (Swede 1991). The method is based on distinguishing content that involves nature, both organic and inorganic, from content that deals with humans and their artifacts. Haiku with images only from nature I call N haiku and those with images only from the human world I refer to as H haiku. Haiku with images from both the natural and human worlds I describe as N+H haiku.

The following examples illustrate the differences. First, here are three N-haiku.

rows of corn
stretch to the horizon—
sun on the thunderhead
(Lee Grga 1997, 22)

Carp pond
the cat circles
the moon
(Garry Gary 1993, unpag.)

wet snow—
another color or two
on the sycamore boughs
(W. J. Higginson 1991
in Ross 1993, 89)

68 Every image in all three poems concerns the natural world. No mention is made of human beings or their artifacts.

H haiku are the exact opposite, as these two poems show:

terse message
on the answering machine:
the divorce is final
(Francine Porad 1995, 19)

baby lip quivers,
all his clothes off
in the doctor's office
(Randy Brooks 1985, 13)

Every image in these two H haiku involves the world of human beings—our concerns, our inventions (answering machine, clothes, doctor's office). Neither includes anything from the world of nature.

The third category, N+H haiku, are hybrids or a combination of the first two. They merge the natural

and the human worlds:

**after the quake
the weathervane
pointing to earth**

(Michael D. Welch 1990, unpag.)

**spring cleaning
a white kitten
rolls in the dust**

(Margaret Chula 1993, unpag.)

**measuring the fencepost
the inchworm stops, leans out
into space**

(Penny Harter 1994, p. 106)

Each of these N+H haiku combines nature images (earth, quake, white kitten, dust, inchworm, space) with those from human enterprise (weathervane, spring cleaning, fencepost). Such haiku stress the underlying unity of the two worlds.

Before presenting the results of the content survey of *Modern Haiku* and *frogpond*, I would like to describe briefly the methods used. I sampled 90 (or twelve-and-a-half percent) of the 722 haiku in the four issues of the twomagazines by analyzing the *first* and *seventh* haiku on every *second* page. Poems were excluded from the sample if they appeared in tributes or in haibun, in articles, in reviews, in renga or in sequences that contained non-haiku fragments.

The two early issues, with the exception of two pages in *Modern Haiku*, had six or less haiku per sampled page. This pattern changed dramatically in the later issues of the two periodicals which had seven or more haiku per page (with the exception of one sampled page in *frogpond*). Thus, the sampling of a seventh haiku kept the proportion of work

examined roughly the same from early to late issues of each magazine.

The results show that most haiku published across the years have been ones with N+H content (see Appendix 1). Almost 58% fit this mold, a finding very close to the 61.4% N+H haiku I found in an earlier study of Cor van den Heuvel's 1986 *Haiku Anthology* (Swede, 1991). However, *Modern Haiku* and *frogpond* differed considerably in the average number of N+H haiku they published, from 75.4% for the former to 38.9% for the latter.

N haiku were the least published (22.2%) of the three types, a result very similar to my prior study where N haiku comprised 22.8% of the total (Swede, 1991). The low numbers are a surprise because so many persons, haiku experts as well as members of the general public, believe most published haiku deal mainly with nature. The current study confirms that my 1991 finding was no accident, that is, it was not due to the unique tastes of one editor.

Do the data in Appendix 1 indicate any trends for the future? They strongly suggest that N+H haiku will probably continue to dominate, simply because the combination of two different contexts, the natural and human worlds, creates a greater number of possible juxtapositions.

What constitutes nature and human content should change, however, paralleling societal developments. For instance, both the 1993 *Modern Haiku* and the 1992 *frogpond* contain haiku about AIDS. The revolution in communication should also create new content for haiku. The internet, interactive television and virtual reality, to mention only the major changes, should become the content of many H and N+H haiku. Virtual reality, in particular, might play havoc with the three categories of haiku. If you strap on a headset that gives you a virtual reality pond and

a virtual reality leaping frog and you later write a haiku about a frog leaping into a pond based on this experience, is your haiku an N or an H type? If it uses only nature images, it is an N, but the frog and pond on which your poem is based were human inventions and thus your haiku should be an H. Problems, problems, at least for persons who get gratification from creating categories.

Haiku Form—Has It Changed?

To see if form has undergone any changes over the last decade or two, I examined the same 90 haiku used for analysis of content. Over 93% of the haiku in the survey occur in three-lines (see Appendix 2). Of these, 22.2% are 5-7-5 and 71.1% are free-style. The percentage of three-liners is almost identical to what Eric Amann and I found when we conducted a survey 17 years ago of the work in Cor van den Heuvel's 1974 *The Haiku Anthology* (Swede and Amann, 1980). The only difference is a slight increase in 5-7-5 haiku, from 20% to 22.2%. Actually, the percentage of 5-7-5 haiku would have declined were it not for *Modern Haiku*. Taken together, its issues have 34.8% of their total contributions in this classic form, while the two issues of *frogpond* average 9.1%. The difference between *Modern Haiku* and *frogpond* is puzzling. As far as I know, the editors of *frogpond* do not actively discourage 5-7-5 work, nor do the editors of *Modern Haiku* encourage it.

Despite the efforts of some to promote one-, two-, and four-line haiku as well as visual haiku, the combined use of these forms has actually gone down by one-half from early to late issues, 10% to 5%. The overall average of the 4 issues is 6.6% which is three percentage points less than what Eric Amann and I found in 1980.

What predictions can we make about form? Very likely, haiku in the 21st century will still look very much as they do today. The majority will have three short lines, a few will have one, two or four lines, and even fewer will have some sort of pictorial arrangement on the page.

The three-line form for haiku in English most closely follows the rhythmical structure of haiku in Japanese (Higginson 1985). Perhaps, then, it is the most natural way to express the haiku's moment of awe or wonder.

The Heart of Seasons

TAKAHA Shugyo

Haiku is a 5-7-5 fixed form verse with season words. It is relatively easy to explain the fixed form, but it does not seem easy to explain the roles of season words. However, if we know what season words are, our understanding of haiku will at once become much deeper.

In the early stages of learning haiku, even Japanese seem to have difficulties in getting to know the functions of season words. We tend to regard a season word as one of the various words in a haiku, and to think any verse is a haiku only if it has a season word. However, a season word is not simply one word in a haiku, but implies various seasonal meanings. It is the diverse expressions and the heart of seasons that support haiku. By superimposing them over the heart of people a short haiku manages to say a lot.

The four seasons in Japan are clearly marked, each with its distinct characteristics. Let us think about each season a little. Seasonal changes can be compared to people's lives. Spring is the time of birth. Trees bud, birds and insects are born, and the earth comes to life. Summer is the time for growth. Grasses and trees are rampant, the strong sunbeams beat down, and the vitality of all nature fills to the brim. Autumn is the season when maturity begins to wither. Crops are harvested, and mountains are tinted with red leaves, which will soon begin to fall. Winter is the time to perish. Mountains and fields are withered, and most insects come to the end of their year-long lives. Animals go to sleep for the winter, and the desolate earth is like a dead world. In

other words, spring is infancy, summer is adolescence, autumn is the prime of life, and winter is the elderliness of life.

In addition, the four seasons have their respective feelings. There are the feelings which the season itself gives forth on its own, such as the overflowing joy of spring, the bright openness of summer, the forlornness of autumn, and the despair of winter. Or some might say this is what people have handed down as common recognition over a long period of time. However, since we live with cosmic nature, we must be perceiving its cycles in our hearts. These feelings have been taught by nature, not by people.

74 Spring and autumn are both between cold and hot seasons, and have similar weather conditions such as average temperatures, but are exactly reversed in reality. Spring, which has been released from the dark world of winter, and autumn, which is heading toward the season of decay, are completely opposite.

There are two season words: "spring melancholy" and "autumn absorption". Both express lamentation, but "spring melancholy" is a sentimental feeling without knowing why, and has a scent of sensuality somewhere. On the other hand, "autumn absorption" can be referred to as more speculative melancholy, such as lamenting on life and nation.

Let me quote some haiku as examples, and talk about the seasons' feelings.

shuncho no yubi todomareba koto mo yamu Nozawa Setsuko
(spring day / when fingers cease / so does the koto)

A woman who had been playing koto suddenly stopped playing. It is natural that if the fingers cease playing, we stop hearing the sound. But this haiku

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reminds us of a somewhat languid expression of a woman, and a hollow atmosphere comes across like the koto sound stopping a little behind the fingers' halting. This results solely from the effect of the season word "spring day". "Spring day" implies the glittering sunlight, and the warmth to make us perspire in late spring, permeating ennui throughout the verse. This feeling is unique to "a day in spring" and does not apply to "a day in summer" with its scorching sunlight, or "a day in autumn" with its limpid sky, or "a day in winter" blessed with sunny nooks.

natsukusa ni kikansha no sharin kite tomaru Yamaguchi Seishi
(*summer grasses / the locomotive's wheels / come to a halt*)

This must be a locomotive which came into a switchyard. It braked to a stop, emitting white steam, which looked as if it had been stopped by the surrounding overgrown summer grasses. It is the force of rank summer grasses that convinces us of what is unrealistic to the effect that the rankness of the grasses overcame the locomotive which is a mass of steel. But it is the work of the vitality of the summer season as well. This haiku dating back more than sixty years still retains its freshness in modern times when locomotives are no longer seen.

akibare no dokoka ni tsue o wasure keru Matsumoto Takashi
(*autumn clear day / a walking stick left behind / somewhere*)

Leaning heavily on a walking stick, a man took a long ramble tempted by the clear autumn weather. Then he felt so fine that he forgot his walking stick. This haiku seems to express only a pleasant feeling on the surface, but the latent desolateness of the autumn season is behind it. The sky is blue all over, and the air is completely lucid. Placing oneself in

this vast space, one cannot help being dismayed at how small human existence is. The autumn season makes us feel the original loneliness of human beings accompanied by a feeling of loss. Is it not an internationally common feeling that autumn is sad?

fuyu no mizu isshi no kage mo azamukazu Nakamura Kusatao
(*winter water / not deceiving the shadow / of even one branch*)

The water of a winter pond mirrors the sky, and a big tree nearby. The tree has shed its leaves, and its fine forked branches are beautiful. These are all reflected in minute detail on the water. Autumn water is clear, but winter water is unique in giving out a metallic radiance. It symbolizes a severe cold winter season in which even time seems to have frozen.

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As stated so far, season words comprise only an ordinary object or an insignificant event, but behind the words lies a wide world, reflecting the heart of seasons. It is due to the power of season words that this little poetic form can sometimes depict a world equivalent to a short story. Here I would like to stress that knowing season words is the very way to the true understanding of haiku.

[*Translation by Mami Orihara and Kris Kondo, edited by Tadashi Kondo.*]

Traditional Haiku in the English-Speaking World: The Way We Have Come in Twenty Years

TOKUTOMI Kiyoko

I would like to tell you how I opened my eyes to haiku. That was a half-century ago, when I was living in the dormitory of my school. The last year college students were a bit wild. No one wanted to stay in the room. About three girls got together and visited the dormitory inspector. He was a psychology professor who welcomed and gave us interesting topics. That night, he said "I am going to introduce you to a wonderful haiku. As he stirred the charcoal fires in the Hibachi with the iron chopsticks he recited "your nature you place the charcoal beautifully". As soon as his voice reached my ears, I was startled at how such a short poem could give the image of a beautiful lady's movement, adding black charcoal on white ashes, and inside the ashes fire red charcoal.

After this haiku hit me, I decided to change to haiku from tanka which I was attached to at that time. I read as many books as I could find to learn haiku. I then decided to study Buson. The instructor of the culture center's haiku class let me borrow many books. I finally decided to write my graduation thesis on "Haiku of Buson".

At that time, I did not compose haiku. I learned about haiku by reading books. I finally obtained a saijiki with the haiku "place the charcoal beautifully" by Sosei Hasegawa, which had so impressed me.

Keeping the word "haiku" in the back of my mind, I got a job, came to America and married

Kiyoshi, my late husband. After many years passed, I found that my husband was sick. He did not have enough nourishment during World War II and his health had declined.

After a long medical treatment, he and his doctor got a new medicine that had been developed in Japan. Unfortunately, due to miscommunication, the medicine took my husband's hearing. I took him to almost all the doctors in the town. No one said that his hearing would improve. So, we re-started our lives with "he can't hear a thing".

A bit later, I saw an ad saying "come and join this group to compose haiku". It occurred to me since haiku is written on paper, my husband can read it! I was delighted and decided to show him haiku. He was more interested in science but I took him to the haiku meeting anyway. This was the first time that he had been exposed to haiku. He surprised me by showing a great interest.

He took great joy in folding his fingers to count 5-7-5. He said very soon after the meeting was over, "I think the English-speaking people will enjoy this very much". Of course, in order to introduce haiku to the English-speaking people, he had to study haiku himself. Obtaining as many books as he could, he studied hard. After he gained confidence in his knowledge about haiku, he decided to contact people. We went to the city library, where there was a poetry reading by Bay Area poets. We spoke about haiku and what it was. Many people at that meeting showed interest. Through another friend, we found someone who was composing haiku. We visited him and introduced traditional haiku to him.

Soon after, we heard that the poets we met at the library wanted to hear more about haiku. So, in the summer of 1974, we had our first haiku meeting. We started by saying that in order to

compose haiku, you have to observe nature very deeply. When we introduced kigo, the season words, we gave the example of California poppies as a good kigo for California. One of the attendees stood up and said "I have not seen California poppies yet. I am going to go out and look for them". We were delighted with his reaction and told him where he could find some poppies.

Mr. McDaniel, who was the head of the San Jose Library at the time, talked with us about Western attitudes about nature. He said that in Western countries, people think more often about how you can conquer nature, rather than how to live with it. He said that very few people in Western countries thought about how to admire nature. We thought that as people learn about haiku, they also learn how to admire nature.

Soon we began receiving many inquiries from all over the country. Some societies and individuals began sending us their haiku. We found that people from everywhere, town and country alike, had a strong interest in haiku. But when we started to read the haiku, we found that they did not have the proper structure or composition. There were many with multiple kigo and some with no kigo. The composers of these haiku had confidence in themselves, but they needed to learn what the rules were to create proper haiku. We thought about how haiku might have been introduced to this country. It seemed that nothing other than the fact that haiku are a short poem using the 5-7-5 syllable form was mentioned. Possibly, the Japanese people who brought haiku to America did not know how to teach the composition of haiku to people living here.

How to compose haiku was not taught, but many Americans tried to learn by reading from books. People tended to study haiku from only

one book and one author and believed that what the author said about haiku was the only truth. The end result was that their view about haiku was very narrow.

The president of the Robert Frost Poet's Association at that time, Dr. Edwin Falkawski, told us about America's haiku world. He said that it is like a jungle that had no paths leading in. After he learned the traditional haiku from us, he was very pleased. This helped us decide to promote the traditional haiku as much as we could. The words that Dr. Falkawski used were "Please open and make a road into the jungle". This gave us much needed encouragement.

In 1977, we published the first *Haiku Journal* as our bulletin. Autumn and winter kigo lists were at the end of the book. Members' haiku were also published. My husband's article, "Why Traditional Haiku Is Important, or Do Not Explain in Haiku" was in the first issue as well.

Haiku lovers were not limited to America. We also had Canadian members. So, we named our group the *Yuki Teikei Haiku Society of U.S.A. and Canada*. Today, we have members from Australia, Argentina, England and Japan.

The haiku requires a kigo, or season word, to follow the *teikei* (form). Once people learned how to compose haiku, there were very many good traditional haiku in English. My husband once told members to compose haiku without a verb. When a verb is used, often the haiku ends up being explanatory. Dr. Falkawski and Professor Jerald Ball tried wonderful, no-verb haiku. It was a great affirmation that English haiku can show great sophisticated sense. We were very pleased with this experiment. Occasionally, we would see haiku with nothing but beautiful words, without any of the writer's feelings. My husband called such haiku

“fortune cookie haiku”. He wanted to let people know that careless composition of haiku sometimes results in beautiful words with no real content. The early members who knew my husband still remember this and its meaning.

Since the members were spread out over such a large area, we decided to do haiku teaching by correspondence through *Geppo*, a monthly publication. We listed the members’ haiku and let readers choose the haiku which they thought were best. To practice composing haiku, we selected a kigo. This kigo had to be used in haiku. This method gave ideas on how to write traditional haiku. Our members became accustomed to kigo, the season word. We decided to use the Japanese word as it has just two syllables. Now the word kigo is used freely among all of our members.

Our first haiku contest was held in 1978. We decided to have a judge from Japan. We asked Mr. Shugyo Takaha, who is famous in Japan. Twenty-one people received prizes. The first grand prize winner was Eric Amann of Canada. His winning haiku was:

**The name of the dead
sinking deeper and deeper
into the red leaves**

The second contest was held the following year. Thirty people won prizes. The grand prize was captured by Jerald Ball from Livermore CA for :

**A small child rapping
beside toys in the sand pile
the afternoon shade**

The third contest’s grand prize was given to Raymond Roseliep from Dubuque IA for:

**Campfire extinguished,
the woman washing dishes
in a pan of stars**

Later we learned about Father Roseliep. He was a priest and teacher of haiku in the Midwest. He corresponded with my husband very often. I still remember his beautiful signature.

The fourth contest records cannot be found. We may have skipped that year. the fifth one was held in 1982. Fifteen people received awards, and the grand prize winner was Louise Sommers Winder of Virginia.

**Still the drough drags on
the old tin cup—up, up, up
to the very last**

The sixth we skipped again. The seventh had twenty-two winners, with grand prize won again by Jerald Ball.

**summer evening
when the setting sun moves
then I move too**

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We changed the rules of the contest for the eighth contest. We felt that people had improved very much in composing haiku. So, five haiku from each contestant were to be judged as a group. Louise Summers Winder was the grand prize winner.

**The spring river and
the sunset's fiery red path . . .
the wake crosses it**

**Shopping for a gift
for someone with everything . . .
red poinsettia**

**Abandoned farmhouse
just the forgotten wind chimes
making hollow sounds**

**The first New Year's Day
my dead father's pocket watch
making hollow sounds**

**The lowering sky
head up — nostril quivering,
the deer sniffs the air**

These are the summaries of the haiku contest until 1985. Our society has continued the yearly contest, now named the Kiyoshi Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest. The officers pick five kigo: spring, summer, autumn, winter and New Year. The contestants can pick a kigo and compose upon it. These are judged by Japanese haijin who understand English.

Another yearly activity is the Haiku Retreat. At the Asilomar Conference Center on Monterey Bay, over three nights without interruptions, telephones or TV, we hear only the birds and the rumble of the sea. We can be immersed in the world of haiku. Elements of Japanese culture are introduced at this retreat. We have had a Kyogen demonstration, Tea Ceremony performed by a local tea master and her students, and have had lectures and workshops on haiku and related subjects.

These are the types of functions that we are unable to do at monthly meetings. We enjoy this retreat very much. We plan a ginko (haiku walk) for every retreat and ask a member who can lead us into the world of nature. We see and learn about so many plants in the sands or meet some unusual birds on the beach.

We also write renku every year. We tried to do a full-length renku one time, and it took us until dawn!! We became a bit smarter later, and divided the group into two, and each did a half-kasen. We can finish much sooner that way.

These are some of our activities since the society was formed. Many talented people have supported the society and that makes for a great environment to be creative.

The Expressive Power of the Shortest Fixed Form

Kaneko TOHTA

Haiku is a short, fixed form of verse made up of 5-7-5 *onji* (one Japanese letter stands for one sound). General use of the term *haiku* for this form began with Masaoka Shiki, at the end of the nineteenth century, when he separated *hokku* from *haikai no renga*. For this reason, the history of *haiku* does not exceed one hundred years.

84 However, composition of this short form of verse independent of longer forms had been done before his time. For instance, *Basho Shichibushu*, consisting of *kasen* (a form of *haikai no renga*, which Takahama Kyoshi later called *renku*) and *hokku* written by Matsuo Basho (1644-94) and his disciples (the *shomon* or Basho school), can be called a rich anthology of *hokku*. In addition, besides *gyohai* (professional haiku poets) like the Basho school and *yuhai* (haiku poets who entertain themselves for leisure), *tsukinami haikai* (regularly monthly haikai or stale haikai), which was popular in the nineteenth century among *zappai* (miscellaneous haikai) that was mainly written for entertainment and prizes, also promoted verses written in 5-7-5 *onji*.

We do not need a detailed explanation to say that the *tanka* form of 5-7-5-7-7 *onji* had been established as the primary form of Japanese poetry by the time of the *Man'yoshu* which was compiled in the eighth century. This form was divided into two parts of 5-7-5 and 7-7 *onji* phrases, which resulted in the development of *renga* in which several people linked verses. *Haikai no renga* emerged

from *renga*, and soon became predominant. Famous haikai masters successively appeared on the scene; Matsuo Basho in the seventeenth century, Yosa Buson in the eighteenth century, and Kobayashi Issa in the nineteenth century.

The 5-7-5 *onji* verses have been independently written for a long time, but for a much longer period of time Japanese poets have been familiar with the 5-7 rhythm prosody which encompasses this 5-7-5 *onji* form. Because of this, the 5-7-5 *onji* form is so imprinted in the Japanese gene that it even matches the natural speech rhythm of young boys and girls, who can enjoy expressing what they think and feel in this short fixed form.

my heart / is running / ahead of me

Okuda Mitsunori

living things / all mumbling / voices in spring

Abe Ikuko

The reason why this short fixed form has been loved for such a long time by so many people is exactly because of its brevity and fixed form. As it is short, we can easily make haiku any time, anywhere, and write them down like memos. Since haiku can be easily written down, they can be easily shared with anyone. Empathy among haiku devotees is nurtured through writing and sharing haiku.

Moreover, this fixed form creates tension and adds musical quality to what would otherwise be just a short piece of writing. Rhythm fuses with the flavor of words to create rhyme, resulting in prosody with a compact, powerful and conclusive quality which can be called reverberation.

lifetime just once / blossoms falling / incessantly Nomiya Asuka

If this concept is put into prose, it is simply what it says, but in this short fixed form it reverberates.

The Hanshin Awaji Earthquake in the winter of 1995 was a major disaster causing over 5,400

casualties. The haiku written by the sufferers, which are brief with deep resonance move us as readers.

Kobe, where / has it gone? Kobe / in the coldest winter

Horiguchi Chihoko

The fixed form with the musical quality of prosody creates an intense mass of words, which is perceived as a pattern, as follows:

the orb of moonlight / shatters and scatters / winter cherry blossoms

Ishihara Yatsuka

War and / on the tatami / a fan

Mitsubishi Toshio

To achieve this tension among words, efforts are made to omit redundant words, or occasionally condense extra parts. This results in the creation of a work of art with extremely brief form and prosody, from which springs forth infinitely abundant content. This is the reason why people even claim that haiku is metaphor.

Moreover, this content can subsume even worlds of higher-orders. This can be compared to the Buddhist idea of Mt. Shumisen contained within a tiny poppy seed. That is to say, the short fixed form can embrace the grand peak which is believed by Buddhists to be the center of the world.

Masaoka Shiki captured cockscombs from his sick bed in his final years as follows:

cockscomb flowers / there must be as many as / fourteen or fifteen

This haiku contains an eerie sense of existence of a band of cockscombs lurking in the inner depths of this seemingly trivial description, which consistently makes us feel the reeking melancholy of his life.

I would like to conclude my speech by making two more brief points.

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First, we have to remember that haiku still shares some of the attributes of *hokku*, and we need to reconfirm this point now. The practice of observing *kidai* (seasonal topics) has been respected for the sake of greeting, and I feel this greeting is also an important ingredient in haiku. I do believe that we should recapture the whole of *haikai*, including the importance of greetings, in order to enrich our haiku.

Second, I propose that a fixed form should be taken into account in western haiku. However, I am not sure if the Japanese criterion of 5-7-5 *onji* can be applied as such, because the amount of information conveyed in one syllable in English is considerably different from its counterpart in Japanese. The same applies to *kanpai* in China. I am looking forward to seeing the evolution of haiku forms in different languages around the world.

This Is How I Teach Haiku

Hisashi YOSHIMURA

In Takasaki City, where I live, a community college program as a part of the adult education project is organized every year for citizens over 60 years old. It includes lectures on "how to make haiku" and I am in charge. The audience is from the general public including those who do not have an interest in haiku. Consequently my lecture is focused on the general understanding of haiku as a liberal art and on having the students try to make haiku. The classes last two days, two hours each day, four hours all together.

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The two hours on the first day are spend on explaining "what is haiku", and the other two hours on the second day are spent reading aloud all homework haiku to select good haiku; in other words, a kukai. I even ask those students who are not interested in haiku to try a verse. Most students come back on the second day to join the kukai with their haiku, quality aside. After this kukai some people become interested in haiku and often start their own haiku club. Contrary to the assumption that all Japanese can make haiku, there are those who cannot. The Japanese of former times may have been different, but among those Japanese born in the middle of high economic growth the understanding of haiku is unexpectedly shallow. Some cannot even tell haiku from tanka, or haiku from senryu. To deal with this situation I have prepared hand-outs with the following guidelines.

Introduction to Haiku

1. The Merits of Haiku

1. You capture each moment as you go on your life's way
2. It is fun to make haiku, and it can help you forget the sufferings of life
3. You can obtain a lot of knowledge
4. You can make many friends
5. You can find something to live for
6. Aging disorders can be averted
7. You learn anew about the culture of your country
8. You can use your own haiku for seasonal greetings
9. You can send your haiku to newspapers, TV or magazines
10. Others

2. Principles of Haiku

1. Haiku must be written in 5-7-5, total 17 *moji* (or *monji*)
2. A seasonal topic is a must

3. History of Haiku

Manyoshu, *choka*, / *tanka*, *renga*, *haikai-no-renga*, / *hokku* and haiku

4. The Position of Haiku in Japanese Literature

1. Haiku is lyrical as well as landscape poetry
2. The difference between haiku and *tanka*, and between haiku and *senryu*
3. Modern haiku

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5. How to Make Haiku

1. First of all, look at things intently (in terms of seasonal topic)
2. Make haiku easy to understand for the reader
3. Cut down to its essence (since it is a short poem, omit unessentials)
4. Express naturally and straightforwardly
5. Revise

6. Places and Occasions to Write Haiku

1. Make haiku on your own
2. Make haiku with fellow poets
3. Make haiku freely
4. Make haiku on a *ginko* (a haiku walk)
5. Make haiku with given topics

7. Items We Need to Write Haiku

1. *Saijiki* (a season word almanac)
2. Dictionaries
3. Your verse notebook

8. How to Judge Good Haiku

1. The tune should be right when you read aloud and listen to the 5-7-5 rhythm
2. The original wonder of the poet must be conveyed to the reader
3. On listening, both the poet and the audience will find themselves uplifted

This concludes the first stage for haiku beginners.

Next I want to discuss various issues that arise concerning international haiku.

The first issue has to do with the linguistic differences and how to reach agreement in each language on the problem of 17 *moji* or syllables. The second issue concerns seasonal topics. In places like Japan people's lives follow cosmic nature with four clearly-marked seasons, whereas people from places with a philosophy of "man ruling nature" may have different understandings of the seasons. The third issue concerns the four distinct seasons in Japanese *saijiki* and *saijiki* of some other countries with rather vague distinctions of seasons. Among these three the issue of seasonal topics is the most important.

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When Kyoshi came back from his tour of Europe, he said that due to the level of understanding of seasonal topics, it was hard to explain haiku to foreigners, and he predicted that it would take decades before Westerners understood haiku properly. Now we are approaching the time he predicted, and what he said has suddenly gained a realistic meaning. Every race has reached a global level of understanding cosmic nature.

We humans live in cosmic nature, and unless we save the earth now, humankind itself can be threatened with extinction. Besides, world philosophy seems to be coming to the turning point away from the age of competition toward an age of co-existence.

It is crucial that countries understand one another through cultural interaction to realize peace. The cultural differences concerning understanding this small poem, haiku, are clearly shown. If we can promote friendship among people and come to agreement on our views of cosmic nature, through sharing a common understanding and philosophy concerning haiku, the role of HIA will have been significant.

As a final word, I remind us of Kyoshû's advice for haiku beginners: "When you write haiku, first of all keep observing nature quietly. For a while you may feel this observation boring, but after a period of perseverance you will notice a kind of poetic feeling arise. This may come out of itself or may be caused by seeing swaying flowers in the wind, or a swaying flower under the weight of a butterfly. At that time you just have to capture this poetic feeling in 17 *moji*."

Appendices

to *American Haiku at the Dawn of a new Millenium*
by George Swede, pages 67-72:

Appendix 1

A comparison of 2 periodicals according to the *content* of the haiku they published in issues separated by a span of at least 12 years.

Periodical	# of haiku chosen per issue / total # of haiku per issue	Nature Content (N)	Human Content (H)	N + H Content
<i>Modern Haiku</i> 1977, 8(3)	15/126 11.9%	3/15 20%	1/15 6.7%	11/15 73.3%
<i>Modern Haiku</i> 1992, 24(2)	31/267 11.6%	3/31 9.7%	4/31 12.9%	24/31 77.4%
<i>frogpond</i> 1981, 4(3)	15/115 13.0%	7/15 46.6%	2/15 13.3%	6/15 40%
<i>frogpond</i> 1992, 15(2)	29/214 13.5%	7/29 24.1%	11/29 37.9%	11/29 37.9%
<i>Totals / Percentages</i>	90/722 12.5%	20/90 22.2%	18/90 20%	52/90 57.8%

