

The 11th World Haiku Association Japan Conference

Sayumi KAMAKURA

English translation by Sayuri ANZAI, proofreading by Bernard FARRELL

In April 29, when young leaves come to fill street trees, the 11th World Haiku Association Japan Conference and the 5th World Haiku Seminar were held at the Itabashi Green Hall, Tokyo. Remarkably international guests included poet Abdelkader Jamoussi, who is also an envoy of the Moroccan Embassy in Japan, and Nguyễn Vũ Quỳnh Như, Assistant of the Consulate-General of Japan in Ho Chi Minh City and Visiting Research Scholar at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

First, Kuniharu Shimizu acted as chairperson of the Conference, and Ban'ya Natsuishi reported on *World Haiku 2016: No.12* (Shichigatsudo, 2016) as its editor. The WHA's annual publication became a multilanguage haiku collection in 33 languages by 164 poets from 48 countries. This was followed by the financial report from Sayumi Kamakura, and the report of the 8th WHA Conference (September 4–6, 2015) in Tokyo from its secretary general, Ichitaro Yamamoto. Then, Jamoussi explained about the development of haiku in Morocco and the 2nd Morocco Haiku Seminar to be held in July. This was followed by all participants reporting on their activities.

Next came the 5th World Haiku Seminar, with Yasuko Saito, a Spanish Literature researcher, as another guest, and Ban'ya Natsuishi as chairperson.

To begin with, Toshio Kimura talked about *Heart Breaths* (Cyberwit.net, India, 2016). Edited by Jean LeBlanc, this contemporary haiku anthology features a line-up of authors from the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, etc. The faces differ from those of the *World Haiku* and their works show freshness and diversity.

Kuniharu Shimizu spoke about the haiku poet, Mikihiko Itami, explaining his characteristic “wakachi-gaki” breaks in the one-line haiku “蓮咲いて 風その上を その下を” (lotus blooms winds blow over it and beneath it). Itami, a forerunner of “sha-hai”, i.e. a mixed presentation of photograph and haiku, continues producing haiku still more enthusiastically, though he will turn 97 years old this year.

Sayumi Kamakura chose three haiga collections of Kuniharu Shimizu. Thanks to the haiga artworks by Shimizu, readers can understand their accompanied haikus more: subtleties of mind and the nature that Basho tried to depict, boldness of Shimizu himself, and dynamism of Ban'ya Natsuishi.

Taro Aizu analyzed some haiku examples from *100 Haiku* (Cyberwit.net, India, 2016) co-written by Natsuishi and Kamakura, and reported on freedom of the collected poems.

Nguyễn Vũ Quỳnh Như introduced a haiku journal *Tho Haiku* (Hanoi Haiku Club, 2016), referring to its contents such as Vietnamese attempts in haiku creation that draw out the best of the nature of the country and a study on Basho's haiku. What especially caused wonder and interest among the participants was the following haiku.

Giọt cà phê	A drop of coffee
Không nói gì	Nothing to say
Không nói gì	Nothing to say

Tru Vũ

Yasuko Saito leveraged her specialist knowledge on Spain to present her meticulous reading of

Yoshiko Tazawa's 『俳句とスペインの詩人たち』 [Haiku and Spanish poets] (Shibunkaku Publishing, 2015). It might be valuable information, especially to Japanese, that haiku was already known in Spain by 1907, contrary to a more conventional belief that a Mexican poet José Juan Tabulada was the first who brought the poetic form to Spanish-speaking countries in 1919.

Ban'ya Natsuishi gave a concise lecture based on the book by Mitsuko Kaneko, 『フランス二〇世紀詩と俳句 ジャポニスムから前衛へ』 [French poetry of the 20th century and haiku: From the Japonism to the avant-garde] (Heibonsha, 2015). French haiku written by Paul-Louis Couchoud, Julien Vocance, and Paul Eluard were really innovative even compared to Japanese haiku. Natsuishi also pointed out the versatility of forms in contemporary French examples, such as one-line as well as three-line haiku poems in Georges Friedenkraft's *Sur les sentiers du songe: Poèmes pour mettre la vie en musique* [On the paths of dream: Poems for the life in music] (Éditions Thierry Sajat, Paris, 2015).

Hideki Ishikura briefly summarized five haiku essays in *World Haiku 2016* as follows. In “Haiku and the World,” Ban'ya Natsuishi points out that haiku build a world from three elements, an inevitable feature of this poetry form for its continued spreading worldwide. “Is Arab Haiku Possible?” by Abdelkader Jamoussi (Morocco) explains the poetic tradition of the Arab world and the wide possibility of future of haiku there. James Shea (USA) in “Circular Influences: Haiku in Translation” shows how translation of haiku can produce rich results despite misunderstandings, and sometimes due to them. Zlatka Timenova (Portugal/Bulgaria) develops her sharp, unrestrained thoughts on femininity in haiku through “Le haïku, couleur de femme” [Haiku, colour of women]. “Haiku of French and English speaking countries—Canada, Belgium, France, Ireland” is a report of how haiku live among people in those countries, based on its author, Shizue Ogawa's experiences of poetry festivals.

Exchange continued at the succeeding venue, Restaurant San-ichi. Michiyo Yagi played the 21-string and the 17-string *koto* solo and as accompaniment to haiku readings. Her style was full of dynamism and exquisiteness which surpassed the typical Japanese idea of those instruments. It is not surprising that she has already been invited to and played in 60 countries. Here, Chikubon acted as a master of ceremonies. Representative pieces of multilanguage haiku recited are below.

Sâu trong lòng đất	In the depths of the earth	
sông thôn thức	A river cries	
thành phố của ngày mai	Tomorrow's town	
		Nguyễn Vũ Quỳnh Như

His last dream		
is an eternal life		
... the pyramid		Taro Aizu

shān xiào	Mountain laughs—	
tiān gāo	heaven is high,	
shī kè xiǎo	a poet so small	
		Hideki Ishikura

The earth cries out,		
“It's spring”		
and closes its mouth		Sayumi Kamakura

Divine Indra

Zigzag lightning arrows
Beating mankind

Chikubon

In the echo of the stairs
Another me
Winter morning

Ban'ya Natusishi

A few kakis
surplus of
emptiness

Takashi Hasegawa

A promise:
the rainbow will become transparent
on the hill

Shinji Noya

The shadow of trees
look like squamae
an autmun road

Ryuji Yamagishi

Yasuko Saito recited Federico García Lorca's poem "La guitarra" in her beautiful Spanish.
Video records of the Conference and the Seminar are available on YouTube.

Videos of the 11th World Haiku Association Japan Conference

http://www.worldhaiku.net/movie/11th_J_conf_videos.html