

# The 8<sup>th</sup> World Haiku Association Japan Conference

Taro Aizu

English translation by Kika Hotta

The 8<sup>th</sup> World Haiku Association General Meeting in Japan was convened in Tokyo on 29 April 2013, starting at half-past one.

As for the General Meeting itself, it commenced by Ban'ya Natsuishi's opening remarks delivered in Japanese, English, and French, including joyous news of additional members from Vietnam and of the 7<sup>th</sup> World Haiku Association Conference to be held in Medellin, Colombia. Subsequently, we heard from Kika Hotta regarding his attendance at the Ratković's Poetry Evenings in Montenegro, from Kuniharu Shimizu about the Haiga Contest, and from Sayumi Kamakura the annual financial figures of WHA. The General Meeting ended shortly with no particular questions or comments.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Haiku Seminar kicked off with Sayumi Kamakura's review of Masami Sanuka's 6<sup>th</sup> haiku collection Tenju (Gendai Haiku Association, Japan, 2012). She pointed out that the gaps between actual and imaginary scenes give rise to poesy that astounds, impresses, and convinces readers. She further pointed out that Sanuka's haiku has grown to be more humorous and fuller with images as compared to his past collections, e.g. the two haiku shown below.

In other words/you are a doughnut/the highness of autumn sky  
Spring's evening sun/is yet to come/nirvana

He second reviewer was Kentaro Awano, who glanced through Anthology of Modern Free Verse Haiku by Hundred Poets (Jiyuuritsu-ku no Hiroba, Japan, 2012). The anthology compiled works by poets belonging to Jiyuuritsu-ku no Hiroba, a group of free verse haiku poets, in order to introduce modern free verse haiku to the populace, but there were comments criticizing that some of the works in the anthology lack originality. Among the impressive haiku included in the anthology were the following; they indeed show something different from conservative-style haiku.

A postage stamp for her/ I lick it  
Sunflowers in full bloom/the loneliness of this country  
A gust of wind/the water shows the moon's behind

Yu Soneda  
Kumiko Hiraoka  
Roan Takada

The third reviewer, Taro Aizu, then reported on Haiku of the Present (Rochak Publishing, India, 2011) by Indian poet Santosh Kumar. Kumar's haiku were written in English according to the usual three-line free form. They have utilized keywords in lieu of season words and have covered a wide range of themes aside from nature, such as society, Christianity, Zen, and haiku. Aizu considered Kumar's works to be pensive, proverbial poems, largely different in its pensive nature from traditional Japanese haiku and cited the following two haiku as most impressive.

Shore to shore/lord's kingdom-/vernal bees murmur here  
Haiku is/pilgrimage to world/and underworld

Hideki Ishikura, the fourth reviewer, commented on Black Card by Ban'ya Natsuishi (Sunagoya shobo, Japan, 2012). Ishikura mentioned that Natsuishi's haiku had become more mature probably

on the backdrop of his father's death, that his haiku are nonetheless still constituted from three verses in free style, that his haiku ought to be freely interpreted by readers regardless of their seeming difficultness, and that Natsuishi does whatever is possible in haiku. The second haiku in particular could be considered as a masterpiece that goes beyond human being's limited time and approached eternal time.

Life is death/death is life?/Sounds of leaking water  
My father's eyes/are my grandfather's eyes/ripples in their depths

The fifth reviewer was Kika Hotta who reported on Penguins (Pingviner) (Cyberwit.net, India, 2011) by Danish poet Johannes S.H. Bjerg. The main keyword of the collection was "penguins" in plural form; though the haiku take place in fictitious settings, the images of penguins are real – shadowy beings, the populace, revolutionists, and healers. Hotta pointed out that Bjerg's haiku incorporate criticisms against the globalizing human society as well as humor. As shown below, each line of Bjerg's haiku is succinct and to the point.

on the backside/of the moon/lurking penguins  
penguins/no human suffering/on the agenda

Kika Hotta also reviewed The Dance of Her Napkin (Cyberwit.net, India, 2011) by American poet William E. Cooper. Hotta mentioned that the typical traits of Cooper's works are that they are in free form, they depict daily scenes of the American countryside, they make full use of *shoryaku* (omission of understood or redundant words), and that they often possess good humor.

old lobster/no interest/in box or cable  
hammock/the sway/of Orion

As such, the seminar was a very worthwhile event with lots of comments from the audiences on Japanese, Indian, Danish, and American collections, as well as discussions pertaining to haiku in general.

The seminar was followed by a haiku recital with haiku readings accompanied by guitars of Shin Sasakubo and Haruka Shimizu. With beautiful classical guitar performance in the background, Japanese, English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Mongolian, Chinese haiku were read by their composers, truly making multilingual haiku reading a happy highlight of the evening. Also read were French, German, Austrian, Inner Mongolian, Taiwanese, Colombian, and American haiku composed by members who could not come to Tokyo; those were read by those who could come.

My genes/let them pass on/healthily	Taro Aizu
This whole body/so sinful/to pray silently	Kentaro Awano
a lunar clock-/flowers' songs/are eternal	Shin Sasakubo
El chamón/su negra ala/su blanca estela	Diente de León
Tu prends ta retraite/le médecin en riant/t'annonce une diabète	Georges Friedenkraft
alone again/in full bloom	Yu Soneda
Who is the honor student/among the pumpkins?/You? Or you?	Houbu Umesawa
Les nuages gris/griffés par les arbres nus/Je chasse une pensée	Danièle Duteil
A roc farts/a spring breeze/blows	Hideki Ishikura
Draught-/waves of my past/lap and return	NgBang Ngo
The horizon/likes the clouds/more than the sea	Sayumi Kamakura
In a dream my father/Speaks to me of perfect pitch-/And he could sing	Eric Selland
Morgenmond-/ mein Briefkasten randvoll/mit Pflaumenblütenduft	Ramona Linke
Der Herbst/kommt mit Sturm/und Äpfeln	Kurt F. Svatek
No grave/for a hero/defeated in the battle of love	E. Orgil
A new sprout/within the deep within/of my pledged heart	Maki Osato

A tree/that survived the fire of war/it hugs the Earth

A pin/glitters on the table/cold wave arrives

Upgraded to a dog/I lick/black raindrops

could be anything first drop of rain

Dreams of one thousand nights-/this name is a seed/of the sky and the earth

Un corbeau et moi/allons dans la même direction/à travers les airs

La mia ombra/entra nel buio/per ritrovarmi

Whereto flies/the white ball of August/eyes' pupils ever so clear

To live/within the interior/of a book

Izumi Sato

Yugyo Hashimoto

Kika Hotta

Jim Kacian

Ban'ya Natsuishi

Jean Antonini

Toni Piccini

Mamoru Takato

Shinji Noya