

Haiku which is described as a shortest and wonderful form of Japanese poem is formed by seventeen syllables in three lines (5-7-5 respectively). Although it is very familiar in the Western culture, I particularly didn't know about it. I first heard about it in college (Western haiku) and learned about Japanese Haiku when I came to CSUMB.

Haiku is a wonderful form of art in which so little words have the ability to transmit to the readers the essence of the whole scene that the poet is experiencing in that certain moment, a moment in which simplicity tells its inner nature. I think Haiku just as any other Japanese art is included in the Japanese sense of beauty and it is different from other countries. In this short poem, the poet uses imagistic language to narrate the essence of nature or the season experienced that I think is connected with the aspect of the Japanese sense of beauty that is explained in our text book.

The four aspects of the Japanese sense of beauty are: Suggestion (Keene, p.30), the few words in the poem allowing the imagination of the readers to expand using his/her intuition. Irregularity (Keene, p.32), the metaphor in the poem leaves something incomplete, leading the readers to imagine which makes it interesting. Simplicity (Keene, p.35), the poem is short and simple, without any extravagance and does not use additional words to explain it. As Haiku is an essay of nature, I think it is also connected with the aspects of beauty, perishability. Perishability, which is Kenko's necessary element in beauty, is impermanency, such as the cherry blossom or any kind of aspect with nature (Keene, p.39), that usually is used in Haiku as a keyword.

As we watched in the video, the Haiku's master, Matsuo Basho, who elevated the Haiku poem to the literary art form, traveled on his own feet from Edo capital to the north east (Tohoku), stopping in many places and, in each place, he had the inspiration to write Haiku which is called the haiku moment. The travel diary "Oku no Hosomichi" (The Narrow Road to

the Deep North) is a comprehension of Haiku that he wrote along his journey and as I mentioned above, portrays in simple word the feeling he was experiencing every place he stopped. His Haiku talked about the shrines or temples, the weather, the nature (sensibility, one of the five important things for Japanese) and so on.

In additional, the video showed that a few people (haiku lovers) from different places of the world followed in the Basho's footsteps to experience the haiku moment in particular places, where they were in contact with the same shrines and similar views, the peaceful fields in the hills at the end of residential areas where Basho gathered his inspiration. I believe that in doing so, they could open themselves to have an inspiration of the haiku moment that many of them had on that trail, such as the lady who was inspired with the 500 Buddha's statues (ojizosan) in Tochigui Prefecture. Another person (man), I believe that was from America, commented that for him Haiku moments are times when he feels emotions for a tiny place of nature, or when many aspects of nature come together in a single meaning. In addition, when the group went to Yamagata Prefecture, where Basho visited the Mogami River in the rainy season and wrote Haiku, one of the ladies got her haiku moment there.

Japanese lives are in contact with nature all the time for everything, so I believe that the trail has many places for people to gather their inspiration for a Haiku moment. Moreover, the contact of nature inspires a moment of immense silence and relaxation where it can present their feelings instead of describing objects.

I think Haiku uses a lot of metaphors, it is a kind of poem that is not directly cited, and the readers have to use their intuition to understand it. I believe that it is linked with Japanese mind because Japanese in general don't say exactly what they want, they say what others want to hear instead their true feelings.

The four distinctive seasons in Japan have different characteristics that are elementary in the Japanese people's lifestyle and they usufruct it respectively. Spring is when the plants start to grow as well as the start year for school and work. During this season they enjoy festivals related with flowers, the most popular known is "ohanami" that is when cherry tree are blooming and just during for three days. For these reasons I think that spring is the time for new beginning in Japanese life. Summer also has its characteristics, it is very hot and humid. On the other hand, it is when they have events such as beautiful fireworks (very long displays in compared with here) and also it is the "obon" time, which is related to the Japanese mind and the traditional rites with Buddhism (Keene, 28). Autumn is when the weather starts to be cooler and fresh foods such as fish and fruits can be enjoyed. It is also the season when many trees have a red leaves that contrast with green which make a very nice scene of nature where Japanese people go to see "koyo" (the beautiful scenery of the red leaves). Winter in some places is very cold, is when Japanese are preparing and seeking the New Year to come. In the New Year Day, they usually go to the shrine or temple to pray for a good year.

As we have been discussing in class, Japanese are embraced in nature for everything linked to their lives. According to Seiki Osuga, the poet can only enter into the world of creation when they are completely sincere and humble for nature, yet never separated from nature (Yasuda, p. 132). So, the presence of nature in haiku is one of its fundamental characteristics, and through deep knowledge of nature and the art of haiku, Basho sought a meaning for life when he started his journey. In his long journey on this trail, Basho experienced different seasons and wrote diverse Haiku that was illustrated in our text book, and are part of his collection.

For the Japanese Haiku poet, the awareness of nature is usually expressed through the important element called the seasonal theme (Yasuda, p.144). This theme is usually used as the keyword.

I think Haiku and the Japanese mind are connected in way that leaves something out in the air (leave to the imagination), that is not clear no specific.

I believe that to understand Haiku, you have to have a good imagination to know the whole scene that the poet is trying to transmit in a few words.

Moreover, I particularly think Haiku is connected with other aspect of Japanese beauty, “wabi-sabi”, for having the characteristic of simplicity, unique, richness of spirit and purity, naturalness and so on.