

Haiku and Notes

Zen Haiku, Beginner's Haiku, May 22, 2022, JoEllen Moldoff

The following haiku are offered for Sit and Study conversation:

midnight—no waves, no wind
the empty boat is
filled with moonlight

-Dogen (1200-1253)

this road
that no one else goes on
Autumn's departure

-Basho (1644-1694)

A tub with no bottom
blowing around
in the autumn wind.

-Buson (1716-1783)

Not knowing
it's a tub they're in,
the fish cooling at the gate

-Issa (1763-1827)

peeling pears—
sweet juice drips
from the knife blade

-Shiki (1867-1902)

NOTES:

from Shadow Poetry <http://www.shadowpoetry.com/index.html>

Definition of Haiku

1) An unrhymed Japanese poem recording the essence of a moment. Nature is combined with human nature. It usually consists of three lines of 5/7/5 (5 kana in the first line, 7 kana in the second line, and 5 kana in the third line) totaling seventeen kana.

2) A foreign adaptation of 1, usually written in three lines totaling 17 syllables or less.

As you will notice, there are two definitions. Definition #1 is where many get confused. People tend to confuse kana or a single unit in the Japanese language with the English syllable.

from Haiku and Zen by George Marsh

<https://www.thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/files/original/204e0cba1b0730ee27408fa8fa376329.pdf>

Haiku is a momentary, condensed poetic form and its special quality is that it is perfectly adapted to give the reader that little instant of kensho insight. Basho (1644-1694) developed the haiku form so that each haiku became a little burst of awakening. It is this that is the essence of haiku, not its number of syllables.

from: <https://web.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum210/coursepack/haiku.htm>

Skillful haiku presents two contrasting images, but the poet does not explain how they are connected, nor reconcile any apparent contradictions. These images operated upon each other to suggest a mood or emotion; but they intentionally leave multiple interpretations open to readers.

One image or word – called *kigo*, in Japanese – suggest season: e.g. Japanese reference to a cuckoo means summer in Japan; place may also be suggested.

One image is a concrete, vivid, and fleeting observation of the object(s) observed in its natural or found state.

Cutting word..marks the division/separation/gap between two key images in a haiku. A master haiku poet would not offer an transitional word(s) to explain how the images relate to each other: the poet would leave an interpretive gap for readers to puzzle over.

chrysanthemum fragance
in the garden, the heel of
a broken sandal
- Basho

Additional references:

A look at the works of a Zen master who disparaged literature despite being a prolific poet

By Shohaku Okumura
Tricycle Spring 2022

https://tricycle.org/magazine/dogen-waka-poetry/?utm_source=Tricycle&utm_campaign=b8c954c6b9-Daily_Dharma_03_26_2022_S&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1641abe55e-b8c954c6b9-307787085

<https://www.thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/files/original/defe4e2f3b1eba9c6bdbf76f37b2af36.pdf>

Haiku: The Heart of Japan in 17 Syllables
by Madoka Mayuzumi

<https://www.thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/files/original/defe4e2f3b1eba9c6bdbf76f37b2af36.pdf>

Zen and the Art of Haiku by Ken Jones
https://www.kenjoneszen.com/haiku-as-buddhist-practice/zen_and_the_art_of_haiku

<https://dogeninstitute.wordpress.com/2016/08/07/mind-moon/>

The Essential Haiku: Versions of Basho, Buson, & Issa
Edited with Verse Translations by Robert Hass
Ecco Press, 1994