

Universal Aesthetic Principles of Haiku Form

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“‘Significant Form’ is the essence of every art; it
is what we mean by calling anything artistic’”

—Langer

John Gould Fletcher, in his Foreword to Kenneth Yasuda's *A Pepper Pod*, expressed his feeling about classical Japanese haiku in this way: “(Haiku) is something that may help to lead poetry back to first principles . . . and should lead some of the more intelligent moderns to cast off the burden of too-conscious intellectualism that they carry.”¹ Fletcher did not stipulate the “first principles” he had in mind at the time he wrote the above comment, but his association with the Imagists leads one to believe that he was referring to the primacy of the image in the concentrated and evocative seventeen-syllable haiku. The early excitement of the Imagists over the classical haiku faded quickly, but not before it exerted significant influence on the poetic practice of many of the greatest twentieth-century American poets, including Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and more recently Gary Snyder.

Enthusiasm has been minimal in academic circles, however, and many Western critics have considered it childlike and unworthy of serious study. In a sense haiku is childlike because of its freshness and immediacy, but this quality merely camouflages its deeply rooted aesthetic principles, and the reasons for its power to attract so diverse a group of students and poets. The longevity of haiku in Japan, where it has enjoyed great popularity for over three hundred years, suggests that it still has much to offer the Western poet and scholar. Many of the most renowned Japanese poets devoted their entire creative energies to the mastery of this seventeen-syllable poem and its related forms, the roots of which go back to the very beginnings of Japanese poetry. The greatest haiku poet, Matsuo Basho, indicates the difficulty of haiku composition in these words, “He who creates three to five haiku poems during a lifetime is a haiku poet. He who attains to ten

is a master. . . .”²

A number of special problems are encountered in a study of this kind, because it must encompass two literary traditions and the corresponding cultural and linguistic differences which separate them. Furthermore, a lack of understanding of the classical tradition has contributed to the polarization which has characterized North American haiku almost from its inception. In twenty short years, since the publication of *American Haiku* in 1963, an astonishing number of “schools” has emerged, so that there is no consensus about any aspect of the appropriate method of writing an English haiku, except that it be brief. In addition, there is little agreement on the nature of the classical Japanese original, and English haikuists have felt comfortable with picking what they like from that tradition and discarding the classical standards that seemed most difficult for them to accommodate.

Essentially, there are two main perspectives: those who believe that haiku must remain within some parameters of the classical prototype, and those who do not. Even among the first group vast differences occur, based on what aspects of the Japanese tradition the poet decides to emphasize. For example, a major conflict persists between those who stress the importance of Zen in haiku and those who choose to emulate the more traditional aesthetic principles of the five-seven-five classical pattern. The view that haiku is a “wordless poem,” and therefore non-literary, has been held by many prominent North American poets since the term was coined by Alan Watts and developed by Eric Amann in his book, *The Wordless Poem*.³ This argument is based on the opinion that haiku is not poetry, but is instead a device for the expression of Zen insight and “nothingness.” Following this line of thought have been the inventors of non-literary haiku, exemplified by “visual haiku,” “language-centered haiku,” and “two-word haiku,” none of which have much in common with the Japanese model, despite their statements to the contrary by their authors.

At the other extreme are those who have reduced haiku composition to a formula, who seem to feel that the pattern of a strict five-seven-five syllable count and the inclusion of a seasonal reference is sufficient to create haiku. Such poets believe that English haiku, by definition, should consist of a rigid pattern based solely on syllable count, while some even support the compilation of a *kigo* dictionary, which would stipulate the words that can be used to refer to a particular season, a practice reminiscent of the most mechanized aspects of the Japanese tradition.

This paper investigates the aesthetic principles which underlie the classical Japanese haiku, both in respect to formal properties, and to the less tangible, perhaps more profound elements that unify the haiku poet's experience and poetic practice. It will be argued here that classical haiku developed the way it did because it was capable of creating a unique experience that no other kind of poetry could simulate. Therefore, it is reasonable that the formal properties of classical haiku are not simply arbitrary, historical accidents, but are intrinsic to the haiku experience, although formal properties alone are not sufficient by themselves to create it.

The above assumptions have clear implications for the creation of haiku in English, or in any other language. It is obvious that English is so vastly different from Japanese that one should not expect to be able to adapt identical prosodic features to this medium without a deeper understanding of the principles which underlie the surface form. The intention is not to argue that another kind of poetry, deriving from classical haiku but deviating from the norm, may not be equally satisfying. The purpose here is to clarify what the parameters of the classical mode are and to analyze their universal aesthetic values.

Although the implications of this analysis are potentially wide-ranging for those interested in writing haiku in a language other than Japanese, there is not space here to explore them in any detail. This essay seeks to dispel the assumption that the classical haiku has derived from arbitrary and language-specific properties of the Japanese tradition only, and therefore can only be viable in another language and culture if the principles of form and substance are largely ignored. The attitude, for example, that haiku is primarily a nonliterary means for the expression of "Zen" experience is prevalent among many haiku enthusiasts in the United States, the first and most influential of these being R. H. Blyth, although there are many others still holding this view.

II.

Like all art, haiku aims at a symbolic representation of human experience, if only because it is created by humans and thus arises from human perception. However, haiku differs from most kinds of poetry in that its subject is only rarely human *per se*; rather, it avoids the direct expression of human thought or feeling. Yet underlying the 300-year survival of haiku

is an art form which expresses the poet's heightened awareness of the moment through the use of "natural," sensory images.

One example of this is the following poem by Basho:

Wild the rolling sea!
Over which to Sado Isle
Lies the galaxy.

tr. Vasuda

Although not without weakness, this poem is a "microcosm" in a more specific way than the term can be applied to most well-realized haiku. In this case the theme of the poem is literally a "micro" view of the cosmos. Its first five syllables manage to express the violence and vastness of the stormy sea, the next seven describe a tiny spot of human habitation, Sado Isle, and the final five direct the reader upward to the universe of stars and planets — the cosmos. Sandwiched between the immensities of sea and sky is Sado Isle, which was well-known to Basho's public as a forlorn refuge for political exiles.

The standard criticism of the "Sado Island" poem is that it lacks "verisimilitude" with the world of everyday reality, because Sado Isle could not actually be seen at night. Critics holding this view argue that the poem is flawed because the inaccuracy damages the poetic illusion by what is essentially a violation of logic. This criticism illustrates well the underlying principle of verisimilitude, which pervades the thinking of classical haiku masters, especially Basho. To such poets haiku has the essential objective of conveying to the reader an immediate, spontaneous, non-analytical experience which represents a moment of sudden insight. In order to achieve this the poet must avoid putting anything in the poem which disturbs the reader's immediate realization of the haiku moment. Thus, in a more general sense, one can say that all of the principles of haiku form and method contribute to the sense of verisimilitude haiku seeks to convey in the response of the reader.

It is customary to define classical haiku form by its tripartite structure of five, seven and five syllables respectively. Technically, it is less accurate to refer to three "lines" of five, seven and five syllables, because haiku was often written in one vertical line (but sometimes two or three). However, the one-line haiku in the vast majority of cases had a clearly discernible structure of three parts, usually marked by syntactic features. Also,

the *kigo*, or seasonal reference, can be found in most classical haiku. Finally, a *kireji*, or cutting word, is used often to mark the caesura or pause, which divides the poem into two parts. Thus, many haiku have a three-part structure superimposed on the two parts marked by the caesura. The aesthetic effects of this are quite interesting and will be treated later.

Regarding the use of subject matter, the haiku poet presents his vision with little or no subjective commentary through the selection of imagery which is as concrete and particular as possible. The poet avoids mention of his feelings or ideas with respect to the "meaning" or significance of the poem itself, or the images it contains. Ideally such interpretive activities are left exclusively to the reader. Basho expresses the desirability of indirectness and suggestiveness in haiku in this way: "The haiku that reveals seventy to eighty percent of its subject is good. Those that reveal fifty to sixty percent we never tire of."⁴

However, all the characteristics of haiku named above should be thought of as norms or tendencies, rather than rigid rules. Perhaps the most essential criterion, though not in itself a sufficient one, is the direct, "objective" presentation of images and the avoidance of intellectual, subjective commentary. It is this approach to subject matter or to experience that sets haiku apart from the Japanese lyric forms which preceded it, and from most kinds of Western lyric poetry. Arising from this direct treatment of objects, usually observed in nature, is the haiku quality of immediacy, its sense of "nowness," which creates an atmosphere of timelessness, inherent in the moment of the poet's perception and transmitted to the reader: the "world in the grain of sand, eternity in an hour" of William Blake. Yet before further elaboration, it may be helpful to look at another example from Basho, chosen from his late work:

The fragrance of plum trees
and the sun up all of a sudden
on the mountain path

tr. Miner

Written in the last year of Basho's life (964), the poem seems so simple, at first reading, that a novice may wonder at the acclaim heaped upon its author, but its simplicity is the key to its power. The effect is immediate, and sensory, appealing simultaneously to the senses of smell, sight and touch — the use of *synesthesia* common in Basho's mature work. However,

unlike his earlier haiku, this one lacks the subdued tones which characterize the famous "Crow" or "Frog-pond" haiku.⁵

With respect to the aesthetic principles referred to above, one can observe that the seasonal reference is implied by the fragrance of the plum tree, with its clear evocation of spring. The seasonal implication adds a universal dimension to the poem and creates, not merely the physical setting, but the tone as well. The economical use of a single word or phrase to establish the background of the poem is highly valued in so brief a form, and without the *kigo* convention it is unlikely that this seventeen syllable poem could have flourished for over three hundred years. The *kigo's* *raison d'être*, however, is its aesthetic function, rather than blind obedience to tradition. The effective use of the *kigo* depends on the universal human response to the season (or an equivalent response to natural environment), thus rendering "subjective" comment *about* the feelings or thoughts of the poet superfluous. Likewise, the precise "meaning" of the poet's aesthetic experience could never be expressed in discursive language, but must be conveyed indirectly by concrete images which allow the reader to construct the experience. For this reason, in the "Plum Tree" haiku, Basho simply gives the reader all that is needed to share in the experience he attempts to evoke: the plum-tree fragrance, the rising sun, the mountain path, and by implication, the spring dawn. In the subtlety and nuance typical of Japanese poetry, one often finds that not even the experience which stimulates the poem is paramount but rather the quality of that experience, a notion which will be elaborated later in the discussion of Japanese aesthetics.

A haiku is more than the sum of its images, and its organization of images must form a coherent whole that stimulates the reader's imagination and in doing so transcends the sum of its parts. This intensification of the moment, arising from the poet's experience and created anew in the imagination of the reader, originates in what Yasuda calls "the haiku moment:"

A haiku moment is a kind of aesthetic moment — a moment in which the words which created the experience and the experience itself can become one. The nature of the haiku moment is antitemporal and its quality is eternal"⁶

Though much more could be said about the "Plum" haiku, the focus of further discussion will be the aesthetic and historical development of haiku

as a unique poetic *genre* – its form and effect on the reader. This example will provide a point of reference to what follows and to other poems cited. Above all else, Japanese haiku is a sharing of perceptions between reader and poet, and their convergence has long been stressed, even in the earliest period of haiku.

III.

The above introduction to the basic elements of the classical haiku must suffice. A great deal more could be said about each of the salient characteristics of the form, but space must limit further discussion to only several salient features, with the simple assertion that deeper investigation will reveal similar, more profound and universal justifications for all of the time-honored principles that have led to the crystallization of the classical haiku. The 5-7-5 structure is one attribute deeply rooted in Japanese literary history, but also reflecting a more universal set of aesthetic principles realized in many art forms and traditions. Another seemingly unique feature of the haiku is its avoidance of metaphor in the usual Western sense of the word. The following pages will attempt to show that these elements, often rejected by English haikuists as incidental and arbitrary, are essential to the creation of the haiku experience, and can be understood best in the context of a more unified theory of the haiku aesthetics. Furthermore, these properties can be adapted to other linguistic media only if their underlying functions are fully appreciated.

The underlying problem facing the would-be American haiku poet is that of determining the extent to which he or she can deviate from the classical haiku form and full set of conventions, while still writing a kind of poem close enough to the original to make the designation “haiku” a meaningful one. The kinds of poems being labeled “haiku” range from two words placed side-by-side on a page to graphic designs. A logical prerequisite to the question of haiku *genre* is an exploration of the underlying aesthetic principles of the classical Japanese haiku form. If it can be shown that factors more complex than mere convention have helped determine and preserve the haiku in its essential classical form for 300 years, then it is reasonable to assume that many of these principles may have their close corollaries in other languages, and in some instances, even in other art forms.

In an effort to clarify the aesthetic principles of the traditional haiku

form and to try to answer the charge that even the most accomplished haiku masters abandoned the normal structure in some of their greatest work, it will be shown that not only in haiku, but in other poetic forms, deviation from the standard can contribute to the defense of the form itself. Conversely, the existence of a form from which deviations are possible may aid the poet in achieving special effects made possible only because tension is created between the deviant poem and the expectations aroused in the reader by the convention. The poet who has the skill and insight to work within the restrictions of convention in new and innovative ways usually stands above his contemporaries. Nonetheless, the master poet also knows when to display virtuosity and when not to do so; he is guided by sound aesthetic principles, even if they are purely intuitive at the time of composition. The stability of the classical haiku form, despite periodic challenges throughout its history, is remarkable, for as Harold Henderson has put it: "About one haiku in twenty-five does not have a strict five-seven-five form. The variation from the rule, however, is usually not more than one syllable."⁷ Examination of those rare but highly valued "deviant" haiku, such as the following example from Basho, reveal an underlying aesthetic justification for their departure from the norm:

The sea grows dark:
The voices of the wild duck
Are palely white.

tr. Ichikawa

Although not reflected in the English translation, the original Japanese reverses the usual seven-five of the last two lines, thereby calling special attention to the unusual "mixed metaphor" which fuses sound and color, and perhaps in the poet's mind was intended to evoke the irregular rhythm of the duck's cries as it flies over the sea. The evocation of the sea and the calls of the duck are expressed in the balanced five-syllable lines, but that initial symmetry is countered by the contrast of "dark sea" with the "palely white" of the final seven-syllable line, creating an asymmetry even more emphatic than the normal five-seven-five pattern. Ichikawa sees it slightly differently, but confirms the justification of the five-five-seven in this way:

The irregular five-five-seven (metre) instead of the usual five-seven-five helps to convey the pulsating quality of this particular

bird-cry floating across the dark sea.⁸

One can safely assume that by inverting the normal pattern of the last two lines, Basho did not do so out of ineptitude, laziness or by accident. This deviation from the norm not only has its own aesthetic justification, but is especially effective because it works against the expected pattern of the form.

The function of *vraisemblance* or the “principle of interaction between one discourse or another,” is discernible in the use of literary convention and its set of associated expectations in the reader.⁹ *Vraisemblance* incorporates the notion of verisimilitude, the relationship a text has with the “real world,” but it refers as well to the relationship the text shares with the conventions established by literature itself, including the knowledge of those conventions possessed by a community of readers.

Having discussed the conventional use of form in principle, and the value of deviation within conventional parameters, the focus will shift to the principles underlying the structure of haiku. The general aspects of symmetry and balance are inherent in the first and third lines of five syllables each, the principle of asymmetry is fulfilled by the longer second line, and by the odd number of syllables in all three lines. However, there are far less obvious dimensions of haiku form which need to be clarified. First is the matter of duration, which has been described by many as the duration corresponding to that of one breath. The connection between art and basic physiological functions is not an uncommon one among artists and critics, but in fact has often been a fundamental assumption of poets, philosophers and other students of the artistic process. Thus it is not surprising that writers on aesthetics frequently refer to the essential characteristics of any work of art in physiological terms. John Dewey, in *Art as Experience*, expresses his belief in the fundamental link between the aesthetic experience and physiological processes:

The biological commonplaces are something more than that; they reach to the roots of the aesthetic in experience . . . the very processes by which life is maintained tend to throw it out of gear with its surroundings. Nevertheless, if life continues and if in continuing it expands, there is an overcoming of the factors opposition and conflict The marvel of organic, if vital, adaptation . . . , actually takes place. Here in germ are

balance and harmony attained through rhythm. Equilibrium comes about not mechanically and inertly but out of, and because of, tension.¹⁰

This close affinity of biological functions and art can also be applied to haiku, which has been frequently referred to as the poem of "being." The brevity of haiku has led to the term "one-breath duration," used by Yasuda and others. Yasuda elaborates on the brevity of haiku form and its capacity to create a unique experience in the mind of the reader: "The 'mental state of tension in the poet' during the kind of experience I am discussing lasts for one breath-length, for as the poet exhales, that in itself draws the haiku moment to its close, and his vision is complete."¹¹ Yasuda relies on the Japanese critic Otsuji for support, ". . . successful haiku can be read again and again without growing stale, for as Otsuji puts it, there is no space between the expression and the insight."¹² Thus, at the completion of this moment of awareness the "oneness" the poet experiences with the object of his contemplation is interrupted by the most basic reminder of his finite condition — the breath-unit. The brevity of haiku also explain why the poem must confine itself to concrete and immediate perception, because there is no room for abstract observations or extraneous comment. The haiku seeks to recreate such experiences in the reader, but here a refinement is necessary. It is not the "experience" itself that is paramount, but the *quality* of such experiences. Therefore, one must make the ancient distinction between everyday truth and "aesthetic truth."

In this discussion several interrelated processes have been stressed: the physiological basis of all finite beings, the nature of experience, and the expression of experience in art. It is not incidental that art has characteristically been associated with the essential nature of living organisms, and it is in this connection that whatever might be considered "universal" in art may find its explanation. Pervasive throughout writings on art and form is the metaphoric linkage of art to life. Such phrases as "living form" and "vital form" all reflect this concept Suzanne Langer stresses the analogy of art and life in this passage:

Naturally, then, their basic forms (of life) are vital; their coming and going is in the pattern of growth and decline, not of mechanical occurrences; their mutual involvements reflect the mold of biological existence. If therefore, a created sensuous

symbol — a work of art — is to be in their image, it must present itself somehow as a version, or projection, of living process: it must be of a logical form commensurable with the essential form of life.¹³

These essential qualities found in life are homeostasis, or in art the adherence to pattern and stability, and growth, or in art the semblance of tension, which finds its corollary in the capacity of a work of art to engender in its viewer or reader infinitely new and varied experiences; thus, the successful poem generates a “new poem” through the imaginative and critical powers of its readers.

Jacques Maritain, the esteemed writer on aesthetics, goes even further than Langer toward a synthesis of physiological processes and the experience of “oneness,” which is essential to the “haiku moment.” He begins by citing Rimbaud:

‘Je est un autre,’ Rimbaud said . . . In poetic intuition objective reality and subjectivity, the world and the whole of the soul, coexist inseparably. At that moment sense and sensation are brought back to the heart, blood to the spirit, passion to intuition. And throughout the vital though nonconceptual activation of the intellect all the powers of the soul are also activated in the roots.¹⁴

In a footnote to this statement Maritain adds, “the poet is literally out of his senses — in exchange, all comes about within him. He is, to the letter, subject and object at the same time. . . .”¹⁵ As this example might suggest, the writings of artists and philosophers from diverse cultures frequently support the notion that there is an inherent and deeply rooted connection between artistic creation and the process of physiological existence. It will be seen that such correspondences between the aesthetic and biological apply to the structure of classical haiku, and the five-seven-five pattern.

When studying the occurrence of structural patterns in both art and nature, many scholars have reported the predominance of the same or similar mathematical proportions. The aesthetics of proportion and harmony in the visual arts of sculpture, painting and architecture, in the progression of musical intervals between notes in ancient Greek music, and in the physiological structures of plant and animal forms have revealed the almost identical ratio of 1.618 found in the Greek “Golden Section.”

This ratio was first discovered by the esoteric and mystical Pythagoreans who believed that the universe was ordered according to mathematical principles derived in part from the "Golden Section," and underlying the classical concept of symmetry. The original basis for the development of this proportion came from the study of musical intervals and chord progressions, but it was later applied by Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance artists in architecture, painting and other plastic arts. However, the discovery of nearly identical ratios of 1.6 in myriad plant and animal forms seems to extend the implications of its presence in art and nature to a universal principle of harmony and organization. Matila Ghyka [in *The Geometry of Life and Art*] makes the following assessment:

The Pythagorean creed that 'everything is arranged according to number,' is justified not only in Art but also in the realm of nature. The use of Geometry in the study and classification of crystal is obvious, but it is only lately that its role in the study of Life and Growth has begun to be recognized.¹⁶

What Kepler called the "Divine Proportion" is described by Ghyka as:

... the 'principle invariant' as remarkable for its algebraic and geometrical properties as for this role in Biology and in Aesthetics. There are then such things as 'The Mathematics of Life' and 'The Mathematics of Art,' and the two coincide.¹⁷

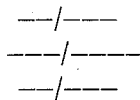
Although the mathematical machinations of the Pythagoreans are not the subject of this study, the principles of harmony and organization which they revealed relate to haiku form in two ways: first, the intuitive connection between art and nature expressed by artists and aestheticians finds verification in a more "scientific" way, because the proportions in question are empirically verifiable; secondly, the ratio of 5 to 7 (1.4) and that of 7 to 12 (1.7) approximate the 1.6 of the Golden Section, and the concept of the "rhythmic half" comes even closer in the proportions of the five-seven-five haiku pattern, as will be seen shortly. The prevalence of the 1.6 ratio need not be discussed at length, but it is safe to conclude that the occurrence of this proportion reflects its harmonious and aesthetically pleasing effect on its viewers or hearers (in the case of music and poetry). It is surely no accident that the approximately same proportion is found in

standard paper sizes, credit cards, room proportions and books, to name only a few.

The mathematical derivations of the Golden Section bear other proportional similarities to the haiku five-seven-five. The formula, $A:B = B:(A+B)$ has its corollary in haiku with an interesting variation: $A:B (5:7)$ is nearly equal to $A+B: A+B+C (12:17)$, or 1.4 almost equals 1.41. In other words, the first line of haiku bears the same durational proportion to the second as the first two lines together bear to the whole: the “mirror image” of the 5-7-5 as it is recited. This reciprocity found in haiku is also the most striking feature of the ratio characterizing the Golden Section. Gregory Doczi, in *The Power of Limits*, confirms the close connection of the reciprocal nature of the Golden Section to what seems to be a pleasing and harmonious effect in the ordinary objects of daily life:

The complete reciprocity of this proportion strikes us as particularly harmonious and pleasing, a fact that has been proven by many scientific experiments since the end of the last century. Preference for this proportion is also apparent in the tendency of paper standards to approximate it or its multiples, including the sizes of paper money, checks, and credit cards.¹⁸

Finally, the concept of the “rhythmic half” is exemplified in the ratio of five to seven. This concept is expressed in the formula $1/2 A = 1/3 B$, or when translated into the five-seven haiku: $1/2 (5) = 2.5$, compared to $1/3 (7) = 2.3$. The three units of haiku, when divided according to the concept of the rhythmic half, would look like this:



Since haiku frequently is recited with slight pauses occurring at or near the points marked above, it is interesting that they tend to come at the points predicted by the rhythmic half. To be more accurate, the pause in the first five-*jion* unit would have to occur after the second or third *jion*, with a slightly longer pause at the end of the fifth *jion*. At any rate, perhaps this demarcation of pauses in the spoken haiku can help explain Basho’s remark that “every word in a haiku can be a *kireji*.”¹⁹

In a chapter entitled "Hellas and Haiku," Doczi links the proportion derived from the Golden Section to various examples of Greek and Oriental Art, the latter including the Japanese "Zen Garden" at Ryoanji, whose five rocks reveal spatial proportions of 1.6. As Doczi puts it:

The shared proportional limitations of architecture reflect a basic pattern-forming principle permeating all Japanese life and art. For instance, haiku poems are limited to seventeen syllables in three lines of five, seven and five syllables. These narrow limits allow a powerful expression through suggestion by detail, a form of the power of limits.²⁰

To summarize, the haiku form serves aesthetic purposes which can be viewed in both historical and conventional contexts, and in more universally applicable principles. The properties of symmetry and asymmetry are combined in the haiku form and its simultaneous sense of balance and tension are analogous to the biological processes of homeostatis and decline. The one-breath duration of the haiku is the length found most appropriate for expressing the experience of the "haiku moment." Various attributes of haiku pattern, when seen in the broader context of Japanese aesthetics, seem consistent with the following comment by the famous Japanese aesthetician and potter, Shoetsu Yanagi:

A pattern is a picture of the essence of an object, an object's very life; its beauty is that of life. . . . The maker of a pattern draws the essence of the thing seen with his own heartbeat, life to life. . . .

Since pattern is a portrayal of essence, all that is non-essential must be stripped away; the pattern is what remains. There is no wordy explanation. . . . Good patterns are simple; if they are cluttered, they are not yet patterns.²¹

The charge has often been made by English haikuists seeking to assail the formalist position that "haiku is not form." It has even been pointed out that *senryu* also has a five-seven-five syllabic pattern, therefore eliminating formal criteria from the definition of haiku. To advance this argument is to miss the point. Haiku *is* not form, but neither is it formless. Haiku *has* form, or rather the classical haiku form, which tends toward a structure of five-seven-five, and serves an aesthetic purpose which enables it to have

unique aesthetic effects. No other poetic structure has been developed to supplant successfully the classical form, although there are now "modern haiku" advocates in Japan who have made genuine artistic accomplishments.

II. Metaphor, Metonymy and Other Tropes

One of the central tenets of classical Japanese haiku has always been that it avoids the use of Western figures of speech such as metaphors and similes, the reason being that such devices are "intellectual" in a broad sense of the word. By this it is meant that the poet "intervenes" in the direct presentation of imagery, because the ordinary metaphor involves a kind of commentary or embellishment of the images that constitute the poem. This holds true so long as "metaphor" is thought of in the usual rhetorical sense, as an implicit or explicit comparison between two images, ideas or entities. Certainly the most explicit type of metaphor, the simile, with its use of "like" or "as" would rarely be found in classical haiku. Likewise, the metaphoric assertion of direct identity between objects is too abstract and intellectual for classical haiku; we find it in the following English haiku by J. W. Hackett:

Searching on the winds,
the hawk's cry
is the shape of its beak.

However, so that misconception can be avoided as much as possible, some basic qualifications and clarifications are needed. The first is that the use of "metaphor" as it relates to rhetorical "figures of speech" must be distinguished from its usage in everyday language and conceptualization. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson make clear in *Metaphor We Live By*, metaphors in the broad sense are not only a part of ordinary speech but they also reflect some basic patterns by which we conceptualize experience. In their words, "*the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of experience in terms of another.*"²² Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson support their thesis with an abundance of examples from ordinary speech, more likely to be heard in a MacDonald's restaurant or read in the newspaper than encountered in a work of literature. Such expressions as "Argument Is War," "Time Is Money," are each metaphors that entail subspecies of other metaphors consistent with these general concepts.

Examples arising from the former metaphoric concept are: "He assailed my argument," "Your position is indefensible," "They attacked my theory." As Lakoff and Johnson say in their opening chapter:

The most important claim we have made so far is that metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words. We shall argue that, on the contrary, human [thought processes] are largely metaphorical. This is what we mean when we say that the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined.²³

The distinction between metaphors as a rhetorical or decorative device and as a fundamental basis for communication is significant to the present context. In haiku the use of metaphor normally occupies a middle ground between everyday usage and its function in poetry as a trope. Although images in haiku may and often should connote more than the object to which they refer, they are frequently not metaphorical in the sense described above — that of direct or implied comparison. Also, the rhetorical use of metaphor usually has the function of isolating or intensifying a quality of an image *in itself*, of making the image startling and rare, for the purpose of stimulating the imaginative powers of the reader. This also has the effect of distancing the image somewhat from its "real world" referent, or *signifie*. However, as shall be seen, the opposite effect is sometimes possible through the use of "figure." Recall, for example, the poem:

The fragrance of plum trees
and the sun up all of a sudden
on the mountain path

tr. Miner

In this translation by Miner there is no overt use of metaphor. Although the reference to plum trees in bloom connotes spring, it does not in any way substitute for it, nor is anything compared to anything else in the poem. However, when another translation of the same poem is examined the case is not so clear:

In plum-flower scent
Pop! the sun appears,
Mountain path

tr. Aitken

Robert Aitken has rendered the poem quite differently, arguing that the Japanese word “notto” has an onomatopoeic effect best approximated by “pop.”²⁴ Whatever the merits of this are, the two renditions have a very different effect on the reader. The distinction lies, at least partially, in the use of metaphor. The first translation can be processed on a “literal” level, meaning therefore that the reader need not imagine anything as anything other than its usual *signifie*. The sun remains nothing but the sun, and does not behave in any deviant or striking way. In Aitken’s translation the sun “becomes” something new, because the sun, as most of us know it in daily life, does not “pop.” The use of “pop” requires at least one, but possibly two, imaginative transformations by the reader: first, he or she is asked to think of the sun as an object that moves like a toaster or Jack-in-the-box rather than in the manner in which it “actually” seems to move. Secondly, the word “pop” may plausibly have audial connotations, which makes the appearance of the sun seem so dramatic that it is realized by the reader as a small explosion. Thus, if one accepts the definition offered by Lakoff and Johnson for metaphor, the second translation of Basho’s poem can only be seen as metaphoric. Even if this is granted, there is yet a further refinement in this type of metaphor, which originates from the technique of onomatopoeia. When sound symbolism is employed in poetry to convey a more direct association between a word and its referent, the effect is such that the “metaphoric” function of the word is mitigated, at least to some extent. This is the reason for using the word in the first place – to “cut through” the linguistic medium to convey a more immediate impression through sound rather than “meaning.”²⁵ In this respect, the Basho plum poem must be a special case of metaphor in that it shortens the distance between the image and its referent.

Another instance of this technique can be found in Basho’s famous “frog” haiku, which has proven almost untranslatable because of the vowel harmony in the [*mizu no oto*] of the last line:

Old pond –
and a frog-jump-in
water sound

tr. Henderson

“Water sound” is a direct translation of the words *mizu no oto*, but does not convey its effect, which is, perhaps, closer to “plop!” However, this

has a comical, silly connotation to the English reader (much like the connotation of the frog itself), and does not convey the subtle mixture of seriousness and wry humor inherent in the original. The same poem will be discussed in the section on convention, but one way to think of it is an attempt by Basho to make silence 'audible,' to borrow an insight from Yasuda. Both the "Plum" and "Frog" use the technique of onomatopoeia, but differently. The former poem requires a kind of semantic shift already described, while the latter example does not. The mimetic function of phonetic symbolism is not metaphoric in itself, in the usual (rhetorical) sense of the word, because it operates primarily (and initially) on a sensory level, rather than on a semantic one.

A third type of usage which comes closer to the usual metaphoric mode in Western poetry can be seen in the following example:

In the rain of spring
An umbrella and raincoat
Pass by, conversing.

tr. Vasuda

This haiku by Boson holds special interest in the present context for several reasons. First is the issue of personification mentioned previously. Since the raincoat and the umbrella are not truly "animated" except in the fleeting perception of the observer, this is not really a case of personification as observable in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," for example, in which the leaves become "ghosts from an enchanter fleeing" fully humanized beings vulnerable to fear and enchantment. It is more accurate to describe the use of raincoat and umbrella as an example of metonymy, through which the people in the poem are suggested by association with the objects they must be carrying or wearing, since these objects in "real life" neither walk or talk.

However, this approach to the poem imposes a system of categorization on the poem from outside, and confuses rather than illuminates the experience which the haiku evokes. As Max Eastman points out in his *Enjoyment of Poetry*:

The treatment in rhetorical theory of figures of speech appears to be one of the greatest blunders that an overspectacled scholarship ever obtruded upon the world. It is due, I believe, to the

fact that all discourse was assumed by Aristotle to be practical in its primary intent; and from the stand-point of a practical intent it [is] indirect to say un umbrella when your logical subject is a man. From the stand-point of a poetic intent, however, an intent to put a man before the eyes *umbrella-foremost*, is supremely direct.²⁶

Eastman's comment is a valuable insight into haiku method as it is exemplified in the Buson "Umbrella" haiku. What remains is to clarify why the device is "supremely direct." Before proceeding with the analysis, it is necessary to look at the original Japanese, because the translation permutes the sequence of images as they were originally presented by Buson:

Harusame ya
 Monogatari-yuku
 Mino to kasa

spring rain
 conversing-go
 raincoat, umbrella

To paraphrase the scene in the original sequencing: "A poet is walking through a spring downpour and two figures pass by quickly, but the poet only hears their voices. He turns to see them, but all he can make out are a raincoat and an umbrella through the rain." Thus, the images as they are put down on the page bear a precise relationship to "external world;" once again, the principle of verisimilitude is important for understanding haiku method.

Although the umbrella and the raincoat definitely connote human beings, they do not substitute for them. On the contrary they are what the poet actually *sees* when he tries to locate the source of voices. Furthermore, the placement of the nouns in the final line, itself a permutation of the usual Japanese word order, serves the purpose of creating a surprise element that constitutes the quality of the experience. The realization of the unexpected, with its element of wry humor, is the "haiku moment," a moment of simple but heightened awareness.

All metaphor has the intention of intensifying "reality," to paraphrase Wallace Stevens. When the traditional metaphoric devices are used in haiku, it is not with a decorative purpose, nor to display the imaginative powers of the poet. The etymological derivation of "metaphor" carries with it the sense of "motion between" two objects or entities. Inherent in this semantic movement is the process of imaginative and intellectual

transformation, or as Stevens expresses it, "the symbolic language of metamorphosis," which "intensifies one's sense of reality."²⁷ At the broadest level it is possible to see all images and all poetry as "metamorphic" by convention. In *The Poetic Image*, C. Day Lewis speaks of this broad application of metaphor:

Yet the image is the constant in all poetry, and every poem is itself an image. Trends come and go, diction alters, metrical fashion changes, even the elemental subject matter may change almost out of recognition: but metaphor remains the life-principle of poetry. . . .²⁸

On the nature of the poetic image as fundamentally metaphorical, Lewis writes:

In the simplest terms, the poetic image is a picture made out of words. An epithet, a metaphor, a simile may create an image; or an image may be presented to us in a phrase or passage on the face of it purely descriptive, but conveying to our imagination something more than an accurate reflection of an external reality. Every poetic image, therefore, is to some degree metaphorical. It looks out from a mirror in which life perceives not so much its face as some truth about its face.²⁹

Thus, the convention of poetry and the poetic image itself implies that there is some underlying similarity or relevance in the verbal construct called a "poem" which has special significance to human life and feeling. The haiku in this sense belongs to the universe of artistic forms, but its method is to leave the process of metamorphosis to the reader as much as possible.

Philip Wheelright in *Metaphor and Reality* distinguishes between two main types of poetic metaphor: epiphor and diaphor. Epiphor, as Wheelright defines it, extends meaning by means of comparison, while diaphor creates "new meaning by juxtaposition and synthesis."³⁰ Thus the epiphor implies a "semantic transference" from one object to another through an implied or explicit assertion of similarity between two essentially different things. For this reason the epiphor must state similarity not normally perceived; it must be fresh and startling, carrying with it "energy-tension." This is the traditional rhetorical view of metaphor, and is

exemplified by such expressions as, “a cricket like a dwindling hearse,”³¹ and “blazing in Gold and quenching in Purple/leaping like leopards to the Sky.”³²

On the other hand, diaphor is not based on so clear a statement or implication of similarity, but is primarily a suggestion of contrast. Wheelwright states that the purest forms of diaphor occur in music and painting where the mimetic factor can be minimal or completely absent. Since Wheelwright believes that mimesis is present to some degree in every use of words, he contends that all diaphoric figures are also in part epiphoric. The diaphoric method is essentially that of simple juxtaposition, as in Pound’s “Metro”:

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

These two lines, on the surface, stand primarily in contrast to one another, but their very juxtaposition in the context of a poem implies cohesion and unity, hence similarity of a kind. In Wheelwright’s words: “the association of ideas is based not on similarity but on emotional congruity.”³³ What he calls “the new meaning” arising from diaphoric usage might be quite close to the “quality of the experience” conveyed by haiku, but there is a distinction to be drawn. The quality of the haiku usually arises from the totality of the poem, rather than the reconciliation of juxtaposed imagery. The “Metro” poem leaves the reader puzzling over the intended relationship between its two lines, whereas a well-realized haiku presents a clear “frame” within which the reader can construct the poem out of which the quality of experience arises. An example from Onitsura (1660-1735)

They blossom, and then
we gaze, and then the blossoms
scatter, and then. . . .

tr. Henderson

Saku kara-ni miru kara-ni hana-no chiru kara-ni

The method used in this haiku is primarily diaphoric, in that its imagery is simply juxtaposed without any overt hint of similarity. “They blossom,” “we gaze,” “the blossoms scatter,” can be read as a plain statement of fact and nothing else. Yet, arising from this process of blossoming and gazing

and scattering, the things-being-viewed and the viewers are bound together by "emotional congruity," by the special quality of the experience of viewing cherry blossoms. One can go beyond this level of response by constructing any number of metaphoric or symbolic interpretations of the poem, such as the epiphoric fusion of the mortality shared by both viewer and blossoms, or the evanescence of loveliness, but these extensions of meaning are not necessary for the initial, "surface level" construction of meaning. The viewing of cherry blossoms is clearly enough presented by the words themselves, which must be amplified in the imagination of the reader but not transformed into something else.

In short, the possibility of epiphoric interpretation is inherent in many haiku, but it is rarely forced on the reader by the poet. This is fundamentally different from the opening line of Blake's "The Tyger," which cannot be reasonably seen as a flesh-and-blood tiger writhing in actual flame, but instead must become something more than a simple tiger that lives and dies like human beings. So Blake's tiger assumes another dimension, but at the same time retains its essential "tigerness." It should also be said that the treatment of the tiger in Blake's poem is primarily symbolic, but this does not negate its metaphoric and epiphoric nature.

Finally, the matter of symbolism in general should be treated. Rather than stray into the dense forest of semantic and semiological terminology, it is more fruitful (and safer) to stay within the cultivated domain of the poem itself. Consider for example, the two poems which follow:

On a withered branch
a crow has settled —
autumn nightfall.

tr. Henderson

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?³⁴

Both poems above refer to animals, which are placed in the larger context of nature, as in the Basho poem, or metaphysics, as in Blake's "Tyger." And the "meanings" of both these poems have been the subject of considerable speculation. The haiku does not contain any of the

metaphoric devices which are usually thought of as “tropes,” or “figures of speech,” while the Blake poem opens with a traditional metaphor — that of the tiger “burning,” which is obviously not intended as a literal reference. The poem goes on to develop what is really its primary focus — the nature of the Creator and his purpose in “framing” the tiger’s “fearful symmetry.” Throughout the work metaphors are interwoven to create a dense fabric that must be interpreted on several levels simultaneously. The concrete images of the tiger, fire, the blacksmith’s tool and labors, and the anatomical references, all combine to create a unified work which poses the ultimate metaphysical question — what is the nature of God? The poem cannot be interpreted coherently without frequent recourse to “metaphoric” interpretation, and to the construction of implied similarities and likenesses, and certainly not without understanding “one kind of thing in terms of another.”³⁵

The Basho “Crow” is quite different in this respect, because its surface level, the images themselves, bear a one-to-one correspondence with everyday experience: the bough is simply the bough, the crow the crow, and the evening the evening. They all come together to form a harmonious “portrait” in tones of grey and black, suggesting, perhaps, the aesthetic quality of *sabi*, or quiet melancholy. The answer to such a question can only be looked for in the words of the poem itself, in the nature of the haiku convention, and in the minds of its readers. The words of the poem present the picture very clearly, although succinctly, so that the reader is given the basis from which to experience the “haiku moment” as freely as possible. Presented with the suggestive black and grey portrait the reader may apply whatever feelings and significance contribute to his enjoyment. A less philosophical reader may not try to draw “meaning” from the poem beyond the composition implied by its imagery, and by the conventions established over time for the reading of haiku. Thus, in the case of the “Crow” haiku, a particular reader may wish to see it as an expression of deep symbolic significance, and may interpret it as such, but all readers are bound by basic rules of logic arising from shared human experience. Although haiku is a poem of ellipsis and suggestion, a kind of poetry that “opens” rather than closes and concludes, it is in itself a unified entity, whose surface level offers a clear “framework.” As shall be seen in the next section, haiku is a poem of “being,” and the essential properties of “being,” or existence, must be included in haiku for it to achieve its end. These elements, like its syllabic structure, are three-fold, and they constitute “when” (the temporal), “where”

(the spatial), and "what" (the objects or images of the poems and their interaction).

III. The Semblance of Being

So far the problem of haiku structure has been treated some what abstractly with only occasional reference to examples and aesthetic principles. It may appear that this approach tacitly condones the separation of form and content. In fact, the point of this inquiry into haiku form is to demonstrate that the fusion of formal properties and other less "measurable" criteria, such as the seasonal element, "objectivity" and the relationship between images, are what make haiku a unique poetic *genre*. This section will explore another aspect of the haiku which will expand the concept of haiku as a poem of "being," and show that a well-realized haiku is not simply a random presentation of images, even if "tension" is created in the reader.

The idea of haiku as a poem of "being" or "nowness" has received considerable attention from English-language haikuists, who often see this as another way of saying that haiku aims at expressing "Zen essence." Randy Brooks, for example, in his article, "Haiku: Poetry of Being," makes the following comments:

Haiku *presents* a moment of the poet's aliveness. . . . Haiku presents only those *high* moments of being intensely alive. Only those moments of intense feeling, intense awareness, and intense acceptance of what is become haiku."³⁶

William Cohen expresses essentially the same opinion when he claims: "the essence of haiku is to express *Being*, the completely unabstracted (non-conceptual) awareness of existence."³⁷

the implications of being and the realization of the haiku moment require

While these statements are legitimate and do get at the essence of haiku, the implications of being, and the realization of the haiku moment require fuller understanding, because through this concept the relationship of the diverse elements of haiku nature can be unified. First the implications of "being" should be considered with respect to its realization or evocation in a seventeen-syllable poem. The poet writes in a temporal frame that has beginning and end. However, during that brief moment of "oneness" with the object, when awareness of self as a distinct entity from other objects is transcended, his finite nature is lost in timeless consciousness, or in a state

of “pure” awareness that does not acknowledge the passage of time. In this sense (rather than in a metaphysical one), the poet glimpses infinity — timelessness. The limit to the duration of this moment is that of one breath, for his very nature, being finite, pulls him away from the state of oneness and back into a temporal consciousness. The physiological necessity of breath itself provides the poet with the durational limitation of his experience, which has been called the “haiku moment.” This experience finds support in everyday, non-artistic ways, such as in the “breath-taking” experiences people have with nature.

The triumph of the haiku form is that it can express so economically the heightened awareness of life itself. It does not do so by gasping at the wonder of existence, nor by philosophical allusions to enlightenment or “time,” although even the best English-language haikuists sometimes seem to think so, as in the following poem by Raymond Roseliep: “time/is what/is still.”³⁸ Rather, the haiku masters achieved, in Langer’s terms, “semblance of being” by including in their poems the three dimensions necessary for any complete experience: a temporal point of reference, a spatial element, and the “what” or “happening” itself.³⁹

The time element in haiku is usually presented through the *kigo*, which has already been discussed at length. The apparent contradiction between haiku as the expression of timeless consciousness and the necessity for a temporal point of reference is explicable through the physiologically imposed limitations of biological experience itself. Thus, one of the most striking aspects of haiku nature is that it can express at once the flow of time, by structuring its elements according to a rhythmic pattern, a *semblance of time*, and yet because of its brevity it can transmit its imagery to the reader almost instantaneously, so that the “whole” can be realized intuitively. The other elements of the haiku, the “what” and the “where,” are necessary to help it convey the quality of experience, because human experience is three-dimensional (at least). Usually each of these elements occupies a “line,” or one of the three units of the poem, and are expressed in a sequence that best meets the requirements of surface clarity and immediacy. Thus, the criterion of verisimilitude, which establishes a close correspondence with the real world, is aesthetically justified by the deeper principle of haiku as a poem of “being.”

Likewise, the principle of verisimilitude explains the purpose of the season word, which places the reader solidly in the simulated environment of external reality. The need for the three elements also helps limit the poet,

and by extension, the reader, in the selection and holistic organization of the imagery. These elements can appear in any sequence, but the criterion of verisimilitude, the demand for clarity, and the surprise element so frequently seen in haiku govern the sequence of imagery. The composition of the haiku is intuitive, however, and it should not be thought that this analysis suggests that the poet always makes a conscious deliberation in writing his poem, although there are many instances of haiku masters rearranging and "shaping" their material to meet one or more of these criteria.⁴⁰ An example of the use of three elements will now be given:

The piercing chill I feel:
 my dead wife's comb, in our bedroom,
 under my heel. . . .

tr. Henderson

The Buson poem serves to illustrate how the three elements of the haiku help the reader realize the haiku moment as vividly as possible. The sense of "when," though given indirectly, dominates the haiku. The "coldness" of winter, with its dual application to physical and emotional cold, creates the tone of the poem, which is intensified by the concrete and truly "chilling" final image of the comb underfoot. It can be correctly pointed out that the chill is metaphorical, which may seem to contradict the main line of argument. However, the significant thing to remember is that the reader can still process the poem on a non-metaphorical, purely physical level, unlike Blake's treatment of the tiger or Shelley's "West Wind." The second line, whose "in our bedroom" provides the spatial element, is equally effective, with its contrast to the first and last lines. In short, the poem is concrete, immediate, and clear in its surface presentation, but highly suggestive in its range of implications. Although on the surface it remains in the "now," it implies a past, a present, and even a future experience through the three-dimensional nature of its images and their inter-relationship.

The necessity for the three elements of where, what and when are emphasized by Yasuda, who further stresses their unity as paramount:

Although the three elements of objects, time, and place are necessary for haiku, it is the relationship among them in a unified whole thing that is haiku. A poet must see how the three

elements exist, in one, as part of a whole, without which they do not become an experience but only remain in a relationship to another. They are in that case simply placed side by side or 'gathered together.'⁴¹

This sense of relationship and inevitability in the placement and selection of imagery may be what is most difficult in the composition of haiku. It is this characteristic which is most frequently lacking in English-language haiku, because the full implications of haiku as a poem of "being" have not been recognized. In this context the concept of "crystallization," as discussed by Yasuda, is useful because it relates to both the haiku form and the inclusion and placement of the three elements. Regarding the relationship that exists between the poet's experience and its realization in haiku, Yasuda writes:

In and around the world through which the haiku poet attempts to form the world of his aesthetic experience, must flow the feeling of the experience. It alone will control the selections of words, their order, sound, rhythm, and cadence. When all these elements within a group of words are bound in and with emotion, the resulting haiku is a crystallization. Much as crystals are held together by the inner force of their pattern, so that a crystallized haiku is held together by the organic, emotional force of the experience.⁴²

It is not sufficient for a haiku to be suggestive and "open," it must "open" within restraints provided by the text and the conventions established for reading haiku. Otherwise, haiku might as well be considered a kind of Rorschach test, which the reader uses to reveal his or her hidden personality quirks. Indeed one branch of the "reader-response criticism" emphasizes the psychological dimensions of reading literature, almost irrespective of the text itself.

The "minimal haiku," which often reduce the form to a skeleton version of the 5-7-5 classical form, lack the fullness of a well-realized poetic experience. The poet in this case has left everything to the reader, without providing a clear framework for evoking the type of immediate experience that constitutes the haiku moment.

The relationship between the convention of literary *genre* and the role of readers is of necessity a close one, because it has been suggested that

the very definition of a "poem" or "novel," for example, has as much to do with the attitudes of readers as with anything that lies in the text. The numerous attempts to differentiate poetry from prose on "objective" linguistic grounds have failed because no objective tests have been devised to account for the variety of readers who ultimately must make this judgment.

Haiku can be most fruitfully viewed as occupying a middle ground between text-orientation and reader-response, exemplified by the "transactional" theory of Louise Rosenblatt, who states her approach to the study of literature as follows:

The text as a set of verbal symbols becomes, we have said, not only the stimulus but also the public control by which we check the relevance of what we have conceived. The "close" reading of the New Critics centered on the text. *The transactional view also assumes close attention to the words of the text. But it assumes an equal closeness of attention to what that particular juxtaposition of words stirs up within each reader.*⁴³

The role of convention in respect to classical haiku form was discussed in the early part of this section, where it was seen that the existence of "norms" in the minds of readers helps create aesthetically pleasing effects, even in cases of deviance from the usual pattern. This is not to imply that great poetry requires a "norm," but merely that the existence of one differentiates the poems which adhere to it from those which do not. This may seem to belabor the obvious, but in the case of English-language haiku this view is quite controversial.

Besides that of form, classical haiku developed many other conventions which enabled its "community of readers"⁴⁴ to share more fully in its potential to communicate the "semblance of life."⁴⁵ The principle of the *kigo*, often dismissed as an archaic and outdated convention, has been discussed. The Japanese reader is often highly sensitive to the nuance possible in the use of *kigo* convention, so that the presence of a particular animal or flower, for example, might trigger a response inherent in cultural or traditional literary symbols, but not specified by the poem itself. Thus the mention of "crane" or "frogs" might have far-reaching associations not stipulated in the text. Although this and other haiku conventions can be reduced to a "mechanism," it was seen that the *kigo*

is essential for most well-realized haiku, in Japanese or English. Again, no principle is rigid or inflexible in art, but the poet must be guided by the principles of the *genre* he has chosen to emulate, or he should abandon the *genre*.

The matter of haiku conventions is important for the English haiku movement if it has any chance of surviving as a viable and lasting poetic mode. It is clear that the English haiku must develop its own form and its own set of conventions, but they must be principled developments based on an understanding of the classical haiku and modeled on the aesthetic function of the convention at work in the prototype.

It is possible to see a hierarchy of conventions in the classical haiku which unify its seemingly separate and arbitrary principles. The most basic principle of the classical haiku lies in its nature as a poetry of "being," which was discussed in the previous pages. Since it aims at creating the sense of vitality inherent in the experience of the "haiku moment," it must make maximum use of the one-breath duration, of the tension and symmetry in its five-seven-five structure, and of its organization of imagery. The "semblance of being" principle also explains the need for the *kigo* and what has been called "verisimilitude." In turn, verisimilitude can cast light on the special use of metaphor in haiku, or rather, its avoidance of the usual rhetorical figures in Western lyric. That such principles as these are at work in the haiku has been demonstrated throughout this study, but what is still needed is a discussion of the most aesthetically effective approach to similar classical principles in the English haiku tradition.

Notes

1. John Gould Fletcher, Foreword to Kenneth Yasuda's *A Pepper Pod* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1976), pp. ix-x.
2. Quoted by Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1957), p. 35.
3. Eric Amann, *The Wordless Poem* (Toronto: Haiku Society of Canada, 1965).
4. Yasuda, *Op. Cit.*, p. 6.
5. Harold Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 20.
6. Yasuda, *Op. Cit.*, p. 24.
7. Henderson, *Haiku in English* (New York: Japan Society, 1965), p. 4.
8. Sanki Ichikawa, *Haikai and Haiku* (Tokyo: Nippon Gaikujutsu Shinkokai, 1958), p. 17.
9. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 139.

10. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Mentor, Balch, 1934), p. 14.
11. Yasuda, *Op. Cit.* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1957), p. 33.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
13. Suzanne Langer, *Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 46.
14. Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1953), p. 50.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 312, n. 9.
16. Matila Ghyka, *The Geometry of Life and Art* (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1946), pp. xi-xii.
17. *Ibid.*, p. vi.
18. Gregory Doczi, *The Power of Limits: Proportional Harmonies in Nature, Art and Architecture* (Boulder and London: Shambala Publications, Inc., 1981), pp. 2-3.
19. Personal interview with Professor Kenneth Yasuda, Professor of Japanese Literature, Indiana University, May 10, 1983.
20. Doczi, p. 125.
21. Shoetsu Yanagi, *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty* (New York: Kodansha International Ltd., 1972), p. 114.
22. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 5.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
24. Robert Aitken, *A Zen Wave: Basho's Haiku and Zen* (New York: John Weatherhill Inc., 1978), pp. 31-32.
25. Here I use the word "meaning" in a general sense to refer to what is commonly thought of as "content." It should be clear from previous comments that with haiku "meaning" signifies everything that the reader experiences through reading the poem.
26. Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Poetry* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 77.
27. Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), p. 118.
28. C. Day Lewis, *The Poetic Image* (London: Alden Press, 1947), p. 17.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
30. Philip Wheelwright, *Metaphor and Reality* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 72.
31. Richard Wilbur, "Exeunt," *Things of This World* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), quoted by Wheelwright, p. 75.
32. Emily Dickinson, "No. 228," *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Little, Brown and Company, 1960), quoted by Thomas Johnson, ed., *Final Harvest* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), p. 28.
33. Wheelwright, p. 80.
34. William Blake, "The Tyger," *The Complete Writings of William Blake: With All The Variant Readings*, ed., Geoffrey Keyens (London: Nonesuch Press, New York: Random House, 1957), p. 214.
35. Lakoff and Johnson, p. 5.
36. Randy Brooks, "Haiku: Poetry of Being," *Cicada*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (1980) p. 5.
37. *Ibid.*, quotes William Cohen, "The Calligraphy of the Cosmos: The Essence of Haiku," *Literature East and West*, Vol. 9, no. 3 (1965), p. 225.
38. Raymond Roseliep, *The Still Point* (Memomonie, Wisconsin Uzzano, 1979),

- p. 7.
39. Yasuda, *Op. Cit.* This discussion is an expansion of Yasuda's treatment of the three elements in haiku, pp. 41-60.
 40. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
 42. "Reader-response criticism" is a cover term which refers to critical approaches that emphasize the reader rather than the "text."
 43. Louise Rosenblatt, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern University Press, 1978), p. 137.

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