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# The 6th WHA Japan Conference

## April 29, 2011, Tokyo

by Kuniharu Shimizu

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A terrible thing does happen. The disaster that happened in the north eastern region of Japan on March 11 was in such an enormous magnitude that it would be written with bold letters in the history of this small island nation.

They say there is nothing that occurs suddenly, be it good or bad. Even the earthquake, which is usually viewed as sudden occurrence, is no exception. According to the scientists, the earth accumulates so called stress daily from the push and pull of the ground plates, and at one point, the stress is released, hence the earthquake. The nuke power plant accident, too, seems accidental, but various information reveals the accumulation of unwise decisions and half measures done over the years, and these led to the disaster.

What happened this time seems to reflect the daily steps that this nation has taken over the years, during which time we all have become less conscious of the fact that this land actually sits on a huge but shaky tofu (bean curd). The tofu has no mind, thus it never minds the people living on it, when it releases the stress. On the other hand, we human have mind, thus we should use it wisely, never forgetting the tofu land, learning well from this disaster, and make this country a better and safer place to live.

Despite the gloomy atmosphere in the society, The 6th WHA Japan Conference was held successfully. More than 20 members participated. Though the society in general is unsettled yet, WHA will hold its bi-annual

conference (WHAC6) this September. Also, the 2nd Tokyo Poetry Festival (TPF2) will be held jointly with WHAC6. We members need to concentrate in carrying out this joint event.

At the Japan Conference, the vice directors of TPF, Chuei Yagi and Masayuki Tamura were introduced to us. After that, each participating members did self introduction, and shared thoughts and news, which eventually became quite substantial discussion on present day haiku. As for the World Haiku Anthology 2011, it was noted that better translation of haiku was evident throughout the volume. Better translation is indeed essential in conveying the poetic core of the haiku. Such translation does not appear suddenly, it only appears as the result of many trials, of accumulated effort such as World Haiku Anthology series.

It was requested that the monthly haiga contest would hold a special contest to commemorate the WHAC6. I am in charge of the contest, and my plan is to hold the special contest only online. I will not consider exhibiting the submissions in printout form.

WHA dispatched its representatives to haiku related events world over. Toshio Kimura made a report on “World Haiku Festival, Pecs 2010”, and Ban’ya Natsuishi on “International Conference, Soul University” and “Sha’ar Poetry Festival”. In this July, Natsuishi is scheduled to attend “Medellin Poetry Festival”, Colombia, and will promote the joint event of TPF and WHAC.

Reports on domestic haiku events: “Evening of Haiku Reading and Strings” (at Yona, reported by Tange), “Solo Haiku Live 17” (at Shinjyuku, reported by Natsuishi), “Haiku Reading, Harp and Shakuhachi flute” (at Fujimi, reported by Nomura).

The last subject of the conference was about TPF2, and details of the event was explained by Hideki Ishikura, the secretary-general. He emphasized the importance of TPF as a rare opportunity in Japan to have the literal exchange among the poets from around the world.

In the end, Sayumi Kamakura, the treasurer of WHA, made a financial report.

The conference was followed by haiku readings by members. We were all affected by the disaster one way or another so many haiku read were about it. Especially notable was many haiku submitted from world over. These haiku were read by Natsuishi, Kimura, and Hotta in various languages. One of the attendees, Masanori Matsuda was from the affected area, and he presented his haiku written on flip boards, showing them one by one as he read them. I thought that was a good presentation. One of his haiku:

「春岬いつまで待っても帰らない」

A cape in spring

waiting, waiting but

no sign of return (translated by Kuniharu Shimizua)

I made a haiga for this haiku. Together with seven other haiga I made, this one will be published on the autumn issue of “Jelly Bucket”, a literary magazine published by East Kentucky University.

Other haiku that I noticed:

「手のひらのこの水が国を壊すとは」 by Sayumi Kamakura

This water in my palm

what is the water

destroying my country

「自在に春を操り桜咲かせたのはだれ」 by Tadato Nakatsuka

Who's done it,

manipulating spring

and let flowers bloom? (translated by Kuniharu Shimizu)

Each reading can be viewed on YouTube, which can be accessed via WHA website, Movie link.