

The 9th WHA Japan Conference

Yoshihiko Furuta

On 29 April 2014, the 9th WHA Japan Conference was convened in Tokyo. The conference commenced with a screening of a Spanish haiku reading by Eizo Ogusu, one of the association's translation staff.

It was followed by Ban'ya Natsuishi's opening speech in three languages, Japanese, English, and French, as well as his report on the annually issued *World Haiku*. This year's issue, No. 10, contains a multilingual anthology of haiku written by 188 poets from 40 countries and 5 haiku criticisms. Though Japanese and English occupy the largest space, the book is purely multilingual; this year, it has newly welcomed Polish and Tagalog to its long list of languages.

The WHA holds its world conference every two years. Last year, its 7th conference was held in Medellin on the backdrop of rising popularity of haiku in the Spanish-speaking world. The 8th world conference is bound to be held in Tokyo next year, and the establishment of an organizational committee has been announced at the session.

Subsequently, results of last year's 3rd Japan-Lithuania Online Haiku Contest, hosted by the Embassy of Japan in Lithuania under the auspices of the WHA. The first prize winner of the Japanese haiku division was Hirokazu Aihara, who just passed away this February; attendees of the conference took a moment to commemorate him. There was also an announcement regarding this year's 2nd City of Medellin Haiku Contest, urging for more proactive entries. The WHA has become one of the contest's host organizations.

Then came the annual budget report and notification of a haiku event to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam, in mid-September of this year, as well as a proposal to limit the number of poets to be included in *World Haiku 2015 No.11* to 200 even though there have already been submissions from 90 poets. Finally, there were discussions on the association's future management policy and reports by its members' regarding their activities.

Following the Japan conference, the 3rd World Haiku Seminar was held, offering an enriching experience to all attendees. The first half was criticisms on haiku anthologies and haiku criticisms. Sayumi Kamakura reviewed Chiaki Nagamine's *Imamo Okiniwa Miraiari: Critique on Kusatao Nakamura's First Haiku Collection* (Honami Syoten, 2013); Naoto Tsuchiya reviewed Smajil Durmisevic's *Fragrance of the Wild Rose* (Zenica, 2013) (Ban'ya Natsuishi read the review on Tsuchiya's behalf); Kika Hotta reviewed *Haiku in English* (Norton, 2013), an anthology of English haiku; Hideki Ishikura reviewed *Selected 100 Chinese Kanpai Poets* (Sensho Shokyoku, 2013). Also, comments were made on Sayumi Kamakura's trilingual *Seven Sunsets* (Cyberwit.net, 2013), Ban'ya Natsuishi's trilingual *Black Card* (Cyberwit.net, 2013) and his French *Cascade du future* (L'Harmattan, 2014) by the respective authors.

Bosnia a country
of man, stone and dreams
a divine omen

Smajil Durmisevic, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Thunder in the mountains –
the iron
of my mother's love

Jack Kerouac, USA

The jade willow sweeps my shoulder
I deeply and intimately talk of karma to my wife
We both think of our youthful days
“Jade Willow” by Li Mang, China

Meeting a whale
after seven sunsets
and six capes

Sayumi Kamakura, Japan

Wall of mud –
electricity plunges a village
into insomnia

Ban'ya Natsuishi, Japan

The second half of the seminar was a joint review of *World Haiku 2014 No.10* (Shichigatsudo, 2014). Building on comments by Hideki Ishikura, Yu Soneda, Yugyo Hashimoto, Ryuji Yamagishi, and Ban'ya Natsuishi, attendees discussed the characteristics of haiku written in different languages.

At the station, wild winds stare at
A desolate country.
Black purebred Arabian horses

Jacob Kobina Ayiah Mensah, Ghana

Poor thief
he forgot the haiku
and the frogs

Diente de León, Colombia

From which straw
and which fire?
The earth full of ashes

Lê Thị Bình, Vietnam

One of the rainbow colors
begins to take
an independent path

Shinji Noya, Japan

The colony;
a strong cold wind
on a straight road

Ichitaro Yamamoto, Japan

a boat fishing
from bush to bush
of fragrant immortality

Božena Zernec, Croatia

The history of Serbian haiku has been included in *World Haiku 2014*

No.10 as one of the criticisms, but there were voices from attendees requesting histories of haiku of various countries and a world history of haiku rhetoric. There were also voices of concern regarding the obvious failure to transmit enough and precise information on Japanese haiku to the overseas; many non-Japanese citizens' notion of haiku is the classical haiku in the style of the Edo Period; much of haiku theories and haiku histories distributed overseas are imprecise and raise the eyebrows of Japanese citizens.

After the seminar, attendees enjoyed a joint haiku reading session accompanied by the morin khuur (Mongolian cello) performance by Urugun from Inner Mongolia. The highlight was readings by Catalina Tomiya from Colombia of haiku written by various Hispanic poets.

To my ear a stone's soliloquy Yu Soneda

Evening Venus like Li Bai shines in the western sky
Chinese winds announcing flowers' blossoming cross the sea and blow across its homeland
Chinese plum and Japanese cherry blossoms enduringly drink together

Hideki Ishikura

Pyracantha:
the meeting point
of cats apt to disappear

Yoshihiko Furuta

Every three minutes
loaches
look at the sky

Houbu Umesawa

Tutankamen
waits for spring –
even after my death

Shuichi (Hansuiho) Watanabe

Under white fishy clouds
I am alone
on a terrace of a coffee shop

Fumi Hashimoto

Sneaking underneath the elevated railway tracks
a flower petal
on a flower petal

Yuki Kajiwara

Through a telephoto lens
a breath
of a blossom

Maki Osato

Fruit
at the bottom
of tropical sleeping

Ichitaro Yamamoto

Snow falling from gods' trees
is the white

of a wedding dress

Tadato Nakatsuka

A lot of dragonflies
are skimming the waterside
opening its doors

Yugyo Hashimoto

Out of the hose
water is born, and then
the earth is born

Sayumi Kamakura

In a sandstorm
my head is blown
into innumerable slopes

Ban'ya Natsuishi

Si Dios no bailara,
la tristeza
interrumpiria su sueño.

If God didn't dance,
sadness
would interrupt his sleep.
Omar Gallo, Colombia