

## World Haiku, on Its Tenth Anniversary—The 5th WHA Japan Conference

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In September 2000 World Haiku Conference was held in Slovenia and in December in the same year World Haiku Association (WHA) was founded officially. This year in 2010 WHA has attained its tenth anniversary, and for those ten years it has tried to spread haiku throughout the world. In consequence, now haiku has been recognized as a international poetic form in more countries. Also in Japan as a result of its steady activities, a kind of conservative old-fashioned misunderstanding, such as ‘haiku can be appreciated only by Japanese people and therefore haiku written in other than Japanese language cannot be haiku,’ has been melting away gradually.

The 5th WHA Japan Conference was held in April 2010 in Tokyo. There were around forty turnouts chiefly from Japan, including about ten from Mongolia, Latvia, Croatia and Germany. The program contained a conference, haiku reading with instrumental accompaniments and a social at a restaurant.

The part one was a conference. It started with a speech by the WHA Director Ban’ya Natsuishi. He told that this was the tenth anniversary of WHA, and in 2011 the 6th World Haiku Conference would be held in Tokyo. The multi-language haiku publication World Haiku, edited by WHA, reached the 6th number and contributors were increasing. It was reviewed in the Croatian newspapers. Last year, in 09, ‘Druskininkai Poetic Fall and the 5th World Haiku Association Conference 2009’ in Lithuania was successful. This summer WHA supports World Haiku Festival in Pècs, Hungary and

some members of WHA will join the Festival. Next, Sayumi Kamakura, an accountant, made a financial report.

After the addresses, all the poets present talked about their recent conditions. Natsuishi said that haiku are becoming a worldwide poetic form at a high level but Japanese people concerned with haiku may not realize that. There would be other artistic possibilities of haiku if haiga, haibun and renku, or collaboration with music developed more. Sayumi Kamakura told that in Lithuania they tried to rear younger poets however here in Japan not so, and WHA could help them. Kuniharu Shimizu talked about recent condition on haiga: in these days haiga with photos had increased reflecting spreading digital cameras. He also suggested possibility of electronic books (in his case, Amazon Kindle) which he recently got personally. Bin Akio said he took charge in public relations. As for poets present from abroad, we had Irena Morskaja from Latvia, and Andreas Preiss from Germany as a WHA intern for researching on haiku. There were some Mongolian poets: B. Bold wrote haiku in Mongol. He said that he tried to translate other Mongolian poets' haiku into Japanese but they were writing too many haiku to translate. J. Bat-reedui told that they had not any haiku society in Mongolia and he wanted to found one by himself. Kheshigt wrote other poems than haiku, so he said next time he tried haiku.

In the part two a haiku reading was held on the stage set up next to the site of the conference. As for haiku works read by poets, I want you to refer to "World Haiku 2010" because of limited space. Now the Croatian Ambassador Drago Stambuk joined, poets present read their own haiku in Japanese or in their mother tongue with sometimes in English, giving their individual haiku expressions. This time haiku were read in collaboration with music: first to the cello accompaniment played by Chikara Suda, then to the splendid violin played by Paul Florea from Romania. Attendees surely could feel another possibility of haiku expression in these collaboration

In the evening we had a social gathering at a restaurant. In the intervals between nice Western dishes, Tsolmon played the powerful music on the Morin khuur (a kind of Mongolian small 2-string cello). Then a Mongolian female singer Gegen-Uyanga came in and sang traditional songs. Such touching notes induced the two instrumental players, who had accompanied at the reading, to take their own cell and violin again in their hands, and soon began an unexpected improvised trio. The venue seemed to turn into a different space, as a Mongolian ger (yurt, i.e. tent) or an European bar restaurant where music never stopped. There started another haiku reading by all of the poets at the place and they realized that the world could be united in haiku. At the end of the party all participants promised to meet again at the WHA conference next year.