Meeting of January 13, 1969—excerpts from the Minutes[1]

NAMING THE HSA

The question of a name for the organization was discussed—two suggestions being "The Haiku Society of America" and "The Haiku Study Group." Although the former name might sound somewhat pretentious, Mr. [Nicholas] Virgilio pointed out that if the group held open contests, etc., such a name would be of value in getting publicity. It was also pointed out that if, as has been suggested, the membership becomes open to people outside of the New York area, then such a name might be appropriate.

WORKSHOP
VIRGILIO

[One of the poems discussed at the meeting was] Mr. Virgilio's:[2]

Lily:
out of the water …
out of itself.

IMAGE

[This] led to a wide-ranging discussion of "what is an image," the use of images by Bashô, especially in the famous pond-frog haiku and in the "temple bell.… "Mr. [William J.] Higginson spoke of the great variety in the haiku of Bashô, and he suggested that one should look to see how a poem (haiku) works—the use of sound, the juxtaposition of images, the development of tension. Mr. Henderson's insistence that a haiku must be, first of all, a poem was brought out.

ZEN

Without getting into the question of the place of Zen in haiku, Mr. Higginson presented his belief that, just as the Japanese haiku grew out of a subtle religious tradition, so haiku in English should grow out of a definite aesthetic stance. An acceptance of an experience for itself; [the] relationship between the person seeing and the thing seen.

FORM

Also touched on: haiku in relation to renga; universality of haiku; time units and syllables. Mr. Higginson told briefly of his analysis of reading times for a group of Japanese haiku as contrasted with their English translations—on an average the English versions took from 50–100% longer. After some discussion, Professor [Alfred] Marks predicted that in a couple of centuries haiku in English would have settled down into a pattern of 5–7–5 syllables, simply because of the momentum this pattern has already acquired.

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[1] Adapted from *A Haiku Path,* 26.
[2] Adapted from *A Haiku Path,* 26–27.

NATURE
HAIKU MIND

In response to a question about use of nature and season, Mr. Higginson commented that in Japan today haiku writers show an awareness that life is no longer so closely connected with “nature” but that the best haiku are still written out of the whole “aura” of where the poet is at the time. Mr. Virgilio, who earlier had suggested that all members of the group write haiku daily, recommended that the works of Blyth, Henderson, and Keene be studied for an understanding of the “haiku mind.”