NOTICE TO MEMBERS: THIS OUTER SHEET CONTAINS YOUR BALLOT! IN ORDER FOR YOUR VOTE TO BE COUNTED WE MUST HAVE IT BACK BY 26 JANUARY 1977. Please attend to this as soon as you can. Thanks.

ALL-MEMBERS WORKSHOP HAIKU for January 1977:

Please send your comments 'by the numbers' on the poems below to "HAIKU SOCIETY WORKSHOP, c/o Japan Society, Inc., 333 E 47th St., NYC 10017". Subject to space and duplication, comments will be published in the January Minutes & Proceedings. Those attending the meeting are also asked to BRING their comments IN WRITING. (This will make it easier to produce these Proceedings faster, and get them to everyone faster.) The poems are presented anonymously for obvious reasons. If you wish your comments also to be presented anonymously, please say so; otherwise we will print your name. The material below is part of the November 1976 Minutes & Proceedings of the Society, and covered by copyright (which reverts to the authors). Authors names are on file with us.

1]
Listening
to silence . . . then
a whippoorwill. . . .

2]
on the gray window
of the small empty store
S A L A D A

3]
Shore birds mark the sandy soil
With flower shapes and fallen stars
Then again the tide evolves

4]
Iced field
only the shadow
of an owl's shriek

5]
Long summer dusk—
taking a shine to her lover
Ms Firefly

6]
halting on the gangplank—
in the crowd ashore
the Greek cap

7]
How every wave
molds sand to the old log's shape . . .
hot, humid morning.

8]
Egyptian relic,
encased beneath a Renoir—
connecting life-times...

9]
On my life's terrain
these small enthusiasms
are survival's rain

—Author asks: "Is this too...too?"

Interesting criticism (what you like about the poem & why, what you dislike & why) and suggestions for improvement are solicited; this is a workshop, not an "I like that!" or theoretical discussion session.

MINUTES & PROCEEDINGS 18 November 1976

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Please see the outer sheet for the ballot which will elect officers for 1977 and instructions for the ALL-MEMBERS WORKSHOP. Note next meeting date:26 January 1977 WEDNESDAY. Please examine the ballot now and mail it immediately so we have it in time. (And my apologies for the delay of this M&P--autumn's illnesses have carried on into winter. WJH)

Minutes of the Business Meeting

The meeting was opened at 6 pm by Pres. Higginson in the Gallery at Japan House. Members present were Tony Suraci, Bernard Einbond, Cor van den Heuvel, Wm. J. Higginson, Penny Bihler, Alan Pizzarelli, Edythe Polster, Frances Levenson, Dorita Kerner, Yasko Karaki, and Carl Fredricks. The following guests also attended: John E. Koch, Jr, William R. Haseltine, Shin Higuchi & guest, Frederika Blankner, Jim Strickland, Dorothea Neale, Hiro Sato, Alice Halliday, and Bessie Wherry Noe. Marion Richardson also attended.

The Minutes & Proceedings of 21 October were presented; Marion Richardson noted that in the discussion on page 4, referring to Yasko Karaki's poem, she did in fact prefer the author's version rather than her briefer version; the M&P were accepted as corrected.

Reports:
Though unable to attend the meeting, Treasurer Drivas reported an on-hand balance of approximately $500, and noted that there are still some 1976 mailings to be paid for.
Cor van den Heuvel gave the Nominating Committee report:

for President, Carl Fredricks
for V. Pres., Alan Pizzarelli
for Secretary, Yasko Karaki

Van den Heuvel noted that there had been no success as yet in obtaining a nominee for Treasurer. Frances Levenson suggested that the Society have a Membership Secretary, whose responsibilities would be to collect dues from the members, keep the membership roster up=to-date and note address changes, etc., and generally correspond with members. Thus the Treasurer would be relieved of keeping up a membership list, and could devote full energies to the bookkeeping and financial planning.

It was moved that the President be empowered to appoint a Membership Secretary with duties as described above. Seconded and carried. Note this is not an elective office, and may be held by an out-of-town member. Members interested in taking on this position should address a note to that effect to the President, Haiku Society of America, 333 E 47th St., NYC 10017. It looks like a time-consuming, but also interesting job, and would perhaps be ideal for a member who is not immediately surrounded with haiku devotees. In the meantime, we still need nominees for the position of Treasurer, preferably someone who will be able to attend the meetings in NYC.

Welcome to New Member Alice Halliday, 3 Clement Road, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755.

Member Carl Fredricks has a new book of haiku, Of, available from Circle Publications, P.O.Box 34, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071, at $2.95.

Guest Dorothea Neale, Director of the NY Poetry Forum, announced a number of programs sponsored by her organization, including a haiku workshop presented by Jim Strickland 4 Dec 76. Dr. Fredericka Blankner, an original charter member of HSA who has recently returned to NYC, announced that she had uncovered the Yuku Haru Haiku Society, Kiyoshi Tokutomi, Coordinator, 490 N 5th St., San Jose, California, but was unable to give details of their activities.

The Business Meeting was adjourned at 6:25 for the program.

PROCEEDINGS

Our guest this evening is Hiroaki Sato, a fine and prolific translator of Japanese poetry into English. His work, which has drawn high praise from Burton Watson and Gary Snyder, includes Spring & Asura: Poems of Kenji Miyazawa (1973) and Mutsuo Takahashi, Poems of a Penisist (1975), both from Chicago Review Press, 172 E. Walton Place, Chicago, IL 60611. Montemora 2 (summer 1976) contains his translations of 7 additional poems by Miyazawa, and a sequence of 59 tanka by Mokichi Saitō, "Mother Dies". He is currently at work on complete books of haiku by Santōka and Hōsai, two major early 20th century haiku poets.

"Haiku As Seen By A Translator"

For a long time I have been troubled by one aspect of Japanese haiku: its frequent inability to stand on its own. What I'd like to do this evening is to review what happened up until Basho (1644-1694), and to see that haiku was not meant to be an organic entity.

Before Masaoka Shiki (1868-1902), haiku was hokku. Hokku, "starting verse," was the opening part of a renku or renga. Ren means "serial, connecting, or linking", so renku is "linked verse" and renga "linked tanka" (ga being a phonetically changed pronunciation of ka, which in this case means tanka). The difference between renga and renku, which came into being after it, is in content, not in form. Both consist of varying numbers of alternating 5-7-5-syllable and 7-7-syllable units, usually composed by two or more people. For convenience I will use renga for both renku and renga.

A unit of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables makes a tanka, and tanka was the predominant and most popular verse form in Japan until the seventeenth century. Then, hokku--or haiku as we now know it--became its powerful competitor. There were, of course, other forms. Among them were choka, the "long song," sedoka, the "repeat song," and katauta, the "Half song." To point out what is usually pointed out, there are two things that are immediatly noticeable about these early short "songs." One is that they are all various combinations of 5 syllables and 7 syllables. The other is the brevity of the forms. Even choka, the long song, seldom had more than one hundred units of fives and sevens. Sedoka, the repeat song, consisted of two units of 5-7-7, and katauta, the half song, was made up of a single unit of 5-7-7.

When you look at these songs, you will notice three things. First, knowledge of the circumstances of composition was assumed. For example, in the Kojiki ("record of ancient things," completed in 712 A.D.), Prince Yamato, apparently exhausted from subjugating barbarians in distant countries, remembers his homeland, and sings this song:

> Yamata is the most exalted of this land.
> Layer upon layer of blue fences, the mountains, enclose it,
> Yamato is beautiful.

One may be tempted to think that this was a lyrical outburst on the part of Prince Yamato, but in reality, it was probably a formal, ritualistic song, which people, as they entered the province, sang to flatter its rulers. It

is in irregular form of 4-7-5-4-6-8 syllables. The following song from the Manyoshu ("collection of ten thousand leaves," completed in 784 AD), attributed to Princess Nukata and said to have been composed in 658, is in the strict tanka form of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables:

> At Nikitatsu, to get on board, we wait for the moon, the tide has become right. Now let us row out.

It is most likely that this tanka will make many people think romantic thoughts. But the tanka was composed either when the empress Saimei was assembling her naval vessels to invade Korea or when she and her entourage were visiting an island. It is a public composition.

Second, the "songs" are frequently part of a larger work. The Kojiki, apparently written to establish the genealogical authenticity of the imperial family then in power, is known to have cited songs and snatches of songs which originally had nothing to do with the narrative. But their meanings are made clear--in most cases--by the prose poetions. So, one way to present "songs"--or tanka, for the other forms had lost their popularity by the ninth century--is to make them part of prose, be it an episode, a diary, or a story. The other way in which tanka are made part of a longer work is by categorization. The Manyoshu, the first anthology of poetry, already groups many tanka under particular subjects, such as love songs, songs describing emotions directly, elegies, songs composed on the seventh of the seventh month (when the legendary princess and cowherd are allowed to see each other in the Milky Way), and so forth. The Kokinshu ("selection of old and new tanka", completed in 905), codified this method of categorization. The imperial anthologies that followed never deviated from this pattern, and as increasing restriction was imposed on diction and the variety of topics for tanka, the presentation of tanka within each category became more refined. Although individual tanka do often come across on their own, it may be assumed that they were seldom meant to be "autonomous entities" (Earl Miner).

Third, the short "songs" were often composed by a pair of authors. In a courtship exchange in the Kojiki, Princess Isukeyori says: "Like a swallow, plover, or warbler, why do you have your eyes wide open?" to which Prince Okume replies: "to meet you, maiden, face to face, I have my eyes wide open." This exchange occurs in a couple of variant katauta units of 4-7-7. Perhaps the most famous exchange in the Manyoshu is the one in tanka form between Princess Nukata and Prince

Oama. The emperor Tenchi went hunting; Princess Nukata, who was in the entourage, sang:

> In the madder-bright purple field, the roped-in field, going
> back and forth, won't these field-keepers notice?
> You, my lord, waving your sleeve?

to which Prince Oama replied:

> You who are as fragrant as a purple, sister. If I hated you,
> someone's wife, would I be so much in love?

Some scholars believe that this was a good-humored public exchange made in a feast after hunting, not a private one made for a nefarious purpose. The relations between the emperor Tenchi, Nukata, and Oama were tangled. Princess Nukata first bore a daughter to Prince Oama. The emperor, Oama's elder brother, then summoned her to become his mistress. Later, Oama killed his brother's son and became the fortieth emperor. Had he been a secretive man, who would rather steal a kiss beneath a bush from the mother of his daughter than openly laugh off his passion, Prince Oama wouldn't have made it. The same, of course, is true of Princess Nukata.

Prince Oama, when he was emperor, had an exchange with a different woman: Lady Fujiwara. One morning he woke up and, to his delight, saw a lot of snow outside. So he sat down, jotted down a tanka on a piece of paper, and had a courier take it to the wife of one of his cabinet officers living a short distance away. The tanka was:

> My village has tons of snow. Ohara, your antiquated village,
> will, if ever, have such a snowfall only much later!

Lady Fujiwara, I suspect, didn't have to keep the courier waiting for a minute. Her reply was:

> I told the watergod on my hill to let the snow fall. It splattered,
> and some fell there, I'd say!

This time, the prince--or the emperor--obviously lost the match.

The Tales of Ise (9th cen.) is the first well-known book with an extensive collection of tanka exchanges. After that, a deluge. Ariwara

no Narihira (825-880), to whom the book is attributed, may have made it the thing to do for the nobles and courtiers in the later periods to exchange tanka.

Renga, of which hokku was the opening part, came into being against the backdrop of these three things: knowledge of the circumstances of composition, verse intended as part of a larger work, and verse written by two or more persons. The second and third points were, of course, integral to renga, although some renga seem to be solo compositions. Also some, such as the following two combinations, apparently did not require any special knowledge of the circumstances. In one couplet, someone said in a unit of 7-7 syllables:

Disgusting, indeed, and it was also funny

to which someone else responded with a unit of 5-7-5:

me, farting around even when father lay dying.

In the other couplet, the 7-7 part went like this:

Whether there's hair or isn't he knows by groping

to which the response was:

a monk without an acolyte shaves his head himself.

But most renga, especially those composed by the "serious" school, as opposed to the "vulgar" school, did require knowledge of the circumstances, as well as understanding of allusions. Take, for example, the following couplet, which is the opening portion of a 100-unit renga that Basho composed with his friend Yamaguchi Sodo, in 1676. Basho's hokku goes like this:

At this plum, even a bull must have raised his first moo

which Sodo followed with:

even more so, a frog's, a man's work.

The renga sequence was dedicated to the Tenman Shrine, so it is,

first of all, celebratory. Then, since the Tenman Shrine enshrines Sugawara no Michizane (845-903), a scholar-courtier who was deffied after his death, one must remember his famous tanka about the fragrance of plum blossoms and the legend about him, including the frequent pictures of him riding a bull. Furthermore, one must notice that Basho uses bull instead of warbler. That was part of haikai, humor or satire. A commentator adds that the plum and the bull are used for contrast: the plum is meant to represent the nobility of the enshrined scholar, and the bull, the unworthiness of the poet. But a hokku becomes complete only with the following 7-7, the mysterious line by Sodo, which, lacking commentary, I don't understand myself.

Composing renga was a game, although, as played by Basho and his followers, it was a demanding one. Rules were set and followed. It is easy to imagine that by Basho's time renga had become a prime example of what Professor Barbara Ruch calls "practitioner-oriented canonical literature." If we ignore this aspect of renga, we are bound to misunderstand many hokku. For example, at a renga gathering, the principal guest was expected to open the sequence, and the host to follow with his or her 7-7. Since Basho was a professional in this game and the "master" to his followers, he was frequently called on to compose the hokku. The hokku, which set the tone to what followed, had, among other things, to imply a compliment to the host or his or her district. Consider the next hokku by Basho:

Gathering the May rains, and swift, the Mogami river

Basho composed this hokku at the end of may 1689, when, traveling north, he met with a group of his followers in Oishida. As originally wwritten it had "cool", instead of "swift", thus complimenting the landscape in which the gathering was held. To this Takano Ichiei, the host, responded with:

mooring the fireflies to the bank, the boat-piles.

Basho wrote another hokku at a gathering hosted by Sonojo in 1694. Sonojo was a woman highly respected by Basho and others. In this instance, the complimentary overtone is apparent;

White chrysanthemum, without a speck of dust that hits
the eye

to which Sonojo responded with:

letting water flow over crimson leaves, the morning moon.

It is understood that Sonojo tactfully returned the compliment with "the morning moon."

Many, no doubt, will argue that knowing the answering portions of these hokku doesn't change them. Also, it must be pointed out that hokku were composed without any special gatherings in mind early in the development of the form. We are told that the first collection of hokku independent of renga appeared in the middle of the fourteenth century. Basho himself seems to have felt a strong urge--particularly toward the end of his life--to treat hokku as independent entities. Nevertheless, until and during Basho's time, those who composed hokku always had in mind the possible follow-up portions that would complete them. Renga and hokku were composed by people who correctly assumed the existence of a coterie that would appreciate their writings. And this latter group of people also composed renga and hokku. As Yamamoto Kenkichi succinctly states, "in the world of haikai, readers were at the same time writers." The extent of cooperation may be illustrated by the story told about the composition of Basho's famous:

Old pond, a frog jumps in, the sound of water.

As Kagami Shiko, one of Basho's followers, describes it, one day Basho was sitting in his house and came up with the 7-5 part of a hokku: "a frog jumps in, the sound of water." He then asked Takarai Kikaku, who happened to be there, to complete it with the first 5. Kikaku duly suggested "yellow rose", minding that the combination of yellow rose and frog had been traditional for more than seven hundred years. Basho, however, rejected it. He used his own "old pond" and explained why. What Shiko omits to say is that that was the day when dozens of Basho's followers gathered at his house and had matching contests on the subject of frogs. Also, though Shiko doesn't say so, Basho's hokku was followed by Kikaku's 7-7:

cast over young reed leaves, a spider's web.

To sum up, hokku, the parent of haiku, developed as a singular kind of literature. Surely, the kind of social milieu that enables a

group of people to get together and entertain themselves with haiku still exists today in Japan, and the number of haiku written and published is something that Basho wouldn't have dreamed of. But, because modern haiku has been cut off from renga or the attitude that renga composition entailed, and because it has an understandable urge to present itself as an autonomous literature, two disadvantages that may have been justified in Basho's days have become conspicuous. One of them is the frequent arbitrarinessof the selection of things described. Consider the following three examples, which are in an anthology of best postwar haiku:

A ladybug, a soldier, I haven't been killed
Yasuzumi Atsushi

The long war ended, I put up a blind
Kuribayashi Issekiro

Out of prison I touched a dead tree and a holy wife
Akimoto Fujio

In these it is hard to see the universal appropriateness that Basho strove for. He could probably have explained the choice "swift" and "cool", or "speck of dust", in relation to his adherence to or diversion from tradition. But in the three haiku sited above, "ladybug," "blind," and "dead tree" could easily have been replaced with "butterfly," "curtain," and "brick wall."

The other possible disadvantage is the brevity of the form itself. Haiku, whether in traditional 5-7-5 form or non-traditional form, are often too short to reveal themselves fully. Consider the following examples, from the same anthology:

Autumn cicadas too cry, bagworms too can only cry
Takahama Kyoshi

Seated on a stump, I shed tears on its offshoots
Nakamura Kusatao

Just before, monk-cicadas just increase
Ishida Hago

Two-day moon, the Divine State has gotten narrow
Wanatabe Suiha

Sasanqua, of a country defeated in battle
Hino Sojo

In these five haiku, probably the only phrase that requires explanation

is "bagworm's cry." Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959), the stout traditionalist, was probably alluding to a few hokku by Basho, and to the well-known story on bagworms in The Pillow Book of Sei Shonangon (early 11th cen.). The trick is, of course, that bagworms don't make any sort of sound. Even if this is understood, one simply cannot connect this haiku with Japan's defeat in August 1945, as Kyoshi meant to. The same is true of the other four. In the second haiku Kusatao could be describing what he did after he was jilted by his girlfriend or after his mother died. In the third haiku, no one would be able to guess that Hago meant just before the emperor's announcement of Japan's defeat on the radio at noon on the 15th of August 1945. And so forth.

The inability of haiku to mean what the author intends to mean begets an utter willingness on the part of haiku writers and their friends to explain. In Japan, books of haiku selected and annotated by the authors or their friends abound. I'd like to quote comments made on Nakamura Kusatao's haiku. I pick Kusatao, who was born in 1901, because he openly dismissed the importance of other people understanding what he wrote. In 1931 Kusatao composed one of the most frequently memorized haiku in the last several decades. It goes:

Falling snow, Meiji has become distant

Meiji is the name of the era that began in 1868 and ended in 1912. On this haiku Kusatao himself wrote: "I spent my grade school years in Tokyo, toward the end of Meiji. Once, I was walking near my school, and it began to snow, and snow heavily. Pure-white snow has the capability of thinning the distinction of all concrete things and in the end obliterating it, making everything blank. While I was standing in the deserted town and in front of the deserted school building, neither of which had changed a bit from what they had been twenty-odd years before, the awareness of the concreteness and individuality of time and place--"the modern" and "modern things"--began gradually to thin out. The feeling that modern times were exactly the same as twenty-odd years before, began to become strong. At the same time, by falling ceaslessly, the snow did exactly the opposite: it called forth, almost against my will, the wide-awake awareness of "progression" and "continuity." Time, which was fixed in the extreme and then obliterated by the falling snow, made me aware, with doubled strength, in an almost fatefully stark way, of the solemn fact that "twenty-odd years had passed." This is a commentary by a man who rejected the importance of other people understanding what he wrote. I must leave you

to decide whether the haiku contains the explication or the explication contains the haiku.

What made me choose this rather negative approach this evening is partly the disatisfaction I have felt with the way Japanese haiku is described in books written in English. Most of the time, the independence of the form is taken for granted, and the importance of Zen is overemphasized. When millions of people are ticking off haiku night and day, day and night, it would be nonsensical to call into question the independence of the form. But it would be equally nonsensical, I believe, to present haiku as a precious manifestation of Japanese literary genius. Similarly, though it is silly to deny Basho the knowledge of Zen, it is misleading, and ultimately fruitless, to give Zen an all-encompassing power over haiku. But I have said enough.

To switch the focus at this point, and to "pull the water into my paddies," as we say in Japan, I think that haiku, when taken as a sequence or, even better, as a book, are as interesting as any other literary product. In this belief, I try to translate not a random selection but a sequence or a book as originally published. I have brought one sequence [part of which follows] and part of a book I am working on for you to see. I will gratefully welcome any comment on them, now or later. Thank you very much.

from <u>One Hundred Haiku</u>, by Mutsuo Takahashi, translated by Hiroaki Sato, the sequence "Winter: 25 haiku":

Winter's begun, a beach vendor's stall, a pregnant dog

At each house oranges heavy, winter this morning

Rain puddles, all turned into crystals, winter this morning

Tangerines ripe, mother aged, distant, a cove

From the second floor a crimson plate thrown, an evening shower

On a strawstack a voice, an evening shower

Over withered reed crimson remains, only a touch

A deer sleeps, far deep under its belly, it has withered

 [sequence, continued]

A deer sleeps, far into its dreams a withered field

[sorry, no break intended]

Winter cloud rim glistening, I came away

Vernal day, shoes left on the lawn, the number of

Vernal day, I hold it, it's light, an egg basket

Round shoulders, father's bequest, blossoming eight-fingers

Glittering, wind there, thin ice

Cold day, inside the paper doors it's being cooked

Decay, the winter sun collects on the large paper door

On my tongue, tangerine melting, I'm discouraged

Beautiful rice cakes I was presented with, crimson and white
Cocoons hanging from branches, they're called winter flowers
Rough sea, roofs are all low, and a kite
Picture cards, one missing, a past
A collage, a fiction that, a screen
Into the muck falling, the snow, so fast
After the fields were burned, snipes stopped, it seems,
to come home
The friend distant, I crack open a walnut, the roof of my
mouth

Mr. Sato also presented some portion of his translation from Ozora ("big sky"), a collection of haiku by Hosai Ozaki, which we may be able to include in the M&P at a future date. The meeting ended with a heated discussion of some of the issues raised in Mr. Sato's talk, and members are invited to contribute their ideas on the subject for possible inclusion in future M&P. We particularly thank Hiroaki Sato for introducing us to the haiku of a striking contemporary poet who is only just coming to be known in the West, largely through the fine translations by Mr. Sato.

1977 BALLOT HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

Circle candidate of your choice for the following offices:

for President

Carl Fredricks

_____
(write-in)

for Vice President

Alan Pizzarelli

_____
(write-in)

for Secretary

Yasko Karaki

_____
(write-in)

detach ballot here

Only ballots received by mail, in-hand 26 January 1977, will be counted. Please mail your ballot as soon as possible. If you know of a person who is generally able to attend meetings, and who would accept the position of Treasurer, please enter this Nomination below: (You may nominate yourself.) Please do not sign ballots.

Nomination for Treasurer: _____

Finally, if you would like to be Membership Secretary (this is a non-elective position), please drop a card to that effect to the President, Haiku Society of America, 333 E 47th St., NYC 10017. Which is also the address you should mail this ballot to!