

Haiku: A Bridge between Sweden and Japan

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The Swedish Haiku Association (SHA) was founded in 1999, which demonstrates growing interest in haiku in Sweden. Since then, the association has held monthly haiku gatherings in Stockholm, where members' haiku are presented and commented upon by other attending members. In 2000, on the occasion of a visit from the Emperor and Empress of Japan to Sweden, an anthology of haiku, *Aprilsnö* 四月の雪 (April Snow), was compiled, containing 100 haiku by Swedish poets and 100 by Japanese poets. The anthology was in both Japanese and Swedish, included originals and translations, and was given to the Emperor and Empress in Stockholm. The member's journal, *HAIKU*, started to appear twice yearly in 2001.

In Japan, the International Haiku Exchange Association was established in 1989, through the cooperation of all three major Japanese haiku organizations.¹ This shows that, on the Japanese side, the genre's international expansion was felt strongly at the time. An International Haiku convention was held the following year. Some members of the Swedish Association have since participated in International Haiku Conventions, in, for instance, Matsue, Japan in 2003 and Vadstena, Sweden in 2007, which was organized by the SHA.² Recently, a symposium on "haiku in Sweden" was held at the Swedish Embassy in Tokyo (May 8–9, 2012). Kaneko Tōta, the honorary president of Gendai Haiku Association; Arima Akito, a member of the Association of Haiku Poets; and Kai Falkman, the president of SHA, were among the speakers invited to participate in the symposium's panel discussion.

In this paper, I would like to discuss the Swedish definition of haiku, as found in Swedish haiku poets' writings. To determine the genealogy of Swedish haiku—or, in other words, when and how haiku was introduced in Sweden—I briefly consider various translations that have played an important role in Sweden, because translations were the first step to introducing Japanese haiku to Sweden.

In this paper, I use "haiku" as the genre name, but sometimes also use it as the synonym of "ku," an individual haiku poem. I often refer to haiku writers as "haiku poets," which is "*haijin*" in Japanese. In some cases, I use "*haijin*."

¹ Kokusai Haiku Kōryū Kyōkai 国際俳句交流協会; The three organizations are Gendai Haiku Kyōkai 現代俳句協会, Haijin Kyōkai 俳人協会, and Nihon Dentō Haiku Kyōkai 日本伝統俳句協会. Hoshino 2002, pp. 95–96.

² The Swedish Haiku Association's journal, *HAIKU* 7 (2004) and 11 (2007).

Haiku and Translations³

Swedish translations of haiku started appearing in the late 1950s based on English, French, and German translations.

Basil Hall Chamberlain translated some haiku that appeared in *Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram* in 1902.⁴ His *Japanese Poetry* appeared in 1910 and included many haiku from the Edo era.⁵ He was an acknowledged Japan scholar and his writing left a strong mark on how to perceive the genre. He referred to haiku as “epigrams” and his appreciation of Japanese poetry in general appears to vary; he may see it as lacking originality, but at the same time perceive originality in its 5–7–5 rhythm. “Japanese poetry is, in every respect, a plant of native growth,” he writes, but “it is merely originality in the sense of spontaneous invention, not originality in the sense of uniqueness.”⁶ Regarding “epigrams,” Chamberlain writes, “... I venture to translate by ‘Epigram,’ using that term, not in the modern sense of a pointed saying, ... but in its earlier acceptation, as denoting any little piece of verse that expresses a delicate or ingenious thought.”⁷

After Chamberlain, haiku have often been called epigrams.⁸ Miyamori Asatarō published *An Anthology of Haiku, Ancient and Modern* in 1932.⁹ Miyamori begins by discussing “haiku and epigram” (Introduction I). He claims, “British and American writers call the *haiku* ‘the Japanese epigram,’”¹⁰ because “generally speaking ... [haiku presents] an objective description... often omitting the verb, and the poet’s subjective sentiment is left to the reader’s imagination,” whereas “epigrams, for the most part, treat human affairs and aim chiefly at humour, cynicism and satire.”¹¹ Miyamori clearly understood epigrams in the modern sense, and paid no heed to Chamberlain’s classical view of the “epigram.”

According to Crowley, Miyamori’s translations have been criticized, because he gave titles to each haiku. The nature of the criticism is not further explained in the article.¹² Blyth’s *Haiku* in four volumes, which began to appear in Tokyo in 1949, was an elaborate effort to translate the genre into English. He acknowledges Miyamori (1932) and Henderson (1933) as

³ Here, I only go through some English translations, which I see as important for Swedish haiku. Crowley discusses influential haiku literature from the 1950s in U.S.A. in Crowley 2012, pp. 155–79.

⁴ Chamberlain 1902.

⁵ Chamberlain 1910.

⁶ Chamberlain. *Classical Poetry of the Japanese*. Oriental Series 9. London: Trübner, 1880.

⁷ Chamberlain 1902, p. 243.

⁸ An example is *A Year of Japanese Epigrams*. Translated and compiled by William N. Porter, illustrated by Kazunori Ishibashi. London: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1911. We can also find it in Blyth’s *Haiku*, vol. 1. Tokyo: Kamakura Bunko, 1949.

⁹ Miyamori 1932.

¹⁰ Miyamori 1932, p. 14.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Crowley 2012, pp. 155–79. Regarding Miyamori, see p. 159. Crowley maintains that the era of haiku in the U.S. began seriously in the 1950s (p. 158). She acknowledges the importance of Miyamori’s work as a scholarly forerunner, but also says that it met with criticism, though she mentions only the fact that he attached a title to each haiku as a point that met with criticism (p. 159).

his forerunners.¹³ Comments on Zen, especially Bashō, abound in his *Haiku*.¹⁴ This is another element that has long influenced the reading of haiku, especially in the United States, though not as in Sweden, as I will discuss later.

The very first introduction of haiku to Sweden most probably occurred on March 4, 1933, when Anders Österling's review of Miyamori's *Anthology of Haiku, Ancient and Modern* appeared in *Svenska Dagbladet*.¹⁵

The first important introduction of haiku to Sweden, Jan Vintilescu's *Haiku, Japansk miniatyrlyrrik* appeared in 1959.¹⁶ Vintilescu used English, German and French translations in translating the text into Swedish, and especially used those of Miyamori, Blyth, and Bonneau.¹⁷ After a short introduction to the history of haiku and its origin in linked poetry (*haikai no renga*), he focuses primarily on four poets: the most important poet of linked poetry during the Tokugawa period (1603–1868), Bashō (1644–94), who elevated the genre to new artistic heights; the painter and poet, Buson (1716–84), who revered Bashō some hundred years later; Issa (1763–1828), who often wrote affectionately about small creatures; and Shiki (1867–1902), a modern poet who appreciated Buson and advocated modernization of the genre. He promoted the modern concept of haiku (the 5–7–5 moras verse) as the most independent, shortest modern poetry form in the world. Vintilescu's anthology also includes one or a few poems by each of some of the other well-renowned earlier poets like Moritake (1473–1549), who is regarded as one of the founders of the genre, and, in total, presents 73 verses by different poets. In his bibliography, attached at the end, he includes works by Chamberlain,¹⁸ Henderson, and Revon, along with Miyamori, Blyth, and Bonneau, and many other earlier and contemporary English, Japanese, French, and German authors. The bibliography gives useful insight into the wide scope of haiku literature available in Sweden in the 1950s.

The next major introduction of haiku occurred when Per Erik Wahlund translated Issa in 1978. This resulted in one of the most important publications on Issa's life and haiku until then in Nordic countries.¹⁹ The author mentions several earlier authors as sources, among them Miyamori.²⁰ In my opinion, Miyamori's works served as important sources in many sections of Wahlund's writing. Wahlund begins his introduction to the history of haiku with the time of *Man'yōshū* and continues until Bashō. Along with Vintilescu's, Wahlund's introduction to the

¹³ Blyth 1949, vol. I, p. xiv.

¹⁴ Blyth had previously published *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics* 禅と英文学. Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1942. Shirane Haruo makes the same point about Blyth and Zen in *Traces of Screams: Landscapes, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. A section is called "Bashō and Zen." Blyth 1949, vol. I, pp. 23–29.

¹⁵ Österling 1933. Quoted in Granström 2003, pp. 5–6.

¹⁶ Vintilescu 1959, "Introduction."

¹⁷ Vintilescu 1959, p. 10.

¹⁸ Chamberlain 1902. This is the only work by Chamberlain mentioned in Vintilescu's bibliography. Otherwise, Chamberlain's *Japanese Poetry* (1910) is today a more accessible source in Sweden.

¹⁹ Wahlund 1978.

²⁰ Miyamori 1936.

genre became a pioneering work in Sweden that spread knowledge of haiku to wider circles. Wahlund published another anthology of Issa's writing in 1981.²¹

Kai Falkman's translations of haiku, *Vårregnets berättelse* 春雨物語り, appeared in 1986.²² His sources were Miyamori (1932) and Blyth.²³ Since then, the author has produced several volumes of haiku translations.

Among some other noteworthy works of translation is the 1998 introduction of Shiki by Thunman and Wahlund.²⁴ In 2003, *Haiku* by Eiko and Christer Duke came out.²⁵ Emond and Emond-Martinsson's *Haiku och Kamon* came out in 2004.²⁶ Lars Vargö's *Japanska haiku: Världens kortaste diktform* (Japanese Haiku: The Shortest Poetic form of the World), which came out in 2003, is especially important. The anthology introduced many modern haiku for the first time, and, as such, differs from earlier publications that gathered mainly classical, pre-modern haiku. It also introduced many contemporary Japanese haiku poets in Sweden for the first time. It includes haiku poets such as Nakamura Kusatao (1901–83), who tried to combine objective sketching in the spirit of Kyoshi with introspective human sentiments in haiku, and Mizuhara Shūōshi (1892–1981), who also advocated the introduction of subjectivity to the Kyoshi school's objective sketching. Some of the others introduced are free verse poets Santōka (1882–1940) and Hōsai (1885–1926).

Hōsai, the free verse modernist, was translated by Lars Granström, in a volume titled *Klockans återklang: Haiku och kortdikter/Ozaki Hōsai* (The Sound of a Bell: Haiku and Short Poems/Ozaki Hōsai) in 2010.²⁷ The importance of translations' role in the introduction of haiku to Sweden cannot be stressed enough. Before Swedish translations appeared, English translations served as the most important sources for information on the poetry form.

Swedish Poets and Haiku

Swedish poets started writing haiku at the end of the 1950s.²⁸ This time corresponds with the appearance of Swedish translations of haiku. Dag Hammarskjöld wrote 110 17-syllable poems in the autumn of 1959. Fifty of them have been translated and commented on by Falkman.²⁹

²¹ Wahlund 1981.

²² Falkman 1986.

²³ Reginald Blyth. *A History of Haiku*. 2 vols. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1963. This was published in 1964 according to Falkman, which I could not find in NDLP-OPAC.

²⁴ Noriko Thunman and Per Erik Wahlund, eds. *Shiki: Japanska haiku-dikter för fyra årstider/Shiki Masaoka*. Helsingfors: Orienta, 1998.

²⁵ Eiko and Christer Duke. *Haiku*. Red Alfabeta Bokförlag AB, 2003.

²⁶ Vibeke Emond and Cecilia Emond-Martinsson. *Haiku och Kamon: Japanska miniatyrer*. Pontes, 2004.

²⁷ Stockholm: Bambulunden.

²⁸ Falkman 2005, p. 17; Kodama 2008, pp. 33–45.

²⁹ Falkman 2005. Falkman relates that Harold G. Henderson's *Introduction to Haiku* (1958) was found on the bedside table of Hammarskjöld after his death. Blyth's *Haiku* vol. 2 can be found in the Dag Hammarskjöld Collection at the National Library.

Swedish poet Bo Setterlind left behind some haiku-inspired poems. Setterlind's *Några ord att fästa på* (Some Words to Put on) from 1961 is a charming publication.³⁰ It is a brown book made of Japanese paper and bound in a Japanese way, placed in a small box tied with a pink ribbon. The tiny publication is 43 pages long with around 20 three-line poems in it, each with titles.

Thomas Tranströmer is another poet who has written a sequence of poems referred to as haiku.³¹ The members of SHA quote some of them in *Aprilsnö* and elsewhere.³²

As in Japan, the most common characteristic of haiku writers in Sweden is that they are not poets who publish professionally. Haiku poems written by such writers appear in privately produced or small publications, which mostly pass unnoticed. There are some cases in which a short poem is referred to as haiku with no regard for haiku "poetics." When SHA arranged a haiku competition in 2003, 150 people sent in 680 haiku.³³ This approximately conveys the extent, or limits, of the active haiku community.

However, haiku has now become more widely known in Sweden through study circles, lectures at libraries and museums, and lessons in school classrooms. A haiku competition was organized in 2003 at a high school in Vesterås in cooperation with SHA, and 231 pupils sent in 230 haiku.³⁴ Thomas Tranströmer's haiku has been attached as an appendix to this paper to give this relatively minor publication a touch of literary authority.

A haiku anthology, gathering the haiku of ten contemporary Swedish *haijin*, was published in 2008.³⁵ One *haijin* is the translator of Ozaki Hōsai, the abovementioned modern Japanese free verse haiku writer from the beginning of the twentieth century, and some others had published their own and translated earlier anthologies.³⁶

Members' haiku poems are published in *HAIKU*, and sometimes, poems submitted by non-members are also published. The journal is an important channel of publication for Swedish *haijin*. The Association's home page gives a short, valuable explanation of what haiku is and how to write haiku.

³⁰ Setterlind 1961.

³¹ Tranströmer 2004.

³² Regarding other Swedish poets and haiku, Tommy Olofsson mentions Solveig von Schoultz and Sonja Åkesson along with Anders Österling and Bo Setterlind in his review of Andres Olsson's poetry anthology, *Ett mått av lycka* (1998), which also includes haiku. Olofsson 2008.

³³ See *HAIKU* 7 (2004).

³⁴ 5+5+7=*HAIKU* 2003.

³⁵ Vargö 2008.

³⁶ To mention some of the ten, Granström translated Hōsai. Falkman and Vargö were already mentioned earlier. Sven Enander. *Rykande snö: Haiku*. Stockholm: Iota, 1981.

How Haiku has been Understood as a Genre: Poetic Form³⁷

From the start, the brevity of haiku has attracted attention from outside Japan, in Sweden as well as elsewhere. In early haiku literature, including Miyamori's, this brevity constitutes the genre's most distinguished feature. Haiku consists of 17 syllables, divided into 5-7-5 syllable patterns (moras). It does not rhyme, but it may benefit from phonetic qualities like alliteration, onomatopoeia, and assonance.

The poetic form of haiku seems the least controversial in Sweden. There are those who believe it is important to write in 17 syllables in Swedish, but most haiku poets today do not. Both groups write three lines, but some write two. Rarely do haiku with one line consisting of one or only few words appear. The length of each line can vary, but, regardless of its length, a haiku is either 17 syllables or not. The three-line presentation has a bearing on how one reads haiku, which will be discussed later in the section on *kireji* (cut words).³⁸

It is also well known in contemporary Sweden that, though using 17 moras³⁹ is the mainstream approach, different ideas on the forms of haiku, such as free verse haiku, have existed and still exist in Japan. Both Ozaki Hōsai and Santōka have been translated into Swedish.⁴⁰ Thus, Swedish readers and writers already know about the modernist movement in Japanese haiku.

Today, active haiku writers in Sweden have good general knowledge of haiku's origin in haikai linked poetry and its historical ties to waka tradition. They also know that the first verse of haikai linked poetry, *hokku*, has been known as haiku, an independent modern poetic form, since the Meiji era and that Masaoka Shiki played an important role in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Seasonal Words: *Kigo*

Swedish *haijin* often mention and stress the importance of *kigo* 季語 in Japanese haiku. However, this does not mean that they think *kigo* is important in Swedish haiku.

A Japanese research group published research results regarding *kigo* in *Kokusai saijiki ni okeru hikaku kenkyū: Fuyū suru shiki no kotoba* 国際歳時記における比較研究: 浮遊する四季のことば in 2012.⁴¹ The volume gives rich information about *kigo* in East Asia, Japan, the United States,

³⁷ I discuss here only the length of the form. Pausing (*kireji*) is treated separately later.

³⁸ Both Chamberlain and Miyamori's work translated into two lines, with Miyamori always attaching a title to each haiku. Henderson also attached a title to each haiku and translations then took up three lines. Henderson 1958.

³⁹ "Mora" (拍) rather than syllable is used, because "n" and double consonants (っ) without a vowel constitute the same rhythm unit/length as a syllable in Japanese.

⁴⁰ Ozaki Hōsai. *Klockans Återklang: Haiki och kortdikter*. Translated by Lars Granström. Bambulunden, 2010. Vargö translated three haiku by Santōka. Vargö 2003.

⁴¹ Azuma and Fujiwara 2012.

Europe (i.e., France, Germany, U.K., Spain), and Brazil. The state of affairs in the U.K. and U.S. would be the most interesting, because the primary source Swedish haiku poets rely on is English literature. Takahama Kyoshi reported the total lack of understanding of *kigo* when he met haiku poets in London and Paris in 1936.⁴² As their knowledge of the history of Japanese haiku and *kigo* increased, international poets belatedly began to pay more attention to *kigo*.⁴³

Since the 1960s, the question of *kigo* has attracted attention in the U.S., but this does not mean that U.S. *haijin* started to use it.⁴⁴ *A Haiku Path* (1994) by the Haiku Society of America says that *kigo* is not necessary in American haiku, because of the difficulty of applying it systematically across the whole country.⁴⁵ In the U.K., interest in *kigo* seems having been rather weak, but *Eikoku saijiki* 英国歳時記 was compiled in 2004 by David Cobb, the president of the British Haiku Society.⁴⁶ Cobb points out that Japanese *kigo* is the “result of thousands of cultural experiences crystallized.” He is skeptical about whether Western haiku poets are ready to wait hundreds of years to establish *kigo*-consensus.⁴⁷

Until around the 1980s, *kigo* seems to have been mainly regarded as a convention that suppressed individual expression and creativity in both the U.S. and U.K.⁴⁸ However, the situation is changing in the U.S. In the U.S., Higginson has been a central figure in promoting *kigo* since the 1990s. Crowley is of the opinion that Higginson has contributed greatly to advancing knowledge on the nature of *kigo* and its importance in international haiku.⁴⁹

In Sweden, the importance of *kigo* in Japanese haiku has been thoroughly acknowledged. However, Falkman writes about *kigo* in Swedish and international haiku: “Outside Japan *kigo* has never enjoyed a privileged position nor regarded obligatory for haiku.”⁵⁰ This can be considered reflective of the general opinion of *kigo* in Sweden today.

Yamamoto Kenkichi maintains that *kigo* lexica, which comprise seasonal and human phenomena, express Japanese people’s aesthetic consciousness.⁵¹ Japanese *kigo*, included in various dictionaries, is an important constituent of semantic clusters of associations in haiku. *Kigo* can be seen as a carrier of poetic code, both synchronically and diachronically.

⁴² Hoshino Tsunehiko. “Kidai to seiyōjin” 季題と西洋人. In Hoshino 2002, pp. 207–209; “Kyoshi to kokusai saijiki” 虚子と国際歳時記, pp. 210–11; “Eikoku no fūdo to kigo” 英国の風土と季語, pp. 212–20.

⁴³ *Hawai saijiki* ハワイ歳時記 (Hawai’i Poem Calendar); Kayano Keizan 栢野桂山. “Burajiru haikai shōshi” ブラジル俳諧小史. *Yuki* 雪, January 2007. See Fujiwara Mariko. “Burajiru no saijiki” ブラジルの歳時記. In Azuma and Fujiwara 2012, pp. 386–408.

⁴⁴ Azuma and Fujiwara 2012, p. 164. See also Hoshino Tsunehiko. “Kigo to eigo haiku” 季語と英語ハイク. In Hoshino 2002, pp. 41–52.

⁴⁵ Haiku Society of America 1994. Quoted in Azuma and Fujiwara 2012, p. 168. Another important work is Higginson 1996.

⁴⁶ Sakamoto 2012, pp. 299–316. The article includes only the Japanese translation of Cobb’s *Eikoku saijiki* 英国歳時記.

⁴⁷ Azuma and Fujiwara 2012, p. 315.

⁴⁸ Crowley 2012, pp. 164–70.

⁴⁹ Crowley 2012, pp. 170–77. William J. Higginson. *The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku*. New York: Kodansha International, 1985. Also see Higginson 1996.

⁵⁰ Falkman 2012, p. 60.

⁵¹ “Maegaki” まえがき. In vol. 1 of *Saishin haiku saijiki* 最新俳句歳時記. Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1971–72. Quoted in Hoshino 2002, p. 42.

Katō Shūson (1905–93) writes that *kigo* must be used with caution when describing foreign nature and phenomena. Because *kigo* per se has close ties to a “Japanese” sensibility, it can become an obstacle in expressing new kinds of “foreign” phenomena and sensitivities.⁵² Shūson has Japanese haiku writers in mind, who go abroad and write haiku on their journeys. His words show the power of *kigo*, and also offer a rationale to international haiku writers reluctant to use Japanese *kigo* even in applied form.

In Sweden, poets and readers share the experience of many natural and human phenomena, but because such experiences are not encoded and systematized as *kigo*, words denoting seasons tend being more personal.

Instead of *kigo*, nature comes to the fore as the essential characteristic of haiku in Sweden. As Florence Vilén puts it, “Haiku deals with nature, and people in nature.”⁵³

Cut Words: *Kireji*

Kireji 切れ字 has been mentioned along with *kigo* as an important characteristic of haiku in English and Swedish haiku literature. However, this seems to be a relatively recent phenomenon. Hoshino points out that the question of *kireji* had hardly been discussed outside of Japan until the latter half of the 1980s and, in the 1990s, some English articles started appearing on the question of *kireji* for the first time.⁵⁴ Hoshino’s article on *kireji* provides a survey of writings on *kireji* in the U.S. and U.K., by authors such as Blyth, Henderson, Keene, and other later authors.⁵⁵

In Sweden, Falkman, Vargö, and Vilén have written about *kireji*, but they began doing so slightly later than U.S. and U.K. writers, beginning around 2000.⁵⁶ They have explained Japanese *kireji*, saying that *kireji* can be the use of words like “*kana*,” “*ya*,” “*keri*” or others to create pauses in the flow of the 17 moras in Japanese haiku. The same effect of pausing or cutting can be created in Swedish through interjections like *ah*, or exclamation points, hyphens, commas and full stops.

Beginning haiku writers in Japan are taught to avoid the three part form *sandan-gire* 三段切れ by using “cutting words” after each line. In contrast, Swedish *haijin* do not appear to pay special attention to cut signs. They seem more interested in “pausing” in haiku reading than in *kireji*.

For his part, Falkman seems more concerned with how to read a haiku, speaking about pausing after each line, than with *kireji* itself. His own haiku can serve as an example:

⁵² Quoted in Hoshino 2002, pp. 195–96.

⁵³ Florence Vilén. “Vad är en haiku: Egentligen?” *HAIKU* 18 (2010), pp. 8–13. The quotation appears on page 10, where she briefly addresses “nature and *kigo*.” She concludes that even though some Swedish *kigo* like Christmas trees, “we in the West are less sensitive to *kigo*” (Falkman 2012, p. 16).

⁵⁴ Hoshino 2002, p. 55.

⁵⁵ “Kireji to eigo haiku” 切れ字と英語ハイク. In Hoshino 2002, pp. 53–74.

⁵⁶ For literature on *kireji*, see Vargö (2003), Falkman (2012), and Vilén (2010).

Efter solnedgången	After the sunset
visar sig solen	shows the sun up
på måsens vingar	on the wings of a gull ⁵⁷

The first line presents the reader with an evening scene. In the second, the sun comes up again, which raises a question. In the third, the question of how the sun can come up again is answered, when sunlight is reflected on a gull's wings.⁵⁸ The open scenery of the setting sun and the reflection of sunbeams coloring a flying gull's wings may also be open to further interpretations.

Word order in haiku is not straightforward, and sentences do not have commas or other cut signs. However, Falkman posits that the three-line presentation creates a pause after each line, as *kireji* would. A reader stops, for a while, after each line, to draw a picture in his mind and fully exploit its implications.⁵⁹ Falkman's explanation suggests that the focus is not at all on *kireji*, but on the reader's response.

The same line of interpretation of the pause (cut) informs his translation of Bashō's "*Furuike ya*" (Old pond);

古池や蛙飛び込む水の音

Den gamla dammen	The old pond
En groda hoppar i	A frog jumps into
—vattnets ljud ⁶⁰	—the sound of the water

Falkman's reading clearly shows a pause after each line. In Japanese, the haiku has two parts, divided by the *kireji* "*ya*." The verb "*tobikomu*" ("plunging/jumping in") is then understood as a participle adjective (*rentai-kei*), qualifying the following noun "*oto*" ("sound"). However, in English translations, the verb form has been interpreted both as a participle adjective and predicative form, as the following examples show:

The old pond, aye! And the sound of a frog leaping into the water.
(Translated by B.H. Chamberlain)⁶¹

⁵⁷ Falkman 2002, p. 29.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Falkman sees the reading process as consisting of three steps, the last line giving a "surprising" answer. There is also a section called the "Three steps experience" in Falkman 2012, pp. 35–40.

⁵⁹ Falkman 2012, pp. 29–34.

⁶⁰ Falkman 2012, p. 29.

⁶¹ Quoted in Miyamori 1932, p. 132. Miyamori lists many other translations of the poem that were available at the time.

The old pond!
A frog leaps into—
List, the water sound! (Translated by Noguchi Yone)⁶²

Blyth, too, translated many haiku divided into three parts *sandan-gire* that had just one cut (*kireji*) in Japanese. Many times, his solution was necessary due to the linguistic differences between Japanese and English.

Falkman is a central character working with haiku today in Sweden. His opinion appears repeatedly in the members' journal *HAIKU*. In my opinion, the question of *kireji* has been translated into more semantic terms in today's Sweden, where it is referred to as a "pause of reflection," putting the focus on the reader's response. This partly has to do with linguistic differences, but also with the three-line presentation of haiku in Sweden.

Metaphor and Rhetorical Apparatus

Miyamori expressively stresses the importance of Nature in haiku. He also speaks of the importance of an objective stance vis-à-vis the world when writing a haiku.⁶³ Ego should not dominate the conversation but only be discernible behind natural phenomena described in haiku.

Similar to Miyamori, who stressed the objective nature of haiku, Falkman often stresses the importance of avoiding subjective explanation in haiku. He proposes as the definition of haiku:

Haiku is a short poem, composed of concrete pictures that render the essence of an experience of Nature or human situation.⁶⁴

Concrete elements and occurrences are important haiku motifs. Falkman, along with other members of SHA, repeatedly points out that reasoning and explanations should be avoided in haiku. Likewise, the personification of natural phenomena, metaphors, comparisons, and paraphrasing should be avoided. The descriptions and situations themselves must give readers clues to find the hidden meanings in a haiku.

On this point, Swedish haiku poets completely agree with the Japanese haiku poets who advocate "sketching" as the essential method of creation. Shiki and Kyoshi represent this group, which has remained one of the most influential haiku groups in Japan even into the present.⁶⁵

⁶² Miyamori 1932, p. 133. He quotes many other translations of the same haiku.

⁶³ Miyamori 1932, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Falkman 2012, p. 16.

⁶⁵ Today, they are gathered into the Nihon Dentō Haiku Kyōkai 日本伝統俳句協会 (Association of Japanese Classical Haiku). Around 1914, Ogihara Seisensui and Nakatsuya Ippekirō started the free-verse haiku movement. Magazines like *Sōun* and *Kaikō* began appearing. Ozaki Hōsai and Santōka, who wrote in free verse, started their careers in *Sōun*.

The reader is expected to decode while reading to fully grasp the meaning of each haiku. Most of the Swedish haiku poems included in *Aprilsnö* (2000) fit the conception of the genre, reflecting the redactors' idea of the objectivity/concreteness of haiku.

Aprilsnö is, as mentioned previously, an anthology of haiku by one hundred Japanese and Swedish poets, including both Japanese and Swedish originals and translations. The following examples from *Aprilsnö* demonstrate this "objective" stance. The English versions are my translations:

Med vattenspannen	With a water bucket
följde	followed
vårvattens måne	the moon of the spring water
(Roland Persson)	

水おけの水に浮かべたはるの月⁶⁶

In the Swedish original, the verb "followed" conveys the movement, whereas the scenery is entirely static in the Japanese version. The Japanese version describes the image of the moon reflected on the surface of water in a barrel, but, in the original, this is a smaller bucket that can be carried by one hand. Without giving any explanation and by simply describing settings for the reader, the haiku provides a suggestive and poetic picture of a working person, walking under the spring moon.

Hem från akuten,	Home from the hospital,
över huset fullmåne	the full moon over the house
och snö på träden	and snow on the trees
(Florence Vilen)	

退院す満月かかる木々の雪⁶⁷

The Swedish version does not include a verb, but the situation (back home from the hospital) and what meets the person who comes home; the full moon and snow on the trees. In the Swedish version, the person, having been acutely ill, returns home after treatment at the hospital. In the Japanese version, the person comes home after staying for some time at the hospital. This seems a good example of the objective aesthetics of haiku in Sweden:

⁶⁶ Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 37.

⁶⁷ Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 94. See note 66. The English translation is mine.

Hotfulla generationer av släktdrag i mitt orakade spegelansikte (Lars Vargö)	Generations of menacing family traits in my unshaved face in a mirror
---	---

累代の凶相鏡中無精髭⁶⁸

Both the Swedish original and the Japanese translation consist only of nouns and noun phrases. All descriptive surpluses are cut off, and there remains just the mirror with the reflection of an unshaven face on it, burdened by “generations of menacing family traits.” The picture of an unshaven face is dark, but the haiku could also suggest a sigh of resignation or, perhaps, a sense of humor. Its condensed style makes it a good model of Sweden’s haiku aesthetics.

In another haiku anthology, *Ljudlöst stiger gryningen* (2008), which includes haiku by ten Swedish haiku poets, the same appreciation of concreteness can be found. All poems in the anthology are in Swedish, and the English and Japanese versions below are my translations. One haiku reads:

Den där grodan Andas och glör på mig Med hela kroppen. (Sven Enander) ⁶⁹	The frog breathing with the whole body glares at me.
--	--

我を見る蛙ふんばり息をすう

A frog and the poet stare at each other, the frog’s belly moving up and down while it breathes with “the whole body.” The scene is somewhat humorous. In the haiku, the frog is glaring at the poet, but the poet’s gaze on the frog conveys to the reader the poet’s posture vis-à-vis small living beings and nature in general. Perhaps because Bashō’s “*Furuike ya*” and Issa’s haiku both reference frogs, frogs became poetic creatures for Swedish *haijin*, too. There is an echo of Issa’s haiku in Enander’s.

Another haiku about frogs in the anthology reads:

Stannar i mörkret på stigen överallt prasselet av grodor (Paul Wigelius) ⁷⁰	Standing still on the path at night all around the rustling of frogs
---	--

カサコソと蛙小道の闇に満つ

⁶⁸ Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 123. See note 66. The English translation is mine.

⁶⁹ Vargö 2008, p. 31.

⁷⁰ Vargö 2008, p. 173. English and Japanese versions are mine.

Frogs appear in nature in Sweden in late spring or the beginning of summer. In Japan, the frog is *kigo* for spring. It is not clear that the poet uses “frogs” as *kigo* for spring here. It seems that the season the haiku is set in is rather late summer, perhaps August or September, because it is dark. In August, nights become darker.

Another haiku that includes a sympathetic scene reads:

Under olivträdet —	Under the Olive tree —
en herrelös hund och jag	no one's dog and I
delar skuggan	sharing the shadow
(Paul Wigelius) ⁷¹	

オリーブの影分かちあうのらと我

Here, “I” may be a traveler in Italy or Spain. He seeks shade under an olive tree with a stray dog. This haiku conveys warmth, and warmth is felt throughout the scene though not expressed by any adjective or descriptive terms.

In all of the above-quoted haiku, nothing is explained and interpretation is the reader's task.

The same principle of objectivity in haiku can be observed in the choice of the haiku published in the members' journal, *HAIKU*, as well as in many of the haiku included in the Swedish anthology, *Ljudlöst stiger gryningen*.

Swedish haiku anthologies, among them both *Aprilsnö* and *Ljudlöst stiger gryningen*, show in their prefaces and above all in their selection of poems that the poetics of haiku in Sweden closely resemble the traditional Shiki/Kyoshi-school's “objective sketching” approach. Inner depth should be reached through the suggestive power of language, and never through metaphors, comparisons, aphorism, paraphrasing, or personification. Good haiku is always built up around concrete things and real events.

Human Situation

In his definition of haiku, Falkman writes, “haiku renders in concrete pictures the essential in the experience of nature and *human situation*.”⁷² “Human situation” can refer, in my opinion, even to a man's feelings and reflections. Falkman's definition seems not to completely condemn the expression of a poet's feelings and thoughts, i.e. subjectivity, when this is done in the right way. The following exemplify such expression:

⁷¹ Vargö 2008, p. 164. English and Japanese versions are mine.

⁷² Falkman 2012, p. 16. Italics are mine.

svarta vinterkväll⁷³ dark winter night
över axeln läser du over my shoulder you read
min oskrivna dikt a poem yet to be written
(Niklas Törnlund)⁷⁴

冬の夜君肩越しに何を読む

Personal pronouns should normally be avoided in haiku. Here, however, the tone is personal: “you” and “my” are used. The adjective “oskrivna” (not-yet-written) is difficult to translate in the Japanese version. Translations are too long to be contained in 17 syllables.

Inne i skogen In the forest
glest mellan människorna among so few people
har tanken sin gang has thought its own way
(Carl-Erik Wiberg)⁷⁵

森歩く人影なくて想いあり

The abstract word “tanken” (thought) and the rational tone can be regarded as less appropriate to the traditional haiku school. As such, this verse may be closer to aphorism than haiku. However, contrasting people and thought, it gives a sympathetic picture in which we can recognize our own walks in the forest.

Another example in *Aprilsnö* reads:

Hör suset av regn Listen to the murmur of the rain
Jag viskar en hemlighet I whisper a secret
för att nå in dit to reach in there
(Thomas Tranströmer)⁷⁶

春雨に響きあわせぬ我が秘密⁷⁷

The original and Japanese versions seem especially divergent in this case. The Japanese version reads, “My secret gives a dissonance to the spring rain.” The agent “I” in the original does not “whisper” in the Japanese to “reach in there.” Normally, using just one verb is recommended

⁷³ According to the original, “svarta” is plural.

⁷⁴ *HAIKU* 22 (2012), p. 28. Japanese and English translations of the poems quoted from *HAIKU* are mine.

⁷⁵ *HAIKU* 22 (2012), p. 8.

⁷⁶ The original is in Tranströmer 2004. Also in Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 32.

⁷⁷ Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 32.

in Japanese haiku. The example shows that, in this case, two verbs may have been too much to incorporate into the Japanese 17 mora-form. The original is beautiful, personal, highly subjective, and open to different readings.

Swedish haiku writers have already progressed their art to the point of modern Japanese haiku, where subjectivity is no longer categorically banned. The haiku of Japanese poet, Harako Kōhei, quoted in *Aprilsnö*, reads:

灰皿に小さな焚火して人を恋う

På askfatet	On an ashtray
tänder jag en liten brasa	I start a small fire
en inbjudan ⁷⁸	an invitation ⁷⁹

This haiku expresses the poet's inner sentiments, solitude, and vague longing. This is done beautifully through the combination of "ashtray" and "fire," and the rather prosaic, worn out phrase "I long for you" (actually it refers to a human being, "人," in an abstract manner). This haiku demonstrates that Japanese haiku has transformed to correspond with changing times.

Another modern Japanese haiku reads:

はなはみないのちのかてとなりけり (森アキ子)

This haiku also appears in *Aprilsnö*. It can be translated to

All kinds of flowers, ah, they have nourished me, nurtured me.⁸⁰

Here, no "concrete" things appear; the word "flowers" refers to the general category of flowers, and "life" (いのち) is also abstract. The *kireji* "keri" is the most important element in this haiku; it stresses the emotional echo of the past, while at the same time giving the reader the sense of the poet's strong will. The transcription in hiragana gives the line a more musical character, because the reader must/tends to pronounce each hiragana, instead of reading a line with the eyes (as is more often the case when lines contain Chinese characters and compounds, *jukugo*). This vocal element may contribute to making this poem less abstract. When written 花は皆命の糧となりけり, the line has too rational a ring. This haiku, too, is an example of how haiku in Japan can so closely correspond with modern poetry, playing with different writing systems.

Another haiku without *kigo* reads:

⁷⁸ Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 205.

⁷⁹ This haiku was quoted in Japanese and Swedish translations in Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 205. Unless otherwise stated, haiku translations to English are mine.

⁸⁰ Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 231. In Swedish translation it reads: Blomsamlingen, / min färdkost / för hela livet.

目覚めけり青きなにかを握りしめ (沼尻巳津子)⁸¹

Awakened
gripping hard something blue
in the hand

“Wake up” is the only concrete, everyday occurrence in this haiku. “Something blue” is abstract, like the haiku’s whole latter part. Perhaps it conveys hope that a newly awakened being could grasp something from a dream. Here, too, the cut word “*keri*” gives the whole line a forceful tone.

Senryū deals with human life and such subject matter that deal with human and social motifs with humorous, ironic, or comical undertone has been introduced in Sweden. Some examples read:

åter omkörd	again passed
av en barnvagn	by a baby buggy
i joggingspåret	on the jogging track
(Helga Härle)	

ジョギングまた乳母車に追い越され⁸²

Världskartans	The world map’s
vita fläckar	white stains
smälter.	Melt.
(Hans Boij)	

世界地図白いシミは溶けてゆき⁸³

In so many examples of Swedish haiku poems, pronouns play an important role in expressing a personal voice. Sometimes, they come too close to aphorism (a small, sometimes ironic, truth of human nature), and other times to the humor or ironical criticism of senryū. As in Japan, haiku in Sweden shows the shifting character of aesthetics and poetics.

⁸¹ Svensson and Falkman et al. 2000, p. 232. In Swedish: Vid uppvaknandet / håller jag något blått / hårt i handen.

⁸² *HAIKU* 21 (2011), p. 27. English and Japanese translations of the poems quoted from *HAIKU* are mine.

⁸³ *HAIKU* 21 (2011), p. 12.

Surprise in Haiku

Before 2012, Falkman had written in several places that a haiku, when it has a strong impact, consists of two parts: the first introducing things or occurrences, and the second giving expression to something unexpected. He defines haiku as follows:

Haiku tries to render an experience, which is transformed in some way in the following line, to finally give an unexpected effect and lasting poetic sentiment.⁸⁴

In Swedish, he calls the effect that of “överraskning,” i.e., surprise/shock.⁸⁵ Överrasknings poesi: *Upplevelser av haiku* (The Poetry of “Surprise”: Haiku Experiences) is the title of his latest book on haiku which appeared in 2012.

What Falkman means by “surprise” corresponds to *niku-issō* 二句一章 (two phrases one sentence), or *nibutsu-shōgeki* 二物衝撃 (shock created by combining two unexpected things), which are regarded as important rhetorical apparatuses in Japanese haiku. Haiku written as “two phrases one sentence” have a *kireji*, cutting the haiku into two parts. The pause may be after the first 5 or after the 5–7 syllables. More generally, the technique is called *tori-awase/haigō* 取り合わせ/配合 (combination), a technique equivalent to the in modern montage approach.⁸⁶

Vargö quotes American haiku poet Henderson and Cor van den Heuvel in giving earlier examples of haiku definitions.⁸⁷ It is interesting to see how Vargö defines the traits of haiku and its most important aspects. He writes,

It should in a way be divided in two parts, which strengthens the effect of surprise, desired by many haiku poets.⁸⁸

Henderson also writes about “the principle of internal comparison” in his *Introduction to Haiku*, which is another translation of Japanese *niku-issō*, two different parts that comprise one haiku.⁸⁹

An example may read:

鰯雲人に告ぐべきことならず (加藤楸邨)⁹⁰

Sardine clouds, this I can never tell anyone

⁸⁴ Falkman 2012, p. 16.

⁸⁵ One example is *HAIKU* 17 (2009), pp. 28–29.

⁸⁶ Ishi et al. 1995, pp. 81–82.

⁸⁷ Vargö 2003, pp. 20–22.

⁸⁸ Vargö 2003, p. 23.

⁸⁹ Henderson 1958, Chapter three “Bashō.” Quoted in Hoshino 2002, pp. 59–60.

⁹⁰ About Shūson, see Gendai Haiku Kyōkai 現代俳句協会, <http://www.weblio.jp/content/> (last accessed July 20, 2012). English translation is mine.

Sardine clouds are cirrocumuli, a *kigo* of autumn. The sky is high, covered by thin cirrocumuli, which are patterned like mackerels scales, seldom cover the whole sky, and allow light to come through. In short, cirrocumuli in no way give a dark, oppressive impression. Their varied yet regular pattern may compel recollections and introspection, almost nostalgia. The time, daytime or evening, is not specified, but, looking at the sardine clouds, the poet's mind goes back to his own concerns; he has a secret he cannot tell anyone. This combination of sardine clouds and a secret gives the secret a somewhat mundane yet still enhanced effect, just like the cirrocumuli that catch the eye and invite one to lose oneself in dreaming. Shūson belonged to the group of modern *haijin* who regarded haiku as poetry suited to expressing one's own inner life. In the quoted haiku, he uses the established rhetoric of the combination of two unrelated things to create a poetic effect while also making a purely subjective statement. *Kigo* plays an important role as a point of departure for such combination and correspondences.⁹¹

A contrasting technique is referred to as *ichibutsu-jitatelikku-issō* 一物仕立て/一句一章 (one motif one *ku*). One example of this is by Kyoshi:

帯木に影というものありにけり⁹²

Now I know that gooseweeds have shadows

In the Shinano region, common belief held that a gooseweed (goosefoot) resembles a broom from afar, but, when one comes near, it disappears. It was also believed that when one tries to come near a person one loves, the person disappears like a goosefoot. One chapter in *The Tale of Genji* is entitled “Hahakigi” (goosefoot), which relates to the story of “Utsusemi,” who disappears when prince Genji wishes to be with her.⁹³ Given this heritage, Hahakigi can be considered a highly literary weed, but one day when Kyoshi looked at the weeds closely and saw shadows behind them. Shadows existed behind weeds that become invisible according to folk belief. Thus, Kyoshi turned upside down the commonly believed, thousand year old “truth” by the power of realistic observation, *shasei* 写生, as Bōjō puts it.⁹⁴

Kyoshi's haiku lies far from the modern, Romantic conception of poetry, where subjective feelings and thoughts constitute the core theme.

Because haiku is short, each word weighs heavily. It is important to use the suggestive power of contrasting images to give haiku deeper resonances and meanings. It seems more challenging

⁹¹ This is the sense of analogy the French Symbolists referred to when using the term.

⁹² One chapter in *The Tale of Genji* is titled “Hahakigi” 帯木 (goosefoot): goosefoot, a kind of weed with leaves in the shape of a goose's foot.

⁹³ Bōjō Toshiki 坊城俊樹. “Takahama Kyoshi no hyakku o yomu” 高濱虚子の100句を読む. <http://www.izbooks.co.jp/kyoshi64.html> (last accessed July 18, 2012).

⁹⁴ Ibid. The same line from Yamamoto Kenkichi's comment is also quoted. Unless a reader possessed knowledge of old Shinano folk belief, the haiku would say nothing, or very little, to him or her. This kind of intertextuality was at the core of the rhetorical methodology of haikai, which Kyoshi seems to follow here.

to create haiku that includes just one aspect and one situation. To make his work interesting, Kyoshi leans heavily on literary tradition and folk belief.

Today, “internal comparison,” or *niku-issbō*, constitutes the most important approach to haiku poetics in Sweden. However, in Sweden, it is merely a rhetorical matter without any connection to *kireji*. In Japan, “two verse” (*niku* 二句) means “cut in two by *kireji*” and cannot be separated from *kireji*.

Haiku Moment

In American haiku literature, one often encounters the expression “haiku moment,” which has become a key term of the genre. Hoshino gave a rich survey on the use of the term in the U.S.⁹⁵ According to Hoshino, the origin of the term goes back to Blyth, possibly back to Chamberlain. It is about the privileged moment at which a poet comes to understand that which is essential in life. Blyth’s strong penchant for Zen comes immediately to mind behind perceptions of this kind. Hoshino points out that Blyth’s choice of the word “this moment” played a crucial role in building up the emphasis on “haiku moment” in American literature. When he translated Bashō’s word 今日, meaning literally “today,” Blyth chose to translate it as “this moment.”⁹⁶

In Sweden, too, literature occasionally mentions the “privileged moment,” but not that frequently and without special emphasis on Zen. A distant echo of the “haiku moment” may be heard in the Swedish conception of “surprises” (*överaskningar*). Falkman’s definition of haiku reads:

Haiku tries to render an experience, which is transformed in some way in the following line, to finally give an unexpected effect and lasting poetic sentiment.⁹⁷

“Unexpected effect” is, as I understand it, not so much about a moment of instantaneous, Zen-like revelation of the truth, but more about the technique of combining two unexpected matters to create the effect of surprise *tori-awase*. Instead of a Zen-like moment of truth, concreteness and “objective suggestiveness” is at the core of Haiku poetics in Sweden.

Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that Swedish haiku emerged much later than in U.S. SHA was established as late as 1999. Some Swedish haiku poets studied the Japanese language, and some had direct connections to Japanese haiku poets. The Internet offered various channels for haiku poets to make contact. In short, Swedish *haijin* had many more opportunities to get to know different currents in haiku writing, both in Japan, the U.S., and

⁹⁵ Hoshino 2002, pp. 15–21, 24–40.

⁹⁶ Bashō’s words are quoted by Tohō in *Sanzōshi*: “Haikai deals only with today, what you have before your eyes.” Today 今日, was translated to “this moment” by Blyth. Hoshino 2002, pp. 26–27.

⁹⁷ Falkman 2012, p. 16.

Europe. This may explain why Swedish haiku poetics so closely correlate with the Japanese conception of the genre, both with the traditional school of Kyoshi's objective sketching and also others who see haiku as a poetic form for expressing human feelings.

Conclusion

Swedish haiku poets began translating Japanese haiku mainly through English, but sometimes, through French and German. The first good anthology of Swedish haiku translations appeared in 1959. However, a haiku community large enough to warrant attention seems not to have existed in Sweden until around 2000.⁹⁸

The Swedish understanding of the genre has much in common with that of American haiku poets. Miyamori, Blyth, Henderson, Yasuda and, later, Higginson, and others have served as important sources of haiku knowledge of haiku. In particular, Miyamori's significance is worth stressing. As mentioned earlier, one of the most important sources, if not the most important, for Wahlund was Miyamori's work (1932). Haiku in the U.S. provided rich references for Swedish *haijin*, but Swedish *haijin* have shown little interest, compared to Americans, in Zen and the "haiku moment." Only a distant echo of this can be heard in the word "surprise" that the Swedish *haijin* advocate in their approach to haiku.

In Japan, what haiku is and should be has been a topic of discussion since the time of Masaoka Shiki. The discussion spans from today back to the time of Bashō, and even further back, when definitions of haiku poetics were already being sought.

Outside of Japan and in Sweden, haiku has, in the first place, served as a foreign, exotic form of poetry. Especially because of its alien identity, the need to define the genre has felt urgent. Conclusions that Swedish *haijin* have reached in terms of haiku definitions correlate quite closely with the Japanese perceptions of the genre: both recognize the importance of concrete descriptions and occurrences; letting these convey meaning without the help of metaphor, paraphrasing, or rational explanations; using the technique of combination and the shock the two parts generate when joined in a haiku.⁹⁹

Japanese modernists' haiku and some of their work have been introduced in Sweden. This knowledge of the modernist movement in Japanese haiku may partly explain Swedish haiku poets' rather liberal stance vis-à-vis form. That the lines embody poetic quality is deemed more important than adhering to the 17-syllable form. Regarding content, Swedish *haijin* draw a line between haiku and senryū, the former built up by natural phenomena and the latter by focusing on human beings and society and treating them in ironic or humorous ways. However, they

⁹⁸ Some anthologies of poems titled "haiku" appeared in Sweden before 2000. But most of them had very little to do with Japanese haiku except the three-line form.

⁹⁹ Shock, however, tends to be explained in terms of surprise that the three steps effect rather than in terms of "two phrases in one sentence" (*niku-issbō*), as we have seen in the section regarding *kireji*.

qualify this approach by acknowledging that it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between these aspects.

Also important to note is that various channels are open today that were not in previous eras. Swedish haiku poets travel to Japan to participate in haiku contests and conferences. International Haiku Conferences convene in Europe and Japan, promoting direct contact between Swedish and Japanese *haijin*, as well as other international haiku poets. The Japanese interest in the internationalization of haiku dates back to 1989, when the Haiku International Association was established. The interest in getting to know each other appears to be mutual today.

Do international and Japanese haiku belong to the same genre? Hoshino wrote Japanese haiku “俳句,” but began writing international haiku “ハイク” ten years ago.¹⁰⁰ This choice shows that the two are considered close, but not identical. Differences lie mainly in the status of *kigo* and *kireji*. Swedish *haijin* define the genre using wording identical to the Japanese regarding the objectivity and concreteness of language in haiku, but they do not accord the same importance to *kigo* and *kireji*.

Even translated into different languages, Goethe belongs to the canon of world literature. In the same way, Bashō belong to the classical canon of haiku for international *haijin*. Is it meaningful to say that Bashō in Swedish is not really Bashō? Despite cultural and linguistic differences and obstacles, literary works have always traversed cultural boundaries and come to be loved and cherished by different people and to take root in diverse places. Hoshino’s suggestion that the genre should be seen as a tree with various branches, Japanese and international, without necessarily seeing the Japanese as the trunk, provides a sympathetic picture of the genre.¹⁰¹

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¹⁰⁰ For instance, Hoshino’s title uses kanji for Japanese haiku and katakana for international haiku. Hoshino 2002.

¹⁰¹ Hoshino 2002, pp. 312–13.

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