Spring 1974

Haiku: Bless You

Wanda Mohatt
Carroll College

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.carroll.edu/langlit_theses
Part of the Comparative Literature Commons, and the Japanese Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholars.carroll.edu/langlit_theses/78

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Languages and Literature at Carroll Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in Languages and Literature Undergraduate Theses by an authorized administrator of Carroll Scholars. For more information, please contact tkratz@carroll.edu.
Bless You

April, 1974

Wanda Mohatt
This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of English.

Sister M. Clare Ressler, O.S.F.  
Director

Alice Pope  
Reader

Henry E. Burgess  
Reader

April 1, 1974  
Date
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

Born of the Japanese tradition, haiku capitalizes on the depth and universal scope of fundamental images (fire, water, vegetation, the seasons, celestial bodies) to make her the property of the world. The following treatment traces the ancestry of haiku; investigates the literary techniques she draws upon; and explores the underlying aesthetics which sustain the form, to increase understanding and appreciation of the genre. Having thus established the backdrop, the final chapter illustrates the all-encompassing sweep of haiku through the selection of just one of the basic symbols: water.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the sensitive and comprehensive handling of the haiku in Kenneth Yasuda's The Japanese Haiku; and the clarification
of symbols and their significance in Mircea Eliade's *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. These two works in particular, and the encouragement of a number of fine people, were invaluable to me in this effort.
CHAPTER I
Literary Historical Perspective

The roots of the haiku are anchored in a murky past which "may well have origins deep in a primitive society and be identified with spring festivals."¹ This very ancient stirring, credited to the gods, took the form of question and answer or statement and response. The lines were short, spontaneous, and connotative of an immediate formation of words. From this question and answer basis arose the poetic form, katauta.

First recorded in 712 a.d. (although long in existence before then) the katauta form consisted of three parts ar-

ranged in the syllabic pattern 5-7-7 or 5-7-5. These parts varied in length from seventeen to nineteen syllables.\(^{2}\) The katauta was composed by two people, often in a seeming spirit of competition because much value was placed on questions or answers that managed to confound and delight by either their wit or unanswerableness.

Following the katauta, came **sedôka**. This form consisted of two sets of three lines: 5-7-7 plus 5-7-7; in other words, simply a pair of katauta. The sedôka, however, differed vitally from the katauta in that it was written by one person, and did not necessarily conform to the question/answer motif.

Further evolution produced the chôka, alternating lines of five and seven syllables to an indefinite length, concluded by a seven-syllable line. Even here in a longer form, the line lengths remained fairly fixed: five and seven syllables alternately. Interestingly, the katauta-like patterns of 5-7-7 or 5-7-5 occurred within the body of the poem.\(^{3}\)

Thus, the basic Japanese rhythmic pattern of five and seven syllable lines is firmly established; the concluding

\(^{2}\) "It is extremely significant that the length of this oldest poetic form in Japanese is the length that it is. For it was used to ask a question—simply, directly, spontaneously, in one breath length. And the answer to the question is given in the same manner, in one breath." (Ibid., 110.)

\(^{3}\) Historically speaking, rigid adherence to the above verse patterns was not clearly formalized. The basic rhythm pattern was the 5-7 syllable pattern, but it was as honored in the breach as in the observance, thereby allowing great individual freedom of form.
line, balancing and harmonizing the rhythm by containing an odd number of syllables, is crystallized. This emergence of pattern and form pre-figures the evolution of an independent poetic form of three parts of approximately seventeen syllables, seeming to show that "the basic element of haiku lies deep within the poetic instincts of Japan and to foretell the future poetic form we know today as haiku."\(^4\)

Elaborating upon the now-traditional syllabic-rhythmic pattern, the tanka emerged to sophisticate and formalize its predecessors. Tanka consistently retained a well-defined form: five lines in a pattern of 57-57-7, maintaining the characteristic alternation between five and seven syllable lines, and concluding in a line of an odd-number of syllables. Typically, one subject was treated in the first pair of lines, a second in the following pair of lines, with the concluding line serving as a refrain or reiteration. A slight variation of the tanka form was written in a pattern of 575-77; the first three lines formed the upper hemistitch, the concluding two lines formed a second hemistitch with a well-defined pause between the two.

The tanka became the dominant poetic form during the Manyō Period, with the sedoka and choka still much in evidence, while the katauta as such completely disappeared. During this

---

period, the original tanka pattern of 57-57-7 gradually gave way to the more refined 575-77 pattern, the latter possessing a greater fluidity and flexibility capable of the far more sophisticated subtleties and nuances which were rapidly becoming an integral part of the composite Japanese.

Emerging from the refined tanka form, the renga (or linked-verse) was written by two people—one composing the upper hemistich and the other composing the second hemistich. The renga is often regarded more as "a social than a literary phenomenon...(in which) records of the time show almost all classes indulged." The composition of renga became a competition; wit, pun, and parody were highly prized. The more piquant the wit, the more clever and subtle the pun, the more contrasting the parody, the better the verse. As the Heian Period (794-1185) of wealth, luxury, and increasing sophistication flourished, versifying became more and more of a social pastime. The single-link renga, issuing directly from the tanka, grew until some renga consisted of as many as one hundred links, each written by a different individual. At first, the longer renga attempted to recapture, in the words of Kenneth Yasuda, "the sober, classical beauty of the early tanka spirit"; but the competitive element of the shorter renga persisted "with bets being made on the comparative excellence

---

of the links composed by various poets."

As the influence and popularity of the renga expanded, the importance of the opening verse (or hokku) became more pronounced, especially in the longer renga. The game had become more elaborate and had taken on a more serious intent in the longer form which could no longer be justified by mere witticism alone. Hence, the hokku assumed the vital role of setting the whole tone or atmosphere of the poem. Hokku writing demanded such excellence of skill that great concentration was centered on it, resulting in the emergence of hokku which were not written as the beginning verse of renga. Gradually, hokku as a separate form was firmly established.

As the renga form became more highly stylized and rigidly structured, a comic reaction to its formalization surfaced in the form of haikai no renga. Observing the same basic pattern of the old renga, the haikai no renga placed heavy emphasis on humor, broached every subject known to man, and liberated poetry from traditional circumscribed poetic language. As hokku was to renga, so haikai was to haikai no renga. It too came to stand on its own as humorous verse, a sort of counterpart to the hokku.

Haiku crystallizes as a gentle fusion of hokku and haikai. Liberated by haikai to draw on any subject in any diction,

haiku becomes flexible and universal. Inspired by hokku to strive for excellence of expression and effective establishment of tone and atmosphere, haiku becomes poignant and significant. Drawing from the dignity and sobriety of hokku on the one hand, and the levity and wit of haikai on the other, haiku inherits the best of two worlds, resulting in unparalleled versatility.
CHAPTER II
Characteristics of Haiku

The haiku as a poetic entity is a fascinating study. What distinguishes haiku from any three-line verse? What traits figure in its inception and follow through in its execution?

As Japanese literature "...had little of the variety we (the Western tradition) have in sonnets and quatrains, iambics and dactylics"\(^1\); and as rhyme was only incidental to the literary verse and never a conscious effort\(^2\), the


\(^2\)Since all Japanese words end in either a vowel or in 'n', rhyming in Japanese would seem become monotonous. Rhyme is often found in English rendering of haiku, partially because the definite form given in the native Japanese by alternation
burden of supporting rhythm and harmony fell to skillfull interplay of syllable-division and masterful usage of the pause. Hence, these characteristics are an integral part of haiku.

Generally speaking, the haiku is composed of three lines, seventeen syllables. The line division usually occurs in a pattern of alternating five-syllable and seven-syllable lines. Although this pattern is the norm, strict adherence to its dictates is not essential to the creation of true haiku. For example, Bashō, generally considered to be the man who first elevated haiku to a place of true poetic dignity during the 17th century, produces the lovely haiku "Beauty":

The usually hateful crow;
he, too—this morning,
on the snow.

The first line of seven syllables, the second of five, the third should—conventionally speaking—revert again to seven (it is of three.) There is more then, obviously, to the creation of true haiku than mere syllabic arrangement of words.

The value of the well-positioned pause is incalculable in haiku writing. Under various conditions, it can serve either to emphasize and intensify the significance of a point just made, or it can soften harsh edges; it can render a poignancy of syllables is quite difficult to maintain in translation, and partially because, due to the extreme brevity and often fragmentary grammar of the haiku, literal translation could produce the mistaken effect of an unfinished piece of poetry.
beyond words or a piquancy beyond expression. It is, perhaps, one of the most subtle and yet most deliberate techniques available to the artist. Haiku capitalizes on this most intriguing of literary tactics with most pleasing results. Consider Ryota, writing in the mid-1700's, "Harvest Moon":

So brilliant a moonshine;
if ever I am born again—
a hilltop pine!

The colon after "moonshine" brings the reader to a complete stop; he sees the "brilliant moonshine." The scene is set, the mood is set; in the ensuing pause, all the myriad implications of a moonlit night and its attendant reflective atmosphere subtly infiltrate the mind, still only half-recognized. A setting and atmosphere of contemplation being established in the first line, the pause affords the opportunity for possibilities of unlimited avenues of cogitation to present themselves; the second line selects one of these avenues, reincarnation, as that of the moment. The dash at the end of this line suggests a continuity, a tremulo in the note, rather than the complete break as represented by the colon following the first line. Thus, the dash maintains a continuous flow while still affording the opportunity for a wealth of divergent topics to insinuate themselves before concluding in a most definitive and indisputable fashion, "a hilltop pine!"

Continuing formal considerations include diction and use of literary techniques such as simile, metaphor, personi-
fication, alliteration, etc. Centuries before Eliot observed that "Every revolution in poetry is apt to be, and sometimes to announce itself as, a return to common speech," Bashō had insisted on the use of common language: "In the poetry of haikai ordinary words are used"; adding that the value of poetry is "to correct ordinary words." As for figures of speech, similes become superfluous; the words themselves become what they represent: "...As words function dynamically in poetry, they cease as in prose to stand for objects and concepts, rather, as the force of crystallization binds them together, the words themselves can become the things they stand for." Personification is fairly common among haiku collections, possibly due to the close kinship felt between the Japanese people and nature. Its usage is so natural, almost inevitable, that it flows spontaneously, intrinsically through the verse:

At the butterflies
the caged bird gazes, envying—
just watch its eyes!

Sometimes the personification is of such a subtle fiber that, though aware of the inference, the statement itself is far from bald:

---


5 Ibid., 69.
Insects one hears--
and one hears the talk of men--
with different ears.

There is no direct statement that insects 'talk', yet the reference to insects in the first line immediately succeeded by the reference to "the talk of men" in the second line subtly imputes a fine correlation between the speech of men and that of insects, although heard "with different ears."

In the original Japanese, much reliance is often placed on assonance, consonance, and alliteration in underlining a mood or reinforcing and compounding by sound what is seen in print. Understandably, some of this driving force inherent in the Japanese language itself is lost or subdued in translation; yet its impact is undeniable, and often follows through into English most admirably.

Witness "The Unknown Flower":

To bird and butterfly
unknown, a flower blooms;
the autumn sky.

Here, the recurrence of the strong 'b' sound of 'bird', 'butterfly', and 'blooms' punctuates the mellow vowel sounds of 'unknown', 'flower', and 'autumn.' The successful harmonizing of these polarities produces a timbre at once delicate and cogent.

Final notes on distinctive elements of haiku form are outlined by Kenneth Yasuda: "...the characteristics that are haiku (are) ellipsis, condensation, spontaneity, and nakedness of treatment." These elements (vital to the suggestive aura
intrinsic to true haiku) are realized through great use of what the Japanese call renso: association of ideas. There are various widespread techniques employed in achieving this deft inter-play among ideas. Prominent among these is the infusion of season into the haiku. A moment's reflection on the myriad sensations, impressions, and associations attendant upon each of the seasons will bring an appreciation of the broad spectrum of implications elicited by reference to any particular season. The seasonal reference itself is effective in an overt fashion, as in:

Summer night;
from cloud to cloud the moon
is swift in flight.

or by mere suggestion:

If a west wind blows,
they pile up in the east--
the fallen leaves.

A similar economy-by-association is executed by allusion to or direct statement of familiar religious, cultural, traditional, or political significance. Such references, though useful in eliminating excess verbiage, are highly particularized and apt to vary from one country to another, one region to another. This is conducive to condensation, but is not indispensably essential. It is far from uncommon for haiku employing this technique to touch a respondent cord in the heart of any man, regardless of nationality, creating a complete understand-

---

ing, even without an intensive familiarity with its possible muted references. Consider, for example:

The bush warbler—oh,
his perchings on the plum tree
started long ago!

The feeling of timelessness is not diminished, even though it is not common knowledge that the ancient poets of Japan had associated the bush warbler and the plum tree for more than a thousand years.

Another form of association of ideas is accomplished by comparing two or more ideas expressed within the haiku itself. Once again, the expression ranges from obscurity to relative bluntness. The comparison in Shiki's "The New and the Old" is patent:

Railroad tracks; a flight
of wild geese close above them
in the moonlit night.

The contrast between the somewhat prosaic archetype of the progressive modern world of man embodied in the railroad tracks and the somewhat more ephemeral archetype of the free, ageless world of nature, an impartial sky overseeing both, is thus thrown into unmistakably stark relief.

As one turns again to Shiki, the internal comparison assumes a deeper hue:

It looks like a man,
the scarecrow in the moonlit night--
and it is pitiful.

---

\textit{Ibid.}, 77.
The forlorn aspect of the scarecrow is discreetly heightened by the beauty and serenity somehow associated with a moonlit night. Impossible to overlook is the comparison drawn between the scarecrow ("it looks like a man") and man himself; but beyond this, promise of deeper comparison beckons. Does the pathetic element of the scarecrow rest in its similarity to man with none of man's saving graces; or, does man truly have no saving graces but is actually as empty and pathetic as the scarecrow? Interpretations hinging on various relationships between man and the scarecrow are diverse and profound, spinning one-out-of-the-other from comparisons of the ideas and concepts each encompasses.

"Omission of words which would be required in a grammatically formal sentence but which are not really needed to make the sense clear" is a vital tool in condensation of expression. Properly wielded, this omission compounds the illusive and alluring suggestive qualities of the haiku, streamlining the verse for maximum effectiveness, without plunging it into murky depths of impenetrable obscurity:

New Years Day:
clouds dispersed, and sparrows
chattering away.

Absence of articles and auxiliary verbs in this haiku is certainly no barrier to understanding. Rather, the omission enhances the descriptive powers of the verse, rendering it all

---

Ibid., 7.
the more pungent.

Thus it is that haiku draws heavily upon its balance of syllables, its deft positioning of the pause, its incorporation of contrasting and complementing sounds, and its genius for playing off the denotative and connotative meanings of words to produce the masterpiece of suggestion and understatement that is haiku.
CHAPTER III
Aesthetics of Haiku

Underlying the considerations of form and convention, there flows a deeper consideration in exploring haiku. Slightly more illusive, but undeniably crucial to good haiku, is the attitude, or aesthetics, of the haiku. It is this element which renders the haiku something beyond mere observation of norms. Indeed, it is the aesthetic stance which remains constant while structure fluctuates. It is the aesthetics of the haiku that breathe depth and life into an otherwise hollow shell of sounds.

Haiku arises from an experience, becoming the tangible expression of that which is seen, felt, heard, or, in some cases, imagined. In realizing the experience so that it becomes the domain of mankind, it forces the artist to become
one with the experience. This unity is vital to the creation of haiku, for it is only by becoming one with the experience that the experience is known and the insight shared. Consequently, the awareness of self as distinct from that which is seen, felt, heard, diminishes. Such a merging of the experienced and the experiencer bears significant ramifications.

As a direct result of this unity comes a steadfast allegiance to sincerity. Having once integrated with an event, one's entire being is involved. If the experience is not approached honestly, then either the unity has not been achieved or the artist is being deliberately deceptive. In any event, such a situation prohibits haiku invention.

Indivisible from sincerity, spun of the same stuff and intrinsic to the very fiber of true art, is the ever-promising thread of truth. Indeed, art as a manifestation of the quest for meaning and truth has teased man for centuries. Haiku crystallizes its truth by an uncompromising insistence upon sincerity, for "sincerity lies in a single-minded devotion to the totality of the realization."¹ This is the fusing of conflicting elements into a harmonious whole. A prior identification with the parts to provide insight into being is required, providing the opportunity of glimpsing that mercurial cord of affinity which unites the universe. So it is that truth and sincerity become interwoven with that one-ness of

subject and object which demands fidelity to both subject and object.

Arising from the integrity inherent in the unification and harmony of the knower and the known is a certain lack of violent emotion and a curious "surrender (of) cherished intellectual concepts before the reality of (the) experience." At first glance, such seeming restrictions hint at sterility; yet, closer inspection reveals that the abundance contained within these two elements expands haiku potential immeasurably.

It is important here again to understand the nature of the unity that binds experience and artist. If the artist is truly involved with the object/experience, and if he is seeking the truth therein, it becomes evident that his insight must be as free from external prejudices as possible. When one is overwhelmed by sorrow, or anger, or joy the consciousness of self is heightened—sometimes even distorted. The result is a clouding of vision and inevitable imposition of subjectivity upon experience. Similarly, if pre-conceived intellectual concepts are allowed to influence the experience, the result is a tunnelling of vision and an inevitable restriction.

So it is that the heart of haiku rests in the gently powerful fusion of man at one with himself and his surroundings. From this harmony rise the valiant strains of sincerity on which are written the notes of truth.

\(^2\text{Ibid.}, 10.\)
CHAPTER IV
Symbolism

Symbolism plays an important role in every form of Literature in every tongue. It enriches without over-
embellishment; it speaks volumes without verbosity; and it
seems to touch a deeply buried sense of the unknown and un-
knowable in man's universe. This last aspect is a harkening
back to man's earliest explanations of himself and his world.
These explanations were fraught with superstition, myth, and
ritual. The explanations fell before the advance of science,
but the symbols they inaugurated have not died. Rather, they
have become a part of man; they are his inheritance from a
past beyond his touch.¹

¹Mircea Eliade, Images and Symbols (New York: Sheed &
The most basic symbols rise from the most basic natural phenomena (fire, water, vegetation, celestial bodies, stones). Mention of these elements provides a common frame of reference for all men because they are an integral part of the human experience. Haiku communicates in terms of these symbols, and in so doing transcends cultural limitations. By drawing on these most ancient, fundamental, and universal images, haiku becomes the gift of the Japanese tradition to the world.

The water symbol traced through haiku serves as an illustration of the universal symbol. Its usage in haiku spans every aspect of its nature in regard to human interpretation. By observing the role it plays in giving depth and tenor to haiku, it becomes increasingly apparent that we have seen it play this part before in the Literature of the western tradition. Barriers between variant cultures begin to crumble as the superficial trappings of civilization fade and the sense of a common humanity grows.

The poet Jōsō presents the whimsical "Little Duck":

Ward, 1952), pp. 13-14. "Every historical man carries on, within himself, a great deal of prehistoric humanity...today we are beginning to see that the non-historical portion of every human being does not simply merge into the animal kingdom...nor ultimately into "Life"; but that, on the contrary, it bifurcates and rises right above Life. This non-historical part of the human being wears, like a medal, the imprinted memory of a richer, a more complete and almost beatific existence."
"I've just come from a place
at the lake bottom!" --- that is the look
on the little duck's face.

This is light, humorous haiku. A first reading finds it entertaining; a second look finds it profound. Consider the implications contingent on "the lake bottom": water—the begetter and sustainer of life; water—the re-newer and denier of life. It is as if the insignificant little duck has glimpsed the awesome mystery of life, has gleaning some deep inner knowledge of the world from the very lifesblood of the world, and will never divulge the secret. It is the curious paradox of the simple given preference over the sophisticated.

Now consider "The Little Valley in Spring" by Onitsura:

A mountain stream:  
even the stones make songs—  
wild cherry trees.

Here, the atmosphere is one of lightness and life. As "even the stones make songs" proclaiming life, so too does the stream, the source of life. Further reflection gives rise to the speculation: is it the water flowing over the stones that causes song? or, are the "wild cherry trees," reaching up from amidst the stones along the bank, the physical expression of song? The first interpretation is patently dependent upon the waters for its celebration; the second is equally dependent

---

Ibid. 151. "they (the Waters) precede every form and sustain every creation. Emergence repeats the cosmogonic act of formal manifestation; while immersion is equivalent to a dissolution of forms. That is why the symbolism of the waters includes Death as well as Re-Birth."
but in a more subtle fashion. In order to survive, the cherry trees must have water. They stretch their roots downward to draw life from the stream and reach their branches upwards through the stones as the visual song of life. This celebration unites all things under one common denominator, "a mountain stream."

A different aspect of the powers of the waters, considerably less beguiling, is presented by Shiki:

In the winter river, 
thrown away, a dog's 
dead body.

The effect of this verse, vivid on impact, is compounded by a consideration of all that is compactly represented by "a winter river"; for "water symbolizes the primal substance from which all forms come and to which they will return either by their own regression or in a cataclysm." The impersonality of the scene, the bleak coldness of a river in winter, carries an eerie, unsettling whisper of death's indifference to what it claims. Somehow, recognized or not, the suggestion of the source of all life rescinding all life seems to equalize impartially all life. Thus, man sees his own fate in the corpse of a dog and the perfidious indifference of the grey-dead winter river.

Thus far, only the effect of the actual presence of water in the experience has been examined. It is equally eloquent

---

in its absence, as witnessed by Buson's "In Winter":

Willow trees are bare--
Dried the water, and the stones
Lie scattered here and there.

The vital importance of Water is poignantly emphasized by mention of its absence. As Water symbolizes life, the fact that the water has dried suggests that the water once present will return. This image, coming as it does after the "Willow trees are bare," reinforces the aura of half-death/expectancy created by the willows. Certainly the trees are not dead, only waiting. Thus, the expectancy of water's return links with that of the return of leaves to the trees to effect a hushed promise of life.⁴

Synomous with life is fertility. It is only natural, then, that the Waters should assume a symbolic mantle of fertility. "Principle of what is formless and potential, basis of every cosmic manifestation, container of all seeds...it fertilizes the earth, animals, and women."⁵ With this in mind, the very simple haiku:

Bags of seeds
being wetted
by the spring rain.

of Buson becomes charged with powerful fertility overtones. The irrefutable fertility concept overt in seeds is compounded

---

⁴Ibid., 193. "Symbol of creation, harbour of all seeds, water becomes the supreme magic and medicinal substance; it heals, it restores youth, it ensures eternal life."

⁵Ibid., 188-189.
and reinforced by the fertility concept wrought up in "spring rain."

Another concept found in the powerful water symbol is that of eternity. Eliade states, "It (water) existed at the beginning and returns at the end of every cosmic or historical cycle, it will always exist..." This sense of the eternal pervades "The Sea of Spring":

The sea of spring,
rising and falling
all the day long.

The feeling of timelessness issues from the constancy, the monotony of "rising and falling." Integral with this is the peculiar tint of the interminable conveyed through "all the day long"; the sense of the eternal is thus established.

The Waters carry with them an unequivocal abundance of symbolic regeneration, purification. This awesome restorative power bears with it strong overtones of hope and a certain peace. "After the Storm" capsules this rejuvenation:

The thunderstorm goes by,
on one tree evening sunlight--
a cicada cry.

\[6\] Ibid.

\[7\] Ibid. "Immersion in water symbolizes a return to the pre-formal, a total regeneration, a new birth, for immersion means a dissolution of forms, a reintegration into the formlessness of pre-existence; and emerging from the water is a repetition of the act of creation in which form was first expressed. Every contact with water implies regeneration; first because dissolution is succeeded by a "new birth", and because immersion fertilizes, increases the potential of life and creation."
It is the calm after the storm; the thunderstorm renewing, the sunlight promising, the cicada substantiating. All three are interwoven, and should any one of them be eliminated, the effect would be diminished, if not destroyed.

The Waters and the Moon are so closely related in the universal ebb and flow of life\(^3\) that it is not surprising to find much of the symbolism associated with the waters present in the mystique of the Moon. Consequently, Water and Moon symbolism often coincide with the happy result of a mutual enrichment. The intertwining water and moon symbolism of "The Visitor":

All the rains of June,
and one evening secretly,
through the pines, the moon.

makes the verse doubly effective. The first line carries the rain with all the attendant life and promise symbolism; the final line echoes this symbolism in the moon's appearance through the pines, for the moon, too, with its own perpetual cycle of swelling and diminishing, represents life. Beyond this, the moon's rhythmic cycles maintain a certain governance over the waters. Consequently, the "rains" of the first line being subtly supplanted by "the moon" of the last line cements the dependency aspect of the water-moon relationship.

The feeling of eternity, successfully conveyed by the

---

\(^8\) Ibid., 159. "Both because they are subject to rhythms (rain and tides) and because they sponsor the growth of living things, waters are subject to the moon."
Water image alone, is even more sharply defined when the images of water and moon are combined. This powerful union is reflected in "Constancy":

Though it be broken--
broken again--still it's there:
the moon on the water.

Here, three ideas commingle. The motion of the water ever-breaking the moon's reflection but never banishing it establishes the notion of fidelity; the notions of change and rhythm enter under the guise of the moon which changes constantly in a cycle of waxing and waning; the final water image hints eternity. Read together, it becomes the poet's expression of life disrupted, ever-changing, but ever-continuous.

The moon and the waters appear together again in "The Short Night (I)" with different effect:

Night that ends so soon:
in the ford there still remains
one sliver of the moon.

The night is ending; darkness moves into light. Emergence from darkness bears with it overtones of initiation. Yet, curiously this verse conveys a certain reluctance to give over the night, the darkness; it "ends so soon." The moon, too, carries strong initiation significance; and here again occurs a cer-

---

9Ibid., 182-183. "The hierophanies of the moon...may be grouped around the following themes...change, marked by the opposition of light and darkness (full moon--new moon...)....the dominant idea is one of rhythm carried out by a succession of opposing modalities."

10Ibid., 158. "The symbolism of emerging from "darkness"
tain reluctance, as the waters ("the ford") still claim "one sliver of the moon." As initiation ends one life to begin another, these three lines suggest a faint sense of regret at the inevitable ending of one way of life, even though the one to follow may be superior.

An exuberant celebration of life, "Snow, Moon, and Flowers" is a series of mutually reinforcing images:

The moon, the snow,
and now besides--through mist,
the morning glow!

The strong image of the moon, which creates a mood of life and freshness and hope, is immediately succeeded by the image of snow, which compounds the theme of freshness. The mist, with its water associations of life and re-birth, gives additional support to the already established mood and also serves as a catalyst for the final line. This last line, "the morning glow," conveys the sense of a new chance with a new day, thereby consolidating and re-emphasizing the previous images. This haiku plays image-on-image for the glorious effect of insuppressible belief in the promise of life.

In these ways, the many facets of the Waters are reflected in haiku. Their powers of increased depth on the literary

can be found in initiation rituals as well as in the mythology of death."

11 Ibid. "Man saw himself reflected in the "life" of the moon; not simply because his own life came to an end...but because of his own thirst for regeneration, his hopes of a "rebirth", gained confirmation from the fact of there being always a new moon."
level, as well as their function as an underlying cord of universal identification on the human level, are unmistakable. The Waters encompassing and sustaining men around the world in fact, are the self-same waters that flow through literature around the world. Haiku, with its reliance on the un-said and its insistence on economy, makes severe demands of the symbolic potential of the Waters. The challenge is met; the form and the image complement and invigorate one another.
CONCLUSION

The Japanese have said, "Words are like nets in which the fisherman tries to capture the moon but fails." All men are fishermen; all men aspire to capture the same moon. Japan offers the net of haiku to the world to assist in the effort; for, through its use of symbolism, Japanese haiku supercedes barriers of time and place. The Water image treated here is representative of all those symbols most basic to haiku and to man. Haiku capitalizes on these universal rudiments of the human experience; the tradition from which haiku emerges translates these rudiments into a form distinctively its own. By so doing, this genre draws on the common points of identification which bind all men, expresses them through syllabic division and brevity, and returns them to all men.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


