

## Multiculturalism in practice : World Haiku Movement

A talk to the Summer course "*Cultural Diversities: East and West*" held in Budapest, Hungary in Summer 2002.

by Dusan Pajin (Yugoslavia) [dpajin@f.bg.ac.yu](mailto:dpajin@f.bg.ac.yu)  
Home Page - <http://dekart.f.bg.ac.yu/~dpajin/>



### MULTICULTURALISM IN PRACTICE - WORLD HAIKU MOVEMENT

Johann W. von Goethe - Worldliterature, 1827 - poetry is the common good of humanity, present everywhere, and in all times - "literary values" must and should include beside the "European classics" literary output of other cultures, and times, which together make up "world literature". Goethe, and others after him, realized that certain works of art and literature -- although individualized in time, and subject -- transcend national, cultural, and historical limits, specific time in which they were created, and speak universally: to all humankind.

### HAIKU (East) + ENGLISH (West) = World Haiku - MULTICULTURALISM IN PRACTICE

With haiku a particular poetry form has become global, as one of the forms of multiculturalism in practice, in the second half of the 20th century (and probably it will be the same in the first half of the 21st c.). Haijins round the globe write haikus which -- one way or the other -- share some traits of classic Japanese haikus, but which are at the same time "local", sharing the background of the literary tradition within which they spring, sensibility toward nature, history, and destiny of their region.

Some haijins develop their worldwide communication in various ways - writing to journals, attending competitions, and exchanging their haikus in a multi-language cross-communication. One of them is in particular Kijima Hajime (from Tokyo) who developed his exchange of haikus with haijins from various countries (Israel, Italy, Hungary, France, Yugoslavia, etc.)

Through linked quatrains in Japanese, English, and the respective language of the other poet, he prints and exchanges cards which have the same verse of two poets, in three languages (for this occasion I have brought for the participants and professors of this summer course the card with his and my poem, presented in this fashion).

WORLD (GLOBAL) HAIKU CONGRESSES were held between 1999-2002 - in Japan, England, USA, and Slovenia. THE "WEBOLUTION" OF HAIKU - currently over 100 valid haiku sites - see:

<http://www.tempslibres.org/aozora/en/centre.html> - HAIKU SITE related to the

Balkan (south-eastern Europe) haiku, and world wide haiku news.

## HAIKU IN THE BALKANS

The first contact of the Balkans with Japanese haiku (and the first in the Western world) were translations into Romanian, by Bogdan Petricevich Hasdeu (1838-1907), published in 1878, just 10 years after the "opening" of Japan. In 1888 we find the publication of the earliest translations of haiku into English -- in A Handbook of Colloquial Japanese, B. H. Chamberlain, includes a few haikus.

Praise of Japanese haiku in Yugoslavia starts 40 years after that -- in 1928 -- when one of the classics of Serbian literature of the 20th c., Milos Crnjanski (1893-1977), published in Belgrade his book "Poetry of Ancient Japan," introducing, in translation, the high tradition of haiku. Several Yugoslav (Serbian) composers -- between 1930-1992 -- composed voice-instrumental pieces, using haikus of classic Japanese and modern Yugoslav poets.

During the sixties, Yugoslav poets started to write on haiku, to translate them from Japanese, and wrote haiku poems. In 1970's the process gained momentum, including many writers. The growing number of haikins was followed by groups, gatherings, festivals, and specialized periodicals, springing in all parts of Yugoslavia, including also smaller cities.

In South-eastern Europe haiku had a unique development in the 90's. While many things were in a downfall, and crumbling (economy, politics, national, and personal relations, etc.), haikins went on writing and joining, in conditions of war and peace, semi-peace (warm peace), and semi-war (cold war). They managed to keep their friendships, and to make new friends outside the Southeastern Europe ghetto (or Balkan reserve).

Together with Jim Kacian (from the U.S.A.), Anakiev edited "The Anthology of Southeastern European Haiku Poetry - KNOTS," published (in English), in 1999, in Tolmin (Slovenia). The book includes haiku's written by authors from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. English and haiku (West and East) give it a global aura; a specific poetic feeling, bringing together poets from the Southeastern Europe, gives it its Balkan aura. If not in the world at large, it is at least in their minds of these poets that friendship and understanding won over enmity and hate, and they go on, singing and communicating, in spite of everything... I admire them.

Dusan Pajin teaches philosophy of art and aesthetics prof. at Arts University in Belgrade.