

## Multiculturalism of World Haiku - Cross-Cultural and Personal Meaning

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### MULTICULTURALISM OF WORLD HAIKU - CROSS-CULTURAL AND PERSONAL MEANING



Kimi hi take	You light the fire
Yoki mono miseru	I will show you something nice --
Yukimaroge!	A great snowball

(Matsuo Basho, 1644-1694) (trans. by R. H. Blyth)

### WORLD HAIKU -- MEETING OF EAST AND WEST

Nowadays, a historian of culture who would try to locate and make the chronology of world haiku developments during the last fifty years, would have hard time. Beside Japan, the modern, world haiku -- as one of the significant global culture phenomena of our times -- was ignited simultaneously in many countries and continents.

1) In ex-Yugoslavia, the "haiku movement" goes back to sixties, when individual poets started to write on haiku, and wrote haiku poems. Perhaps among the first were (women poet) Desanka Maksimovic (1898-1993, Belgrade), Dubrako Ivancan (1931-- published a first haiku book in 1966, in Zagreb), Alexander Neugebauer (1930-1989, in Novi Sad, who published a first haiku poetry book, 1975), Zvonko Petrovic (from Varazdin, born 1925, who edited one of the first magazines, "Haiku" 1977-1981, and published a haiku book in 1971), Vladimir Devide (born 1925, living in Zagreb), introduced Japanese haiku as well as Dejan Razic (teacher of Japanese in Belgrade, 1935-1985), and Vladimir Zorcic (1941-1995, Belgrade), who wrote and published haikus in the 60's.

In the 70's the process gained momentum, including many writers, among them poets with former poetry reputation, and those who wrote solely haiku, in peculiar poetic form and content. Since that time -- especially during the 90's -- the movement accelerated. The growing number of haikins, was followed by groups, gatherings, festivals, and specialized periodicals, springing in all parts of Yugoslavia, including also smaller cities -- from the south of Serbia (Nis) to its northern part (Novi Sad, Odzaci), and up to the northwestern parts of Yugoslavia, like

Varazdin in Croatia, or Tolmin in Slovenia.

However, praise of classic Japanese haiku in Yugoslavia goes back to 1928, when -- one of the classics of Serbian literature of the 20th c -- Milos Crnjanski (1893-1977), published in Belgrade his book of translations "Poetry of Ancient Japan," introducing Basho, and the high tradition of haiku. He considered the influence of Chinese, and Japanese poetry as essential part of his own poetic stance, and writing. At that time he did not know anything about the Japanese metaphor-concept *aioi-no-matsu* -- growing in co-dependence, or sympathy, transcending time and space .1) However, he felt it in haiku poems, and made it part of his poetic sensibility and personal literary ambition: to connect through sympathy, and love, things (or persons) which are far away (in time, and/or space) one from another, and to find connections (or empathy): "a smile which can affect the grass," "care free gift of the waters", and "tranquillity transferred by pines in the snow." In Japanese poetry he particularly searched those peak experiences of tranquillity, eternity, and ethereal feelings, that can be reached by our minds. 2) His anthology "Poems of Ancient Japan" was popular between 1928-40, and after W.W.II. Several Yugoslav (Serbian) composers -- between 1930-1992 -- composed voco-instrumental pieces, using haikus of classic Japanese and modern Yugoslav poets.

Miloje Milojevic (1884-1946) composed in 1930 a cycle of compositions using Basho's haikus. Dejan Despic (1930-) composed two cycles. In 1991, *The Homeland Ozone* (opus 105, on haiku poems by D. Maksimovic), and in 1992 *Circle* (op. 107 - old Japanese poets). Rajko Maksimovic (1935-) composed in 1966 two compositions on Basho's haikus, and three compositions on Basho, Shiki and Moritake (these were presented at the Zagreb Music Biannual, in 1967).

2) Nowadays the "World haiku network" or global haiku, is one of the peculiar culture phenomena of our times, which in many cases cuts through the national, cultural, political or even military barriers, more fluently, and efficiently than drug traffic (but definitely for the betterment of mankind).

The world haiku network -- as a globalisation of a particular feeling and experience of the world -- is made up of two components: **haiku poetic form**, as poetry medium, and **English language**, as language medium.

These days there is a lot of talk about "globalism" and in most cases people have in mind negative processes and examples of "globalism" in politics, economy, and culture -- including the most drastic one: when the most powerful countries (or their military organization) take as their privilege to bomb any country round the globe, following its global, or regional interests.

However, world haiku gives us some positive examples and different meaning of globalism -- for example: "the global meaning of culture," or

"communication, and exchange of culture values and forms."

## NATIONAL AND WORLD LITERATURE

The idea that the national literature (transmitted orally or in writing, in one of the national languages), should be complemented by the idea of world literature (*Weltliteratur*), was first launched by J. W. von Goethe (in one of his discussions with Eckerman - Jan. 31. 1827). He said that poetry is the common good of humanity, present everywhere, and in all times. Otherwise, he was obsessed by *Ur-formen* and *Ur-phaenomen* (primal forms, and phenomena) in culture as well as biology, believing that behind multiplicity stands - at the beginning - some primal phenomena, which through metamorphosis brought multiform (be it plants, religions, languages, or literature forms).

However, the idea of world literature meant that the "literary cannon" must and should include beside the "European classics" literary output of other cultures, and times, which together make up "World literature".

By their translations, the new generation of Orientalists, and the Romantics, were opening up the literary treasures of the world, and *Weltliteratur* was to become one of Goethe's most treasured concepts. Its aim was to advance civilization by encouraging mutual understanding and respect -- whether through translation or criticism (Goethe's attempts to interpret Serbian poetry to the Germans is an excellent example of this latter), or through the blending of different literary traditions. Two poetic cycles, the late and lesser known *Chinese-German Hours and Seasons* (1830) and the *West-Eastern Divan* (1819), are his own outstanding attempts to connect East with West in 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, and for all times. Thus, beside the national heritage, nations, and humankind can share also the heritage of world literature.

The global sense and meaning of culture is present in the ideas which promoted

a global or world "outlook" -- broader than the national, or continental outlook -- considering "world philosophy", "world art, and literature", "world religions", etc.

These concepts, initiated by Goethe, and the Romantics in Europe, and the Transcendentalists (Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman) in America,<sup>3</sup> were precedents of our multiculturalism, and globalism (in terms of culture), and gave the context for a somewhat broader concept of world literature, which was to flourish in the multiculturalism of the second half of 20th c., and in the "meeting of East and West", which happened in spite of Rudyard Kipling -- who said that the twain shall never meet

-- and Huntington, who predicted the clash of cultures-civilizations.

## **CROSS-CULTURAL MEANING OF HAIKU**

With haiku a particular poetry form has become global, and one of the principal mediums of multiculturalism 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.

Therefore, "world haiku" as part of the globalisation in the positive sense and meaning, does not imply "homogenization" of haiku, or unifying standards and rules. On the contrary, it encouraged individual haiku poets' originality and style, local trends and initiatives, supporting diversity and difference, and thus endorsing multiculturalism of our times.

Viewed in the context of modernism and postmodernism, one could say that world haiku shares the universality peculiar of modernism, and multiculturalism peculiar of postmodernism.

Basing their communication in English language, haiku poets round the globe communicate more freely, and with better mutual understanding than any party in the field of literature, or culture.

So far, it seems that world haiku has fruitfully transcended the inevitable questions of "universalism" and "localism," "international haiku communication" and "individual efforts," "freedom in haiku" and "literary and aesthetic discipline" etc.

In a way, world haiku has become a new world view, inevitable part of a global culture, and example of the global meaning of culture -- a culture link, connecting multiculturalism, and globalism, West and East, North and South, in a positive way.

However, these general features are based on some particular functions -- on some personal meaning that writing, and sharing haiku has for so many people round the world.

In the following chapters we will outline these functions, and meanings.

## **SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS, NAZUNA IN BLOOM - BASHO AND WORDSWORTH**

William Wordsworth (1770-1850), and Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) can represent two human possibilities, or situations -- a glance that

withdraws, and a glance still vigil; splendor and beauty which are seen no more, and splendor and beauty which revive if you look carefully; inner glow which receded toward ethic issues, and inner glow which is still vital to respond to the natural beauty.

Wordsworth says in his "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood":

*There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
to me did seem  
Appareled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore -- (...)  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more. (...)  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower,  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind,  
In the primal sympathy, (...)  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering;  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.*

With Basho, we see that (after childhood) it is still possible to see the glory in the flower -- even in a modest flower like nazuna (in colloquial English: "shepherd's purse"), if one looks carefully!

<i>Yoku mireba</i>	<i>(When) closely inspected,</i>
<i>nazuna hana saku</i>	<i>Nazuna in bloom</i>
<i>kakine kana !</i>	<i>(Under) the hedge!</i>
(trans. by D. T. Suzuki)	

Perhaps this "haiku-opportunity" -- not to lose this glory, either because of age, or because of degradation of the environment -- is something that makes haiku so vital for many people today.

## **"SOUL POETRY" -- PERSONAL MEANING OF HAIKU**

To appear in the Norton or Oxford anthology is to belong to the literary canon, to have literary (social, aesthetic etc.) status, and accessibility to a reading (academic) public. In time when academic (high brow) literature -- prose and poetry -- based on literary canons, seems to have moved away from the average, common reader,<sup>4)</sup> there is a gap, which many people fill searching for a type of poetry which is colloquially called in Serbian "soul poetry." Now world haiku serves as "poetry for the soul."

1) In certain periods, modern literature among its programs had the principle that everyone should be the writer, everyone should be the reader. It seems that "haiku in practice" comes most closely to this. It

brings together professional poets (whatever that means in a particular society), and everyman/woman (vocational) poet (who is otherwise a person with a distinctive profession). In haiku practice, writing and reading, being a poet and a reader are simultaneous.

2) Haiku serves the primal function of sincere, heartfelt understanding, and communication between people, which many people need badly in most societies. So, with haiku they take off their social and professional garbs, they listen, and are listened to by others, joining the world fraternity of haikins. In haiku, people think locally, but speak universally.

3) For many people haiku practice recovers their perception, and spontaneous feelings. Numb by marketing, professional, and routine communication, they seem to recover their senses, their perception of nature, and other humans, when they switch to haiku. Haiku practice is efficient as an antidote to the contemporary destruction of attention and perception, because it starts with what is already the case -- short-span attention -- but goes beyond it, gradually broadening and deepening personal sensibility (and developing the sense for the "depth of time" -- Japanese: *aware*).

4) In particular, nature, and perception of nature, seem to be re-discovered in haiku practice. It revives some "faculties of the mind and senses" that are deteriorating in the "short-span attention culture." 5)

a) Type of attention, sensibility, and perception that is considered as essential for "deep ecology" seem to revive in haiku practice. People discover again the suchness of nature and beings around them, in a way which is invigorating, and considered as essential by many writers on ecological awareness.6)

b) Beside reviving ecological awareness, haiku poetry has another, in particular aesthetic dimension - reviving the ecstasy of the moment, contemplation of nature for the sake of its beauty, often in its simplicity (*wabi* tradition in Japanese haiku).

## **SOUTHEASTERN EUROPEAN HAIKU 7)**

In South-eastern Europe (in particular in the region of ex-Yugoslavia) haiku practice had a unique development in the 90's. In that decade, everything was in a downfall, and crumbling (economy, politics, national, and personal relations, etc.) only haiku writing kept an upward course. The new states were chasing out their former inhabitants, former friends would split, unable to reach consensus -- who is to blame, and who is guilty -- families were splitting where husband and wife were of different nationality, etc. New state borders and visa iron curtains were lifted -- the plan: divide and rule, turn the region into a series of protectorates, hating each other, was successful, so far 8)

Only haikins seemed to resist this, to communicate and share their common lot of haiku destinies. They 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 mutual friendships, and to make new friends with others -- outside the Southeastern Europe ghetto (or Balkan reserve). Jean-Louis Bouzou (from France) has published in his web magazine CARPE DIEM (No. 12) haikus from this part of Europe, and Basho's haikus (in No. 13 - <http://www.chez.com/erato/>).

With Serge Tome (from Belgium), Dimitar Anakiev (from Slovenia) made the Aozora site: <http://aozora.tempslibres.org>. Aozora (Haiku Association of South East Europe) is an international network of haiku poets, its societies & magazines from the Southeast European community, with further links to the World Haiku Association.

Together with Jim Kacian (from USA), Anakiev edited "The Anthology of Southeastern European Haiku Poetry - KNOTS," 9) published (in English), in 1999, in Tolmin (Slovenia). The book includes (in alphabetical order) haiku's written by authors from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. This book is an excellent example of "balkanization" in positive terms ("balkanization" is otherwise used mostly in negative connotation), and an example of (positive) globalisation.

English and haiku (West and East) give it a global aura; a specific poetic feeling, bringing together poets from the Balkans, gives it its Balkan aura.<sup>10</sup>) A few examples:

abandoned home -  
huge snowflakes fall  
down the chimney flue -- Vid Vukasovic (Yugoslavia)

meeting each other  
then disappearing --  
footprints in snow -- Robert Bebek (Croatia)

trees in the mist -  
climbing my arm  
an ant -- Konstantin Abaluta (Romania)

after the rain -  
a snail glowing  
in the grass -- Pandora Ilijevska (Macedonia)

cold moon --  
shadows within shadows  
along the snowy road -- Dimitar Stefanov (Bulgaria)

hot chestnuts --  
the first snow melts  
upon them -- Dimitar Anakiev (Slovenia)

grandpa's forge fire --  
cherries redden  
in the glow -- Franjo Krizmanic (Bosnia & Herzegovina)



evening --  
the frog hops  
with raindrops -- Savina Zoe, Greece

Since so much energy has been introduced to divide and antagonize the peoples in the Balkans, one can consider this as a miracle: that English and haiku brought them together in this book.

One could even imagine this as a beginning of a miracle, or utopia -- poetry transcending so many hates and borders that were created and erected during the last few decades, to serve some "global" interest... (divide et impera).  
If not in the world at large, it is at least in the minds of these "crazy poets" that friendship and understanding won over enmity and hate, and they go on, singing and communicating, in spite of everything... I admire them.<sup>11)</sup>

This anthology was followed by two other multilingual anthologies (Anakiev, 1999, and Simin, 2000), that introduced a new subject into haiku poetry -- war at large.<sup>12)</sup>

Both can be found on Aozora site -- <http://aozora.tempslibres.org>.

## NOTES

1) Royal Tyler (in Tyler, 1987) explains the famous *aioi* pair (pair of pines: Sumiyoshi and Takasago), celebrated in the classical Japanese play Takasago: one (male) pine is in the present, and another (female pine) in the past, but the communication between them is everlasting, since separation in time and space is mere appearance...

2) Crnjanski, M. (1966): *Putopisi*, Beograd, Sabrana dela, tom 6, "Finistere", str. 50.

3) See - Pajin (2000): "Qu'ont transcendé les transcendentalistes?" (What Did the Transcendentalists Transcend?)

4) There is also the question of gender in the literary canon (see Pajin, 1999), and the simple survey of activities of haiku clubs and meeting, shows that haiku has successfully transcended the gender question and discrimination.

5) In words of Ralph Nader: *Our children are now exposed to the most intense marketing onslaught in history. From the age of 9 months to 19 years, precise corporate selling is beamed directly to children, separating them from their parents, an unheard of practice formerly, and teaching them how to nag their beleaguered parents as unpaid salesman for companies. (...) Through television, the Internet stores, samples and mailings, these companies convey their message to the little ones. They teach them how to crave junk food, thrill to violent and pornographic programming, interact with the virtual reality mayhem.*



*The marketers are keenly aware of the stages of child psychologies, age by age, and know how to turn many into Pavlovian specimens powered by spasmodically shortened attention spans as they become ever more remote from their own family. Conditioned to become gazers and spectators for an average of 30 hours a week, youngsters now register as more obese and out of shape than any previous generation since 1900, when such records began to be collected. Their teachers see the results of this addictive commercial exploitation, the rat pack product conformity, the intrusion of commerce into the schools themselves. This does not prepare the next generation to become literate, self-renewing, effective citizens for a deliberative democracy. Instead, this commercial traffic makes them even more vulnerable to the streets (Nader, 2000).*

6) "Arne Naess... concludes *that it is not enough to have ecological ideas, we have to have ecological identity, or ecological self*. How are we to expand our identities in this way? Naess believes we need 'community therapies' such as the Council of All Beings. In the Council of All Beings we remember our rootedness in Nature. (...) We further extend our sense of identity when we find an ally in the natural world, make a mask to represent that ally, and then speak in council for and with the animals and plants and landscapes. We are always awed at the very different view of the world that emerges from their dialogue. Creative suggestions for human actions emerge and we invoke the powers and knowledge of these other life-forms to empower us in our lives" (Seed, 1998).

7) Since one can meet designations: (a) Southeastern Europe, (b) Balkans (c) (ex) SR Yugoslavia, and (d) (present) FR Yugoslavia, we should make it more clear for the general reader. (a) Southeastern Europe is a regional term which designates all countries, from Slovenia, and Croatia in the northwestern part of this region, down to Greece, and Turkey, in the southeastern part of this region, including present Yugoslavia. (b) Balkans is sometimes used as a synonym for Southeastern Europe, but sometimes as a region not including Slovenia and/or Croatia, since these two countries do not like to be considered as belonging to Balkan region (when the term "Balkans" is used as a pejorative, or synonym for the less developed part of Europe). (c) Ex, or SFR Yugoslavia was a country including six republics (four of these -- Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia, B&H -- seceded during the civil war period 1991-1996, and formed separate states). (d) Present, or FR Yugoslavia is a country with two republics: Serbia and Montenegro.

8) *For instance, in the Feb. 15, 1999 "Washington Post", former State Department planner Robert A. Manning described U.S. policy as: "...turning former Yugoslavia into a series of protectorates, one province at a time." One province at a time, until Yugoslavia is a group of Banana Republics. (Israel, 1999).*

9) The metaphor used for the title of this Anthology -- KNOTS -- has a complex meaning, as Eliade has shown in the third chapter on the symbolism of knots, in his book *Images and Symbols* (Eliade, 1980). In the Balkan tradition knots are used in everyday life to tie, and secure something, or -- in inter-personal meaning -- as something that brings people closer, but also in negative connotation - as something that binds,

or creates hindrances. In the Upanishadic context "knots of the heart" are all emotional ties (mainly negative type) - like evil doing, or evil done to us, or desperate longing that cannot be fulfilled in a lifetime etc. "In a pure nature the traditional doctrine becomes firmly fixed. In acquiring the traditional doctrine there is release from all knots of the heart"

(Chandogya-up. VII. 26.2.).

"When are cut all

The knots of the heart here on earth,

Then a mortal becomes immortal!

Thus far is the instruction" (*Katha-up. VI. 15*)

"He, verily, who knows that supreme Brahman, becomes very Brahman.

(...) He crosses over sin (evil). Liberated from the knots of the heart, he becomes immortal" (Mundaka-up. III. 2. 11) -- see Pajin, 1980.

10) In his speech about Balkan Haiku -- at the Global Haiku Festival, in Illinois, USA, April 15, 2000 -- Jim Kacian said: *The Balkans hold legitimate claim to holding the longest tradition of haiku culture outside Asia, as we shall see. (...) It was a book of translations, from Japanese into Romanian, by Bogdan Hasdeu, a book he published in 1878 -- a mere 10 years after the opening of Japan (...) nearly a quarter of a century before Lafkadio Hearn was supplying similar texts in translation to English-language readers in America* (<http://aozora.tempslibres.org>)

11) To outline my background, and contributions to multiculturalism, I will give few examples. Between 1975 and 1999, I published nine books on the history of culture -- East, and West. From 1983 to 1992 I edited a quarterly magazine "Eastern Cultures" published in Belgrade, and specialized for art, philosophy and religions of Asia. In 1993, I wrote a study on Kuan-yin worship, in Taipei, and it was published as "Form and Meaning of Kuan-yin Worship" in *Dharma World*, Vol 21, May-June, and July-August, 1994, in Tokyo. Article on the "Symbolism of Chinese Gardens" was published in the "Journal of Oriental Studies" - Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, 1996 (University of Hong Kong). In 1997 "The Anthology of Contemporary Yugoslav poetry - 1950-1995" (edited by me, and Ms. Chang Shiang-hua) was published in Chinese, in Taipei, and in 1998 in Beijing. In 1998 I published a book on "Chinese and Japanese Art Philosophy" (in Belgrade, BMG), with separate chapters on Zen aesthetics, and development of classic haiku in Japan. In fall 1999, I finished my book (in English) on "Sung dynasty Landscape Painting."

12) Some people share poetry globally, some people like to threaten globally. Everyone needs to share the best part of himself. "We're going to bomb them back into the Stone Age." - said U.S.A.F. General Curtis E. LeMay, in 1965, threatening North Vietnam. "We will demolish, destroy, devastate, degrade, and ultimately eliminate the essential infrastructure of that country" -- said U.S. NATO General Wesley Clark, threatening Yugoslavia, in March 1999. Thomas Friedman, in *New York Times* (Apr. 23, 1999), advised Americans, whose tax money was to be used for war: "Give war a chance. (...) It should be lights out in Belgrade: every power grid, water pipe, bridge, road and war-related factory has to be targeted. Like it or not, we are at war with the Serbian nation." Addressing Yugoslavs, he said: "We will set your country back by pulverizing you. You want 1950? We can do 1950. You want 1389?

We can do 1389, too" (the cynicism of "1389" is that this was the year of the Battle at Kosovo, when Serbs tried, without success, to stop the Turkish invasion: in the next three centuries Turkish Empire conquered Southeastern Europe, and from July-Sept. 1683 Vienna was under their siege).

Bill O'Reilly, on the Fox News Channel (April 26, 1999) advised NATO: "Rather than put ground forces at risk where we're going to see 5,000 Americans dead, I would rather destroy their infrastructure, totally destroy it. Any target is OK. I'd warn the people, just as we did with Japan, that it's coming, you've got to get out of there, OK, but I would level that country so that there would be nothing moving--no cars, no trains, nothing."

Stephen F. Cohen described the results in the *Nation* (May 24, 1999): "NATO's sorties are literally demodernizing Serbia. Two or three decades of its economic development -- the foundation of the elementary well-being of ordinary men, women and children -- have already been destroyed." A report released in London (August 1999), by the Economist Intelligence Unit, concluded that the enormous damage NATO's aerial war inflicted on Yugoslavia's infrastructure will cause the economy to shrink dramatically in the next few years. (...) Yugoslavia, the report predicted, will become the poorest country in Europe (*San Francisco Examiner*, August 23, 1999).

Now -- although it was too late to live, and too late to die -- I realized that it still may be the right moment to write a haiku, or celebrate the Enlightenment Day (Vaisakha). And we (a group of Dharma friends) did celebrate it, during the full moon night in May 1999, amidst the bombing event, when the whole city was dark (with damaged electric system). We recited some haikus, and a quote from the Lotus sutra:

"In all our palaces  
Never has there been such shining:  
What can be its cause?  
Let us together investigate it.  
Is it that a great virtuous god is born,  
Is it that a buddha appears in the world,  
That the great shining  
Everywhere illuminates the universe?" (ch. VII).

And we did the same, in May 2000, although the predictions of the Economist Intelligence Unit were fulfilled.

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