

Second 1998 HSA Quarterly Meeting

[as reported in the *HSA Newsletter*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, summer 1998]

Executive Committee Meeting. The HSA Executive Committee met before the Second 1998 HSA Quarterly Meeting in Hot Springs, Ark., on June 13, 1998. HSA President Kristen Deming chaired the meeting, the other Officers present being Jim Kacian and Charles Trumbull.

The Committee discussed and accepted the suggestion of Elizabeth Nichols of Colorado Springs, that Colorado be transferred from the Southwest Region to the Plains and Mountains Region and that she be named to fill the vacant HSA Regional Coordinator position for that Region. Other recent proposals for the reorganization of the Regions, including the creation of one or more Regions for Canada, were tabled.

The 30th Anniversary activities of the HSA were reviewed with satisfaction, notably the dedication of a memorial cherry tree in Washington, D.C., to honor HSA charter members, the West Coast retreat scheduled for November, and the East Coast Retreat in October. President Deming announced that the HSA National Meeting in December will be held at the Japan Society in New York City; it is hoped that a number of HSA charter members can be in attendance.

The Executive Committee heard the Secretary's Report, that membership is increasing at an average rate of two members per week, allowing for non-renewals. The Treasurer's Report was also heard and approved.

A proposal that the HSA prepare educational packets for the teaching of haiku in schools was discussed. The Committee agreed on the names of a number of members likely to be interested in such a project. President Deming will contact them with an eye to selecting a chairperson and forming a committee.

— *Dee Evetts*

General Meeting. Suzanne Tucker, treasurer of the Arkansas Haiku Society, was away on business but planned our reception and meeting. Those who attended were Jennifer Adams, McKendra Adams, Sulaiman Aqueel, Lorraine Binini, Missy Brown, K.A. Buckelew, Carlos Colón, Kristen Deming, Marcia Dobbs, Lee Gurga, Van Ivey, Jim Kacian, Bud Kenny, Tadashi Kondô, Pat Laster, William Lerz, Horst Ludwig with his wife Keiko and daughters Yoshi and Yulia, Komar and Peg'e Maruthur, Megan McCoy, A.C. Missias, Nan Mitchell, Charles Trumbull, R. Paul Tucker, Alan and Marilyn Waugh, Kenneth Wheatley III, and Laquita Wood.

The following summary of the General Meeting by A.C. Missias (edited slightly) was originally posted on the Shiki Internet Haiku Salon on the World Wide Web:

The day started with a ginko in the morning, while the HSA officers met for business. The walk was along a nice promenade, behind the old bath houses and near the national park.

Lunch was generously provided by the local haiku group (with a simultaneous demonstration of Japanese flower arranging by a local expert).

The afternoon program started with a brief summary of the Business Meeting. Kristen Deming gave an overview of the history of haiku: its evolution from the high Chinese poetry form of waka, through the court poetry of tanka, to the highly stylized renga, then to the looser relative haikai-no-renga (or renku), from which the first verse was developed into haiku. She talked a little about how Bashô brought back the dignity to the somewhat debased form of renga, and how Shiki saw the value in the hokku alone (which became haiku) and advocated direct experience.

Tadashi Kondô talked a little bit about renga and renku, and particularly discussed his interest in Shinkei (1406–1475), who was the teacher of Bashô's mentor Sogi. He also mentioned some fine points about the very long renga forms (100 verses) practiced by Shinkei as compared to the shorter later forms, and how that shortening has shifted the balance between the need for linking and the need for shifting between verses.

Carlos Colón and Charlie Trumbull talked a little about punctuation in haiku (and a tiny bit about other nontext elements such as space and layout), presenting possibilities more than conclusions. They tried to elicit discussion about the different effects, for example, of dashes (single or double) vs. tildes (which most people seemed to think were either affected or an attempt to sidestep the established meanings of usual breaking punctuation marks). They gave examples of haiku using various kinds of breaks at the ends of lines, and occasionally at the beginning or middle of lines, talking about how some authors often go against the usual “acceptability” of such usages (such as putting a dash at the beginning of a line).

Susan Delaney Mech made a remote presentation via a recorded video on “Mindfulness, Epiphany, and the Haiku Poet,” which got at notions of receptivity to experience, sensory input, and resonances around us — the “observing self.” She pointed out themes of openness to rediscovery of the ordinary, and also to the spiritual in nature, etc. (“sensing the numinous”). Pat Laster read haiku to illustrate various points of Susan’s presentation.

Paul Tucker, Howard Kilby, and Bud Kenny, the three heads of the local haiku (and poetry) community, talked about the history of poetry locally. Bud talked about writing poetry while walking across the U.S. with a mule and a dog. He lighted in Hot Springs and began the Wednesday night poetry reading, which has not missed a night in nine years.

Paul Tucker sang Arirang, a Korean song, and talked about his development as a poet and patron of the arts. It is unlikely that there would have been a national meeting in Hot Springs without Dr. Tucker’s support. Howard Lee Kilby led a robust rendition of The Star Spangled Banner, and Tadashi, Kris, and Howard joined voices in the Japanese national anthem, Kimi Ga Yo Wa.

Jim Kacian chose the theme “Toward a Typology of Haiku.” He laid out the notion that all haiku are about relationships (even where they appear to present one image, there is an implied/unspoken negative being contrasted). Such relationships are of necessity considered in human terms (“nature does not comment/ reflect on itself”) but not necessarily about human nature. He suggested that the closer a haiku comes to presenting the “is-ness” of nature, the better a poem it makes.

Finally, Lee Gurga ran the afternoon workshop, picking out a few of the submitted haiku to generate discussion. Lee also added his own thoughts on haiku types, mentioning the notions of “context and action” poems (where one part gives the setting, the other part the event/image) and “juxtaposed images” poems (which are just that, and depend on finding the right balance of linkage between the two images; neither too tight, nor too loose).

Then we were off to an Oriental restaurant, a whirlwind tour of the local music fest happenings, and to Bill and Dottie Lerz's for some wine & cheese and more haiku discussion.

— *A.C. Missias*