

You will enjoy more Japanese culture when this crisis will be over

Weekly Cultural News, substitute for monthly Cultural News

July 06 - 12, 2020

America Haiku: Japanese language Haiku depicting American scenes around Japanese immigrants

Mr. Kosuke Shima is a Haiku poet and a Haiku editor living in Los Angeles for over 40 years. He selects regularly Japanese language Haiku written by Japanese immigrants in the past to post at the Japanese language website of Cultural News: <https://digest.culturalnews.com>

Mr. Shima calls these Japanese language Haiku as "America Haiku" because Japanese immigrants depict lives of Japanese and American scenes around Japanese in the U.S. to seek their readiness to live in America as their own country.

The following is the first English language translation of Mr. Kosuke Shima's America Haiku series:

水打つや別れに来たる志願兵

mizu utsu ya wakareni kitaru shigan hei

Watering in front of the Barrack Young Volunteer Soldier Came Just to Say Goodbye to Me

安田 北湖
Hokko Yasuda

Hokko Yasuda was one of the poets we all should remember. Kyoshi Takahama, a leader of modern Haiku in Japan, once said, "there is

Hokko in North America while there is Nenpuku in South America."

Hokko began to send his Haiku to Kyoshi's "Hototogisu" society when he was young, and since 1924, his Haiku have been selected often for the monthly "Hototogisu" periodical, one of most influential Haiku publications in Japan.

Following Hokko, many haiku poets in the United States began to send their Haiku to "Hototogisu," and this was a spark for the so-called second rise of North American Haiku movement.

Taro Miyake of Portland, Oregon, describes Hokko as follows: "What really strikes us through his works is the sophisticated expression technique and the elegant appearance. This is something that Japanese poets in the United States should commend Hokko as our mentor" (Haiku magazine "Tachibana," January, 1936 issue).

This Haiku was written Haiku at the Manzanar incarceration camp where Hokko was sent during World War II. "Manzanar Ginsha (Haiku group)" was created in the camp, and it seems that Hokko was the key person of the ginsha.

This Haiku was included in the ginsha's collection "Setsu-rei" (compiled in 1945), and it was also included in Hokko's own Haiku collection "Haouju" published in 1984.

Continuing to the next page

America Haiku: Japanese Haiku depicting heart of Japanese immigrants

Continued from the previous page

This Haiku seems to depict one scene of a movie. I think there was a small garden that was prepared in front of his barrack in the camp, and he was watering plants in the garden.

Hokko was born in 1904, so he was about 40 years old at the time of incarceration. So he must have been respected by young people there. A young Nikkei who decided to go to military services came to Hokko to say "Goodbye." He was going to leave the camp soon for the service.

What words did Hokko give to this young Nikkei? Other poems written in the camp by Hokko, such as "Loyalty group, Disloyalty group, Cooling myself in the Evening" suggest that Hokko was very

quiet person, looking at the situation somehow objectively and envisioning his future and the future of the people there. While accepting the decision of the young Nikkei to serve for the country, Hokko must have been quietly speaking to the young man and wishing him well.

The "water" of "watering plants" can be considered a symbol of sake cup of water served to soldiers when they go to war, ready to die. Hokko serves an imaginary cup of water for this young Japanese soldier, wishing him well. Here are seventeen syllables of "highly elegant style" that show the rigor of war.

In this Haiku, the seasonal word (Kigo) is "mizu o utsu (watering plants)" which depicts Summer. This Haiku is selected in Hokko's Haiku collection "Haouju."

Los Angeles calligrapher kicks off 5-Tuesday online event

Los Angeles-based calligrapher Kuniharu Yoshida's performance of drawing "Tsunagaru" character was premiere on June 30 via <https://www.facebook.com/NextGenJCA>

This is a kick-off of Next Gen Geijutsuka, (See page 4). This YouTube streaming is available at https://youtu.be/VD4urFO_X58

Kuniharu Yoshida is also Hip-hop Dancer, Teacher and is 1/4th of the concept-art collective In the Attic, based in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles.

He collaborates with artists to combine sublime arts, merging traditional with the contemporary. Respect between different cultures is the founda-



tion of Yoshida's unique work, designed to intertwine not just art but also audiences. His most recently work was the Little Tokyo Service Center's +LAB Artist in Resident.

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Your donation are appreciated via <https://culturalnews.com/donation>

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Video series about Japanese traditional percussion “Let’s Play the Kotsuzumi” available via YouTube

By Mariko Watabe

There are dance videos and shamisen videos. But KABUKI HAYASHI (Japanese percussion) videos are rarely found or discussed especially in English or with English subtitles. I have decided to make them as I believe this art is too precious to be hidden or lost.

With the guidance of Master Katada Shinjuro, I am trying to uncover the world of HAYASHI by producing YouTube videos in Japanese language with English subtitles.

After four Kabuki lecture series with the title of HAYASHI JUKU in the previous Weekly Cultural News, I would like to introduce readers from another series, my OHAYASHI videos that explores the main instrument, called KOTSUZUMI.

With the title of “Let’s Play the Kotsuzumi,” the video series are in English language. The first video <https://youtu.be/AF4jH6Yi9qU> explains about the characteristics of the KOTSUZUMI, which is an instrument used in KABUKI music.

The video also demonstrates percussion parts from one song called NININ WANKYU, or The Two Wankyus.

The story of Two Wankyu is about the son of a rich merchant who fell in love with the courtesan Matsuyama, but end up wandering the streets penniless.

In the song, Wankyu sees Matsuyama in his dream and dance



Multi-talented Japanese traditional music artist Mariko Watabe

under the cherry tree together. However, his dream ends.

I am using the piece to show how expressive the kotsuzumi is. It is not a simple drum. It expresses the sweetness and sadness of the story in a beautiful way.

OHAYASHI-JUKU Series

OHAYASHI JUKU video 1 <https://youtu.be/KDMzTLuikCA> , I introduced you to the SHIBYOSHI, the four main instruments for HAYASHI which are KOTSUZUMI, OKAWA, TAIKO and flute and its history.

OHAYASHI JUKU video 2 <https://youtu.be/5fJx5UaQzAE> is about “The Ritualistic Music”. Besides working as an accompaniment to the music, HAYASHI was used for multiple purposes.

OHAYASHI JUKU video 3 <https://youtu.be/fpil5uOoUDs> is about “Overture Music,” the music cues that are used to introduce upcoming stories.

OHAYASHI JUKU video 4 <https://youtu.be/Job1zEJlprg> is about “The Music Accompaniment During Dance Dialogue”.

Mariko Watabe has been introducing Kabuki dance and music to American audiences nationwide for over 40 years. She goes by her stage names such as; Kimisen Katada for Hayashi, Kyosho Yamato for Yamatogaku, Kichitoji Kineya for Nagauta; and Marifuji Bando for dance. She is currently living in Los Angeles area. Her activities and performances are found at <http://fujijapanesemusic.org>



Future stars of Japanese cultural arts perform online events on five subsequent Tuesdays

Oakland, Northern California-based Shirley Kazuyo Muramoto Studio presents “Next Gen Geijutsuka” video streaming events on five subsequent Tuesdays from June 30 to July 28 at 8pm via <https://www.facebook.com/NextGenJCA>

Future stars of Japanese cultural arts perform their presentations and live streamed interviews. Japanese arts include Koto, Shamisen, Shodo Calligraphy and Kabuki Buyo.

June 30: Kuniharu Yoshida (Los Angeles): Shodo Calligraphy https://youtu.be/VD4urFO_X58

July 7: Isabella Kazuai Lew (Oakland) with Isako Kajun Kashino (Sacramento): Koto

July 14: Kyle Abbott (Santa Cruz) & Su Bunjamin (Berlin): Tsugaru Shamisen

July 21: Brian Mitsuhiro Wong (Oakland) with Nao Matsui (Japan): Koto

July 28: Bando Hiroshichiro (Los Angeles) with Bando Nao (Japan): Kabuki Buyo

About Artist:

Bandō Hirohichiro 坂東拓七郎 (photo) began his Japanese classical dance training at the age of three under Bandō Ryū.

He has traveled throughout



the United States performing and introducing the art of Japanese classical dance at various venues.

He attained his *natori*, equivalent to a Master’s degree, at the age of seventeen, when Bandō Mitsugorō IX granted him the professional name of Hirohichirō.

In addition to his career as a professional Japanese classical dancer, he is the first non-Japanese to become a professional Kabuki actor in the theater’s history. He is apprenticed to National Living Treasure, Sakata Tōjūrō and performs under the name of Nakamura Gankyō.

As part of Tōjūrō’s vision of introducing the art of Kabuki to the world, Hirohichirō completed his Master’s from the University of Southern California (2010) and his Ph.D from the University of California-Los Angeles (2019), specializing in Classical Japanese literature, culture, and the performing arts.

To share his passion of Japanese classical dance to the future generations in the United States, Hirohichirō was granted his *shihan*, equivalent to Ph.D, by Mitsugorō X in 2007. Hirohichirō then founded Bandō Ryū Kyō no Kai 坂東流 京の会 in 2008 opening studios throughout California.

It is Hirohichiro’s hope to train future professional Japanese classical dancers who will be able to continue the traditions and teach future generations in the art form.