

# Our Basis for World Haiku in the 21st Century

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There are many problems in World haiku, at first might appear quite easy to resolve, but finally are quite difficult. This difficulty sometimes contains the truth in which our lives itself is engaged. For example, take the simple and big question: Does all humanity have only a common ancestral mother, the so-called African "Eve"?

Before we discuss our common basis for World Haiku, it would be worth considering whether humanity has only one mother or several mothers. Of course, I'm not an anthropologist, and therefore cannot give a definitive conclusion. But If we have an "African Eve" as our sole ancestral mother, then it is easy to search for our basis for World Haiku. If, however, we have multiple ancestral mother "African Eve", "Asian Eve", etc, then it is not so easy to search for our basis. Nevertheless, we have something in common, inasmuch as we can exchange genes by some acts to give birth a baby. In any case, we have something common within us, to a certain extent, that lies beyond any secondary differences.

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By the way, not just human beings, but other animals as well can have a dream or dreams during the night while sleeping. In addition to sleeping, dreaming may be indispensable for the living creatures. Interestingly, the dream plays an important role in many myths, legends and folktales all over the world. For example, ancient Egyptians considered a dream to be a divine revelation. In later Christian world, as well as the Jewish world, everyone knows the dream of Solomon and that of Jacob. In our Japanese mythology, the dream of Takakuraji urged him to help the future first Japanese Emperor Jimmu to unify ancient Japan. Perhaps you could enumerate many significant dreams appearing in the myths and legends of other countries than I have not mentioned here. I have no intention of recommending that intelligent contemporary people return to the ancient world, but I would like to ask my contemporaries to note the continuing importance of dreams to humanity.

Now I'm very interested in the contemporary haiku in which the word "dream" is the core. From "All Year" chapter in *Haiku World* (1996) by William J. Higginson, I have taken one haiku:

restless dream  
a game of hide and seek  
in the graveyard

Joanne Morcom, USA

I like this one because the expression "restless dream" has the same sincerity as each of our lives has.

Among Japanese free haiku submitted to *Our Dream* (2000), edited by Sagicho Aihara and myself, and published to commemorate both the World Haiku Festival 2000 and the Inaugural World Haiku Association Conference here, the following contain the word "dream(s)".

As numerous as  
thorns of the cactus--  
my dreams

Sumie Aihara, Japan

In my dream  
float  
all shapes and sizes

Saki Inui, Japan

Sumie Aihara recognizes her many bitter dreams. A little Japanese girl, Saki Inui is surprised at her confused dream. Indeed, in composing their haiku, the two Japanese women succeed in seizing on the truths of the dream. Recently, from two haiku poets: Jim Kacian from USA and Dimitar Anakiev from Slovenia I have received a dozen haiku for our international haiku journal Ginyu No.8. The following two short poems especially focused on the dream and find a deep attraction in my heart:

Mlada trava...

Planina krvavi iz slema

Punog snova

The young grasses...

The mountains bleed from a helmet  
of dreams

Dimitar Anakiev, Slovenia

Into my dream

the gentle rocking

of the ship

Jim Kacian, USA

Alluding to one of the most famous of Basho's haiku "Natsukusa ya", Dimitar Anakiev expresses skillfully the miserable war dead. In this haiku, in a way that is true to life, the word "dreams" shows us the future possibilities erased by the war. I suppose that Anakiev composed it based upon his own war experience in the former Yugoslavia. His haiku is certainly realistic, but what matters the most important now is the universality of his haiku. Even a man who doesn't know the details of the war in the former Yugoslavia can understand the cruel truth of the war, owing to the haiku written by a refugee in Slovenia. In the haiku of Anakiev, both the cruelty of the war and the beauty of the landscape are emphasized at the same time. Needless to say, it's not propagandistic in any way. After visiting several sites near Tolmin, I guess Anakiev was also inspired by the former battle field of World War I where more than one million young soldiers were killed.

I would like to offer one haiku to these young dead, to let them take a restful peace.

Behind a rock

on the green slope

dead soldiers' spirits

Ban'ya Natsuishi

I find another touching haiku alluding to dreams in "PARCE NEBA: Haiku iz skloni- sta (1999. The English title is A PIECE OF THE SKY: Haiku from an air-raid shelter):

US-bomb Us-pakao

U decijim snovima

Za to Srbija?

US-bomb US-hell

in children's dreams

why Serbia?

Miroslav Klivar, Czech

In the second line, the word "dreams" serves as a center of any relations among the words appearing in the haiku cited above. More precisely, "children's dreams" is a crucial acknowledgement of all the miseries of the people unhappily involved in the war.

Contrary to these two haiku composed in the southeastern Europe, Jim Kacian's smart example is quite refreshing. His "dream" gets gentle and relaxed by the healing movement of the ship. Through haiku composed in several languages, we can reach various essential aspects of the dream. The word "dream", certainly the non-seasonal keyword "dream", is thus an excellent illustration of World Haiku.

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Two contradictory principles are always at work in any one haiku. The first: brevity, instantaneity, concentration; the second: duration, continuity, undulation. The most important element of the first principle is the keyword, whether it concerns the seasons or more fundamental matters for humanity or our universe. I would not like to abandon all Japanese season words as worthless. But if we are to truly enter the age of World Haiku, there is no absolute center of haiku, as Greenwich Time serves in the case of clocks.

On our earth there is no standard time or climate for World Haiku. We can fully enjoy the various and local conditions while still locating them all within World Haiku. And yet, despite such individuality, we need some rich basis to keep our haiku from becoming prosaic and trivial.

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At present, we are not certain the entirety of our basis for the future of World Haiku. However, the little part of it showed by the keyword "dream" seems quite rich. One hundred keywords would not illustrate the whole, but might reveal a widespread and precious part of it. I would like to say again that we hold something in common between that lies beyond any secondary differences such as nationalities, religions, languages, tastes, passions, ages, etc. "Leap before you look!"

Though our basis is not unfolded, it is here and there. So our common dream, namely our future of World Haiku is very promising as a haiku by one of the most brilliant Japanese haiku masters, Tohta Kaneko, tells us:

Slept well  
till the withered field in my dream  
turned green

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