

Chapter 13

Elegant and Efficient Communication by Haiku– Like Concise Sentences

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ABSTRACT

Poetic fragmental sentences such as Haiku are often free from grammatical constraint while maintaining full message transmitting power. The author takes Haiku, a classical Japanese concise poetic sentence, as an elegant and efficient communication language for a digital signal system. By using the functional grammar and season-word ontology, the author will throw light on the secret of efficiency in Haiku-like sentences. It is often said that this efficiency comes from artistic mutism—ellipsis or abbreviation. Various events and situations are narrated in a very short and simple sentence, which is composed of a 5-7-5 pattern of letters, words, or phrases. Haiku-like sentences can be composed in non-Japanese, such as English, French, Chinese, etc. The most important Haiku philosophy is “the universality” (Fueki-Ryukou), which was first told by the great poet Basho in 1689. The benefit of universality is even ranging over the digital communication system. That is, the Haiku-like sentence enables highly efficient and concise communication. You can so much as write a cipher by Haiku.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the readers with the knack of composing a Haiku-like sentence as an elegant and efficient means of communication. Before entering into the details of Haiku-like sentence composition, it may be useful to offer the readers a basic knowledge of Haiku.

This chapter intends to provide readers with a sense of Haiku-like short sentence composition and cultural effects in their daily lives, such as that they can learn a lesson from casual, trifling, ordinary events. This chapter is not a well-designed introduction to composing Haiku; rather a rough sketch of the attractive elements of Haiku. Readers with strong intensions to compose Haiku based on rigid rules are advised to read such books that can be obtained easily at ordinary bookstores. Some of them are listed in the List of References of this chapter.

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BACKGROUND

Basics of Haiku

Haiku, the classical Japanese literary art, is now known worldwide as a very handy means for people to write down their thoughts or emotions in their daily lives.

Therefore, many guidebooks are published to provide the expertise to compose Haiku. Almost all the books describe Haiku as snapshots of ordinary people's daily lives. The snapshots usually concern common and trite articles, unimportant events, natural beauty, weather, and so on. The guidebooks say that the point of Haiku is to embed some indistinct suggestions in the snapshot. However, this sort of explanation only results in readers' bewilderment and confusion.

Herein, the author would like to present a concise, informal introduction to Haiku. The origin of Haiku is in the Hokku (発句) of Renga (連歌). The representative author is Basho (芭蕉) in the mid-Edo era. In the Meiji era, Masaoka Shiki (正岡子規) completed the formal style and established the Haiku as a rigid literary art. Haiku has been defined to be a 5-7-5 phonetic character construction, which often has a segmenting word (切れ字: Kireji) and a season word (季語: Kigo). The candidate for the season word is given by Saijiki (歳時記) (Ohno & Haiku-Bungakukan, 1994; Mizuhara, 2005), which is a kind of daily-life ontology (Guarino, 1998; Bateman, Henschel, & Rinaldi, 1995; Nitta, 2015b; Nitta, 2015c; Jurisica, Mylopoulos, & Yu, 1999; Gruber, 1993; Takeda, 2004; Bateman, Henschel, & Rinaldi, 1995). The season word is the keyword or headline word in ontology, which is sorted by seasonal division order.

Haiku and Tanka form two major mainstream of Japanese short poems. People outside Japan are supposed to have their own domestic Saijiki ontology.

At several places in this chapter the author has added more detailed suggestions as to what kinds of communicative information can be embedded in or conveyed by the Haiku in an efficient and elegant way. Furthermore, the Haiku composer could derive mental consolation and/or contentment that would lead to an Aufheben-like enlightenment. Explanatory information is provided in square brackets below each Haiku example.

From now on, the author advises the readers to ignore the formal Haiku pattern together with the annoying season word. Using a small number of English phrases (Nitta, 2012a), you can write Haiku as a short poem. Let us try it!

蛍火や去りにし日々の漂う如く Toushu (透舟)

Hotaru-bi-ya sari-nishi Hibi-no tadayou gotoku

In the dim blinking lights of fireflies, I see the time past.

[Explanation: In the course of life so far of the author, he has encountered various events and happenings; some are pleasant, sad, unhappy, painful, satisfying, surprising, etc. All these events are now dimmed and faded, and are passing away after a long time lapse.]

冬の朝強き珈琲の香気分よし Toushu (透舟)

Fuyu-no Asa tsuyoki Koh-hi-no Ka Kibun yoshi

Winter morning, strong coffee smells, feel good.

[Explanation: In the morning, many people are making ready to start the day's job; in such a situation, if the aroma of strong coffee comes from somewhere, it will surely encourage them to start their jobs. The message embedded in this haiku is a kind of call to fellow workers.]

冬空や道掃く老婆意気高し Toushu (透舟)

Fuyu-zora-ya Michi haku Rouba Iki takashi

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