

Living Guide



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Let's Get Familiar with Haiku

Haiku is one of the arts representing Japanese culture. Recently, the popularity has been spread to overseas and has been familiarized by the people all around the world. Haiku in Japanese is composed of 5-7-5 syllables, and in this limited number of letters, it expresses the beauty of nature or delicate feelings. It is also said that Haiku is the shortest poetic form in the world.

Predecessors in Morioka including Seison Yamaguchi or Inazo Nitobe composed Haiku, too, and they have left some Haiku expressing streetscapes of Morioka surrounded by nature and history. This year, Morioka celebrates the 130th anniversary of the enforcement of the municipal organization. To commemorate the anniversary, the 1st Morioka International Haiku Contest will be held in August. The event will have a Japanese section and an English section so the application will be accepted not only from Japan but also from overseas. There is no difficult rule in making Haiku, but it's profound at the same time. Why don't you take this opportunity and try composing your own Haiku?

Let's Try Composing Haiku !

Japanese There are two basic rules in Haiku.

No. 1 The number of syllables is 17 in three phrases of 5, 7 and 5.

Haku is basically composed of 17 syllables in three phrases of 5,7 and 5. 1 syllable here means not one letter but one syllabic sound, so contracted sounds like "sha" or "gyu" (Small letters like "ゃ" or "ゅ" in Japanese) are not considered as 2 syllables but one, and choked sound (Small "っ" letter) is counted as 1 syllable. Also, a letter express prolonged sound "—" in Japanese is counted as one syllable.

e.g.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| • ちようちょ (chōcho) | ちょ／う／ちょ (3 syllables) |
| • がっこう (Gakkō) | が／っ／こ／う (4 syllables) |
| • コーヒー (cōhī=coffee) | コ／一／ヒ／一 (4 syllables) |

※ Haiku over 17 syllables is called "Ji amari" (extra syllables) and less than 17 syllables is called "Ji tarazu" (insufficient syllables). The techniques are sometimes used to make a piece more impressive. However, you must bear in mind that Haiku is basically composed by 5-7-5 rhythm.

No.2 A season word should be included.

One of the differences between Haiku and other formatted poems like Senryu is whether “Kigo”, a season word is included or not. “Kigo” is a word related to seasons such as words of weathers, creatures or seasonal events. Kigo is roughly divided by 5 categories; spring, summer, autumn, winter and new year days. Season words make the readers envision the sights or atmosphere of Haiku clearly. One of the functions of season words is to help readers picture the sight or atmosphere easily. Books with collection of season words are called “Saijiki”.

- Spring Cherry blossom (Flower), Snow melting, Graduation ceremony, swallow, etc.
- Summer Rice planting, Rainbow, Sea bathing, Sunflower, Cicada, etc.
- Autumn Moon, Autumn foliage, Apple, Pacific saury, etc.
- Winter Snow, Skiing, Swan, Daikon radish, etc.
- New Year New Year's Day, the First dream in new year, Rice cake, Karuta, etc.

e.g.

Kaki kue ba kane ga narunari Horyu-ji (Shiki Masaoka)

Meaning: When I was eating my favorite fruit, persimmon while travelling, I heard the bell sounds of Horyu-ji Temple with feeling.

Season word: Persimmon (Kaki) Season: Autumn

English

Haiku is familiarized by all around the world as “HAIKU”. There are no rules in Haiku in English as Haiku in Japanese, but basically, it is expressed in poems with three phrases, present tense and without punctuation. The recommended form is 5-7-5 syllables with a season word, which is the same as Japanese Haiku but it is not an absolute rule. Let's express the beauty of nature or daily happenings in your own words.

e.g.

across the border

the maples

also, red (Composed by Terry Ann Carter)

Iwate and Haiku

The followings are some famous Haiku composed in Iwate.

- *Natsukusa ya tsuwamono domo ga yume no ato* (Basho Matsuo)

English translation: The summer grass

'Tis all that's left

Of ancient warriors' dreams. (Translated by Inazo Nitobe)

Meaning: Here remain the dreams of warriors who used to battle spectacularly. Now that only summer grasses are growing.

Season word: Natsukua Season: Summer Place composed: Hiraizumi

- Hito mo tabibito ware mo tabibito haru oshimu (Seison Yamaguchi)
Meaning: Me and the others who visits this place where Basho and Saigyo have visited are all travelers who miss the ending spring.
Season word: Haru oshimu Season: Spring Place composed: Chuson-ji temple
- Onyama no hitori ni fukaki hana no yami (Jakuchō Setouchi)
Meaning: I am alone at night in Onyama (Tendai-ji temple). Deep darkness with fully bloomed cherry trees are spreading richly.
Season word: Flower (cherry blossom) Season: Spring Place composed: Tendai-ji temple

You probably have an impression that Haiku is the difficult literature. But if you express what you see and feel with rhythmical words, Haiku will be created. If you see the scenery you see in daily life with thinking of composing Haiku in mind, you will find something new!

About the First Morioka International Haiku Contest

Morioka International Haiku Contest is the first Haiku International contest held in Morioka as the commemoration of 130th anniversary of the enforcement of the municipal organization in 2019. Applications for pre-entry Haiku need to be submitted between January 8th and May 7th in 2019 and presentation of winners and the contest date are scheduled to be on August 8th.

For more details of the contest, please see the official website of the Morioka International Haiku Contest.

Outline

Date: August 4th, 2019 (Sun)

Venue: Odashimagumi Hall, Aiina Iwate Prefecture Citizen's Cultural Exchange Center 7th floor

Entrance fee: Free

Application Categories

- ① Pre-entry Haiku · Japanese Section *Application Period...January 8th (Tue) to May 7th (Tue), 2019
- ② Pre-entry Haiku · English section *Application Period...January 8th (Tue) to May 7th (Tue), 2019
- ③ Haiku entry on the day of the contest · Japanese section *Application will be accepted on the day of the contest...August 4th (Sun), 2019

Host

Morioka International Haiku Contest Executive Committee

