

## Susumu Takiguchi

Susumu Takiguchi is a Japanese poet, artist, and essayist. He has been resident of England since 1971.

In the field of haiku, Takiguchi's great uncle, Naoh Kataoka, was a close pupil of Takahama Kyoshi (1874–1959). Born in 1944 into a family versed in haiku and other Japanese literary tradition, Takiguchi dabbled in haiku as a young boy and has enjoyed the art ever since – for over fifty years. He became more serious about the haiku art when he delved, in primary and secondary school days, into the literature of Koyo, Soseki, Shiki, Meisetsu, Ogai, and other Meiji writers.

However, it was while doing his research into Basho as Lecturer in Japanese Language and Civilization at the University of Aston in Birmingham, UK, that he started to write haiku as a full-fledged haiku poet. His *haigo* (haiku nom de plume) is Ryuseki, which means "stream and stone" (or more mysteriously, "floating stone"). This has led him to become involved with many haiku practitioners and scholars both in Japan and other countries. He has held numerous public lectures on haiku. He is a member of the Japan Classical Haiku Association, the Haiku Society of America, and of other haiku organizations. He served as Vice-President of the British Haiku Society, in charge of dealing with Japan, and liaison with the academic world.

In 1998 he founded the World Haiku Club in order to run the World Haiku Festival 2000, a five-year project aimed at making a contribution to the development of the world haiku movement. As Chairman of this thriving worldwide haiku network, he wishes to work together with like-minded haiku lovers to help develop what has become a world literary asset, and which has great scope and the potential still to be developed as a new literary form in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century world.

In another professional area, painting is where Takiguchi's heart lies. He was first introduced to Western-style painting in Kyushu, Japan, when he was a small boy under the tutelage of a local artist, Shin'ichiro Murakami, the father of the novelist Ryu Murakami. He was also influenced by the art of his uncle, Yoshitada, who was a banker/artist. Landscape paintings were his most favorite genre then, and have become his main area of expertise, though he also paints still-lives. He received further training in painting from various artists who taught at different art clubs and private schools to which he belonged.

Coming to England to study economics at the University of Oxford, Takiguchi spent a year at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art in the 1970s. He now paints not only in the Western style, but in the traditional Japanese style as well. Also, by combining the two styles, he is trying to create a new style of haiga. His Japanese calligraphy is mostly in the Soshō style, whereby he partly pursues the pictorial elements of characters. His Zenga, on the other hand, is a pursuit of nothingness in art. He believes that in his pictorial language, all paintings are reduced to three factors, be they figurative, abstract, or anything else: color; form; and composition. Music and poetry also play a part in his painting. His Western-style works are generally held to be colorful, merry, and uplifting.

Takiguchi has experienced many different careers, including financial correspondent with the *Nikkei Economic Journal*; Editor-in-Chief, *The Art Market Report*; art critic and part-time instructor at Oxford University; lecturer at Aston University in Birmingham; and Executive Director of Strategic Planning & Research, Nomura International PLC. He is currently Director of Ami-Net Oxford International and Chairman of the World Haiku Club. He has written numerous technical articles in various fields and also has produced many translation works. He was educated at Waseda University in Tokyo and the University of Oxford.

Takiguchi's publications include: *Kyoshi - A Haiku Master*, Ami-Net International Press, England, 1997; *Ushizu no Zaregoto* (an anthology of haiku); *The Twaddle Of An Oxonian - Haiku Poems & Essays*, Ami-Net International Press, England, 2000. He edited the WHF2000/2002 World Haiku anthology, *WILD FLOWERS, NEW LEAVES – A Collection of World Haiku*, which was published in commemoration of the World Haiku Festival 2002, held in September at Yuwa Town, Akita, Japan. He has also translated into Japanese: *The Fake's Progress*, by Tom Keating, Geraldine Norman, and Frank Norman, Shincho-sha, Japan; *Naked Came I* (the life of August Rodin), by David Weiss, Futami-shobo, Japan; *Towards The Tamarind Trees*, by Anthony Trew, Hayakawa-shobo, Japan; and *Modesty Blaise*, by Peter O'Donnell.