

**HAIKU: THE SHORTEST POETIC FORM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA**

**Pravat Kumar Padhy**

Petroleum Geologist

ONGC, India

E-mail: [pravatkumar\\_padhy@rediffmail.com](mailto:pravatkumar_padhy@rediffmail.com)

**Abstract**

Haiku is a Japanese short form of poetry with a long and rich history. The word haiku is a combination of two different words 'haikai' and 'hokku'. Haikai is a linked-verse (collaborative) in haikai no renga poetry style developed during the Edo period (1602–1869). In the sixteenth century, the opening stanza (5-7-5, go schichi go) of renga was named as 'hokku' and the last two-line (second verse) as 'wakiku'. Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) is the pioneer of writing hokku. In the late nineteenth century, Masaoka Shiki named hokku as haiku (ha-i-ku). Haiku is considered as the shortest non-rhyming Japanese poetry form written in three lines, in 5-7-5 format, with 17 syllables in total. These formats are indeed the phonic sounds in Japanese poetry. Generally, the strict syllable style is not followed in English and it is written in the form of short/long/short lines, all in lowercase. Haiku comprises two images or thoughts related to nature and human aspects in the form of the fragment (Line 1) and phrase (Lines 2 and 3), and both juxtaposing each other. In the present paper, the significance of nature and the associated zen-philosophy in ancient Indian literature have been analyzed. For the first time, an attempt has been made to classify the haiku literature in English in India into three phases as Inception Phase (1900-1950), Awareness Phase (1950-2000), and Development Phase (2000 onwards). Contributions by the pioneers in Hindi and other Indian regional languages are also enumerated. The gradual understanding, refinement of haiku literature and the modern contemporary practices have been detailed with examples.

**Keywords:** Haiku, History, Inception, Awareness, Development, Nature, Human Aspects

**Introduction**

Japanese literature is largely inspired by Chinese literature during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) in China. The oldest Japanese poetic form, *renga*, is the nucleus of the evolvement of *tanka* and *haiku* down the literary history. The "song" (*uta*) in Chinese was a *waka* which later named as *tanka*. It originated in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD in Japan and was known as *waka* (WAH-KAH) (*wa* means 'Japanese', *ka* means 'poem') and existed already as oral literature. The *waka* was written

on seasonal subjects (*kidai*). The *waka* remained as the neoclassical Japanese literature as characterized by the poets of the Man'yōshū, Kokin Wakashū, and Shin Kokin Wakashū eras.

The schemata or *morae* (sound units) patterns follow 5-7-5-7-7 (known as 'sanjuichi', the Japanese word for 31). The original structure was in 5-7, 5-7, 7 and subsequently, it became 5-7, 5-7-7 during the Man'yo period. Towards the end of the twelfth century, slowly the 5/7/5/7/7 format had been modified by dividing it into 5/7/5 and 7/7. By the fourteenth century, this took shape of *renga* written in sequence by the participating poets. In the sixteenth century the opening stanza or the starting verse (5-7-5, *go schichi go*) of *renga* was named as 'hokku' and the last two-line (second verse) as 'wakiku'.

*Renga* (series or chains of poems) is the Japanese collaborative linked poem and its later derivative, *renku* (*haikai no renga*). Haikai, a type of *renga* poetry, consists of at least 100 verses with alternating stanzas, or *ku*, of 5-7-5 and 7-7 *mora* (sound unit) per line and are linked in succession by the poets practicing during the Edo period. Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) was the pioneer of writing classical 'hokku' and he had rendered aesthetic values to the verse writing with the brilliant poetic spell. Later Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) christened "hokku" to "haiku" (ha-i-ku, 3-sound in Japanese), independent of the haikai-no-renga, at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Japanese haiku comprises three sections namely *kami go* (the top five-section), *naka shichi* (the middle seven-section), and *shimo go* (the lower five-section). Haiku consists of 17 'on' or 'morae' (sound-bytes), written in Japanese in a vertical single line (top to bottom) with no spacing. There is no concept of syllable in the Japanese language. It is only sound-bytes. The 17 sound-unit or phonetic-unit is roughly equivalent to 12 syllables in English. Later on, in the English language, the schema is widely practiced as short/long/short (s/l/s) form in haiku writings instead of strictly following the syllable-count. The Japanese have no plural for their nouns. Hence we speak of haiku and never haikus.

Matsuo Basho (1644-1694), Yosa Busan (1716-1783), Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827) and Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) are the Masters of the Haiku literature, including Chiyo-ni (1703-1775), a great women haikuist.

Examples of some of the classical haiku by the Masters:

old pond  
a frog jumps into  
the sound of water

-Basho (Tr. Jane Reichhold)

Some of the memorable haiku by the Masters are exemplified below:

The sea darkens  
and a wild duck's call  
is faintly white

-Basho

A crow  
has settled on a bare branch –  
autumn evening

-Basho

A field of mustard,  
no whale in sight,  
the sea darkening.

-Buson (Tr. Robert Hass)

The cool of morning —  
Separating from the bell,  
The voice of the bell.

-Buson (Tr. Donald Keene)

O snail  
Climb Mount Fuji,  
But slowly, slowly!

-Issa (Tr. R H Blyth)

rising to the blue sky  
baby sparrow's  
first cry

-Issa

A carp leaps up  
crinkling  
the autumn moonlight

-Shiki (Tr. Burton Watson)

I'm trying to sleep!  
Please swat the flies  
lightly

-Shiki, loose translation/interpretation by Michael R. Burch  
green grass—

between, between the blades  
the colour of the water

-Chiyo-ni (Tr. Patricia Donegan and Yoshie Ishibashi)

## **Ancient Indian Poetry and Zen Philosophy**

The nostalgic reminiscence of poetry emanates from the inception of our age-old civilization. The radiance of the rich heritage of lyric poetry has been reflected in our ancient Vedic literature and it continues to enlighten till today. The Zen and its philosophy of Buddhist lineage in Japan have been inherited from China, 'cha'an'. It is believed that Zen has been derived from the Sanskrit word 'Dhyan' which means meditation. The poetic philosophy of India has been sourced from the Veda, the Upanishads, the Ramayan, the Mahabharata, the Gita, and the Rasa-Dhvani theory. Poetry inspires to unfold the sublime spiritual essence of the basic building block of creation: the living and the non-living. Indian civilization and philosophy are closely intertwined with nature. Haiku essentially assimilates with beautiful nature (*kocho-fuei*) and explores the zen-moment and aesthetic imbibition. Mathew Arnold says, "The strongest part of a religion today is its unconscious poetry." It is true to the philosophy of haiku. From time memorial, the Indian doctrine of spiritualism is embedded with beauty of the nature, divinity and universalism. It is expressed through poetry, dance, art, and architecture. The philosopher, saint, seers of Hinduism, Buddhism, and other religions offer their teachings through the poetical form. Like in Japan, nature has been treated with great respect to bloom divine feeling or zen-feeling.

Syllabic and sound concepts have been in existence in ancient Sanskrit literature. In Indian philosophy, the five elements, *Panchabhootas*, are known as Earth (*Prithvi*), Water (*Jal*), Fire (*Agni*), Air (*Vayu*) and Ether (*Akasha*). Ether is associated with sound; Air with sound and touch; Fire with sound, touch and form; Water with sound, touch, form, and flavour; Earth with sound, touch, form, flavour and smell.

This concept of senses is also one of the basic elements of haiku. Kala Ramesh elaborates and correlated the ancient concept of dance, music, paintings, etc and draws a parallel between aesthetic culture of India with that of Japanese haiku (Ramesh et. al., 2016). The Indian classical music or *ragas* employs seasonal references with rhythmic- beat cycles (*tala*), seasonal reference in Indian paintings, "the *Ragamala* paintings of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the beat cycles of 3,5, and 7 in classical dance.

In Vedic literature, Vedic meter refers to the poetic metre. The study of Vedic metre is part of Chandas, one of the six Vedanga disciplines. The Vedangas developed towards probably the end of the Vedic period (around the 1st millennium BCE) and influenced literature subsequent time.

*Chandas* (the study of the meters) is characterized by the specific poetic meters, including those based on a fixed number of syllables per verse, and those based on a fixed number of *morae* per verse. Interestingly we see the importance of *morae* or sound-units in haiku. In the metrical organization of ancient Sanskrit poetry, a Sanskrit stanza or *padya* consists of four *padas* or four

quarters, which are regulated by (i) The number of syllables in each quarter, or (ii) The number of syllabic time units or *matras* (a short sound being assigned one unit of time and the long one two units of time). The quantitative scheme in the traditional literature classifies the common metres according to the syllable count of a stanza, as multiples of 4 with an exception of Gayatri which a tripada (8,8,8). The major Vedic meters with syllable structure are as follows. Usnih (8,8,12); Anustubh (8,8,8,8); Brhati (8,8,12,8); Pankti (8,8,8,8 +8); Tristubh (11,11,11,11) and Jagati (12,12,12,12).

Adi Kavi (the first poet) Valmiki, Kalidasa, and others contribute brilliant literature in the Sanskrit language. Kalidas is considered as the National Poet of India with his scholarly poetic articulation about nature, romanticism as depicted in *Meghaduta (The Cloud Messenger)*, and in drama *Shakuntala*. His poems, "*Ritusamhāra*" *rtu*, "season"; "*samhāra*", compilation) describe the six seasons by narrating the experiences of two lovers. Interestingly, Kalidas invented a metre or syllabic style called *mandākrāntā* and used this style in his iconic poem, "*Meghadutta*". A line in *mandākrāntā* has 17 syllables, divided into three sections, each separated by a pause. The first section consists of four long syllables, the second of 5 short syllables and one long, and the third a mixture of long and short alternating. The Buddhist mantra (*Heart Sutra*) has seventeen syllables.

The classical haiku is about realization and reverence of nature. In the Rig Veda, verses (*suktas*) in Sanskrit are written in praise of nature and divinity. Nature is beautifully and metaphorically described with celestial citations in the hymns of Rig Veda as:

The sun, the eyes of the universe, is divinely placed  
It rises with bright sunshine,  
May we live to see it for a hundred autumns

Rig Veda:7.66.16  
(Tr. Pandit Satyakarm Vidyalankar)

*Sutras* (string, thread) of the Indian Vedic literature are collections of aphorisms composition of few words or syllables. These are broadly related to ritual, philosophy, grammar etc.

The Vedic Seers in Sanskrit literature often cited cosmological citations like the light in the sky, stars, planets, etc in literature. The references of Astronomy are found in the *Rigveda*, the ancient Indian literature of Sanskrit hymns. Many Indian poets with metaphysical and mystic tenor composed poems with cosmic citations.

Like haiku literature, the Sangam Poetry of 100 BCE – 250 CE (as per Tamil scholar Kamil Zvelebil) written in the Tamil language, has a rich reference of nature, human perspective, love, grief, kindness, ecstasy including valor and war related aspects. The early Sangam poetry follows two meters (*akaval* and *vanci*), while the later Sangam poetry became more diverse.

Ainkurunuru is a classical Tamil poetic work and the third of the Eight Anthologies in the Sangam literature. It comprises of five groups of 100 short stanzas of minimalistic 3 to 6 lines haiku-like poems. There are poems like one line Aathizhudi, two lines Thirukkural and

three lines Sindhar in Tamil language. Couplets written by Tiruvalluvar in Tirukkural are based on kural metres:

Self control places one among the gods;  
lack of it leads one to the darkness of hell

(No. 121)

The old poetic forms of Indian regional language such as *Vachans*, *Tripadis*, *Dvipadis* and *Chaupadis* in the Kannada language during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, four line poems called *Charoli*, *Kanika* and *Vatraitika* in Marathi, *Chutki* in Bengali, Fifteenthcentury Saint-poet Kabir's two-line devotional *Doha*, *Dohā* and *Barve* in Hindi, *Obi* in Marathi, *Boli* and *Māhia* in Punjabi, and *Tirukural* in Tamil are still fresh amongst the common people.

Conceptualising time and space, Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), a saint-poet and a philosopher, in his epic poem *Savitri* writes:

All Time is one body, Space a single look:  
There is the Godhead's universal gaze  
And there the boundaries of immortal Mind:

(Savitri 660)

Tirtha Rama, the nineteenth-century saint-poet of India writes:

Pale stars yet twinkled on the valleys deep,  
The sun just rolled hill tops in crimson blaze,  
The yellow grass waved as golden hair of a sage.

(Rama Poems)

## **Development of Haiku Literature in India**

Though the history of Indian haiku literature goes back as far as to the beginning of the twentieth century, it remained as a less known genre for a long time. From 1950 to 2000, there has been some degree of familiarity of this form of poetry restricted largely amongst a few academicians in the Hindi language, some regional poets, and a few imbibed to attempt in English. The decade, 1990-2000, witnessed an upsurge in the practice of haiku literature amongst academicians and other poets. They could come to know about many things because of wide information available through the internet, electronic media, etc. At present an appreciable number of Indian poets including some from the younger generation who have marked their presence in the international sphere.

The history of Indian Haiku literature can be divided into three periods:

Inception Phase (1900-1950)

Awareness Phase (1950-2000)

Development Phase (2000 onwards)

The classification is broadly based on the initial concept about haiku based on limited information and later followed by more awareness about the genre through gradual availability of information by the academicians of the leading regional language, especially Hindi. Persistent efforts made by translation helped popularising haiku writings. Some even wrote mainstream poems in English with a 3-4 line stanza and shorter version of verses. Slowly the academicians with their poetic skill and intuition tried attempting 3-line poems in English with haiku-ness. Later, the quick information flow due to internet availability, people could get to know the basic elements of the minimalistic genre of classical haiku composition, the actual form and structural manifestation. Through seminars and workshops slowly people get access to the translated Japanese classical haiku, English haiku in the Western world, especially in America.

At times, there has been a limited perception in the strict sense of haiku elements, form, structure etc. Gradually haiku of contemporary style is widely practiced with the elements of aesthetic integrity and experimental truthfulness.

### **1900-1950: Inception Phase**

The Indian Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) during his first visit to Japan in 1916, cited reference of haiku poems in his travelogue “*Japan-Jatri*” and translated Basho’s two haiku in Bengali. Tagore, in his travelogue, introduced two famous haiku by Basho, ‘the old pond and a frog’ and ‘the withered branch and a crow’. After citing the haiku ‘old pond’ Tagore comments, “That is all. And that is sufficient”.

Purono pukur Bengar lāf Jaler Shabdo

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Pochā dāl ektā kāk sharatkāl

His poetry collection ‘*Kanika*’ was published in 1899 and ‘*Sphulinga*’ was written between 1912 and 1916. A couplet from ‘*Kanika*’ is as follows:

Ungrateful  
The echo always taunts the sound  
Lest it may be revealed that it’s indebted to sound.

Praising the zen-feeling of haiku, Tagore says, “We do not find three-line poem anywhere else in the world. These three lines are enough for the poet and the readers. The heart of the Japanese does not sound like a waterfall; it is quite like a lake.” This speaks about the inherent poetic spell of the minimalistic expression of haiku-like genre.

His one-line poems (*monoku* like), “The Stray Birds” (1916) (translated by Tagore from his Bengali version) are more of proverbial expression and aphorism with poetic lucidity and somewhat reminiscent of haiku. The book was dedicated to T. Hara of Yokohama, who was the host during Tagore’s first Japan visit in 1916.

If you shed tears when you miss the sun, you also miss the stars.

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In my solitude of heart I feel the sigh of this widowed evening veiled with mist and rain.

His collection, ‘Fireflies’ of haiku-like short and epigrammatic poems come from the first verse of the bilingual Bengali version, ‘*Lekhan*’ (1926) by Tagore. It consists of 256 epigrams and short verses (Source: Terebess Asia Online).

God in his temple of stars  
waits for the man to bring him his lamp

\*\*\*

The jasmine's lisp of love to the sun is her flowers.

\*\*\*

My fancies are fireflies, —  
Specks of living light  
twinkling in the dark.

\*\*\*

Faith is the bird that feels the light  
and sings when the dawn is still dark.

\*\*\*

Sorrow that has lost its memory  
is like the dumb dark hours  
that have no bird songs  
but only the cricket's chirp.

\*\*\*

As a river in the sea,  
work finds its fulfillment  
in the depth of leisure.

\*\*\*

The fireflies, twinkling among leaves,  
make the stars wonder.

\*\*\*

Leaves are silences  
around flowers which are their words.

In 1916, the great poet Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) wrote an article on “*Japanea Kavidhai*” (Japanese poetry)” in *Swadesamitran* in its 16th October 1916 issue based on a haiku article written by Yonae Noeguchi in *Modern Review*, Calcutta. He also translated two haiku in that article for the first time in Tamil. Bharathi says, “The one who understands loneliness and silence and the language of the flowers and lives in oneness with nature is a poet.”

Nishikanta Roy Chowdhury, under the influence of Tagore, wrote short poems under the name Kukri during the early 1930s (Aju, 2011). An example of it as given below:

*It is better to keep her in my mind  
Keep in my dreamland fair  
In my thatched house; where else to give her share?*

Srikanta Varma, Kailash Vajpeyi, Krishnakant Dubey, Sarveshwardayal Saxena, and others attempted writing short haiku-like poems in Hindi. Srikanta Varma writes:

The first shower of rain  
The sky has thrown  
Its roots on earth

**Kaveripatnam Siddhanatha Venkataramani** (1891-1952) from Tamilnadu was a lawyer and an accomplished writer in English. He met Rabindranath Tagore in 1928 and was inspired by him. K. S. Venkataramani in his book *Paper Boats* (1921) wrote a one-liner haiku:

the corners cut paper boat I float again.

### **1950-2000: Awareness Phase**

Haiku is a non-rhymed 3-line in *s/l/s* style poem with the basic aesthetic elements of fragment-phrase relationship with a pause (*kireji*) in between, seasonal reference (*kigo*), and art of juxtaposition between the fragment and phrase.

Short stanzas and haiku-like English poems by the mainstream poets, not strictly as practiced by Japanese classical haiku, have been composed incorporating a 3-line format with seasonal reference, human feeling, and some with 5/7/5 syllabic format (Pandey, 2004, Singh, 2006, 2017). There has been a gap in proper understanding the haiku, the smallest genre of poetry, syllables versus sound-units (*morae*) in writing haiku. There may be a deviation from the Japanese classical haiku in the sense that some earlier poems were written with title, capital case or a punctuation mark at the end, and sometimes with rhyming. Sometimes there has been confusion about the precise technique of writing haiku, basic elements such as seasonal reference (*kigo*), pause (*kireji*) between fragment and phrase, art of juxtaposition, brevity, etc. These things were gradually refined at a later stage.

## Haiku in Hindi and other Regional languages

It is interesting to mention here that along with haiku in English, haiku has also been composed in the national language, Hindi, along with many regional languages namely Hindi, Tamil, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Telugu, Shindi, Punjabi and Odia. The development of haiku in regional languages with scholarly examples has been dealt by Verma (1992) and Kala Ramesh in her “A History of Indian Haiku”, The Haiku Foundation. The bilingual anthology of haiku (Deodhar, 2008) by 105 poets from Indian is an important treatise in haiku writings.

Jnanpith Awardee Agyeya’s haiku and *Sahitya ki Jhalak* are some of the landmark initiatives in Hindi haiku literature. In 1951, he had composed the following three-line poem:

Birds flew away  
The leaf trembled  
And then settled down

He visited Japan in 1957 and later his collection, “*Ari O Karuna Prabhamaya*” was published in 1959.

In 1960, Dr. Prabhakar Machwe first introduced the translation of haiku poems in Hindi in the collection, “*Bharat Aur Asiaka Sahitya*”.

Prof. Satya Bhushan Verma of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) is the pioneer and India’s first Japanese scholar who translated Japanese haiku into Hindi - '*Japani Kavitaian*' (published in 1977) with haiku in Japanese script alongside their Hindi translations. He also started a newsletter in Hindi called 'Haiku' in 1981. He established the first haiku club in India in 1978. To have a Pan-India popularization in haiku literature, he brought out a bi-monthly in the Indian national language on Haiku poetry and incorporated other haiku written in regional languages with Devnagiri script for convenience. The anthology “Haiku 1989” was a masterpiece comprising Hindi haiku by 30 poets. He in his scholarly article, “Haiku in India” (published in '*Japan Review*' in 1992) described the historical perspective and haiku written by Indian poets in different languages. Prof. Satya Bhushan Verma was the first Indian to be honoured for the Masaoka Shiki International Haiku Prize in 2002 along with the American poet, Cor van den Heuvel.

Prominent poets like Radhey Shiam, Satyapal Chug, Satish Dube, Sudha Gupta, Govinda Narayana Mishra, Laksman Prasad, Naiak, Bhagwat Sharan Aggrawal, and others immensely contributed to haiku literature in Hindi (Verma, 1992). Prof. B.S. Aggarwala published a Hindi quarterly journal called *Haiku Bharati* in 1998.

Krishna Chaitanya published an article, “An Affair Between India And Japan” in ‘The Statesman’ newspaper on 30 May 1982 highlighting the haiku poem with some examples of Radhey Shiam, Vedajna Arya, Satyapal Chug, Sulakshna Khatol, Urmila Kaul, Kamal Ratnam and others:

The stringing pains of  
Wound  
I shall forget  
But the scar?

-Sulakshna Khatol

The dark came encircling  
But feared not:  
Decked it with lights

-Kamal Ratnam

Neelamani Fukan's translated an anthology in of Japanese poets, '*Japani Kavita*' (1971) in Assamese, V Lalithamba's translation of haiku poems into Kannada, Narayan Shyma and Krishna Rahi's haiku in Doha style in Sindhi have enriched the haiku literature in the regional languages.

Article on a comparative study of Haiku and Panjabi Mahia by iconic Panjabi poetess Amrita Pritam in 1979 is a landmark literary initiative in Panjabi language. Satyanand Java, Urmila Kaul, and others contributed a lot in popularizing haiku.

Mukundbhai P. Brahmakshatriya (b. 11 November 1932) in Patan, Gujarat had written 10,000 haiku like poems in Gujarati. In Gujarati, Jhinabhai Ratanji Desai, fondly known by his pen name Snehrashmi (1903-1991) introduced haiku, in Gujarati literature. *Soneri Chand Rooperi Suraj* (1967) is the collection of 359 haiku and six tanka poems along with other collections namely *Kevalveej* (1984) and *Sunrise on the Snowpeaks*. He followed 5-7-5 syllable pattern and also translated his haiku in English.

Peak after peak  
I climb only to find  
A new peak

Gujarati poets Bhagavatikumar Sharma and Bhushit Joshipura have composed ghazals with *shers* formed as haiku (Haiku Ghazals). Similarly, Dr. Rehmat Yusufzai has composed a number of haiku in the Urdu language. Vihang A Naik, a bilingual poet from Gujarat, has translated haiku book '*Angat*' in Gujarati by Ravji Patel (1939-1968) into English. Indian Literature, Vol. XXVII, No.2, 1984 (published by Sahitya Akademi) featured 16 Haiku by Jhinabhai Desai, jointly translated from Gujarati by the poet and Keshav Malick.

Shirish Pai, a renowned Marathi poet first wrote a scholarly article on haiku in 1978 and published in a Marathi literary journal, 'Richa'. A Weekly paper, 'Loksatta' carried out translation of 17 Japanese haiku poets namely Basho, Busan, Issa, and others including some Marathi haiku on July 5, 1981. Richa Godbole, Maonohar Todkar and others also experimented haiku writings in the Marathi language.

The rain stopped  
From behind the Banana leaves  
A butterfly flew away

-Shirish Pai

Abdul Rahman started writing haiku which were published in 1974, titled *Sindhar*. During the sixties, Sujatha, C. Mani, Chandralekha, and others translated a few English haiku poems into Tamil and published them in *Kanaiyazhi* and *Nadai*. Sujatha (1935-2008), an engineer and an eminent author published a book, “Haiku – A New Introduction” in Tamil in the nineties.

Kaa. Na. Kalyanasundaram, a Tamil poet, has written many haiku in Tamil and later translated into English.

a dry leaf dances  
in the meditation of  
buddha with closed eyes.

Sujatha published many haiku in *Kanaiyazhi* magazine.

fishes leap in the waters  
clouds ripple

Original Translation in Tamil by Sujatha  
Translation in English by Ramesh Anand

Kunjunni, a Malayalam poet is famous for his ‘*Kunjunni kkavithakal*’, a book of very short verses, rhymed or unrhymed.

My head’s above the earth,  
But it’s far below the sky.  
It’s a pity  
My thoughts dangle between.

A few poems have been written in Odia. Pravat Kumar Padhy translated some of his haiku-like Odia poems written in 1978 (later published in *The Living Haiku Anthology*) and he also translated a few of his English haiku and tanka into Odia and published in a few journals (*Tanka: Skylark 6:1 Summer 2018*). Debi Prasad Mohapatra and a few others also published some Odia haiku. Later in 2018, Ajaya Mahala, for the first time, published a haiku collection, “*Ghunchu na Thiba Jahna* ( *The Unmoving Moon*) in Odia language.

In 1975, Japan: *Sahitya ki Jhalak* (Japan: Glimpses of Literature) was published by a collaborative effort between Indian and Japanese scholars at the Kansai University of Foreign Studies, Osaka (Sachidanand,2009). A major section of the book is devoted to the translation of Japanese poetry from the extant *Man’yōshū* and Bashō’s haiku besides ‘*waka*’ and ‘*tanka*’ of Ishikawa Takuboku and the contemporary poet Shiraishi Kazuko. The literary work of

Kawabata Yasunari, and Abe Kōbō, and the medieval diaries such as the *Kagerō nikki* and noh and kabuki theatres etc have been published in this volume. During the mid-nineties onward, slowly translation of the original Japanese language instead of English has been encouraged. Institution like Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Biswa Bharati, Govt. organisation like Sahitya Akademi took a lot of initiatives. Special exchange programmes between the institutions of India and Japan were initiated. Mid-eighties onwards workshops on the Japanese literature and related genre (haiku, tanka etc) have been organized by JNU. Delhi University, Japanese Language Teachers Association of India (JALTAI) & Japan Foundation, ICJC, Oxford Book Store to promote Indo-Japanese literature.

Some the mainstream poets like Radhey Shiam, R K Singh, I H Rizvi, T V Reddy, D H Kabadi, S L Peeran, Aju Mukhopadhyaya, Pravat Kumar Padhy, and others contributed immensely in haiku poetry over the years. Pravat Kumar Padhy wrote many short poems of 3-4 lines during the eighties and nineties and published them in 2011 in the collection, “The Tiny Pebbles”. Ryan Kelly, Editor, ‘The Houston Literary Review’, USA, in his ‘Foreword’ writes, “What is most remarkable about P.K. Padhy’s poetry is his ability to express so much by saying so little. The Tiny Pebbles exhibits his aphoristic style.....”

## Mainstream Poetry and Haiku in English

I feel poetry is an art of planting new trees from the old seeds. Many mainstream poets have written short stanza of 3-4 lines and poems of haiku-ness as early as the nineteen eighties. The poet’s mind vibrates with images and he searches for the colours of words to poetically sketch the natural surroundings. Innovative urge always remains in his creative pursuits. Poet artfully experiments nuanced techniques and framework of poetic expression with metaphorical allusions. With limited information about haiku or minimalistic poetry form across the cultural boundaries, the Indian poets often express the poetic spell and haiku-ness in their poetic fecundity. The contribution during the formative stage of the new genre in India by Radhey Shiam, Mijeeb Yar Jung, Urmila Kaul, Mohammed Fakhruddin, I H Rizvi, T V Reddy, D C Chambial, D H Kabadi, Sunil Uniyal, Santosh Kumar, Ankur Betageri, Shekar Kapur, Harihar Patel, Dam Kanan, Yolanda Sangphugpha, Reba Singh, Shyam Santhanam, Goutam Sengupta, Smitha Chakravarthula, B.Vadivelrajan, Dalip Daswani, Richa Dubey, S L Peeran, P K Joy, R K Singh, Ram Sharma, Aju Mukhopadhyay, Amitav Dasgupta, Angelee Deodhar, A. Thiagarajan, Vishnu P. Kapoor, Narayan Raghunathan, Kanwar Dinesh Singh, Pravat Kumar Padhy, Vidhur Jyoti, Ravi Shankar, and others is praiseworthy. Some mainstream poets published their haiku-like poems even after 2000 with renewed contemporary meter, craft, texture, and syntax. The mainstream poets along with brilliant litterateurs from other regional languages, especially from Hindi language, have laid the foundation of haiku culture in India. Occasionally some of the poets were not exactly aware of the intricacy of the classical haiku genre, but experimented with images and structural configuration of haiku-like writings. They enunciated, in addition to the mainstream of poetry, the introduction of micro-poems in Indian English poetry. It is interesting to see that besides poets from Humanities faculty, others from the science stream and allied disciplines also contributed a lot towards haiku literature of India.

A poem, “Hokku” by **Roshen Alkazi** is a two-line verse is among one of the earliest examples of haiku writings by Indian poets.

The solitary bird  
sings

From the book, Seventeen More Poems, 1970

**Mohammed Fakhruddin** (b.1942), an eminent personality, established a poetry journal, 'Poets International' in 1983, and launched "Haiku Poetry Movement" in India in 1995 through his journal 'Poets International'. He organized 'The All India Haiku Conference' in 1997 in Bangalore with more than 300 participants including Kazuyoshi Ikeda, a well-known Japanese haikuist. The event remained as memorable forever when a 9-year Indian girl from the USA read her haiku at that conference. Dr. Fakhruddin is the Founder-President of "The Haiku Society of India," which was established in 1998 (Source: Patricia, Prime, 'Poetry of Moment'). He has written haiku on wider aspects in his own style and structure. Fakhruddin's writings are instant, narrative, occasionally philosophical, and sometimes with a sense of curiosity. They are more of aphorism style and sometimes rhyming in nature. Some of his haiku from 'Haiku Self-Exploration' (2004) are as follows:

Twinkle in your eye  
Gave birth to platonic love  
Between you and I.

\*\*\*

Bright and graceful glance  
Bewitching smile on lips make  
Stars twinkle in trance

\*\*\*

Nature is not free  
So are birds and so are thoughts  
All slaves, so are we

\*\*\*

The sky stoops to Earth  
And makes a mirth at sunrise  
Birds fly in surprise.

\*\*\*

Don't praise to please me,  
Sixty five summers gone by,  
Made me an old tree!

Poets International, September 2010

\*\*\*

Dark moving clouds,

Like a squad after downpour,  
Wind clears the blue!

Poets International, May 2011

In the eighties and nineties, Satya Bhushan Verma, R K Singh, Dr. Mohammed Fakhruddin, , Angelee Deodhar, and a few others pioneered in bringing haiku writings on the global scenario. It is worth mentioning that towards the end of the century in the 1990s, Angelee Deodhar pioneered true contemporary haiku with her publication in International journals. The cultural aspects, rural imageries are reflected in the commonly used verbosity. This attracted the international attention and subsequent poets, particularly Rajiv Lather, K Ramesh, Kala Ramesh, along with many others drive the culture of Indianness into haiku.

**RK Singh** (b.1950), Professor, IIT(ISM), one of the prominent mainstream poets, has contributed a lot to popularizing haiku literature during the early eighties. Dr. Lyle Glazier says, “R K Singh writes with the directness of an overheard whisper, or a wind through trees, a ripple in a stream, or a cry in the street after dark.” In an interview with Prof. R B Singh in 2012, he candidly says, “I have been practicing these difficult Japanese forms for over 25 years. Initially, I used these as stanzas of my regular poems, but it took me about 15 years to understand the essential spirit of haiku and tanka as independent poems.” He further says, “It is the spirit behind the words that counts: the pauses, hesitations, and the silences between words and between the lines, the silences that make a poem live and breathe. That is what makes a good haiku.”

He further says in an exclusive interview with Patricia Prime, “In 1981-82 wrote stanza structure (5-7-5) in poems and wrote haiku, senryu, tanka in 1983 onwards.”

Prof. Singh has also written haiku related to love and satire oriented senryu. His collections of haiku and tanka include Every Stone Drop Pebble (jointly with Catherine Mair and Patricia Prime, 1999), Peddling Dream (in a bilingual trilogy Pacem in Terris, jointly with Myriam Pierri and Giovanni Campisi, 2003), and The River Returns (2006), New and Selected Poems: Tanka and Haiku (2012), I am no Jesus and Other selected Poems: Tanka and Haiku (2014) and God Too Awaits Light (2017).

The best poetry  
is a woman  
concrete, personal, delightful  
greater than all

22 October 1972

\*\*\*

I smoke and see  
in the up going fumes  
dry ashes of life

5 November 1973

\*\*\*

there is no tree  
over the mountain  
I rest under the shade  
of a wandering cloud

31 October 1974

\*\*\*

The watery weather  
continues to shatter  
the mortal shell

39. From the book, My Silence, 1985

\*\*\*

The fig of life with  
roots above and branches below:  
man and woman one

From the book, Flight of Phoenix, 1990

\*\*\*

Reshuffling the shelves  
It's only dust in alleys  
sneezing scholarship

From the book, Above Earth's Green, 1997

\*\*\*

A load of wood  
on her frail back—  
autumn evening

Haiku Harvest, Vol.2, No.2, 2001

\*\*\*

Dew drop  
on a blade of grass  
rainbow

Haiku Harvest, Vol.2, No.2, 2001

\*\*\*

Waiting for the train  
alone on the platform  
swatting mosquitoes

Tinywords, 5 Feb 2002

\*\*\*

Shadow of age  
On the wall-  
Second full moon

2004

\*\*\*

In the well  
studying her image  
a woman

From the book, The River Return, 2006

\*\*\*

looking for a shade  
under the shapeless cloud  
a rag picker

Magnapoets 3, January 2009

\*\*\*

Sea waves  
roll from faraway  
white peaks

NYUSEN, Third prize, 13th Kusamakura Haiku Competition, 2008

\*\*\*

Looking for fish  
a siberian crane  
in a lotus pond

In Ko Vol. 31, No.4, 2016

\*\*\*

the half moon  
on her neck reminds of love  
before departure

From the book, *God Too Awaits Light*, 2017

Subsequently the availability of mammoth information on the internet has opened the flood gate of exchanging ideas. Later K. Ramesh, Johannes Manjrekar, Vidur Jyoti, Kala Ramesh and many other contemporary Indian poets have written beautiful haiku in English.

Haiku and haiku-like short poems were published sparsely in a few journals in India like Skylark, Poet, Kavita India, Youth Age, Canopy, and others. The Japanese short poems have been featured in some of the print Journals in India namely, Poetry International, Taj Mahal ; Online journals like Muse India, websites like Triveni World Haiku Utsav, Indian Kukai, and others. Many publishers like Cyberwit.net, Katha Books, Haiku, Authors Press, Vishwakarma Publications, Prakash Book, Nivasini Publishers, and others have shown interest in publishing haiku, tanka, and other related genres. Blogs like Cafe Haiku, INHAIKU, Mumbai, Chennai also popularized Haiku and Tanka literatures and published some anthologies. There are some international anthology published from India and the notably amongst them are : Bilingual *Bharatiya Haiku* (Indian Haiku) edited by Angelee Deodhar in 2008; *Atoms of Haiku* edited by Archana Kapoor Nagpal, Arie Gerev, and Sanjuktaa Asopa in 2015; *naad anunaad* edited by Kala Ramesh, Sanjuktaa Asopa and Shloka Shankar in 2016; Trilingual (English, Hindi, and Punjabi) Anthology of haiku, 'Beyond the Fields' edited by Sandip Chauhan in 2017.

**Radhey Shiam** (1922-2015) was a distinguished haikuist, painter, and had written haiku in Hindi, Sanskrit, Awadhi, English and Urdu. He was inspired by Dr. Satya Bhushan Verma. He has written Ramayan and Uttara Ramayana in haiku style. After his death, his son Rama Kant published Radhey Shiam's collections in Hindi 'Haiku Pahelyiaan' (Cyberwit.net, 2019) in two volumes. These haiku riddles have been arranged beautifully in seven broad categories viz. mythological, nature, human, entertainment, adornment, food articles, and worldly articles. He has published haiku in many journals of repute.

deserted castle  
shall I hear  
the sound of a piano

Honorable Mention Mainichi Haiku Contest 2011

\*\*\*

temple ruins  
I still hear the sounds  
of the bell

Chrysanthemum 10, October 2011

\*\*\*

a piece of rainbow  
in the pond  
within my reach

Lyrical Passion Poetry, August 2011

\*\*\*

dewed meadow  
a cow moves on  
its footprints follow

Sketchbook, September-October 2011

\*\*\*

autumn morning  
a shower of pearls  
on the meadow

Acorn Haiku, Fall Issue 2012

\*\*\*

winter morning  
on the spider's web  
so many pearls

Haiku Xpression , January 2012 issue

\*\*\*

under the banyan tree  
a priest takes rest  
beside a beggar

World Haiku Review, August 2014

**Radhey Shiam** is the first Indian poet to write Hay(na)ku (Pinoy Haiku) of tercet with one word in the first line, two in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and three in the 3<sup>rd</sup> line. Some of his poems have been published in the first HAY(NA)KU Anthology in 2005 and in HAY(NA)KU:A Commemorative 15<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Anthology, 2018. The following are some of his brilliant creations (Source: Galatea Resurrects#26, 'A Poetry Engagement').

butterfly  
love letter  
a blooming bud

\*\*\*

desire  
a signature  
on life's page

\*\*\*

rose  
with thorns  
song of harmony

\*\*\*

moonlight  
love song  
to sleeping earth

\*\*\*

humour  
like moon  
glorifies dark hours

\*\*\*

wind  
a nomad  
no permanent house

**Urmila Kaul**, a prominent bilingual poet published many haiku in English. Her haiku appeared in Skylark, edited by Baldev Mirza in 1982 and many international Journals. Her haiku received accolades from Tokyo University.

My tale  
Written on Himalayas  
Melts word by word.

Skylark-47/48-82

\*\*\*

Some of her beautiful haiku from her collection, "Bonsai" (2004) are as follows:

A withered tree  
stands on sand dune  
all

alone

\*\*\*

Amawasya--  
Boss on leave  
stars' pompous regime

\*\*\*

Rain drops--  
On the lips of the leaves  
A song stilled

**DH Kabadi** (b. 1936) is one of the leading mainstream poets. His poetic creativity remains ever agile in modern Indian literature. He also wrote many 3-line poems/flickers in his collections: *Rye on Ravines: Flickers* (1985) and *Melting Moments* (1990). R K Singh remarks, “the flickers are essentially as experimentation in the genre of haiku: In a non-traditional meditative mode, Kabadi vividly captures his various moments of experience.” Occasionally his expressions are didactic in nature. His collections, “*Pyramid Poems*” (2003) are written in 5-line Tanka (5-7-5-7-7) and Cinquain (2-4-6-8-2) forms.

the moon  
hides in the wrinkles  
an ancient bed

\*\*\*

maidservants  
with chillies in mouth  
wait for milky talk

\*\*\*

nude stars  
bathing in the sea  
shy waves

\*\*\*

different sounds  
filling  
a talking forest

**T Vasudeva Reddy** (b. 1939) is a poet with many hues. He is a renowned poet, critic, and novelist. His contribution to mainstream poetry is immense. He is the recipient of the international award of ‘Excellence in World Poetry, 2009. The followings are some haiku, in rhyming style, from his collection, ‘*Thousand Haiku Pearls*’ (2016), describing nature, love and grief, and human feelings.

Nude lush green garden  
Feels fresh, slim, shy and sensuous---  
Fairest Eve in Eden

(Haiku. 83)

\*\*\*

Birds flutter wings  
Merry leaves rustle and greet in spring,  
Children’s chaste smiles

(Haiku. 269)

\*\*\*

Moonlight casts its spell,  
It is pure and spotless sage,  
a milk-white page,

(Haiku. 561)

**Narayanan Raghunathan** (b. 1954) is a graduate in Physics, mathematics, and philosophy. He has written many poems of metaphysical nature. He was the founder of "Wonder Haiku Worlds". The first haiku he wrote in 1987 and posted on the web around August 2001. His haiku collections i) Infinite Flame Silences and Apocalyptic Rapture (With Amanda Cazalet) are rich in the poetic style. One can refer to his participatory Haiku site hosted by Narayanan and Shyam Santhanam ~ <http://www.wonderhaikuworlds.com/>

a paradise on  
every flower in  
a butterfly's eye

Translated from the Malayalam original

\*\*\*

summer drizzle ~  
my cat and I walk in our  
own infinite cosmoses

\*\*\*

autumn twilight  
a stray donkey and I dream  
different light worlds

\*\*\*

polar bear and I  
cognize distinct cosmoses  
of seamless ice spaces

\*\*\*

earthworm  
peeps from moist earth  
to see a full moon ~

**Syed Liaqath Peeran** (b. 1950), hails from an illustrious family of Sufi background. His great grandfather was a renowned Arabic, Persian, and Urdu scholar. S L Peeran is a spiritual and humanistic poet and has also composed haiku type of metrical verses. Sometimes his three liners are kin to senryu. His haiku and tanka demonstrates human aspects and ecstasy. His collection Haiku, Tanka, Short Verse, Quatrain, and Poems was published in 2019.

Unnatural deaths  
Incessant streams of tears  
Sorrows bind the heart

\*\*\*

Fragrance in my heart  
A petal falls, a bird calls  
Dew drops melt away

\*\*\*

The clock on the wall  
Ticking away to glory  
My precious hours

\*\*\*

Winter ends blossoms  
Trees shed leaves become naked  
White snow envelops

\*\*\*

Generate good will  
For heaven's sake save your souls  
Save from destruction

From the book, A Call from the Unknown, 2003

**IH Rizvi** (1936-2015) is an eminent Indian English poet and anthologist. His poems on socio-cultural aspects reveal the humanistic voice. His various collections deal with nature, love, and pain. He is a versatile poet, writer, reviewer, translator of repute of Indian literature. He has composed haiku-like 3-line poems in rhyming style in the collection, 'Fettered Birds (2002). Rizvi has written poems in English and Urdu. His collection, "Haiku and Other Poems" was published in 2005.

Needs spread their long hands  
like weather beaten bare trees  
can't hold their weak hands

(Haiku No. 35)

\*\*\*

The train of love knocks  
at my lovely neighbour's door,  
my dreams at rocks

(Haiku No. 43)

When dogs do not bark  
and owls do not hoot at night  
man's howls you can hark

Haiku: The leaves are back on the Tree: International Anthology, 2002 (Ed. Zoe Savina)

**PK Joy** (b.1940) has a lot of contribution Indian English literature, poetry in particular. He has served in the Editorial Board of many national and international journals of repute including 'Crosscurrent' (New Zealand), 'Bitterroot'(New York), and others. His love haiku have been featured in "Contemporary Indian English Love Poetry, 1990 edited by I H Rizvi.

Every time he knocks  
A fresher beauty greets him  
Blooming youthfulness

**Vilas Sarang (b.1942-2015)** is a bilingual poet and writes both in Marathi and English. He edited reputed the literary journal the Bombay Review. In 1989, he edited 'Indian English Poetry Since 1950: An Anthology'. His book, "A Kind of Silence" is a collection of poems written in English and trans-creations of his own Marathi poems. The poem, 'Gothic' is written as haiku-like with beautiful imageries (Kumar, 2001).

Besides griffin carved in stone  
Pigeons brood over  
Their separate solitude.

**Angelee Deodhar (1947-2018)** was a medico, by profession has brought the Indian haiku and its oriental beauty to the world audience. She has contributed a lot translating Hindi haiku into English. She was a member of several haiku groups: The Haiku Society of America, Haiku Society of Canada, and Haiku International Association, Japan, The World Haiku Association, and the Evergreen Haiku Society, Japan.

She has translated haiku in Hindi into English and from English to Hindi also. Her major sources for the Hindi material were *Haiku 1989* and *Haiku 1999*, two anthologies, edited by Kamlesh Bhatt 'Kamal,' and the journal, '*Haiku Darpan*', edited by Jagdish Vyom. In 2005, Angelee wrote the book "*Yadi koi pooche*" (If Someone Asks) which is a translation of the legendary Masaoka Shiki's Haiku into Hindi. It is a selection of 116 Haiku, out of more than 23600 Haiku written by Shiki.

Her contribution as an anthologist of haibun (*Journeys: An Anthology of International Haibun*, 2014, 2015,2016) is a landmark in haibun literature. It would not be exaggerated to consider her as the pathfinder of contemporary Pan-India haiku culture.

azure butterflies  
flitting about  
flakes of sky

New Hope International, 1997

\*\*\*

in the silence  
of the zendo  
my stomach growls

Frogpond XXI: 2, 1998

between us  
vapours from the teacups  
autumn chill

Modern Haiku, Vol. XXXI: No. 3, Fall 2000

\*\*\*

sharing an umbrella  
your wet left shoulder  
my right one

HAS Members' Anthology, 2001  
Mann Library's Daily Haiku, May 12, 2013

\*\*\*

rumors of war  
up into a darkening sky  
- a child's newsprint kite

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize, Robert Spiess Memorial, 2003

\*\*\*

last night's rain  
the bird bath full  
of sparrows

Heron's Nest, Vol. IV, No.8, 2002

\*\*\*

doing laundry  
at the river edge  
the flow of gossip

Asahi Shimbun Haikuist Network, 2014

## **Development Phase (2000 onwards)**

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Based on the earlier foundation, the Indian haiku takes a major stride post-2000 and particularly in the second decade (2010-2020) with insightful writings by the younger generation. Information available on the internet, global connection, and easy exchange of knowledge, ideas through publications, workshops indeed helped the younger generation poets. Indian rural flavor, landscape, festival, and imageries rich in Indian context start flourishing with contemporary haiku literature. Many Indian poets established their global mark of excellence. International seminars, meetings, and congregations are held. R K Singh, Angelee Deodhar and a few others continue to render their creative pursuits of haiku writings and encouraged the new writers. Angelee Deodhar in her book *Utkrisht Haiku* in 2006 included translation of haiku. Poets who enriched translating some of the haiku of the Japanese masters and other poets in Hindi in *Indian Experiments in Tanka & Haiku Journal* are Rajendra Dhasmana, Uita Sachidanand, Ashok Vajpeyi, Ganga Prasad Vimal, Ranjit Saha, Prayag Shukla, and others. Literary personalities namely Mochizuki Yoshitsugu, Toshiko Miyachi, Murao Seiichi, Mizukawa Fumiko, and others visited India and deliberated about Indo-Japanese literature.

The 9th World Haiku Festival held in February 2008 in Bangalore under the auspicious of the World Haiku Club is one of the remarkable events bringing many Indian poets on a single platform. Susumu Takiguchi, Stanford M. Forrester, Norman Darlington are amongst others graced the occasion.

Susumu Takiguchi, Chairman, the World Haiku Club in his Key-note Address in World Haiku Festival 'Special Feature India', 2008, praised Indian literature and expressed, ".....There may well have been some such pioneers if we dig deeply into India's modern history. After Tagore, the single important figure regarding haiku in India is Satya Bhushan Varma... If you have a living legacy as old as Vedas and modern men as great as Tagore, India cannot be an ordinary latecomer in haiku. India is one of the countries I have a special expectation in terms of how haiku would develop in a profound way..... A lot of good things can be expected from the development of haiku in Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi or Urdu, if not all 500 local language ....."

Many poets including Angelee Deodhar, Jagdish Vyom, A. Thiagarajan, Kala Ramesh, R K Singh, Aju Mukhopadhyay, Johannes Manjrekar, Amitav Dasgupta, R J Kalpana, Kamaleswar Rao, Raju Samal, Yajushi (Marella Ram Vinodh), and others published their haiku in the special feature of India in the Vol.6, Issue 1, March 2008 of the World Haiku Review.

Leading from the front, Kala Ramesh has encouraged the younger generation to cultivate the Japanese Short form of poems through wider publication, conference, workshop, blogs, and imparting teaching to the young and budding poets. She also founded 'IN HAIKU Triveni' for interactions and mentoring the younger generation about haiku and the related genres. Charishma Ramchandani also took a special interest in teaching haiku on the website. Pravat Kumar Padhy also inspired many through social networks and publishing articles in the e-Journal published from Odisha. Many younger poets also started popularizing haiku in their regional language by translating and encouraging the budding writers. Ajay Mahala, Ramesh Anand, Sandip Chouhan, Purushthamaro Ravela, Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, Indra Neil Mekala, and others infused interest about haiku literature in their respective states.

**K Ramesh** is a teacher by profession and one of the leading haikuists. He has a passion for both English and Tamil literature. His first haiku was published in 'Still', edited by ai li. in 2000. His first book, "Soap Bubble" was published in 2007 by the prestigious Red Moon Press. Christopher Herold, in his "Introduction", observes that "what appears most plentifully in Ramesh's work is pure joy. Everywhere he turns, it seems, he finds wonder." a small tree of tender leaves (2000), Rogha Haiku & Tanka, 2013, from pebble to pebble: A Haiku and Tanka Collection (2014) are some of his brilliant collections.

slowly coming down  
the spiral of leaves-  
the evening light

Tinywords, 30 October 2001

\*\*\*

dawn...  
the neighbor's newborn  
stops crying

Editor's Choice, The Heron's Nest, Vol. IV, No.8, 2002

fierce bull  
a little bird  
on the hump

Editor's Choice, The Heron's Nest, Vol. VI, No.8, 2004

sunrise...  
I let the fish  
bite my toes

Tinywords, 20.6.2003

\*\*\*

dawn...  
cuckoo after cuckoo  
after cuckoo

Tinywords, 16 June 2004

\*\*\*

abandoned dog . . .  
looking at the face of  
every pedestrian

Tinywords, 9 September 2005

\*\*\*

starlit sky –  
I touch a turtle  
before it enters the sea

Editor's Choice (First place), The Heron's Nest, Volume VI, Number 5, June 2004.

\*\*\*

back from my hometown . . .  
scent of ripe mangoes  
in the empty bag

From the book, Soap Bubble, 2007

\*\*\*

paddy field by the river ...  
the voice of a farmer  
speaking to the bulls

Modern Haiku 40:1, 2009

\*\*\*

twilight...  
a boy brings down  
his kite

Runners up, Blyth Award, World Haiku Club

\*\*\*

moonlit forest stream...  
my thoughts on the tiger  
not there

The Heron's Nest, Vol. XXI, Number 4, 2019

**Rajiv Lather** (born. 1963) was a poet from Karnal who began writing in 2001. He has published brilliant haiku and haibun in reputed journals. His "Bhopal Disaster" poem is used as a study material by the British Council.

moonless night  
a pair of circling nightjars  
feed on stars

Frogpond XXVI: 2, Summer 2003

\*\*\*

train berth  
hot tea from a clay pot  
tasting of earth

The Heron's Nest, February 2003

\*\*\*

sandstorm...  
the scent of rain  
from somewhere

The Heron's Nest, August 2003

\*\*\*

himalayan shrine  
a hermit with hash pipe  
drifts in clouds

Modern Haiku 35.1, 2004

\*\*\*

night jasmine  
in the outhouse a trail  
of wet slippers

Modern Haiku 35.2, 2004

**Parimala Rao** (b. 1940) is a bilingual poet and a painter. She writes in both Kannada and English. Randy Brooks, a leading Haiku exponent, comments that some of Parimala's work seems dreamlike, which is 'unusual but interesting for haiku'. Parimala has also experimented with fusion expressions involving haiku and miniature paintings. British poet Bernard M. Jackson comments, "Here is an artist who can paint in words, and to whom the whole world is her canvas."

She acknowledges that she drew her inspiration from Dwarakanath. H. Kabadi, an exponent mainstream poet. Her daughter, Malini Rao, and granddaughter, Anika B. Rao have a passion for haiku literature. Some of her haiku couplets and 3-line poems on different seasons are simply brilliant (Source: Greve, 2006, World Kigo Database).

empty veranda  
lovelorn moon gazing

\*\*\*

on the telephone pole  
sparrow's chirping call

\*\*\*

in winter blanket  
winter moon still chill

\*\*\*

paddy fields  
between stray cow  
and scarecrow

\*\*\*

if no mirror  
i still  
have a face

\*\*\*

my dreams  
flight of leaves  
autumn wind

**Johannes Manjrekar (1958-2020):** He was an academician, eminent scientist with Ph.D from the prestigious Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai. His contribution to modern Indian haiku literature is immense. He was a great lover of nature. His haiku beautifully translate the artistic images of nature into poetic words.

smell of newsprint  
twenty beauty queens  
with one smile

Temps Libre, 2001

\*\*\*

monsoon sky  
the white cow  
chews a milk carton

Haijinx II:1, Spring 2002

\*\*\*

night walk  
i slow down  
near the jasmine bush

Tempslibres – 2005

\*\*\*

dusk  
an early cricket  
announces itself

Ardea, Issue 3, October 2013

\*\*\*

Sunday afternoon  
the silence heavier  
after the barking

Frogpond, 36.1, 2013

**Kala Ramesh** is one of the finest haiku poets and anthologists. She is a performing vocalist in Indian Classical music. She is credited with being the editor of many international journals. She has rendered flavor of Indianness, simplicity, and the use of art of words in her haiku writings. She is instrumental in introducing haiku and the related genres to the school kids and college youth.

forest walk—  
a spider's shadow  
climbs the tree

The Asahi Shimbun, November 2005

\*\*\*

darkening sky ...  
the snake curves  
into my path

Tinywords, 2005

\*\*\*

parijaat blossom . . .  
as kids, we shook the tree  
for raindops

Tinywords - June 2005  
Poetry Corner, May 31, 2013

\*\*\*

spring breeze –  
I catch the tune  
she leaves behind

Editor's Choice (First Place), Heron's Nest Award, Vol. 8, No. 2. Summer 2006

\*\*\*

sunset . . .  
the cuckoo repeats  
his morning song

The Heron's Nest – Vol. IX, No. 4: December 2007.  
Winner – Snapshot Press Calendar Contest 2009

\*\*\*

running downhill  
I fall through  
the autumn sky

Roadrunner, Issue VII: 2 May 2007,  
Tinywords May 2007

\*\*\*

the year passes . . .  
longing for cranes  
to colour the sky

Acorn #20, March 2008

\*\*\*

dense fog  
the train evaporates  
into a distant horn

The Heron's Nest, XI.2, 2009

\*\*\*

liquid sky . . .  
a steel bucket hits  
the well water

Notes from the Gean - Issue #4, March 2010.

\*\*\*

the ocean in a raindrop inside my womb a heart

Modern Haiku, 43.3, 2012

**Vishnu P Kapoor** (b.1941) has an immense interest in Urdu ghazals, philosophy, literature, and astrology. He chanced to know about this genre of poetry in the Japanese stall at Delhi Book Fair.

93rd autumn-  
only companions left,  
old mountains

Tinywords 12 October 2006

\*\*\*

new year dinner  
in my soup bowl  
her silver hair

Tinywords, 01 Jan 2007

\*\*\*

winter night  
even her memory  
has warmth

Indian Haiku Anthology, Spring 2008

**A. Thiagarajan** (b. 1949) is an academician and later joined the finance sector. He has been writing in English and Tamil since college days. His poems, haiku, short-stories, and articles appeared in many journals.

autumn evening --  
I lightly touch  
my son's first scribbles

The Heron's Nest, Vol. VIII. No.2, June 2006

\*\*\*

vacation over  
a cockroach rushes out  
from shoes

Haiku Harvest, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2006

\*\*\*

road puddles—  
umbrellas dip  
at each passing car

The Heron's Nest, Vol. VIII, No. 4, 2006

\*\*\*

hot afternoon  
the carter wipes his hand  
on the donkey's back

The Heron's Nest, Vol. IX, No.3, June 2007

\*\*\*

sudden drizzle  
a mosquito takes off  
from the paper boat

Tinywords, 16.10.2006

\*\*\*

new actors—  
Gandhi is shot  
Again

Modern Haiku 39.2, 2008

**Rohini Gupta** is a poet, writer, and teacher. She teaches haiku poetry, writing a story at workshops at various literary festivals and colleges.

dawn over Dal lake  
emerging from the mist  
the flower boat

Heron's Nest, March 2008

\*\*\*

vacation's end  
my small black notebook  
brings home the mountains

Bottle Rockets, August 2008

\*\*\*

above  
the funeral pyre  
a falling star

Winner of the Toshiko Award, World Haiku Club

\*\*\*

wet pavements  
a cat walks upon  
the moon

Mainichi Daily, 21 Sept 2011

**Aju Mukhopadhyay** is a bilingual poet, essayist, fiction writer, and critic. His brief notes on "The wonderful World of Dazzling Short Verses"; "Introducing Haiku in India Tagore wrote haiku-like short poems"; "Was Rabindranath Influenced by the short poems of Nishikanta?" and "Finite or Infinite: A Haiku Point" are included in '*Short Verse Delight*' (2010). Some of his haiku are as given below:

Cranes flymaking  
the wide sky  
limitless

\*\*\*

A crane flies  
ahead of others—  
dividing the sky

\*\*\*

a shy girl  
jasmine buds open  
slowly in twilight

\*\*\*

blue moon  
in the rippling water looks  
up at sky

\*\*\*

a ripe coconut  
falls on the garden carrying  
the moonlight with it

**Pravat Kumar Padhy** (b.1957), an alumnus of Indian Institute of Technology and a Petroleum Geo-scientist, had written an article in one of the leading Odia journals "*Manas*", 4<sup>th</sup> Issue in February 1980 (edited by Dr. Krishna Prasad Mishra), on "*Ezra Pound ebon Tankara Kabita* (Ezra Pound and His Poems)" referring haiku-like short poems namely, *The Encounter*, *The Tea shop*, *ALBA*, *Ite* and others. Padhy recalls, his poem, 'A Part of Civilization' published in 'Skylark'-47/48-1982 appeared in the next opposite page where Urmila Kaul, a bilingual poet, published five of her 3-line haiku. He was then writing more about the mainstream version of poetry and information about haiku was very limited by then. He, as a mainstream poet, has written many long and short verses (haiku-like poems).

A few Odia poems, composed during the early seventies, look like haiku though he was not aware of the genre during that time.

neither a pine nor a fir  
I am a tendril  
laying on the surface

A Stanza from the Poem, *Sindura Topae* ( A Vermilion Mark, early 1970s)

The following, a short- verse sequence, “*Satyameba*” (Truth Alone) was published in 1978 in Quarterly literary Odia journal, *Deepti*, edited by Shasidhar Pattnaik. The translation of one of the poems, *Jibanata* (Life) is as follows:

half-moon in the sky  
her body veiled in mixed  
colours of clouds

Deepti, Vol.8, Issue III, Oct-Dec 1978

He has written many haiku-style micro-poems in English, endowed with reference to nature.

The remoteness of separation  
I writhe  
Like a leaf  
Falling from the tree

“Separation”, Poet, Vol. 28. No.10 in 1987

Try best  
Like a bird  
Reaching  
To its nest

A Better Living, Kavita India, Vol.III, No. 2&3, 1990

In Sept 2009, he posted a four-line poem “Pretending” (They speak of volume/ In reality it fills/ Thin hopes/ Of vacuum) in PoetBay. The inspiring comments from the poets, Tai and Shells, suggesting to shorten the poem into a three-line in the form of haiku ignited him to know more about haiku genre. Since 2009, Pravat Kumar Padhy has published many haiku and related genres in the leading journals and anthologies. He has seven poetry books to his credit including ‘Cosmic Symphony: A Haiku Collection’.

Some of his published haiku are:

Dog is misspelled

the child discovered  
the Great

("God" first published in "World Poetry Anthology", 1992)  
Republished: Lynx, XXV:1 Feb 2010

creation is mystical  
vast value of life  
compressed in a seed

The World Haiku Review", Vol. 7, Issue 2, 2009

\*\*\*

shoreline receives  
messages from the sea--  
wavy language

Poetry Pages, 19<sup>th</sup> Sept 2009

\*\*\*

desert land  
measuring sand dune height  
a lone lizard

The Notes from the Gean, Vol.2, Issue 1, June 2010

\*\*\*

rainy day  
mud escapes  
between toes

Ambrosia, Journal of Fine Haiku, Issue 5, Summer 2010

\*\*\*

merry time  
children in the open ground  
collecting rain

Kokako – 13, September 2010

\*\*\*

sudden wind  
falling leaves meet  
in one corner

Berry Blue Haiku, Issue 2, September 2010

\*\*\*

half-moon—  
the child wonders  
the rest

Mainichi Daily News, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010

\*\*\*

murmuring river  
in full moon night  
stars take bath

The Critical Poet and Lit.Org, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2010

\*\*\*

flight of cranes—  
bridging the sea  
with the sky

Haiku Reality / Haiku Stvarnost, Vol. 8 No. 14 Summer 2011  
Editors' Choice: Second Best Award

\*\*\*

fragrance  
fills the gap  
between the flowers

The Heron's Nest, Vol. XIII, No.1, March 2011

\*\*\*

winter morning  
two butterflies  
warm the garden

The Heron's Nest, Vol. XIII, No.2, June 2011

\*\*\*

drizzling day--  
moon in the sky with  
cloudy face

Simply Haiku, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2011

\*\*\*

early moonrise  
cranes shift whiteness  
to an old banyan tree

Honourable Mention, Haiku Reality / Haiku Stvarnost, Vol.8, No.15, Winter Issue, 2011

\*\*\*

deep dark space  
many cosmic townships  
with their own light

The Mainichi Daily News, 23.3.2012  
Haiku in English: Best of 2012, Mainichi Daily News

\*\*\*

green light  
every one crosses  
also a cat

Bottle Rockets #27, August 2012

\*\*\*

*Janmashtami*—  
the human tower  
climbing up the sky

Culture Haiku Magazine, August 2013

\*\*\*

cherry blossoms—  
the scent bridging  
the long river

Honourable Mention, Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Invitational, 2013

\*\*\*

temple bell—  
the lone bird adds  
its cry

Frogpond, 36-2 Spring/Summer Issue, 2013  
Anthology, "A Vast Sky" 2015

\*\*\*

cotton flowers—  
the sky blooming with

cloud-art

Shamrock No. 27, February 2014

\*\*\*

flowing river--  
the bereaved girl holds  
a palm-full of water

Editor's Choice (Sample Poem), Acorn, Issue #33, Fall 2014

\*\*\*

wild flower--  
I breathe my  
loneliness

The Heron's Nest, Vol. XVI, No.4, December 2014

\*\*\*

sparkling light--  
crows shift darkness  
from tree to tree

Shamrock No.30 February 2015

\*\*\*

thick clouds--  
a gap takes me  
to the ocean

Modern Haiku, Vol. 46:2, Summer 2015

\*\*\*

relationship--  
the cold breeze remains  
tightly folded

AKISAME, Issue 19:1 December 2015, The European Haiku Society, Italy

\*\*\*

gene splicing  
I rearrange flowers  
of the garland

The Heron's Nest, Vol. XVIII, No.3: September 2016

\*\*\*

tiny pebbles  
the softness  
of her talk

Iafor Vladimir Devide Haiku Award (Runners Up), 2017

\*\*\*

morning yoga  
a branch slowly twists  
to the sun

Modern Haiku, 49.2, 2018

\*\*\*

flying milky way--  
a bevy of cranes between  
the sea and the sky

2nd Prize: Haiku Society of Constanta Haiku Contest, Rumania, 2019

\*\*\*

lockdown--  
I drag my shadow away  
from the windowpane

behind the mask: haiku in the time of Covid-19, 2020

street dog--  
an old man shares  
his silence

Presence #70, 2021

He has composed many one-line haiku (monostich or monoku):

melting away my pain-- garden dew, *The Heron's Nest, Vol. XV, No. 4, December 2013, Tinywords, 18.1 2018*

the moon behind the shyness your crescent smile, *A Hundred Gourds, December 2015*

autumn solitude my footprints on the desert sand, *Presence # 58, 2017*

what reasons for the trees aggressive wind, *Under the Basho, 2018*

moonrise the sky from the oncology wing, *Presence* # 61, 2018, *a hole in the light: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku*, 2018

the zero-shadow moment I am with myself, *The Heron's Nest Vol. XXI, Number 3*, 2019

sun, sea, sand and the footprints, *Modern Haiku*, 50:3, 2019

space rocks the strange visitors near the entrance, *Proletaria*, Dec 2019

on the back of a refugee a pregnant dog thrashing the shore current, *is/let*, 21.3.2020

mirror surface the past I leave behind, *Presence* #67, 2020

ant trail somewhere the missing sound, *Heliosparrow Poetry Journal*, 27 October 2020

bright sky still holding half of the darkness, *Bloō Outlier Journal*, 2020

Anemone on Bashō's Narrow Road leading the way, *Asahi Shimbun*, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

snow follows snow the layers of silence, *Kontinuum*, vol.1,no.1,2021

Pravat has conceptualized the scientific propensity and haiku literature in his essay on “The Science of Haiku Poetry: My Experience” (Padhy, 2020a) by interpreting the haiku literature from the scientific perspective and correlating with Social Science, Mathematical influence, Environment and Biological inheritance, and Psychological consciousness. He has published many scholarly articles on haiku literature (Padhy, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020b, and 2020d).

Pravat has experimented with an innovative genre of poetry, ‘*Hainka*’ (Padhy, 2020c): a poetic fusion of haiku and tanka, with the image linking of the ‘fragment of the haiku as the ‘pivot line’ of the following tanka. As far as the syllabic count (48 syllables) is considered *hainka* resembles with the metre, ‘*Jagati*’.

There are scores of poets namely Noor Singh Khalsa (settled in New Mexico), Gautam Nadkarni, Bhavani, B.Vadivelrajan, Paresh Tiwari, Vinod Marella, Vinay Leo R, Vidor Jyoti, Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, Indra Neil Mekala, Kishore Matte, Samar Ghose, Milan Rajkumar, Kasinath Karmakar, Kumarendra Mallick, Ramesh Anand, Ajaya Mehala, Pranav Kodial, Kanchan Chatterjee, Purushthamaro Ravela, Brijesh Raj, Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy, Elancharan Gunasekaran, Vijay Prasad, Rajandeep Garg, Suresh Babu, Kinshuk Gupta, and others write haiku and the related genre.

Woman haikuist namely Radhamani Sarma, Linda Ashok, Anitha Varma, Chitra Rajappa, Sandip Chouhan, Hema Ravi, Geethanjali Rajan, O V Usha, Sobhana Kumar, Arvinder Kaur, Snehita Kumbla, Sanjukta Asopa, Apana Pathak, Neelam Dudhwal, Shernaz Wadia, Priti Aisol, Rebba Singh, Jayshree Maniyal, Aruna Rao, Puja Moluste, Usha Kiran, Vandana Parashar, Shloka Shankar, Rasmi Vesa, Akila Gopalkrishnan, Minal Sarosh, Harleen Kaur, Madhuri

Maitra, Richa Sharma, Hemapriya Chellappan, Madhuri Pillai (Australia), Archana Kapoor Nagpal, Neena Singh, Praniti Gulyani, and others mark their presence in the international arena.

In a country like India, known for her rich in literature and ancient culture Indian can dream of a great contributor to haiku literature, especially when a seven-year girl, Anika B Rao, writes the haiku with aesthetic value and humorous sense:

*Peak winter/ snowfall/ twilight in day*

\*

*Autumn leaves falling/ colorful and crunchy/ nice wafers*

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### **About the Author:**

Pravat Kumar Padhy hails from Odisha, India. His literary work cited in Interviews with Indian Writing in English, Spectrum History of Indian Literature in English, Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Poetry, Cultural and Philosophical Reflections in Indian Poetry in English, History of Contemporary Indian English Poetry etc. His poetry won the Editors' Choice Award at Asian American Poetry, Poetbay, Writers Guild of India and others. His poem, "How Beautiful", published in 1983 in the leading Newspaper, Indian Express, has been included in the Undergraduate English Curriculum of Shivaji University, Maharashtra, India. He guest-edited the November 2019 Per Diem Column, The Haiku Foundation, on the theme, "Celestial Bodies". He has seven collections of verse to his credit including "The Speaking Stone" (2020).