

Chapter 6

Thai Life Environment, Culture and Society as Described by Japanese Haiku Poets

6.1 Life Environment

Objects which haiku poets observed are more or less influenced by time and space. As persons living at the same time and place with Thai people, these poets describe the life environment as they see it. Such life environment includes water, land, objects used in daily life, food disease, and death.

6.1.1 Water-related Life Environment

Thai people seem to have special affinity with water. Thai ancestors settled along the rivers in Thailand and since that time people's lives have been connected with waters.

6.1.1.1 Rivers, Canals and Ponds

Many books published in the past mention waterways and people's way of life. During the Ayudhya period, tremendous ships owned by the Siamese kings welcomed foreign guests on their arrival in Ayudhya. Rivers provided abundant waters, fish, as well as fertile rice-fields. People owed a lot to rivers and canals. The entrances of houses faced the rivers and the waterways were used daily for all kinds of traffic. Agricultural products were sold by boats on the rivers. People depended on waters for bathing, washing, cleaning, planting, and many other things. Rituals and festivals often took place on the rivers. In Bangkok, many main roads were built in the later periods at the time of King Rama IV and King Rama V. Even three decades ago or so, floating markets at the canals near Chao Phraya River were popular as daily markets. Many functions of the waters are described as in the following:

Suiyoku ni zō ga hikarete kawa ni iru

(Issō, 1962, Shūhō)

Elephants are led
 into the river
 for bathing

The elephants in the above haiku were working elephants which were often seen in the mountains in Chiang Mai or in the Northeast region. This haiku describes the time when elephants could enjoy bathing in the river in rural areas, being led by a mahout. Those days their role was to carry teak wood timber in the mountains and they did not have to travel a long way to Bangkok, seeking survival methods like today.

Hotetsō Menamu doko made saka-noboru

(Takako, 1980, Mangō no Hana)

Water hyacinths,
 how far will you float
 upstream in the Menam?

Water hyacinths are seen floating on the rivers in Thailand: especially in the Chao Phraya River, the large or small groups of the grass float according to streams and waves. At high tide, water hyacinths float upstream, which make people feel that they are moving by their own will.

Iebune no restu nasu Menamu akeyasushi

(Takako, 1984, Ntbk., vol. 14)

Boat-houses line up
 dawn is swift
 upon the Menam

Boat-houses, or floating houses are a tradition of Siam, as Charles Buls describes in his Siamese Sketches while visiting Bangkok in 1892, "In the canals, all along the banks, there generally is a row of floating houses. In the Menam, there are up to three rows of such houses...One can observe the removal of such living quarters, which are towed by a barge. (Charles Buls Trans., Illust. and ed. Walter E.J. Tips, 1994: 26-27) In this haiku,

the poet implies that people in boat-houses may notice the dawn first because of their position surrounded by the broad river.

Kawa ni sumu hito no kurashi ni tsuki yasashi

(Jisuke, 1996 Ntbk., vol. 20)

The moon is gentle
to the people living
along the river

The people living in house-boats must live without bright nights with modern electric lamps, but on moon-lit nights, they can fully enjoy the wonderful light of the moon.

Inazuma ni ukidete dakō suru Menamu

(Shunrō, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Lit by lightning,
the Menam is spotlighted
and meandering

The poet is watching the Chao Phraya River from a bird' eyes view at the moment when lightning hits and spotlights the river.

Chōme aru nagaki un'ga ya nemu no hana

(Akihiro, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 13)

A long canal
with a sub-lane addresses,
silk-tree blossoms

Japanese poets have no idea that rivers and canals have their own classified addresses. But when we think of the fact that postmen in boats used to deliver customers' letters along the waterways in its history, it is easily understood the fact that they have addresses.

Nagaki kami Menamu ni nagashitsutsu arau

(Takako, 1980, Mango no Hana)

Long hair,

flowing in the Menam

a girl washes

In the past it was common to see people bathing and washing their bodies and hair in the rivers. Still in many areas, this tradition continues.

Zenshin o Menamu ni tsukete kami arau

(Akihiro, 1979, Ntbk., vol.12)

Soaking her whole body

in the Menam,

she washes her hair

As part of her daily routine, the woman shampoos her hair. She may have grown up in a house along the river.

Hoshi suzushi Menamu hiku koto nariwai ni

(Takako, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

Under the cool stars,

undertaking his job

sailing along the Menam

Many people's lives depend on the river. Their jobs are handling boats, towing barges and carrying people and goods. At night when the water is at full tide on the river in the cool season, a man works as usual sailing on the river.

Menamu yuku kai no ne yuruki suika-bune

(Gogyū, 1979, Ntbk., vol, 12)

Sailing the Menam,

the mild sounds of oars,

a watermelon boat

In the boat, a number of heavy watermelons are put up for sale. The vendor is sailing slowly looking for customers who want to buy. The vendor could be a farmer. The mild sounds of oars give a somewhat nostalgic image for people living in busy towns.

Menamu niwa hashi no sukunashi iwashigumo

(Akihiro, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Over the Menam
 there are few bridges,
 fleecy clouds

During the Chakri Dynasty, bridges to cross from Bangkok over to Thon Buri districts were constructed on many occasions, and the most recent bridge built at the end of 1980s is the Taksin Bridge which the poet had not yet seen in 1981. The first bridge crossing the Chao Phraya River was planned by King Rama II. Still now many people must use boats to commute across the Chao Phraya River every day, as the great river flows through the center of the city.

Kaenju ya un'ga nennen yogosaruru

(Akihiro, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Flame trees,
 the canals are contaminated
 year by year

The poet repeatedly visited areas bordering the Chao Phraya River, making short trips with his wife, Takako, and other haiku friends going through the rivers and canals for the purpose of writing vivid good haiku. Through his observation in five years in Thailand, he noticed the changes of the water in the streams.

Natsu yodomi un'ga no soko ni taiseki no kai

(Ako, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

Stagnant in summer,
 heaped up shells
 are at the bottom of the canal

Year by year people have contaminated the rivers and canals. When people face traffic snarls, some passengers prefer to use speed-boats in the canals, like the Saen Sap Canal. In the dry summer, stagnant water compels people to endure. The scene in this haiku could be a true or an imaginary scene in the bottom of a canal, fertilizing shells after getting rich plankton from the polluted waste water exhausted from the drainages of each homes. Shells at the bottom may be a symbol of polluted water.

Suika-bune tomete negi-bune asa no ichi

(Yoshiko, 1974, Ntbk., vol. 10)

A boat full of watermelons
 stops a boat full of spring onions,
 a morning market

In the 1970's, the most popular tours for tourists were traveling to the famous royal temple and visiting the floating markets in Thon Buri and Damnuen Sadwak districts. At the floating markets, people negotiate to buy daily food put up in boats. People sail their boats for the purpose of selling their vegetables, as well as buying some necessary ones.

Watashi tsuku dorian no yobigoe no naka

(Takako, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

A ferry-boat arrives
 in the midst of the calling voices
 of a durian market

The poet is in a ferry-boat welcomed by loud voices selling durians. This is the scene in Nonthaburi district that was famous for its delicious durian products. Later, durian trees were totally damaged and perished because of the heavy flash floods in the 1990s.

Kido-guchi ni shinau itabashi mizu-aoi

(Tada Minoru, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

A wooden plank leads
 to the wooden entrance
 water hyacinths

Geographically lands in Bangkok are not above sea-level, so they are flooded easily. For some houses along canals, crossing wooden boards is essential in daily life. Water hyacinths flow in any place where water is seen.

Yoburi no hi kawa o kogashite raigyo agu

(Gogyū, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Fishing torches

burn at night along the river,
catching cat-fish in the net

This is the scene of traditional fishing at night in the river. As a source of protein, Thai people in the rural areas far from the sea often eat fresh-water fish obtained from rivers, canals and ponds. Cat-fish, which have barbels, are a popular fish for Thai people and are easily seen in fresh markets.

Dragonflies and streams have a close relationship.

Pin gawa wa mizukasa mashite aka tonbo

(Nansei, Ntbk., Menam. vol. 3)

At the Ping River

water is increasing,

a red dragonfly flies

The Ping River runs through the center of Chiang Mai, the old capital in the North and passes the Bumiphol Reservoir and meets the Yom River at Nakhon Sawan. After the rainy season ends, abundant water flows. Red dragonflies are likely to tell that the cool season has come.

Funa-ita ni aloha nokoshite oyogikeri

(Keigetsu, Ntbk., 1971, vol. 12)

Leaving his aloha shirt

on the seat of the boat,

a man swims

The aloha shirt indicates summer for Japanese people and people prefer to wear them in tropical countries. In Thailand, there are many places where one can swim.

6.1.1.2 Rains

The rain is the most important factor for agriculture in Thailand. On the other hand, it also causes floods, and influences people's daily life. Tropical squalls are actively observed by haiku poets and repeatedly the topic of haiku. Such examples are as in the following:

Sukōru ikka niwaka ni machi no ugokidasu

(Midori, 1964, Shūhō.)

After a squall passes,
suddenly the town starts
to bustle

During heavy squalls, people just have to wait for it to pass. A sudden change is brought by a squall and the noisy daily life is also brought back by ceasing rain.

Kisha hashiru sukōru-o nuke sukōru ni

(Akihiro, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12/13)

The train runs
passing through a squall
and coming into another squall.

A squall is a bit of drama and people watch it carefully by looking up the sky through the windows. While travelling by train, the poet experienced squalls twice.

No no ie o ame wa mawatte fuki-komeri

(Hanae, 1971, Ntbk., vol. 9)

It rains,
moving around, pouring
into the house in the field

This rain is not 'mango rain' in February, but a heavy, powerful rain in the rainy season. As if the house in the field is the sole target of the squall, a moving downfall attacks the house with strong winds.

Mekon muki furishi kibenchi ame hazuki

(Yoshiko, 1994 Ntbk., vol. 19)

An old wooden bench
faces the Mekhong,
rainy August

The Mekhong River runs through Thailand and Laos. People in both countries face the river every day at neighboring places. Many people come and watch the river and leave; the old wooden bench facing the Mekhong River indicates the long history of the running river and people's life with the Mekhong. The quiet rainy river sometimes carries timber and other things along.

Amagoi ni ame furasu shoku sora kakeru

(Yoshiko, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

For the people praying for rain,
his job is making rain,
flying in the sky

For the farmers, rains are vital, so H.M. King Bhumiphol Adulyadej, Rama IX, started the scheme of artificial rain using airplanes. Apart from the old traditional methods, such as carrying female cats, some scientific methods are tried and some pilots worked for these plans.

6.1.1.3 Floods

Heavy flash floods are often caused in October or so, near the end of the rainy season. In Bangkok, where the sea level is low, people often suffer from flash floods. One of the important roles of the administration of the Bangkok Municipality for a long time has been to prevent flash floods. Each successive governor of Bangkok has tried to resolve this problem.

During floods, people often wade through the knee-level water on the roads and observe that both buses and boats are simultaneously passing on the same roads. Water hyacinths and fish float on the flooded road. Flash floods and the people who are accustomed to floods are described in the following poems.

Sanbashi o ashi saguri yuku demizu kana

(Sekiyō, 1974, Ntbk., vol. 11)

Feeling the way
with feet on the pier,
people wade through flash floods in autumn

In daily life some people commute by boats, and come to the landing piers often, so even if the pier were flooded, they know where to put their feet. The poet, and the artist who was referred to as "the artist of the Menam" and devoted himself to drawing sketches of rivers also visited piers to draw pictures.

Aki-demizu kakiiru machi no furusa kana

(Midori, Menam., vol. 1)

Fighting against
the floods in autumn,
the town is very old!

At the time this poem was written, the poet's shophouse was situated in the old community of Chinese descendants off the New Road. As often occurred, flooded water rushed to the sub-lanes from the main streets, for main roads which were repaved often became raised higher than the lanes nearby. Residents of newly built, or houses under repair tried to escape from flash floods by making their compound raised higher, too. As a result, old communities in the lower lands suffer from floods whenever it rains heavily.

Mizu hikanu machi hoteisō nagare-komi

(Akihiro, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 4)

Flood-water doesn't recede
water hyacinths
flow in

Water hyacinths float freely anywhere there are waters. Because of this quality, the plants which were brought back from Indonesia by King Chulalongkorn, Rama V on his trip, spread all over Thailand.

Kyūkyūmai o zu ni kōzui o oyogi-kuru

(Sekiyō, Menam., vol. 3)

Putting packs of relief rice
on their heads,
people swim crossing the flood

Although people are accustomed to the daily floods in Thailand sometimes severe situations affect people dramatically.

6.1.1.4 Sea Water

In the past, Bang Saen, Hua Hin, later Pattaya, Phuket and other places became famous seaside resorts. Many poets have wonderful memories about the sea. On the way from the sea, people often see white fields. Near the seashore, people produce salt from seawater. The landscapes of the salt-fields are described in the following:

Yukedo enden yukedo enden iwashigumo

(Takako, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Going on and on,
but I see only the salt-field,
fleecy clouds

An expanse of salt-fields is expressed impressively in haiku by fleecy clouds.

Raimei ya enden ni mizu hibiku nari

(Taniyama Toshiko, Menam., vol. 2)

A clap of thunder,
reflects on the water
of a salt-field

A clap of thunder is vigorous, especially when it reflects on the quiet, large water lying on a salt-field. It is a spectacular scene.

6.1.1.5 Waterfalls

There are some famous waterfalls in Thailand. The Sarika, and the Erawan Waterfalls are well-known to tourists. Japanese people are used to waterfalls, for mountainous Japan has many famous waterfalls everywhere. Visiting waterfalls is described in the following:

Taki nozoku se ni chika-jika to tai kotoba

(Taniyawa Toshiko, Menam., vol. 2)

Close behind me
as I peep through the waterfall,
the sounds of Thai language

At the time of writing this haiku, the poet may have been a new-comer to Thailand and not have associated with Thai people to any great extent. She may have felt as if she was asked something in Thai language, as the voice was so close.

6.1.2 Land-related Life Environment

Scenes taking place on roads and lanes and descriptions of the environment are shown in the following.

6.1.2.1 Roads and Lanes

Kin'uka no kono roji mo mata ikidomari

(Shunrō, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 19)

This lane,
with the golden shower tree in bloom
is also a dead end.

In Bangkok, many lanes do not lead through to anywhere but to private houses, and are, therefore dead-ends. Unlike cities in ancient China, and its imitated old capital Kyoto in Japan which featured square-lined roads, many lanes of Bangkok were initially intentioned and built for the purpose of leading to canals. Today many canals have been converted to roads and lanes and such lanes caused blockages to the traffic flow. Despite this, dead-end lanes are peaceful and quiet, lined with trees and flowers and without the disturbance of passing cars.

Kaenju no shu no tsuranarite michi o nasu

(Akihiro, 1983, Ntbk. vol. 14)

The red of the blooming
flame tree flowers,
continues to mark the path

It is a wonderful experience to pass through big blooming, tropical trees, such as the red flame trees, yellow golden shower trees, pink pride of India trees and many other beautiful trees.

Dono soi mo bugenbiriya sakikobore

(Yōko, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Each lane has bougainvillea flowers
in full bloom,
petals dropping

There are several different colors of Bougainvillea “flowers”, they come in white, red, rose, pink, and salmon pink. Bougainvillea is one of the most familiar plants in Thailand found in gardens and on verandas, providing enjoyment for people. It is the privilege of people to see such full blooms of bougainvillea along the lanes when they pass.

Michibata no suika to narabi ko no hirune

(Natsujo, 1989, Ntbk., vol.16)

Watermelon
lining the roadside,
a child napping

On the way back from the day’s journey, simple stalls or tents to selling fruit and other foods are encountered on the roadside. Round or oval watermelons are heaped and sold. Amongst the fruit, a child has been put down for a nap. On Saturday and Sunday a mother is accompanied her child as she engaged in the family business.

Katakage no hiyari kōka kōjichu

(Yoshiko Note. 22 vols. 1999)

Cool in the shade,
under the construction site
of the skytrain in autumn

As a tool to solve traffic snarls in Bangkok, the plans to build and raise a railroad for trains were discussed repeatedly in Bangkok. Eventually construction started and

greatly changed some landscapes of the city. One of the discovered consequences of such construction is that giant constructions prevent strong sunshine.

Zeni o kou haha mo kodomo mo atsukaram

(Akihiro 1983, Ntbk., vol 14)

Begging for money,
mother and child
must be hot

These days the number of beggars on the sidewalks or on footbridges in Bangkok has been reduced, maybe as a result of policies by the metropolitan authorities to forbid their presence or better care of the underprivileged. It used to be common to see beggars sitting in public spaces.

Monogoi no osana atsukute wan hōru

(Yoshiko, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

The beggar's infant
grizzles and tosses a bowl
in the heat

Beggars are often mothers with children, (sometimes people say kidnapped children are also included), or handicapped people and they patiently sit in public places under the sizzling sun, begging for money. Even if the adults can endure the situation, often an infant cannot stand and resists.

6.1.2.2 Traffic

For a long time, people living in Bangkok and the vicinity of Bangkok have suffered from traffic problems that damage people's quality of life. By 1998, the year of the Asian Games in Thailand, some new highways were completed and on the King's birthday, December 5th, 1999, the skytrain (BTS) started to carry passengers through Mo Chit Station to On Nut Station and through the National stadium to Saphan Taksin Station. These facts indicate the changing face of Bangkok. We look back at traffic conditions in the past through the following haiku.

Ame o yuku mōtā-sai wa tai no bushi

(Hajime, Menam., vol. 4)

Men on motor-bikes
in the rain
are 'samurais' in Thailand

As traffic snarls affected people in Bangkok, the numbers of motor-bikes increased and occupied greater space on the roads. Motorbikes are convenient but dangerous, especially on rainy days, for they easily slide on the wet roads. Praising the courage of those who dare to go out on their bikes on the rainy days, the poets called people on bikes "the samurai in Thailand".

In recent decades, traffic accidents are often observed not only in Bangkok but in many other provinces in Thailand. As a result, many Thai people, including foreigners, die because of traffic accidents.³

Naze ni kimi shini-isogishi ya roikaton

(Hajime, 1995, Ntbk., vol. 19)

Why were you in a hurry to die (by road accident)?
the Loy Krathong Festival

The young person depicted in this haiku, Seijin, a Japanese, who chose Thai nationality, died because of car crash on a road near Rayong in 1995. He was 30 years old. He contributed to mutual understandings between Thai and Japanese culture through editing the community newspaper, The Yomiuri Eyes, in Bangkok. He died before the Loy Krathong Festival started.

Chūshajō deru mo jūtai haru no tsuki

(Takashi, 1990, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Leaving the parking lot
is another traffic snarl,
the moon in spring

³ In 1992, traffic accidents were the fourth leading cause of death in Thailand. (Alpher Research, 1994: 50)

Traffic snarls occur not only on the roads. It also takes time to reach the exit of a parking lot. In this poem the moon is already in the sky, while the writer tries to get out of the parking lot.

Michi kaete mitaru kokora mo aki-demizu

(Shunrō, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Trying to change
the routine way home, still trapped
by flash floods in autumn

Floods are one of the causes of traffic snarls.

Jūtai ni maki-komareishi sansui-sha

(Shunrō, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Trapped by the traffic snarl,
a sprinkler truck

A driver of a sprinkler truck avoids the traffic rush hour, but regardless, traffic snarls still prevent him from sprinkling the trees on Wireless Road in daytime, or even at nighttime.

6.1.2.3 Cities and villages

Scenes in the cities and villages through time from the environmental aspects are depicted in the following:

Tsubame kaeru ki no otoroeshi kanraku-gai

(Midori, 1999, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Swallows depart
spirit in the pleasure haunt
declines

In the past 30 years, Silom area has become known as the business center of Bangkok. The Silom district (specifically Patpong) has also been known as the red-light district, and as a migration spot for swallows before the business companies moved to the Silom area. It was a mystery why so many swallows liked to migrate to such a busy place.

Even now that electrical and telegraphic wires have been put below ground, leaving the birds with fewer places to roost and thus causing many to go elsewhere, swallows still prefer to live in nearby areas like lanes off Silom-Sathorn Road, and Rama IV Road. The following haiku was written by a poet who has seen the changing history of Silom. The poet feels that Silom has progressed together with such swallows.

Etto no tsubakuro mariru hanka-gai

(Gogyū, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Swallows coming to escape winter
send droppings
to the bustling street

People enjoy swallows but the problem is droppings and mess made by the birds affecting the people who walk under the swallows roosting on overhead wires and trees.

Hachi-jutton kurēn būmu fuyu-zora ni

(Nansei, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Eighty-ton-cranes,
in the boom of construction,
stand in the winter sky

Before the Thai economic recession started in 1997, there was a boom of construction in skyscraper buildings. High cranes could be seen at every corner in the suburbs and city in Bangkok.

Toride niwa hei no me hikari kyabetsu-mura

(Tada Minoru, 1976, Ntbk. vol. 11)

At the fort
soldiers gaze,
a village of cabbages

Peaceful vegetable fields, and soldiers of the fort co-existed at the borders. Thailand borders various countries that have problems closely connected to Thailand. A village that grows cabbages encourages hill-tribe people to promote cultivation of vegetables in stead of controversial opium crops.

Ura kara mo miteoru nōryō-eiga kana

(Akihiro, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

From the back side also,
people watch the open air moving pictures,
cooling

In the past, people used to enjoy open-movies outside on some occasions, especially in the rural areas. Today, it is hard to find these outdoor showings of movies in Bangkok, which has many fine indoor movie theaters. This poet was impressed that people are able to watch the movie from both sides of the screen.

Kaze no nami hashireru nōryō-eiga kana

(Akihiro, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Waves of wind
run across the screen,
the open movies cooling

The public open screen is a large white cloth. So, when winds blow, waves of wind run across the screen.

6.1.2.4 Rice-fields

Thailand is known as a big exporter of rice in the world and rice fields cover its main agricultural areas. The rich rice fields of the plains are illustrated in the following:

Ametsuchi o naname ni tsunagu noyaki no kemu

(Midori, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Connecting the ground
to the sky on a slant,
smoke in the burning fields

After the rice harvest, especially in the cool dry season, smoke can often be observed, burning in the field. The vigorously burning smoke connects the sky and the earth. By burning fields, farmers prepare for the next stage of planting.

Sakasanaru yama uketomete shirota kana

(Yuhsaku, 1999, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Reflecting
 the up-side-down mountains,
 rice fields in preparation

Rice growing in Thailand is done by the floating method. When water increases, the rice-plant grows longer than the water level. It differs from the method using less water in Japan. The poet finds that the abundant water reflects the mountains on the rice fields in preparation.

Butto ni noboreba shirota hirogareru

(Keiko, 1999, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Climbing up the stupa,
 there stretch
 rice fields in preparation

This scene is in Ayudhya, which has rich rice-fields. Ayudhya has many historical spots where the ruins of buildings destroyed by Burmese troops in wars in the eighteen century still exist.

Shoki no ta no hibiware fukashi isan no chi

(Haruo, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Cracks in the rice fields
 in the hot season are deep,
 the earth of the Northeast

The nature of the land in the Northeast is severe for farmers. When there is no rain, drought threatens rice planting and the amount of salt on the earth increases. Many northeasterners come to work in Bangkok and some people return for occasional farming during the seasons.

Chiheisen dochira nimo aru taue kana

(Akihiro,)

Horizon,

everywhere we see
rice planting!

It is the moment that Japanese people recognize the richness of Thailand, when looking around to see rice-fields all over the horizon.

Mizuta ima afurete utsusu ushi no kao

(Gogyū, 1973, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Water flows
from the rice field, reflecting
the face of a water buffalo

Water buffalo were commonly seen in canals and rice fields in the 1970's in Thailand but not so much in the 1980's. In areas near Bangkok like in Ayudhya, tourists have found it more and more difficult to see them in recent years.

6.1.3 Objects Used in Daily Life

The objects used in daily life in Thailand are gradually changing. When Bangkok had a lot more canals, white scooping fishing nets with square mouths were seen as part of the daily landscapes of the suburbs in Bangkok. The once-common big earthenware water jars have almost disappeared from around Bangkok houses and the numbers of mosquitoes has decreased in Bangkok as canals have been replaced by roads and the natural surroundings filled with modern structures. We seldom see mosquito nets today. As a result of these changes in Thai society, common objects used in daily life have also changed. What objects were used in Thai daily life in the past?

6.1.3.1 Jars and Mortars

Water and food are essential items for human survival and containers, large or small earthenware jars have been made in Thai villages since early days. During the Sukhothai period, pottery was known to be an important export item. The 13th Nakazato Taroemon, a Japanese traditional potter in Karatsu said that big water jars from Siam (including Lopburi style pottery) were important water-containers on the ships sailing abroad and they were carried afar to Ryukys (Ryukyu), or Okinawa.

Taroemon found that the method of making pottery, by beating the clay with a piece of stick, was a point in common between Chiang Mai in Thailand and in Karatsu in Kyushu, not far from Okinawa. Export items from Sukhothai and other districts have made their way to Japan. Water jars used in daily Thai life are described as in the following:

Kame no mizu shōjo kite nomu aki-matsuri

(Takashi, 1978, Ntbk., vol. 12)

A girl comes and drinks
water from the water jar,
an autumn festival

People in Thailand traditionally have kept rain water during the rainy season. The abundant water was kept in large earthenware jars with lids for daily use through the dry season. This rainwater kept in earthen jars is cool and has a natural, mild taste. Some Japanese poets saw the water jars used in daily life in the Thai villages.

Kame tataki bōfura no mizu kumi-yukeri

(Sekiyō, 1971, Ntbk., vol.9)

Knocking the water jar
with wrigglers,
a person scooped water and left

Water jars were used in Bangkok and were observed in the 1970's according to the above haiku. Some people prefer rainwater to water from the piped water supply, for the taste of the former was mild and natural. But as the sky, air, rain, water and earth have become gradually more contaminated with polluted materials in the urban circumstances, people have begun to use water from wells and the piped water supply more. The above haiku shows local wisdom in daily life. Rainwater kept in a big earthenware jar is cool, but sometimes mosquito larvae hatch in this environment. Mosquito wrigglers swim around in water, submerging down or floating up to the surface. Knowing the mode of wrigglers, a person wishing to drink knocks the jar, so the wrigglers submerge at once. Quickly, the person scoops up the water before the wrigglers float up again.

Other important utensils for Thai cooking are mortars and pestles. In the past it was said in Thailand that by listening to the beating sounds of pestles and mortars, people could decide which young woman would be an ideal wife in the future. The constant beating sounds of the pestle on the mortar indicates a diligent wife to-be, they say. Although earthenware mortars are widely used, a stone mortar is considered better and the price is also more expensive.

Shunchu ni ishi-usu chin to tataki kau

(Takashi, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Day time in the spring,
a customer buys a stone mortar
after knocking it with the sound 'ting'

In the above haiku, the purchaser may have been a veteran cook, or someone who does not know anything about cooking. A mortar and pestle are a symbol of cooking for Thai people.

6.1.3.2 Nets: Mosquito Nets, Hammocks, and Fishing Nets

Thai people had a lot of wisdom to cope with the hot weather. Winds through the waters bring comfortable life at home, but mosquitoes as well as ants prevailed in the tropical life, rich in nature. Mosquitoes have been a nuisance for people who suffer often from their blood sucking bites. Whether true or not, people say that mosquitoes love fresh blood. Therefore, new comers to Thailand suffer more than others. A mosquito net is one of a few tools used to prevent people from being bitten by mosquitoes..

Shiro-gaya no soto wa todoroku tabi no umi

(Yoshiko, 1973, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Outside the mosquito net
is a roaring sea
of my journey

In Pattaya, in the past most tourists stayed in bungalows, for modern hotels like today had not yet begun to be built in the 1970's. Outside the bungalows, it would have

been dark and the sounds of waves could be heard. Mosquitoes would have flown fly freely outside and inside the bungalow.

Hammocks are popular for babies. Hammocks, nets or clothes, offer safe places for babies to lie. Ants will not bite them. The hammock is cooler than normal bedding, and the working adults can take care of them easily.

Hanmokku kaze ga karada o tōri-nuke

(Kōmei, Menam., vol. 5)

A hammock,
a wind goes through
my body

Really good hammocks make us feel relaxed and the poet must have experienced this. In lanes off busy roads, sometimes we see young men napping in hammocks.

In Thailand, we can see two different kinds of hammocks. One is of net and the other is a salon cloth hammock, using *patun* or *pakhama* cloth. Farmers often use cotton cloth in many ways and one of them is to use as a hammock.

Patun no hanmokku yori yaya no koe

(Midori, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 20)

From the sarong cloth hammock,
the voice
of a baby

Babies in cloth hammocks could often be seen at some shops, and in the lanes in Bangkok.

At the Khamtieng House at the back of the Siam Society on Asoke Road, there are many kind of fishing-net-tools exhibited. Many exquisite works to sustain fishing can be observed. Such objects are mentioned in haiku in the following:

Sobae ukete yotsude no narabu kuron beri

(Sekiyō, 1945, Fiftieth.)

Raining in the sunshine,

four-cornered scooping fish-nets
line the canal

During the Second World War, the poet Sekiyō considered that the four-cornered scooping fishing net could be included as a season-word to manifest Thailand. At that time it must have been common to see fishing nets in every day life.

6.1.3.3 Fans

Fans have been familiar objects that people in Thailand have used in every day life. In the past, consumer goods, particularly electronic ones, were mostly imported at high- prices. All imported air-conditioners with high rates of tax were not as common as they are today. Thai-made electronic products today are available at comparatively low prices and it has become easier for Thai people to buy consumer goods. In a country with a summer climate, Japanese people felt that a fan was an object of great necessity. Such feelings are expressed in the following:

Senpūki chichi no katamiya okishi mama

(Yōko, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Left as a keepsake
of the deceased father-in-law,
an electric fan

A few decades ago, the electric fan was thought of as more essential in Thai life than today. The deceased Thai man, referred to in the above poem must have loved to use the fan, so the poet kept the fan, which is no longer necessary, as a memory.

Senpūki kubi furu muki ni awasu kana

(Komei, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 20)

A fan, as I follow
its direction
swings!

The poet came back home, maybe perspiring, and a fan started swinging, so he followed the direction to its turning to cool down.

Kubi o furu senpūki nimo hirō-kan

(Shiotani Toshiko, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 20)

A swinging fan
has a touch of fatigue

The poet observes the electric fan as if it were a person. The old fan continues to send cool winds but is a little noisy.

Senpūki omotaki kaze o okurikeri

(Yoshiko, 1999, Ntbk. vol. 20)

A fan
sends forth
heavy winds

A fan basically moves air to other places. If it rains, it sends humid wind and if fine, it sends fine air.

Senpūki kaba o tsukete fuyu to suru

(Akijo, Menam., vol. 1)

Putting a cover
on a fan,
'winter' has come

The cool season is the sole season in which electric fans may not be used for some period. The poet enjoys the sense of it being winter by putting a cover on a fan.

Senpūki kaian ni muki ugokazaru

(Reika, Menam., vol. 2)

A fan
facing a dark sea,
stands still

The poet stays a night, may be at the bungalow near the seashore. In the room, a fan is facing the sea without any motion.

Yare-basho mina tenjō ni senpūki

(Yasuko, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 19)

Broken banana leaves,
every house has a fan
on the ceiling

In the garden, there are banana trees. It may be the fashion to have a ceiling fan in the living room. European-style old houses in Thailand had ceiling fans.

Machi kado no furuki bami-ya senpūki

(Miyako, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

An old noodle shop,
at the corner of the town,
a spinning fan

An old noodle shop, or *bami* shop, has a fan, which must be as old as the shop is. Many customers come to have *bami* and as long as customers are there, the fan continues spinning to create a cool breeze.

Dai nehanzō no zujō no tenjō-sen

(Midori, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Above the head
of the big Buddha image,
the ceiling fan turns

Whenever we visit main halls at the temples, we feel refreshed with cool winds from electric fans. We look up to see a Buddha image, offerings, ornamental flowers, wall paintings depicting Buddha's pre-life stories and a modern fan.

Senpūki mawari hakubutsu-kan no hiru

(Shunrō, 1998, Ntbk., Vol. 20)

A ceiling fan turns
round and round in the afternoon
at the museum

Ceiling fans were used in palaces, museums, private houses and many places as a new fashion in the past. But, in modern buildings, fans are being replaced by air-conditioners. The ceiling fan has a touch of some historical feeling.

As a newcomer from Japan who married a Thai of Chinese Thai, and lived in the Chinese community, one poet was faced with both Chinese and Thai culture. In addition, she had to cope with the hot climate of Thailand. Today, a Japanese woman marrying a Chinese Thai would not have the same strong impression about ceiling fans. The reason is that today in Bangkok most fine restaurants, and other places have air-conditioned rooms, a phenomenon on telling how much Thailand has developed since then.

Chin, Li renkon hitasura mawaru tenjōsen

(Midori, 1973, Ntbk., vol. 10)

The wedding of the Chin and the Li families,
ceiling fans tenaciously
turn round and round

In the 1960's, rich Chinese families often had wedding receptions at good restaurants and invited many guests. Even the best Chinese restaurant in Bangkok, *Hoitienlau*, had no air-conditioning, but had ceiling fans. Whenever the poet attended weddings, she observed the ceaseless turning of ceiling fans. In her first experiences in Bangkok, the poet's feelings are connected to these turning fans which remind her of times and events of that period.

6.1.3.4 Sandals

Two or three decades ago when sandals were a popular form of footwear in Thailand, rubber sandals were commonly sold everywhere. Rubber sandals were convenient for working people outside: for shoppers at fresh markets and for people walking along sandy or flooded roads. As bare feet are comfortable in the hot weather, Japanese people in Thailand also wore sandals and rubber sandals except white-color workers in offices.

Hizakari ya ikudomo hikaru gomuzōri

(Midori, n. d.)

In the heat of the day,
 a rubber sandal is repeatedly run over
 by passing cars

We do not know the reason why the sandal depicted in this poem was left on the road. The owner might have dropped it by accident from a trishaw or a bus.

The sandal invokes our curiosity about what may have happened.

Wabishisa wa fūsen-uri no gomu-zōri

(Nansei, Menam., Vol. 3)

How pitiful
 the rubber sandals
 of a balloon vendor

A balloon vendor is walking here and there selling his balloons. How far has he walked? You can guess the extent of how far when seeing the state of his rubber-sandals.

Gomu-zori sorotte tōku aki-demizu

(Yōko, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

A pair of rubber-sandals,
 in the distance,
 flash floods in autumn

In this haiku, the owner of sandals is caught in a flood. Unexpected flash floods separate the owner from his sandals.

6.1.3.5 Umbrellas and others

Japanese people have come to know that umbrellas are not as essential in Thailand as they are in Japan. In spite of their being a rainy season in Thailand, people do not always carry umbrellas with them. In heavy squalls, people tend to think there is no way but just to wait it out.

Shiro-higasa machi no hoteri o mochikaeru

(Hōjirō, 1999, Ntbk., vol. 22)

A white parasol
brings back home,
the heat of the town

A white parasol is not so popular among Thai people, excepting some ceremonies but some Thai people who have lived in Japan may use such umbrellas in Thailand. In Japan people think that the white color rejects heat and white colored cloth is effective as a parasol preventing the sun's rays. Through a parasol, readers of the above poem can feel the heat of the town and the poet's warm attitude to the family who has come back in the heat.

Hito o matsu saiban kūko ō-dokei

(Yoshiko, Menam., vol. 3)

Waiting for someone at the airport
at the end of the year,
a big clock

Don Muang Airport has been renovated many times and today we do not know where the clocks are. In the 1970s, at the smaller old airport, a remarkably big clock was put at the center of the building. As we do today, many people came to wait for people who were expected to arrive at the airport. They would wait for a long time beside the big clock. Perhaps, it was a tradition of Chinese people to present big clocks to public spaces, as many such clocks were inscribed with the names of donors in Chinese characters.

Yoru no aki Chenmai futon mata dashinu

(Sagop, 1971, Ntbk., vol. 9)

An autumn night,
I pull out again
the Chiang Mai' quilts

In the past, so called, "Chiang Mai quilts" were sold at shops in front of the Bang Rak market. The quilts had thick and warm *panya* cushions inside. In the rare cold night in

Bangkok, people spread the quilts and blankets. This haiku is the last haiku written by the poet who shocked people by her sudden death by heart attack in December.

6.1.4 Food

In Thailand, food is available everywhere, and the environment pervaded by food. People can buy or eat outside easily at reasonable prices. Moreover relatively tasty cooked food is readily available. Fresh markets at the corners of towns have long been the main center for the fresh ingredients used in cooking since a long time before supermarkets became rather popular among people in Bangkok recently in the past 1 or 2 decades.

6.1.4.1 Food-vending

It is common to meet food vendors on the streets and in the lanes in Bangkok and in other places. Such food and vendors attracted haiku poets often and many haiku depict these scenes as in the following:

Sho no machi no shoku uru mono ni ho o awasu

(Yasuko, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

Adjusting the steps
to the food vendor
in the hot street

Following the food vendor on the narrow footpath occupied by various things, the poet walks slowly, for the vendor is carrying baskets of food balanced on her back pole.

Banryoku o tenbinbō ni tamago uru

(Yasuko, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

A myriad of green leaves
a vendor sells eggs
with a carrying pole

Eggs are grilled on a grill above heated charcoal of a portable-cooking stove. The vendor carried and sells them on a pole, which rests across her back, the stove and basket balanced on each side. The town is covered with green leaves.

Kato hodo no hito no kasegi mizu o uru

(Yasuko, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 19)

The day's profit is
little as a tadpole,
a vendor sells water

How much is the price of a bottle of water in Thailand? The vendor is not selling expensive water imported from European countries, but ordinary water. A tadpole means something small and many tadpoles disappear before they become frogs.

Hanauta o utai nirin no aisuuri

(Yōko, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Humming a song,
a two-wheeled ice lolly vendor
passes

The pleasant sound of bell announces the arrival of ice lolly vendors. This humming person brings people a little happiness.

Geppei no hyaku mo narabite mise no saki

(Yoshiko, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

A hundred moon cakes
are arranged in order
at the store-entrance

The selling of moon cakes indicates the arrival of the moon-worship season. The moon cakes are the traditional offerings to the moon, the custom of which originated in China. Today Thai-made moon cakes are flavored with durian, along with traditional sesame, lotus nut, and bean paste.

Mizu utte bāmi-yatai no mise hiraku

(Yuhsaku, 1999, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Having sprinkled water
on the ground,
a noodle stall opens for sale

Noodle stalls are often open at the corners of busy towns near offices or public gathering places. In order to keep dust settled on the ground, a noodle vendor sprinkles water, then starts his day's business.

Natsu yasai shinbun hite gyōshōsu

(Seijin, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 19)

Spreading summer vegetables
on the newspaper,
a vendor sells

The vendor in the above haiku could be a farmer who wants to sell self-harvested vegetables. Maize is a popular food item seen vended in Bangkok.

Yude-kibi o fukaki nabe yori sukui uru

(Yoshiko, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Scooping from a deep pot,
a vendor sells
boiled sweet corn

Near the fresh market across Lumpini Park, a vendor is selling fresh boiled sweet corn at the price of 20 baht per three pieces of maize or corn on the cob. *Bai toey* leaves are placed in the boiled pot to keep corn smelling good. After soaking in salty water, the cobs of corn are put into a plastic bag and sold. Sweet corn sells well.

Edamame no shioyude zaru ni kesa no ichi

(Suriyon Teruko, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Boiled salty green soybeans
in a basket,
this morning's bazaar

In Japan, salty green soybeans are known as a typical snack to go with beer, but in the past it seemed difficult to procure them in Thailand. Thanks to recent changes however, today various new vegetables, fruit, fish and other food items can be obtained at some markets in Bangkok. The poet, as a housewife must be happy to find boiled green soybeans, which are healthy food for everybody. Among the relatively newly available food are *saba* fish, mackerel, *enoki* mushroom, imported *Fuji* apples at reasonable prices, delicious guavas, persimmons, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, Japanese rice and others.

Kyaku taete nasubi korogaru ichi no gogo

(Yoshiko, 1975, Ntbk., vol. 11)

Customers dwindle,
an eggplant is left abandoned
at the market in the afternoon

There are many famous big fresh markets at the centers of Bangkok and some of them are affected by the flow of time. For example, the Bang Rak market was reformed and rebuilt under the new plan of building the Taksin bridge, and the Asoke market was twice or more largely influenced under renewal plans of the road and the construction of subways. Before such construction started, Asoke market attracted customers living nearby early in the morning and the above haiku describes the same market in the afternoon. Fresh food items are sold only in the morning there.

Many Japanese people in Thailand look forward to having new rice in the rice-harvest season, although some Thai people are said to prefer old rice to new rice.

Basu-tei wa shinmai hisagu nōka-beri

(Masatoshi, Menam., vol. 2)

A bus-stop nearby the farm-house
is selling
this year's new rice

This farmhouse nearby a bus stop must sell its wares well. The above haiku reminds us of the "Friendship" highway, constructed by the U. S. assistance in the 1960's, which connected villages in the northeast to Bangkok.

Takenoko o jibeta ni narabe kuni-zakai

(Yoshiko, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Placing bamboo shoots
on the ground,
people sell at the border

In the mountains, on the boarder between Thailand and Laos, life is severe. People collect bamboo shoots to eat by digging in the mountains. Bamboo is a natural resource in the district which they can sell, where otherwise they have nothing to sell.

Dorian ga hanto no gotoku machi o shime

(Fumio, Menam., vol. 2)

Durians,
like rebels,
take over the town

The word, "rebels" might have been a fashion in the 1970's. Student movements at that time had the power to change the world totally. At the time this poem was written, durian season was a definite time of the year. When the season came, durians "took over" the town. As controls by the authority were not so strict in the 1970's, on the footpaths near the busy streets of Silom and Suriwongse, charcoal-brown, or green durians were heaped here and there.

Chuzai no mae nimo dorian tsunde ari

(Midori, Menam, vol. 3)

Even in front of the police-box,
there are heaps of durian

Recently durian has become available and sold almost all the year, although very expensive. For a long time the people considered that durian was at its best the fruit in April, May and June. It is said that after the rainy season, the taste of durian is not so good. During the durian season, one can not miss seeing the heaps of durian even in front of the police-box, in the past.

Dorian no yama o se ni shite hito-neiri

(Yōko, 1995, Ntbk., vol. 19)

With his back
to a mountain of durian
a man naps

It is a hard work to sell all of a heap of durians. A vendor decided to rest and to take a nap first.

Uradōri zuratto dorian-uri bakari

(Akihiro, 1981, Ntbk. vol. 13)

Backstreet,
lining the road,
only durian vendors

When durian season arrives, people go out to buy durian. In the back street, lines of durian vendors are waiting for such durian-lovers.

Watashiba wa dorian-ichi to narinikeri

(Takako, 1981, Ntbk. vol. 13)

The ferry has turned
into a durian market!

During the durian season, durian-lovers drive far away as Nontaburi to buy the most delicious durian. Some go by boats. Later year such nice durian trees were destroyed by flash floods totally.

6.1.4.2 Thai Food

Today Thai food has become known to people outside Thailand as a manifestation of Thai culture. Those accustomed to Thai food in Thailand introduced to their home countries. Thai people going abroad opened Thai food restaurants in many towns in the world. Through their appreciation of Thai food, foreign people come to be interested in Thailand. Thai food and eating surroundings also reflect the unique culture and changing society in Thailand. Haiku poets in Thailand write about this in the following:

Take no ka no takezutsu meshi o haru no tabi

(Gogyū, Menam., vol. 1)

Bamboo scented
rice in bamboo,
a trip in spring

One of the traditional regional foods is sticky rice with sweet coconut milk and red beans cooked inside a piece of bamboo. Before we eat, we cut off a piece of bamboo into two and scoop out the rice. The piece of bamboo is portable and keeps the taste of the rice. In the past and today, some travelers buy them. When the big earthquake struck Kobe and other cities in Japan in 1995, Chamlon Srimuang, the former Bangkok Governor and the former party leader, suggested sending rescue items to the people who suffered and among them the items were sticky rice in bamboo.

Yaki namazu uwame zukai ni kaite miru

(Shigeki, 1992, Menam., vol. 4)

A grilled catfish
looks at the purchaser
with its eyes turned up

Kuchi akete nani itaino yaki-namazu

(Shigeki, 1992, Menam., vol. 4)

With your mouth open,
what do you want to say,
grilled catfish?

A catfish is skewered on a stick and grilled on charcoal. The poet is not familiar with such a style of cooked fish, and this young man hesitates a little to eat a grilled catfish. I guess that eventually he bought fish from the street vendor and ate with his friends.

Purato o mushiri hitokuchi rao mekon

(Nobuko, 1987, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Plucking at a steamed mackerel,

he drinks

“Mekong” liquor

The *plathoo*, a kind of mackerel is favorite Thai fish in the markets. The fish which are often steamed and/or fried are sold. A Thai man is eating his favorite fish and drinking liquor. “Mekong” is the whisky to represent Thailand which men like to drink. For the man, this is a relaxing moment. The female poet is curious about everything in Thailand and observes carefully.

Prato mo pakku-zume nite pen māku

(Mariko, 1987, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Steamed mackerel

in modern packaging

is very expensive

As the *plathoo* is popular among Thai people. At the modern Thai supermarkets, the fish which used to be wrapped by banana leaves and sold at the fresh markets are packaged in a modern way, using vinyl and Styrofoam packing. The price seems to be expensive from the eyes of a housewife.

Yatsu-wari no rappu suika no uraretari

(Yoshiko, 1999, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Wrapped cut watermelon

is sold by eights!

Twenty to thirty years ago, we could see whole or half-cut watermelons sold, but as time goes by, one-fourth-cut and one-eighth cut watermelons come to sold at the shop. The reasons for the changes are because markets come to meet the demands of customers to sell more and the smaller family does not want to buy a big whole watermelon.

The *oliang*, Thai coffee was loved by people in the past, when no other beverage was more attractive.

Orian ni shitashimite kishi tai no hibi

(Ryōko, Menam., vol. 2)

The days in Thailand,
becoming familiar with
Thai coffee

Scenes depicting the making of Thai coffee using long white cloth bags are clearly remembered by the poet and others in the 1970's.

Sacchin ya shufu ga jiman no kuhinsai

(Inpin, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

Chinese ancestor-worship festival,
a housewife proudly cooks
nine kinds of dishes

Nine is a lucky number in Thailand. In this festival of Chinese origin, a proud housewife cooks nine kinds of dishes for the family and the guests.

Yaki-ika no niote itaru yagaku kana

(Takako, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

The smell of grilled squid,
a night school!

A food vendor carrying a portable cooking stove with charcoal, grills squid. Some night school students may buy and eat it. The stall vendor comes to sell near the school as usual. The smell of grilled squid is enticing. The image of hungry students and those who are not, before the school starts, is clear.

Yagakusei banana-furai de mushi-osae

(Mariko, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Night school students,
eating fried banana to starve off hunger
for the time being

Many young Thai people are diligent in their studies. In spite of the many difficulties in studying at night, they continue to study after their work. Traffic snarls may steal them time for eating supper. So, fried-bananas are welcomed by students, because they are

easily obtainable at many places. Vendors fry banana and sweet potatoes along the sidewalks and sell them.

Soko dake ga akaruki yashoku no taratto kana

(Tada Minoru, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

The only lit-up place
is a bazaar for evening meals!

The scene might not be set in Bangkok, for this poet often traveled upcountry. Leaving his family in Japan, the poet continued to work for his company. As a stranger in some towns, he might have sought a place to eat.

Yomo no tsuji yashoku o kakomu senaka ari

(Midori, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

At the corners of the crossroad,
backs of people
surround night meals

This corner must be at the busy street at night. People have supper, sitting and showing their backs to the passers-by in the town. The life of each person could be imagined through the their backs.

Onago mina mono kuite ori kachin-bune

(Sekiyō, 1967, Shūhō)

Women,
all snacking
in a Krathin boat

The poet illustrates how the people in a Krathin boat, most of them women, enjoy the events of the Krathin trip. It seems fun for religious and fun-finding women to snack together in a boat. The poet is observing the river, sketching floating boats and people.

Būgenbiria narabu yatai no yane gawari

(Shiotani Toshiko, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Blooms of bougainvillea

become the roof
of lined food-stalls

It is lucky to have noodles under a beautiful blooming bougainvillea tree. The tree must be pretty big to cover lined stalls. Rich in green, Bangkok life gives some unexpected joy.

Kishi-kishito meshiya no ki-isu fuyu-hajime

(Midori, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Joggling sounds
of wooden chairs at the chophouse,
on an early winter's day

For the poet, wooden chairs, the chophouse, and foods there are all familiar. The joggling sounds of the old chairs are a part of the daily routine of eating life.

Banryō ya yuge no mazu kite men-yatai

(Yoshiko, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 18)

Coolness in the late afternoon,
steam rises first,
a noodle stall

In cooler autumn-like days, steam is clearer.

Hana, o tsuku togarashi ninniku kogasu soi

(Mariko, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 18)

Stinging our noses
in the lane,
chilies and garlic are fried

The smell of fried chilies and garlic overwhelms everything. This kind of smell is striking for those who are not accustomed to it. Chilies and garlic are popularly consumed in Thailand.

Kai-goto ni nitaki no niou aki-tomoshi

(Fumiko, Menam., vol. 2)

Each floor has
its own smell of cooking,
autumn lights

In the evening of the cool season, every unit of apartment blocks has a light. When the poet climbs up her stairs, each floor has a different smell of cooking. At the time when the poet lived in the apartment house, people from various countries lived there. In one apartment house off Suan Plu Road, South Sathorn, she realized various people were living together peacefully and cooking their own style of dishes.

Somutam o tabete hassha no kisei-basu

(Seijin, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18/19)

After people finish eating
papaya salad,
the bus leaves to return to home town

The bus is leaving for the northeast province. Some passengers started to order papaya salads. It takes time to prepare papaya salad, although green papaya are already cut and all kinds of seasoning are ready. Other passengers and a driver are waiting while the people finish eating. Papaya salads, an indigenous food of the northeast is enjoyed by Thai people as well as foreign people. Princess Sirinthorn has written a song entitled *somtam*, Papaya salad song. She also participated in cooking at the "Papaya salad Contest".

Mango o hitohi no kate ya kisha no naka

(Shinsetsu, 1945, Fiftieth)

Mangoes are our food today,
being on the train

The poet who wrote the above haiku belonged to the Japanese army during the Second World War. Under the Thai-Japanese Treaty, soldiers stayed in Bangkok and when they had to go up-country by train, mangoes, abundant in the season, became their food for the day. The soldiers might have got them from vendors in the station.

Durian has a strong smell and for this reason, some people dare not try the durian. Such smell is illustrated as in the haiku:

Dorian no kaori mo jōge erebeta

(Yuki, n.d.)

The scent of durian
even wafts
up and down the elevator

After durian-lovers carrying ripe durian in the elevator have left, the scent remains and wafts up and down the elevator as it moves. That is the reason why durian are forbidden to be carried in hotels in Thailand. Not only Thai people love durian. There are lots of durian-lovers among Japanese people also.

6.1.5 Diseases and Death

No one can escape from facing death anywhere. Through diseases and death, people recognize life. Such progression through life, diseases, and death in Thailand are described in the following:

Dengu yami haya minnami no hito to naru

(Issō, 1963, Fiftieth.)

Suffering from dengue fever,
I am so quickly assimilated
as a resident in the south

Dengue fever is an indigenous disease seen often among people in tropical countries. Dengue is caused by mosquitoes and generally not as serious as malaria, although sometimes it causes death through high fever. The poet was a long-term resident and a medical doctor in the south and later in Bangkok. This poet might be remembering the day he was suffering from dengue fever for the first time when he was still a new-comer to Thailand, struggling with new circumstances. He felt that by having suffered from disease in the south, he had become a resident in the south.

Kaenju no mado yori miete dengu yamu

(Isso, 1962, Shuho)

Blooming flame tree flowers
 through a window,
 suffering from dengue fever

A patient recovers from the dengue fever with appropriate treatment at the hospital. After his high fever subsides a little, the patient notices that the symbol of midsummer, the flame tree flowers, are blooming in red in the garden at the hospital.

Kanten-gashi sokuu hitosaji shibyō ete

(Midori, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Spooning
 a spoonful of jelly,
 suffering from a fatal disease

There are little things that a wife can do for a husband, suffering from a fatal disease. Those who are suffering from kidney ailments have to control their intake of salty food. The feelings of the poet who came to live in Thailand, and who owes a lot to Thai society through her gentle Thai husband, are expressed in the haiku.

Tanjitsu ya soke ni kuraki shoku tomoru

(Gogyū, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

A short day,
 a dark torch lighted in a house,
 a family has gone to rest

The poet visits a house, or passes in front of the house where a family member has died. He finds that a dark torch is lit in the house. The poet feels that through this, the lament of the family is heard.

Korō-gata hitsugi no mae ya kaze kawaku

(Nansei Menam., vols. 2)

Elders
 are in front of the coffin,
 a dry wind blows

Mourning for the dead is conducted at the Thai temple and the procedures of the funeral are of Thai style. In the above poem, the dead person may be an old Japanese resident of Thailand. Old men who have lost their precious friend, who shared long years of hardship and happiness with them mourn the dead man quietly. Funerals in Thailand often continue for more than a week with people coming to mourn and pay respect to the dead and the family in the evening. The ceremony may be held in the *sala*, an open veranda with pillars and roofs at a temple.

Comparing Thai Buddhist funerals to those in Japan, we can see clear differences between Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. For example, in Japan a monk wearing a black *kimono* chants during the night of mourning for one night, and all through the night the dead is mourned by close relatives. In Thailand, several monks in yellow robes chant in chorus every night for several nights.

Kibi no hige hoshishi kusuri no ihin nari

(Midori, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Dried maize hair,
used as medicine
also belongs to the deceased

In this poem, the maize hair referred to was something that the deceased Chinese descent husband used in an effort to overcome a fatal disease. After he passed away, dried maize hair which was intended to be used as Chinese medicine by him are left behind.

Haha no hone haru no Menamu ni nagashikeri

(Gogyū, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 13)

I have scattered the ashes of my deceased old mother
into the Menam
in spring

The poet writes that there is some place near the mouth of the Chao Praya River to scatter the ashes of the deceased person's bones. The poet chose to live the rest of his life in Thailand with a Chinese descent, Thai wife and the family, after the Second

World War. Later the poet invited his own mother from Japan to stay with him and he and his wife took care of the old mother. The mother died in her senior age.

These days there are quiet movements in Japan to reconsider funerals and tombs and this types of 'returning ashes to the nature' seems to have become popular.

Hoshi-zukiyo mote shinbun ni noranai shi.

(Yasuko, 1995, Ntbk., vol. 18)

On a starlit night!
the death
the newspaper doesn't report

In this poem, the poet mourns her friend of the Menam Kukai who died in a car-crash. There are two meanings in "the newspaper doesn't report". One is that many people die from the traffic accidents in this country, so that his friend's death is not reported as special disaster. The other meaning is that the young poet himself, who passed away in his 30 years old, was the person to edit the articles of what happened in towns in the mini communication paper, the "Yomiuri Eyes" that eventually had to stop its publication after his death.

6.2 Thai Culture

Among the manifestations of Thai culture in haiku, the important ones are manifestations of the royal institution, religions and various events and festivals that many Thai people take part in, or are interested in.

6.2.1 The Royal Family

King Bhumibol Adulyadej is highly respected by the Thai people and admired with pride. Through his long reign of 53 years, the king has visited people in all provinces and has tried to help solve their problems with the help of a team of advisors.

An essay by Surojana Sri-aksorn (edited by Songpol Kaopatuntip) featured in the Perspective section in The Bangkok Post observes that Chitralada Palace "...is more than a conventional palace and that situated in the royal compound are a host of projects initiated by His Majesty to improve farming techniques and the living conditions of

Thai people...His Majesty has initiated more than 2,000 royal projects to help millions of Thai farmers throughout the country. About 30 percent of these projects involve the development of water resources, which are crucial to the well-being of Thai farmers.” (Perspective, The Bangkok Post: December 5, 1999) In 1999, people in Thailand celebrated the King’s Sixth Cycle Birthday and in 1996, the Golden Jubilee Celebration. In 1988, the longest Reign Celebration of the King and in 1987, the 60th birthday of the King. The Bicentennial of the Chakri Dynasty in 1982 was also a significant celebration. For the sake of the respected King, each time the celebrations were held successfully. The King is also called “Rama IX”. Some streets, bridges and parks are named after the King. The feelings of Thai people have influenced Japanese people in Thailand, so, many haiku are written about the royal family.

Kaze suzushi kuttakunaki shonenzō wa ō

(Midori, Menam., vol.4)

A cool wind,
the statue of an innocent boy
is the King

One of the new parks is named as Rama IX Park where various things of the King are exhibited in the building. The poet came upon the statue of a boy which is a statue of the beloved King in his early days.

In the center of town, in front of Lumpini Park, there is a statue of King Rama VI, who contributed his royal land to the public for use as a park.

Dōzō ni nishibi saegiru mono no nashi

(Akihiro, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

On the statue,
there’s nothing
blocking the afternoon sun

The broad space above the Rachadamri Road is now blocked by the elevated skytrain, but in the past, it seemed as if nothing blocked the afternoon sun except the statue itself.

Ōeda o otoshi kokuo tanjobi

(Takashi, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Boughes being lopped off,
 celebrations for
 the King's birthday

December 5th, is the best known holiday for those who live in Thailand. In celebrating King Bhumipol's birthday in the towns, the streets of Bangkok, and other places are most carefully prepared.

Hi no man-ge sakase ōsama go-kanreki

(Midori, 1987, Ntbk., vol. 17)

A thousand and one lights shining,
 His Majesty the King
 is sixty years old

For several decades, offices, hotels, restaurants and other buildings including the trees in Bangkok and in the provinces have been illuminated with lights celebrating the King's birthday for mainly three days, including the two days before December 5th. Economic development has increased the number of illuminated nights. Shopping malls and department-stores continue displaying the lights until Christmas, and the end of year and New Year festivities. The custom of celebrating a birthday of the fifth cycle anniversary (when one is sixty years old) is observed today in Thailand, as well as in China, Japan and some other countries.

Ōhata o tarashi o hogu juni-gatsu

(Yoshiko, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Draping a long banner,
 people pay homage
 to the King in December

A long banner having an auspicious message for the King's birthday is visible over the front of buildings. Such banners are yellow-colored, for King Rama IX was born on Monday; which is signified by the color yellow in Thailand.

Kasa takaki shinbun kokuō tanjōbi

(Akihiro, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

A thick newspaper
is delivered
on the King's Birthday

Thick supplementary issues of English language newspapers were printed on the occasion of the King's birthday to pay tribute to him. Detailed articles about the King with photos were included in the papers, and these supplementary sections made the paper thicker every year.

Mango-ame joō mukaeru gyoretsu ni

(Yasujo, Menam., vol.2)

A mango rain falls
on the rows of the people
waiting for the Queen

Like H.M. King, H.M. Queen Sirikit has also developed many projects to promote handicraft skills in Thailand to preserve the quality of craftsmanship, and to give more opportunities to people upcountry, by setting up the SUPPORT Foundation. The Queen is welcomed by the people wherever she goes. A mango-rain has a sense of elegance. This type of rain during the mango-blossom season is normally not long and strong, but just enough to make the ground wet. The poet felt that such rain befitted the elegance of the Queen.

Yuruyuru to ohi no kuruma natsu-kodachi

(Midori, Menam., vol. 4)

Slowly
the Queen's car arrives
at a grove in summer

The poet is in the welcoming party for the arrival of the Queen.

Ōjo-goyomi yoku ureteiru seikyō-ten

(Yoshiko, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Calendars of the Princess

sell well
at the co-op shop

Princess Sirinthorn is a graduate of Chulalongkorn University. So, she is very popular among people at Chulalongkorn University. Calendars, books, cards, and other goods with her photo sell well. Especially at the end of the year, books, postcards, medals and various goods of the royal families sell well, and are given as presents to others.

Koto no ne no hitohi tayuto wan Chakuri

(Midori, Menam., vol. 4)

The sound of Thai harps
is swinging all day
on Chakri Day

The special tones of Thai harps are heard on Chakri Day which commemorates the founding of the Chakri dynasty, which has continued for more than 200 years.

Chakuri-dei kokki hatameku sho-samura

(Seijin, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

On Chakri Day,
a national flag flutters
on the small tri-shaw

Thai people respect the royal family and some drivers proudly display the national flag as a symbol of Thailand on their small tri-shaws.

Ratanakosin nihyakunen-sai (2525nen)

Gozasen no kai enten o hirugaesu

(Midori, 1982, Ntbk., Vol. 13)

On the Celebrations of the Bicentennial of the Bangkok
Dynasty (B.C. 2525)
The oars of the Royal Barge
turn over
in the burning sun

The tradition of the royal barge procession for the *Kathin* ceremonies was revived by the present King Rama IX after a long interval, lasting since King Rama V's annual visit by barge to Wat Arunratchawararam, the Temple of the Dawn. (Bonnie Davis. His Majesty the King's 6th Cycle Birthday Anniversary, the supplement of Bangkok Post. Bangkok Dec. 5, 1999: 18) People rushed to admire the processions of the Royal Barges on the Chao Phraya River on the occasion of the Bicentennial of Chakri Dynasty. One of the barges is the largest wooden vessel carved from a single large tree in the world.

6.2.2 Religions and Beliefs

It is said that more than 90 per cent of Thai people believe in Buddhism, while some others believe in Islam, Christianity, Chinese beliefs and others. Thai Buddhism comes from Theravada Buddhism, while Japanese Buddhism comes from Mahayana Buddhism. In addition to Buddhism, many people believe in animism, such as spirits that exist in nature, *phi*, or the deities of the earth, houses and others. Brahmanism, old concepts of Hinduism, influences Thai beliefs as can be seen in the God Indra, Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma and their vehicles like the Erawan-Three Headed White Elephant, Nandi-Sacred Bull, Garuda-Half Person and Half Bird and the *Hongse*-Sacred Goose and various mythological stories.

As Thailand has assimilated various people and culture, such traces can be seen in various aspects of religions and beliefs. The nature of the main religion of the Thai people, Buddhism, allows it to co-exist with other religions peacefully. Through daily events and participation in Thai life, Japanese people often met with many Buddha images and came to know some religious aspects of Thai people. Such haiku reflecting this can be seen in the following:

Mihotoke ni taga sasageshi ya kusa no hana

(Inpin 1979, Ntbk.,vol.12)

Who offered
the grass flowers
to the Buddha image?

The Buddha image in some provinces may be surrounded by natural flowers. The poet feels the gentle or religious nature of the Thai people in the grass flowers.

Kodakaki ni hotoke o okite no wa hideri

(Takashi, Menam., vol. 3)

A Buddha image
has been placed up high,
the field is dry

Many Buddha images can be seen all over Thailand. To place higher-ranking people, or Buddha images in high places is a Thai custom. Suffering farmers often pray to a Buddha image, especially when the weather is dry.

Wareme goto natsukusa moete neshaka-zō

(Nansei, Menam., vol. 2)

Summer grass grows
in each crack,
a reclining Buddha image

Some postures of Buddha images in Thailand are different from Buddha images in Japan; some examples are the reclining Buddhas, the walking Buddhas, and the sitting Buddha under the protection of *nagas*, the mythological serpent which rescued Buddha from heavy downfalls and floods during Buddha's meditation. One of the largest reclining Buddha images which represents the passing of entering into the enlightened Buddha, is situated in a field of Ayudhya. It was one of the main popular sites for tourists to visit in Ayudhya in the past.

Senko o kuyurashizume no neshaka kana

(Yoshijo, 1970, Menam vol.1)

Continuously covered with
the smoke of incense,
a reclining Buddha image

The Buddha image is so famous that people who visit the temple often pray. The smoke of incense covers the reclining Buddha image in the hall of the temple which is likely to be the at famous Wat Po. At Wat Po, visitors are both Thai people and foreigners.

Haku o oku hotoke no hada ni hae taezu

(Fumio 1972, Ntbk. vol.10)

Upon the skin of the Buddha image
people place a piece of gold leaf,
the southerly winds blow without ceasing

People who pay respect to a Buddha image normally place a piece of gold leaf on the image, as well as offer incense sticks and flowers. The southerly winds blow upon the Buddha image in the place, where natural winds come in freely and cause the thin gilt to flutter on the image.

Abara-bone sukete aono no shugyo-butsu

(Gogyū 1974, Ntbk., vol. 10)

With ribs showing through,
the Buddha image in practice
sits in the green field

It is said that after the former Prince Sidharta left home, he struggled to attain enlightenment by undergoing extreme ascetic practice, but in vain. As his practice included fasting, the fasting posture images of Buddha can also be seen in Thailand.

Kobotareta hotoke no kubi no ruri-tokage

(Mie 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

On the broken neck of
the Buddha image,
a lapis lazuli-colored lizard

When the kingdom of Ayudhya was sacked by the Burmese army in the 18th century, the temples and Buddha images there were also destroyed. Such broken images still remain as they are still respected by Thai people. For the lapis lazuli-colored lizard, the broken image must offer a safer habitat.

Toyo no aki mura no mihotoke kukuriago

(Midori 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

In autumn in rich harvest,
the Buddha image at the village
is double-chinned

As objects of art, Buddha images in Thailand have unique faces, styles, and features according to various art periods. For example, a Dvaravati-period (7th-11th century art style) Buddha image has a round face with almond-like eyes and thick lips. A handsome double-chinned Buddha image can be seen as Chiang Saen Buddha in Lan Na Thai Kingdom(11th-18th century) with plump cute cheeks and a rich chin. Such a rich image suits the village during a rich harvest.

Saido e no omiashi futoku katen yori

(Midori, n. d.)

Buddha in the murals has big legs,
to save people
walking down from heaven in summer

Buddha is illustrated in the mural paintings in some temples. There is a story that Buddha once visited his late real mother, Maya in the Tavatimsa Heaven⁴ to preach, and later descended down from heaven using golden and silver ladders, followed by the Gods Indra and Brahma.

Basu o matsu so sannin no aki no kure

(Ichizo 1962, Fiftieth, Shūhō)

Waiting for a bus,
three monks
at dusk in autumn

⁴ Heaven of the thirty-three gods on top of Mount Meru over which Indra presides (The National Museum Volunteers: Treasures from National Museum Bangkok 96)

Waiting for a bus in Bangkok is sometimes like hard religious training. Despite waiting for a long time, the bus going to their destination does not come. Yet the three monks are quietly waiting for the bus at dusk.

Butsu-deshi no fushime ni ayumu ame-ango

(Hanae, Menam., vol. 3)

Disciples of Buddha
walk with downcast eyes
on Buddhist Lent

It is the style of disciples of Buddha to walk with their eyes downcast. During Buddhist Lent, many young men enter the monkhood. They must memorize some Pali texts and have to follow many precepts as monks.

Kaenjuka mukiote so muhyōjō

(Midori 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

Under the flame tree
monks sit face to face
with wooden faces

It is preferable for the monks not to express their feelings on their faces. They must undertake their practices, even when they are under the very red blooms of a flame tree.

Shun-in ya nyuin no so mina kōi

(Takashi, Menam., vol. 3)

Spring clouds,
monks in a hospital are all clad
in yellow robes

Thai Buddhism is seen in many aspects and places, even at hospitals. Robes for monks in Thailand are colored saffron, while Japanese monks wear black kimono-style clothes as formal wear. The poet was surprised to see monks strictly follow the way of monks wearing traditional robes. This is one of the characteristics of Therawada Buddhism

which means “following the way of the elders”. Many Japanese monks wear ordinary suits as ordinary people do and some do not even shave their heads.

Suika-bune kara mo dokyo ni te o awase

(Takako 1983, Ntbk., vol. 13/14)

Hearing the chanting of sutras
a vendor in a watermelon boat
also prays

Like the majority of Thais, the vendor is a devout Buddhist and is able to follow along with the chants as she sells watermelon.

Mushi no naka tai no dokyo utaugoto

(Akihiro 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Among crickets,
sutra-chanting
is like singing

The temple, or the place from which the chants emanate, is surrounded by singing of crickets. The chanting is rhythmical and smooth like singing.

Wat Pomen (Fumon-ji in Chinese characters) near Sathu Pradit in Bangkok has a somewhat different atmosphere from other temples in Thailand for this is a Mahayana temple, which was established by invited monks from Singapore and Hong Kong.

Fumon-ji no gon-gyo aki no kaze ni nori

(Midori 1998, Ntbk. vol. 12)

Sutra-chanting at Wat Pomen
rides the wind
in autumn

Japanese people find some common characteristics between Wat Pomen and temples in Japan; for example, there are many written Chinese characters in the temple and there are four deities who guard the four directions, with the same names in Chinese characters and costumes similar to those in Japan. Japanese people had adopted Hindu-origin deities through China more than one thousand years ago. Many years after the

establishment of this temple, Thai monks in yellow robes have replaced the first Chinese monks in different-colored robes from other countries. Wat Pomen used to be surrounded by wild grass, afar from the busy town, but today the surroundings are greatly changed. In the neighborhood today, there is a big department store, and many high-rise condominiums and buildings.

Kaicho ya onna wa inoru koto ōshi

(Takako 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Public "opening up" Buddha images,
women have a lot
to pray about

Some of the most devout Buddhists are women. They cook food to offer to monks in the morning. They go to the temples and have a lot of matters to pray about for the family and for themselves.

In Thailand, mainly in the South and around Bangkok, Thai Islamic communities live and compose one aspect of Thai society. In Bangkok and areas nearby, we have the chance to see beautiful mosques with their marks of the new moon and a star.

Kaikyo no domu ga ukabi inabikari

(Fumio 1971, Ntbk., vol. 9)

A mosque looms large
reflected
by lightning

Along the Chao Phraya River, Saen Sap Canal and other waterways, such mosques are seen within the historical Muslim communities.

Natsubi moru kohokora no shinsen hikarabinu

(Gogyū 1970, Menam vol. 1)

Summer sunshine breaks through
a small Spirit-house,
food offerings to the Spirits dry out

There are many spirit houses at the corners of house compounds, and road-side in towns and villages. Summer sunshine easily dry out food offerings placed there. These spirit houses, an evidence of the traditional Thai belief in animism, can even be seen in front of modern buildings such as office buildings, hotels, and hospitals.

Kashigitaru sanpapumu ni hana-jasumin

(Yoshiko, Menam, vol. 3)

In the leaning spirit house,
ornamented jasmine flowers
are laid

The old spirit-house along the road in the field is leaning and obviously old and worn out. However, there is still someone to bring ornamented jasmine flowers to offer to the spirits.

Kotodama mo sayamu-go naran koshita-yami

(Midori 1985, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Spirits of language also
may speak Siamese language,
darkness under the trees

The poet wonders about the relationship between Thai spirits and speech. Thai spirits must speak in an old Siamese tongue, which is difficult for a foreigner like her to understand.

Natsu yube banana no seirei ugokidasu

(Midori, 70th Krungthep)

On a summer evening
spirits of banana trees
become active.

Among many banana trees, some species of banana are said to have banana spirits. Some people are afraid of spirits, because of a tale told about them. In her imagination, she feels that such spirits become active in the evening in summer.

Entenka sagan furitari bishunu-shin

(Yoshiko, 1974, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Under the sweltering sunshine
 sandstones become old,
 Hindu God Vishunu

Today's important religions were brought to Thailand from India through other countries, including Brahmanism. The Khmer Empire left behind many temple ruins of Hinduism, and Buddhist shrines in the Buriram district, in Phimai and other places. The carvings of Vishnu on the sandstone structures depict Hindu mythological stories. After years and years of heat, the sandstone became smooth and old. At the same time the structures of the ruins showed many years of deterioration. Later, the Thai government renovated the main historical ruins in Thailand, which changed the previous atmosphere in a way. The haiku depicts the ruins at Phanom Rung before the big renovation following the initiative of the Fine Art Department of the Thai Government by a new method.

6.2.3 Festivals and Ceremonies

There are many festivals in Thailand that are related to Buddhism, other religious aspects and beliefs, as well as agriculture and so on. Ruth Gerson says that the Thai calendar is based mainly on the lunar cycle, with religious and agricultural festivals being celebrated during the occurrence of the full moon. This includes the three main Buddhist events namely, *Maka Bucha*, *Visaka Bucha*, and *Asalaha* (as she writes. But correctly *Asanha) Bucha*. The religious festivals provide a time when people all over the country flock to temples and pay respect to Buddha and his teachings (Gerson, 1996: 3).

Japanese people, who also came from a country of agriculture and Buddhist tradition, easily accept the festivals. Poets mention various festivals; sometimes they go out to join in the festivals and events in a group to write haiku. Haiku relating festivals and ceremonies can be seen in the following:.

Makabucha-e busata no anma to deaikeri

(Midori, n. d.)

At the *Maka Bucha* gathering

I met a masseuse

I hadn't seen for a long time

According to Gerson, *Maka Bucha* is generally held in late February, or in early March on the full moon of the lunar month as the second most important Buddhist event of the year. It commemorates the spontaneous gathering of 1,250 disciples of Buddha who came to hear him preach. The gathering is the chance to meet those whom one has not seen for long time. (1996: 4)

Rōken no idokoro mo naki makabucha-e

(Midori, 1993, Ntbk., vol. 17)

There's no room

for an old dog

at the *Maka Bucha* gathering

The temple compound is surrounded by worshipers, holding flowers and incense sticks. A dog, which has made the temple its home, has no space to relax.

Mangetsu ni so wakiizuru banbutsu-e

(Yoshiko, 1993, Ntbk., vol. 17)

Silhouetted against the full moon,

monks come out one by one

on the *Maka Bucha* gathering

A few decades ago, the members of the Menam Kukai members joined in the *Maka Bucha* ceremonies at Wat Benchamabopit (the Marble Temple) and later, several years ago at Wat Dhammakaya near Nonthaburi. Comparing the two ceremonies, the latter was a more prepared performance, like a big show.

Tori mo wasu dokyō no uneri banbutsu-e

(Hōjirō, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Birds also harmonize

with the tones of sutra-chanting,

a *Maka Bucha* gathering

The prayers of the sutra-chanting in the Pali language are lulling harmonious sounds. Even birds like to harmonize with the tones.

Yukizuri ni tera ni sasowaru makabucha-e

(Midori, menam., vol. 4)

On the way,
I was induced to go to the temple
for a *Maka Bucha* gathering

The poet living in Thailand for a long time happened to be asked to join gatherings at the temples.

Songkran festival is an old Thai festival and today *Songkran* holidays are fixed on 13-15 April. Gerson writes that *Songkran* celebration embraces the rites of spring, family gatherings, honoring the elderly, acts of purification, Buddhist rituals, and the now very popular water-splashing revelry. (1996: 34)

Sonkuran hanshin nurete ken watasu

(Yoshiko, Menam., vol. 4)

Water-splashing Festival,
half the body wet,
a guardsman hands in a ticket

Those who go outside on *Songkran* holidays must get wet. People consider that water-splashing is the act of celebration. Even the man handling the parking tickets at a small box is wet and continues with his job.

Mizu-matsuri tarai tataite odori-dashi

(Yoshiko, 1975, Ntbk., vol. 11)

Water Festival,
beating a wash basin,
people go into a dance

Young villagers could often be observed enjoying the festival, making loud sounds by beating drums or a metal wash basin in the back of a pick-up truck on the way to the seashore. Some men start the motion of dancing and they really enjoy the festival.

Visaka Bucha day falls on the full moon of the sixth lunar month, in late May or early June. Ruth Gerson writes that the most important day on the Buddhist calendar is the *Visaka Bucha* and that it commemorates the three major events in Buddha's life: his birth, his attainment of enlightenment, and his death or passing into nirvana...(1996: 6). On *Visaka Bucha* day people earnestly perform deeds of merit making. Such meritorious acts are described in the following.

Wisakabucha hito no maneshite tori hanatsu

(Hajime, 1993, Ntbk., vol. 17)

Visaka Bucha day,

I followed the people's example

and freed a bird

By releasing captured birds, people can make merit. So, a person buys a bird from a vendor who bought birds from other dealers. In doing so, the poet follows the custom of Thai people.

The Ploughing Ceremony is another big concern, especially for Thai farmers. This festival marks the start of the rice-planting season and the date of the ceremony in May is decided by the court astrologers.

Nōkō-sai memoto suzushiki kami no ushi

(Gogyū, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

The Ploughing Ceremony,

clear-eyed

cows of God

The main event of the Ploughing Ceremony is what the sacred cows eat first among the variety of grains. The harvest of the year in Thailand is anticipated by the result. So, people watch the white cows, which are chosen for this important role. Through the ceremony, people can witness the importance of agriculture in this country.

Khao Pansa means the beginning of Buddhist Lent. In July, the following day of *Asanha Bucha*, which marks the first sermon given by Buddha, is the start of Buddhist Lent. During the three-month period, monks stay at the temple. In this season many men become ordained as monks until the end of Buddhist Lent. Relatives, friends, and musicians accompany the ordination procession to a temple. The following haiku illustrates this ceremony:

Kao-pansa kigi no manimani koteki-tai

(Akiko, 1998, Ntbk. vol. 21)

Khao Pansa,

among a clump of trees,

there's a band with drums

Entering the monkhood is considered a splendid achievement for a man, as well as for his parents, especially his mother who, it is said, will gain merit. So the joyful procession of people proceeds with a band playing drums to the temple.

One of the famous festivals on Silom Road is held at Wat Khaek. It is known that some performances of needle piercing take place at the festivals. A poet observed this exotic festival in the 1970s, as written in the following:

Goma takeba hi no kao kakomu baramon-ji

(Fumio, 1972, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Burning a sacred fire,

surrounded by glowing faces

at the temple of Brahma

According to Brahmanic belief, a sacred fire, God Agni, God of Fire has power to deliver offerings and messages to the heavens through its burning fire. People come to worship the gods.

After the rainy season is over, *Kathin* ceremony continues for a month, including the merit-making act of offering robes to monks. Ruth Gerson writes that a period spanning thirty days from the full moon of the eleventh lunar month in October to the full moon of the twelfth lunar month in November is called *Thot Kathin*, which translates as "laying down robes". (1996: 12-13)

In Siamese tradition, waterways were used as a main method of transportation, and Kathin processions were often held by boat in the past. The “artist of the Menam”, the poet Sekiyō, observed Kathin boats and described them in the following:

Kachin-bune hayashi togiretaru magarikado

(Sekiyō, 1963, Fiftieth.)

A Kathin boat for merit-making,
the sound of a musical band pauses
at the turn of the canal

Kachin-bune hayashi hazumite tsuki ni keru

(Sekiyō, 1964, Fiftieth.)

A Kathin boat
for merit-making,
musicians have arrived joyfully

Joyful people performing merit-making, “laying down robes”, proceed along in a comfortable boat. The happy atmosphere and the silence when the boat is at the turn of the canal is impressive.

Onago mina mono kuite ori kachin-bune

(Sekiyō, 1967, Shūhō)

Women, all
snacking
in a Kathin boat

Adding to pleasant music, having a snack together in the boat is another pleasure for women. The poet also enjoys seeing such a relaxed, happy group of women.

Fune amata idete Menamu wa aki-matsuri

(Akihiro, 1984, Ntbk., vol. 15)

A number of boats
sail on the Menam,
the autumnal festival

After the rainy season is over, people enjoy festivals, such as *Loy Krathong*, *Thot Kathin* and the December events. The boat-race is another event of the season. Abundant water enables the performance of a variety of events on the river.

Tōtō-kachin no tera ni kite ori suika-bune

(Takako, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

Coming to the temple
of a *Thot Kathin* celebration,
a watermelon boat

Through the waterways many people come to join the *Thot Kathin* celebration; a vendor also comes to sell her watermelons in a boat.

Wara-zuka e hata tatete ari tera-matsuri

(Isso, 1962, Fiftieth.)

A banner is placed
on a pile of straw
a festival at the temple

After the rice-harvest, various festivals start. Farmers prepare for the *Thot Kathin* festival at the temple; someone has placed a banner on a pile of straw in the rice fields after the harvest. This season must be the most relaxing time for many farmers.

In the early 1970s, black-and-white televisions were still expensive in Thailand. Movies were a special treat for the people in villages. In some parts of various provinces, electricity was still not available. As a special attraction of the *Thot Kathin* ceremony, outside movies were prepared as in the following:

Hiru-matsuri sunde yo o matsu eiga-maku

(Sekiyō, 1972, Ntbk., vol. 10)

The daytime feast is over,
a hanging screen for the movie viewing
is waiting for the night

People are waiting for the dusk, natural darkness, for the movies to begin.

As Gerson writes, one month after the full moon of the twelfth lunar month, usually in November, people throughout the land head to rivers, ponds, and canals to float their *Krathong*. Traditional *Krathong* are still in the shape of a lotus, made of banana leaves and decorated with flowers, (1996: 44). This is the *Loy Krathong* festival. *Krathong* is a decorated lantern for floating.

Katon tsukuru yubi kin gin ni yogoshikeru

(Midori, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Making lanterns for Loy Krathong,
their fingers colored
with gold and silver

Krathongs are hand-made. Some people make *Krathongs* by themselves and others buy them at the corners of the towns. Before and on the day of *Loy Krathong*, people, including craftsmen, are busy making the lanterns. To make the lanterns more beautifully, they use gold and silver colors.

Mangetsu ya te taoyaka ni roikaton

(Hajime, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Under the full moon
hands gracefully dancing,
the Loy Krathong Festival

On the full moon night, people dance celebrating *Loy Krathong* to the famous tune, "wanphen duen sipsong..." (meaning 'on a full moon night of the twelfth month').

Te no nami o okuri tōrō nagashi-keri

(Akihiro, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Sending ripples by hands,
people float
their lanterns

When no winds blow, or there are too many lanterns on the waters, a lantern will not drift, so people push the water with their hands to send ripples on the water.

Mise no fuku kite nagashikeri okaton

(Yoshiko, 1985, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Wearing uniforms of their shop,
people float
a giant *krathong*

On that Loy Krathong day, a group of people brought and floated a big *krathong*. They come directly from the same hamburger shop, wearing the same uniform.

Tsuki no ichi kawari ryūto fuenikeri

(Akihiro, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

The position of the moon
changed and floating lanterns
increased!

As time went on, the numbers of floating lanterns on the water increased. More and more people joined in the Loy Krathong festival.

Roi kuraton kunitami nabete asobi-zuki

(Midori, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

The *Loy Krathong* Festival,
most Thai people
love to participate in festivals

Watching Thai people really enjoy the festival, the poet cannot help admitting that Thai people are joy-seeking people. She loves this country, and this is one of the reasons.

Roi roi to karoki merodi roikaton

(Gogyū, 1987, Ntbk., vol. 16)

"*Loy, Loy*", the tune
has a light melody,
Loy Krathong

The *Loy Krathong* song is loved by people: its tune has a magical power to tempt people into dancing.

Roikaton no uta bakari kiki nete itari

(Midori, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Only hearing a song
of Loy Krathong,
as I was asleep in bed

This year the poet no more thinks to participate in the festival, but wants to rest in bed, hearing the familiar *Loy Krathong* song.

The Elephant-Round up Festival is held every year in November in the Northeast province of Surin. This festival has nearly forty years-history, starting in 1960. It aimed to attract tourists and to encourage people in the province. It has been successful in attracting a lot of tourists from nearby, Bangkok, and other countries. Such festival was described in the 1960s in the following haiku:

Zō to basu hishimeki-aite surin-sai

(Midori, 1967, Shūhō)

Elephants and buses
mill around,
Elephant Roundup in Surin

In this cool season, many elephants (two hundred or so in the 1980s) and mahouts come back to Surin to join the festival. Tourists also rush to the site. So the tourists buses from Bangkok and elephants are a spectacle at the festival site.

When December comes, people prepare to give presents to others and celebrate the end of the year, as a poet describes in the following haiku.

Gozō roppu ni todoroku joya no hanabi kana

(Midori, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Fire-works on the New Year eve
peal out all over the body
into viscera

Celebrating the coming New Year, fire-works sparkle at night during the end of the year. The loudest sounds start at the moment of New Year's arrival.

Chinese people and people of Chinese descent celebrate the Chinese New Year in late January, or in February, depending on the lunar calendar. Chinese New Year holidays are not national holidays in Thailand, so Chinese-descent students do not participate fully in the celebrations.

It is the tradition among Chinese people, as well as Japanese people to clean houses, roads and shrines before New Years day comes. Sweeping has the meaning of purification and expelling bad luck. Such customs of the festive season can be observed as in the following:

Kyūshō ya mukashi no mama no byō o haku

(Masatoshi, 1971, Shūhō)

The coming of Chinese New Year,
people sweep the same old shrine
which remains as it was

The same old shrine is cleaned in the same way as people in the past did every year. Thus, the tradition continues.

"Go Fuku Rin Mon" shuren no haneji shunsetsu ku

(Fumio, 1967, Shuho)

"Five happinesses come to the gate"
dynamic characters on a red banner,
Spring Celebration comes

Red color means good fortune according to Chinese belief. Written auspicious Chinese characters in dynamic style on a banner are expected to bring luck into people's home.

Kyushō ya osatsu no shiwa o nobashikeri

(Takanori, 1993, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Chinese New Year,
a wrinkled banknote
is smoothed out

It is a traditional Chinese custom for working grown-ups to give money to children, juniors, their parents and senior relatives during the Chinese New Year days.

In this haiku, a grandfather or a father prepares bank notes for presents, ironing them neatly.

Takushī mo soko de mattete shishi tōru

(Shigeki, 1993, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Taxis also wait there,
as "the lion" passes

The Lion Dance is a special performance for the Chinese New Year celebrations. When the troop of performers proceed, people nearby gather and watch, and taxis also give way for them.

Chippu ete shishi no kao nimo bisho kana

(Takanori, 1993, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Having received
a tip,

"the Lion's" face smiles

The Lion's face is the mask. The poet guesses that inside the mask of the Lion, the performer must smile because the dance was applauded by the audience, offering him the tip. There are several well-known Chinese ceremonies, or holidays in Thailand. They worship their ancestors several times a year, at least on Chinese New Year's day and Cheng-meng. Cheng-meng is supposed to be on April 4th or 5th. In the past, people paying homage to their ancestors on a particular Saturday or Sunday caused terrible traffic congestion on the way to and back from their ancestors' graveyards. Nowadays, people observe this tradition for about one month up to April to avoid traffic jam. In lunar months Chinese-descent people worship their ancestors, while Japanese poets in Thailand, liken this ceremony to their own one, called the *bon* festival in Japanese.

San-gai no banrei matsuri bon no machi

(Gogyū, Menam., Vol. 2)

Worshipping all souls
in three worlds,
a town celebrating the *Bon* Festival

In the Japanese Bon festival, people pay respect to their ancestors and welcome the souls of the family, especially those who passed away in the past year. The Bon Festival holidays are very important for Japanese people and the meaning of the ceremony is easily understood.

Bon matsuru kakyō shisen o taku kemuri

(Gogyū, Menam., vol. 3)

Holding a mass for ancestors,
Chinese descendants burn imitation bank notes,
smoke rises

Chinese people believe that deceased persons need money when they travel to heaven.

Urabon-e goma no matsuwaru shu no hashira

(Fumio, 1967, Shūhō)

The "Bon" Festival,
a sacred fire lingers
around the red pole

This is at a Chinese shrine, with a red pole that is an auspicious color for the Chinese.

On this day people come to pay homage to their ancestors.

6.2.4 Thai Customs

The experience of living in Thailand gives precious opportunities to foreigners to know something new about Thailand. Through daily life, some Japanese people come to know Thai culture deeply, while others know only on the surface, according to their situation.

Furu-goyomi tokenu fugō no futatsu mitsu

(Ibrahim Teruko, 1984, Ntbk., vol. 15)

An old calendar
has a few mysterious symbols,
I don't know what they stand for

The poet tried to understand the meaning of the mysterious symbols on the Thai calendar, which she does not understand at all. If they were Thai numbers, they are would be easy to understand. However, sometimes Thai people, priests or monks write magical symbols which are beyond her capacity to understand.

Kite-flying is seen in many countries. Japanese kites are observed mainly in the New Year season as one of the games for the New Year. On the other-hand, Thai kite-flying is seen during the dry hot season when southerly winds blow strongly. Among many types of kites in Thailand, Chula-kites are known to be used to fight with other kites, and snake-kites crawl like snakes.

Yuhi mada mottomo takai tako ni ari

(Fumio, 1964, Shūhō)

The evening sun
still shines
on the highest kite

In the past, *Sanam Luang* (the Royal Grounds, *Phramane* Grounds) near the Emerald temple was allowed to be used as a public place for the week-end market. This was some time before Chatuchak Market was built. These grounds have been famous as the spot to enjoy kite-flying in its season. In the 1960s, people enjoyed the spacious sky and the setting sun as part of their daily life.

Hebi-dako no chi o hau gotoku mai-agaru

(Gogyū, Menam., vol. 3)

A snake-kite,
as if creeping along the ground,
flies up

When flying a snake-kite, at first it crawls along the ground with its long, pleated body, then flies up.

Natsu-gumo e hebi-dako sō no manako hari

(Akijo, 1970, Menam. vol. 1)

A snake-kite,

both eyes stare
at the clouds in summer

The unique snake-kite gathers the attention of the poet. She finds that both eyes are strong, as if it stares at the clouds.

Among many elegant Thai dances, the dance using long, gold-colored artificial nails, which is a Chiang Mai-style dance, attracts people with its gracious movement of the dancers' fingers. A poet describes it in the following:

Tsume no mai tsume hiraku toki hohoeminu

(Gania, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

The nail dance,
opening her nails,
a dancer smiles

A careful observer, the poet finds that a dancer smiles charmingly when she opens her nails.

Odori no te mekite kanu o kogi yukeri

(Takako, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

Maneuvering the boat,
their hands are like dancers'
oarsmen rowing away

Watching Thai people, Japanese people sometimes wonder how it is possible to bend their fingers cleverly like Thai dancers. The smooth movement of oarsmen rowing the boat gives the same impression.

Shingō machi ramuwon shigusa mane nagara

(Yoshiko, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Waiting at the traffic signal,
imitating the gestures
of the Ram Wong dance

Without noticing that someone is watching him, a young man on a bike is moving his hands like he is dancing the Ram Wong. He may be getting ready to go back

to the village festival soon, or perhaps he is so fond of Ram Wong dance that he cannot help dancing himself.

At the Bangkok Museum we can see samples of shadow puppets, made of water-buffalo skins. Today, we are seldom able to watch these kind of traditional Thai plays in open spaces as in the past. Craftsmanship to make figures of shadow plays is observed at some shops for tourists.

Kage-e-shibai hanete mukashi no hoshi-zuktyo

(Tada Minoru, 1978, Ntbk., vol. 12)

The shadow play is over,
a starlit night
as in the past

This poet who visited upcountry with his business, had the chance to watch shadow plays at night. The scene must be in a Southern province, because shadow plays come from the South. In this play, they spotlight the "skin-figures" with bamboo holders reflecting lights through the white cloth and create movement through the shadow on the white screen. After the play is over, the starlit night's darkness wraps the performance, which reminds the poet of days in the past.

In Thailand many temple halls have mural paintings, depicting Buddha's life stories, or Buddha's ten stories of his previous lives. Such old murals are easily damaged on time, or are lost, if they are not preserved properly. Although famous murals are restored, and preserved, it is difficult to restore all the fine murals in the various temples, for it is costly and many skilled Thai artists are required.

Hana deigo hekiga hanbun usete ishi

(Shunrō, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 19)

Coral trees in bloom,
half of the mural paintings
are lost

In spite of having fine murals, the temple cannot afford to restore the murals. Also, in the compound of the old temple are the big red flowers of coral trees in the hot season..

6.3 Glimpses of Thailand through Time

Some haiku written in Thailand reflect Thailand's changing society, people's life, environment, and the background history of Thailand. Although some haiku already introduced also tell the facts of the society, here, I selected some haiku connected to social incidents, politics, changes of life, problems, disasters, sufferings and reality.

6.3.1 The Second World War and the Vietnam War

During the Second World War (1942-1945), Japan had impact upon its neighboring countries and other Southeast Asian countries. A year following Thailand's entry into the treaty with Japan in December 1941, the Thai government approved for the Japanese army, or soldiers to be based in Thailand during the War. This caused Bangkok and nearby areas to become the targets of the occasional bombing attacks by the Allied Force. During the wartime the number of Japanese people in Thailand, including soldiers increased: the number of 600 Japanese people, just before the war leaped to 4,000-5,000 at the end of the war. (Krungthep.1974, vol. 7 no. 2, 22)

The Second World war in Thailand is described in the following:

Tōka Kansei banko jakutari ina-bikari

(Fūryū, 1944, Fiftieth)

A blackout—

all houses are silent,

a flash of lightning

The above depicts a scene in the rainy season when bombers were flying close to Bangkok area. Warned by the alarms of the raiders beforehand, people turned off electric lights, so as not to be targeted on by the bombers. In the dark night, sudden bursts of lightning flashed. Natural phenomena ignored the battles of human beings.

Totsugeki ya sunzen hei no ase hikaru

(Sōō, 1944/45, Fiftieth.)

The moment before making a dash,

the beads of sweat
of a soldier glisten

The poet was himself a soldier and had found himself in the same situation of making a dash against the enemy.

Isho mo kaki ihatsu mo kirite tsuki no taku

(Shūsui, 1944, Fiftieth)

The last letter has been left,
the last hair has been cut,
I am at the moon altar

In this poem Japanese soldiers are depicted, regardless of being professional soldiers, or conscripts preparing for their death. Soldiers left their last letters and a lock of hair for their families according to the traditional custom of Japanese samurai when going into the battles or about to die.

Shōkū no kosa sorekiri ginga koshi

(Shōgetsu, 1944, Fiftieth.)

Light beaming the sky
and nothing,
the galaxy is dense with stars

The contrast of death and life is illustrated in this haiku. An unfortunate person could be killed after being found by a beaming light. The galaxy, a symbol of eternity, and life as shown by these dense stars seem to exist forever.

Tekki sarinu sora wa senko no hoshi-zukiyo

(Jinsō, 1994, Fiftieth)

The enemy planes have gone,
the sky is lit by stars
shining in remote antiquity

This poem portrays both a feeling of tenseness and relaxation.

Kōraku ya rappa tone ni hei ni tsugu

(Fumio, 1970, Menam. vol. 1)

Yellow leaves fall,
 a bugle sounds
 alerting soldiers

Tinted yellow leaves fall. A bugle alerting the order of the Japanese army to soldiers. The writer of this poem came to Thailand to carry out a job in Bangkok. He had once been a conscripted soldier in Thailand. The poet recalls this past impressive scene.

Kato koko ni ikitoshi ikiyo kuwai-gawa

(Gogyū, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12/13)

Tadpoles,
 live all the livings here!
 the Kwai River

The memory of the Second World War evokes in the poet a requiem for the dead, who have died uselessly in the war. At the sites of the war along the Kwai River, the poet talks to the small creatures living there, encouraging the existence of creatures. The poet was a gentle, good-natured person who kept a poetic mind even in the long hard days of ill health.

Tatakat ni shisu mono kanashi yakeno kana

(Midori, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Those who died in the war
 inspire sorrow,
 a heated field

The poet who experienced the War in Japan visited the site where people died during the Second World War.

The relatively new monuments within a memorial temple were built in 1990 by Thai people, aged Japanese ex-soldiers and other related people at the temple (Wat Prammanee) compounds in the village of Sarika, Nakhon Nayok province to pay respect to those who died during the Second World War. The mountain place was the last camp for some groups of Japanese soldiers and many horses having traveled a long way from China to Thailand through Saigon in the 1940's. There were various unknown aspects

regarding the war. How and where deceased soldiers, whose division was ordered in Saigon to defend Thailand after proceeding 10,000 kilometers from China on foot in five years, other people and horses were killed were unknown to their families. An ex-soldier, Fujita Yutaka studied all the history and the list of the above deceased people, spending nine years and published three volumes of book (Fujita. 1999: 16-19).

In March, 1965, a series of bombings of North Vietnam led by the US Air force started and in the following year the B52 bombers left Utapao US base, near Pattaya for North Vietnam. The Vietnam War claimed the lives of lots of people including ordinary people in North Vietnam, in South Vietnam and U.S. soldiers during eight years. About Vietnam War John S. Bowman writes in The Vietnam War An Almac:

It was certainly America's longest war, lasting from 1945 to 1975, or counting only the time American combat troops were involved, from 1965 to 1973...It cost the lives of 57,939 Americans. \$ 150 billion in US military spending and produced four million killed or wounded Vietnamese on both sides, a tenth of total population of North and South Vietnam. (Bowman. 1985: 8)

Thailand was also involved in the war, sending 11,000 Thai soldiers called the 'Black Panthers' twice in 1967 and 1968. (Suehiro 1993: 55) During the regime of General Sarit Thanarat (1959 -1963), Thailand tightened ties with the United States, strengthening support for defense.

Haru no ta o hiroku tsuranuku hosō-dō

(Shūson 1970, Menam. vol. 1)

The paved road
passes widely through
the rice fields in spring

The Sarit Regime instigated "Development" plans and paved the Friendship Road from Saraburi to Khorat with the assistance of the U.S. government who thought modern roads were necessary for carrying out defense plan measures. This road played a big role in the lives of Thai people, especially easterners and the development of Thai products, and eventually contributed to the development of the Thai economy as a whole.

Zenki sari kichi inazuma no hashiru mama

(Seiken, 1967, Shūhō.)

After the planes left
the war base,
only the flash of lightning remains

There were many U.S. bases established in Thailand in the 1960's and 1970's which were later changed as a result of Thai policies. As Suehiro writes, nearly 80 per cent of bomber planes to North Vietnam, were from Thai bases like Satahip, Utapao and others (Suehiro, 1993: 55). The bombers were easily identified with their black colored, flying bird-like shapes.

Uki akete hokubaku yamite nao atsuki

(Shūson, 1970, Menam., vol. 1)

The rainy season is over,
bombings of North Vietnam have ceased,
yet, it is hot

The Vietnam War scarred the minds of the people, both those who involved, or not involved. Many people hoped the bombing would cease soon and that there would be peace. When the Christmas season came close, the bombings were stopped intermittently. People knew that such condition would not continue for very long. The Vietnam War finally ended in April 30, 1975.

6.3.2 Uprisings for Democracy in the Past

In Thailand there were many kinds of coups and plots for coups in modern history. Eventually people sometimes felt that changes in cabinet came after such coups as a result of the crash of powers. There were impressive and very important uprisings for Thai democracy. The first such uprising by students was on October 14, 1973 and the next was on October 6, 1976. The last uprising by people and the crash was on May, 14, 1992. The plot of the coup by young military officers, "Young Turks" in April, 1-3 1981 failed. People sometimes did not get accurate information, because of the controls of mass communication at the proper time by the regimes at those time. Many aspects of uprisings were depicted as in the following:

Itto no moto ni sensha no iru yozamu

(Fumio, 1971, Ntbk., vol. 9)

Cold at night,
when the war-tanks are
under a light

The poet who experienced the Second World War as a conscripted soldier in Bangkok, remembers the war-tanks. He again sees the tanks gathering at night under the light. In November 17, 1971, the Revolution led by the Prime Minister Tanom led to a change from democratic administration into a military regime.

Okujō ni hei afure ori iwashi-gumo

(Midori, 1973, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Soldiers overcrowded
at the rooftop,
fleecy clouds

The television news reported some terrible scenes at Sanam Luang during October in the 1970s, but soon news broadcasts were interrupted and people had no way to know what was happening in Thailand. In this poem 1973, the poet observes the unusual scene of soldiers with weapons on the rooftop.

Kūdetā-sawagi osamari tako agaru

(Takako, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

After uprising movements
have been settled,
a kite arises

The surprising coup in 1981 settled down in three days. The newspaper wrote of the details of the coup. The Prem administration made stable steps to the future of Thailand.

Dōran to tomo ni atsusa no kitarikeri

(Nansei, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Together with an uprising,
the hot season
has come

Of course there is no relationship between the heat and the coup plot, but the poet expresses his feeling of there being a relationship because of the timing.

Funi ochinu shamen to narite ango iri

(Tada Minoru, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Unconvincing acquittal
of the deserter,
Buddhist lent starts

The way of dealing with plotters of uprisings in Thailand seems to be quite different from the Japanese way; that is the poet's impression. As a foreigner he could not understand why the deserter could win acquittal.

Kakushi no hō gogatsu no kumo no hikari ite

Pridi shi pari ni shisu

(Midori, 1981, Ntbk., vol.14)

The news of Mr. Pridi's death
in a foreign land,
when clouds of May are glittering
Dr. Pridi passed away in Paris

Pridi Banomyong (1900-1983), one of the most important men in Thailand's contemporary history, died in Paris after living in exile for 35 years (Outlook, Bangkok Post. Aug.16, 1996. 1) Pridi was a member of the bloodless coup of the Democracy Revolution in 1932, the leader of the Free Thai Movement, the underground resistance movement against the Japanese army during the Second World War, the prime minister, the founder of Thammasat University and a law-maker who promoted democracy. Although he had once been labeled as a communist, today Thai people appreciate his real achievements. The poet expresses the Thai people's feelings about a deceased great person.

Wirachon-bi mago o shinobite rōba tatsu

(Yoshiko, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

Heroes' Day,
cherishing the memory of the late grand-son,
an old woman takes a stand

During the incident of *Sipsi Tula*, October 14, 1973, many young students, including seven 14-15 years old boys who had gathered for democracy were killed. Later, this day was settled as the Heroes' Day in Thailand and every year people pay respect to those who died during the uprising. After the ten-year anniversary of the day, a sorrowful old woman is among the people still mourning.

6.3.3 Landscapes in the Past

Thailand's landscape has largely changed in recent decades. The seeds of change started in General Sarit's regime in the 1950-1960s. With the aid of USA, General Sarit started to develop Thailand, by inviting foreign money, loans, and investment, and settling useful laws to promote economic development. Economic growth changed Bangkok, and surrounding areas. Infrastructure, construction of roads, schools, factories, multi-leveled buildings and the skytrain changed the surface of some main cities and towns. Such changes of the time are reflected in the haiku of landscapes.

6.3.3.1 Buildings and Land

Today in Bangkok some roads and buildings are totally changed, while others still retain their old characteristics. As Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker write in Thailand's Boom, not so long ago, Bangkok was still a rather courtly city, famed for its palaces, temples, canals, and... Today Bangkok is very much a city of business. Factories ring the outskirts. Commuters clog the roads. High-rise office towers crown the centre. (Pasuk Phongpaichit, 1996: 10) Haiku poets observe the changes in their surroundings as in the following:

Ōryan-ya kowasare atarashiki machi okoru

(Midori, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

An *oliang* shop
is broken up,
a new town revives

The *oliang*-Thai coffee shops were popular places for Thai people in the 1960-70s. Then, suddenly the old, shabby, but familiar shops disappeared. The poet considers it a consequence of development of Bangkok which people cannot resist.

Katte hoteru arishi akichi ya fuyu-gasumi

(Midori, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Winter haze,
once a hotel was there,
now the land is vacant

In the 1970's, the Amarin Hotel was one of the popular epicenters of the Ploenchit district. People come to have lunch, dinner, view, and exhibitions to meet friends who stayed there. A famous Japanese writer, Mishima Yukio also stayed there for a while. At some time, the lease term expired and the hotel and compound were broken up, in spite of the fact that people loved the place. For a long term, the vacant land was left as it was.

Machi kowasu hanmā hitofuri kumo wakeri

(Midori, 1992, Nbk., vol. 17)

A stroke
destroys the town,
clouds flow out

Here and there people hear the sounds of old houses being de-constructed. Like the poet, some families decided to move to new condominiums nearby before the scheduled construction of highways started.

Tanjitsu ya magaru roji nimo kōji no hi

(Shunrō, 1995, Ntbk., vol. 19)

A short winter's day,
lights under construction
at the turning of the lane

When the boom of high-rise office and condominium constructions started, on the way to the office, or the way back from the office, people saw construction sites even at night.

Uritochi no kanban shosho ni kare-kodachi

(Midori, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Signboards for sale of land
are here and there,
withered trees in winter

According to the economic growth, lands sold well in some places. But, after the economic recession, it became difficult to sell.

Tamurun tsumu tachinoki atochi no usu-akari

(Midori, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Plucking snake gourd stalls
from vacant land after forced removal,
under the slight light

The old building was destroyed and snake gourds grow on the vacant land. Whether due to financial problems or not, new construction has not yet started.

Kusa karuru no ni nyokiri to shin-kōjō

(Akira, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 22)

In the withered grass field,
a new factory
is towering

Japanese enterprises built many factories in the form of joint ventures in Thailand. The NESDB (National Economic and Social Development Board) and the BOI (Board of Investment) encouraged foreign investment to Thai provinces with conditions of special advantages in the five-year plans.

6.3.3.2 Urbanization

Trees in the urban cities offered an oasis of green shade and memories of the time when people spent time admiring. In 1970, mahogany trees still survived along the street on North Sathorn Road. Along the canal on Sathorn Road, there used to be big mango trees with abundant green leaves and mangoes. The Bangkok Post wrote of the dream of a Bangkok administrator to give urban children a chance to experience picking mangoes from trees by themselves on Sathorn Road. Later, as Bangkok and the vicinity's population increased, some trees were replaced by other trees and finally all trees were cut off to pave the way for smoother traffic on Sathorn Road and the construction of a bridge to Thonburi. Today most roads are mainly designed for the convenience of cars and not for pedestrians.

Wakaba moyu mahoganī takaku tako karamu

(Zagop, 1970, Menam., vol. 1)

Young leaves appear,
as the tall mahogany tree
snares a kite

Photos of Sathorn Road in the 1970's show tall mahogany trees along the side canal and unpaved North Sathorn Road. At that time people could enjoy kite-flying near the roads.

Soi jūni būgenbiriya no michi datta

(Natsujo, 1989, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Soi 12 was the lane
full of bougainvillea
blooming

Soi 12 (The lane 12) off Sukhumvit Road in Bangkok was known among Japanese residents as having many apartment-houses along or off the lane. In the past, many Japanese families with children lived in the lane 12, for the location was convenient for going to schools. The lane was rather narrow and short, making it suitable for taking short walks. The poet had lived in one of side lanes and later found that the lane and neighborhood had been completely changed after a decade or so.

Houses with gardens of flowers along the lane decreased and were replaced by new towering condominiums or the some unfamiliar buildings of today.

Yūkari no shokurin susuki-hara goshi ni

(Shunrō, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Planted eucalyptus are seen
through the pampas grass field

The planting of eucalyptus trees in rural areas caused the destruction of forests and some problems among farmers.⁵

6.3.3.3 Fountains

In the 1960's when the influence of General Sarit was still strong, the towns of Bangkok had many fountains at crossroads. Fountains were said to be the General's favorite things. At that time, those fountains were remarkable monuments for people and many haiku were written about them. Later, these fountains were removed in order to create the smoother traffic condition at the crossroads. In front of some hotels and other buildings, there are smaller size fountains. Today, influenced by Chinese thought, some people think fountains are considered a part of Feng-Shui (geomancy).

Mayoi kite funsui no kado ni mata idenu

(Sekiyō, 1963, Shūhō.)

Finding the way,
only to end up back at the corner
of the fountain

⁵ In the 1980s, peasants drew on the tradition of resistance to defend their access to natural resources of land, forest, and water in the face of urban attack. They destroyed eucalyptus plantations, blocked dam projects, ordained trees coveted by loggers, fought against military operations to move them out of the official forests and protested against the industrial pollution of rivers and land. (Pasuk, Phongpaichit and Chris Baker. "Thailand Economy". Kuala Lumpur: 1995, 410)

Fountains are often used as landmarks in the traffic on the streets, for they were easy to find. But sometimes people found that even their taxi-driver drove back to the same place without intention.

Jūjiro ni aru funsui no takasa kana

(Yujo, 1972, Ntbk., vol. 9)

How high.
the fountain is
at the crossroads!

Funsui ya machi no yomo yori nagamerare

(Nansei, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

A fountain,
seen from four-sides
of the town

Fountains were designed so as to be remarkable monuments in modern Bangkok at the time.

Funsui o osaeru kora ya abiru ko ya

(Yoshiko, 1975, Ntbk., vol.11)

Some children
press down a jet fountain,
others bathe themselves

This fountain which belongs to the hotel near a busy road is a smaller fountain in a lower position than the ones at the crossroads. For the street children nearby, it is pleasant to play with waters in the hottest season. Children really enjoy this, as if they were in a swimming pool.

6.3.3.4 Rivers and Canals

For Thai people, rivers and canals have been closely associated to their lives in the past. Seeking peace and comfort, some houses for the members of the royal families were also built along the Menam Chao Phraya River.

Sepia-iro ōzoku-ikka no mizu-asobi

(Yoshiko, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

A sepia photo
of a picnic on the waters
of the royal family

The royal family at the time of King Chulalongkorn enjoyed family gatherings on the waters. The old photos of the Prince Chakrapongse family at the residence near Chao Praya River tell of past leisure activities on the waters.

Shūten wa dorian-ichiba kyō no nishi

(Sekiyō, 1963, Fiftieth.)

The ferry of the last stop
is a durian market,
the west of Bangkok

This scene is at the Nontaburi pier, which had the reputation as being a famous durian market for a long time.

Hoteisō tanmin-sen wa mura naseru

(Akihiro, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Water hyacinths,
house boats form
a village

On the river we still see a large amount of water hyacinths today and house boats were still seen in 1980. Today we seldom see them.

Rakujitsu no donchō aki no un'ga-machi

(Fumio, 1970, Menam., vol. 1)

A "silk drop curtain"
of a setting sun,
the town of canals in autumn

From the canals people could look up at the sunset, which is like a big, gorgeous drop curtain which we often see at a big theater, glitteringly beautiful in red and gold color. The poet lives in this town of canals looking up at the setting sun daily. No towering buildings prevented the view of the setting sun from the canals at that time.

Moto koko ni un'ga arikeri nemu no hana

(Midori, 1999, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Once there used to be
a canal here,
silk tree flowers

Wireless Road depicted in this poem is still covered with old, big silk trees along the roads as it was several decades ago. The center roads today are said to have been a canal in the past. In Bangkok, many canals had been already buried and trees were cut down, changing into modern roads. Beautiful green leaves of the tall trees and pink flowers on Wireless Road still create a wonderful environment and shade for people in Bangkok.

6.3.4 Social Aspects in the Past

Hankechi o nigiri takushi kōshōsu

(Nobuko, 1985, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Grasping my handkerchief,
I negotiate
with a taxi driver

In recent years, passengers in taxis do not have to negotiate the price to their destinations, because effective metered taxis are available in Bangkok. In previous years when such taxis were not available, it was difficult for foreigners to go out in the town by themselves, when they did not understand Thai language fluently and needed to communicate somehow with the taxi drivers to bargain the price.

Sō nijūman shōfu gojūman kaopansā

(Takashi, 1985, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Two hundred thousand monks,
five hundred thousand prostitutes,

the Buddhist Lent

Whether the numbers of monks and prostitutes referred to in this haiku are right or not, is unknown. But it is true that Thai people are ascetic people and that still many young people ordain every year as monks and lead a religious life. On the other hand, the social problems of prostitutes, selling daughters, or children, and serious social problems like AIDS, drug trafficking and others are seen as a reality of Thai society. It is not easy to solve the problems, but some NGOs, mass communications, together with the government try to solve the problems little by little.

The same poet writes haiku referring to the refugees in the camps set up on Thailand's borders. These refugees from Laos and Cambodia were evacuated from political and social confusion and oppression in their countries. Thai NGOs and foreign humanitarian groups cooperated to deal with this crisis. The J.V.C. (Japanese Volunteer Center) was established in Bangkok at this time to support the efforts.

Kurisumasu-kādo mazu kuru nanmin yori

(Takashi, 1983, Ntbk., vol.14)

Christmas card arrived
the first one
from a refugee

Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker write in Thailand's Boom!, The shape of the economy changed with extraordinary speed. In 1980, Thailand's main exports were still rice and cassava chips, and by the late 1980s they had become textiles and other cheap-labor manufactured goods. By the early 1990s, they were "computer parts and other electronics"(1996: 28) After 1985, foreign investment, much of it from Japan, flooded into Thailand, and the Thai economic situation changed.

Fukeiki to hito no iu nari kozo-kotoshi

(Nansei, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

"Economic recession", people say,
from last year
to this year

The poet, as the owner of a private enterprise, must have seen hard times in this period.

Kyosaku no mura-bito futoki ryōjū mochi

(Takashi, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Villagers in poor harvest
hold
big hunting guns

Farming was the main occupation for many in Thailand in the past. Often the life a farmer was difficult. Sometimes farmers had to prepare for unexpected attacks from thieves even after poor harvest. Akira Suehiro writes that the population engaged in agriculture composed nearly 80 per cent of the total work force in the 1960's, but less than 60 per cent in the 1990's (1993: 5)

Pakutai no dai-suigai ya yū-akane

(Inpin, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Serious flash floods
in the South,
an evening glow

As Suehiro wrote on November 21, 1988, a big flash flood claimed the lives of 439 people and 316 people went missing in the South of Thailand. The cause of the serious disaster was attributed to the clearing of forests which later resulted in a law being established to ban forest clearing. (Suehiro, 1996: Main Chronological Table in Thailand. 8)

Sanma-stēki kemuri kakonde tai-ikka

(Midori, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Surrounding
the smoking grilled Pacific saurys,
people of the Thai family

Referring to eating habits in the past 1 or 2 decades, many Thais and other people have begun to eat and enjoy Japanese dishes, such as tempura, sashimi (raw fish), and grilled fish mackerel (*saba*). Such dishes have become very popular amongst Thai people not

only in Bangkok but in other provinces, and *sanma*, or Pacific saury is also eaten by many Thai families. This phenomenon is unbelievable when thinking back to the 1960s and 1970s in Thailand. The same phenomena happened in Japan and other countries when Thai cuisine became popular among people in other countries. The fact shows the extent of globalization and mutual exchange of culture.

Natsu no sora ningyō-kōjō yakeshi koto

(Yasuko, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

The summer sky,
hearing the news
that the doll-factory was burnt down

This poem concerns a fire that occurred at a toy factory and which killed female child-workers who could not escape from the locked rooms in which they were sleeping. It became a warning that more attention should be paid to protect and address human rights and child rights problems. The sorrow felt for those who had to die at such a young age and situation moved many people.

6.4 Summary

The writing of haiku is carried out in relation to seasons. Haiku poets carefully observe seasons and natural phenomena through the year. By writing haiku, people come to observe changes, features of time and places and know delicate differences. By living in this land and by understanding its basic facts of seasons and nature, poets are ready to share common worlds and common fields in Thailand with Thai people.

As poets come to understand Thai people, the life environment also becomes familiar to them. Through daily life, people know the unique existence of rivers, canals, ponds and waters related to Thai people. Things in daily life reflect direct commitment to the memories of time, the aspects of the past and the present. On the roads in Bangkok, people experience daily traffic-snarl and occasional flash floods in heavy rains. By facing diseases and death people come to recognize life itself.

By understanding Thailand and Thai culture, poets also share the feelings of Thai people little by little. Such common feelings are in relation to various aspects, like

the royal family, Buddhism, festivals and culture. What haiku poets captured through haiku are glimpses of Thai society, as well as diaries that poets used to describe their first feelings. In reading such haiku we may glimpse a part of changing world of Thailand.



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