

Annual YTHS Christmas Party-December 2015

Mimi Ahern

Twenty nine very merry YTHS members met at Judith and Lou Schallberger's warm, inviting home on the evening of Dec 12 for our annual Christmas party. After enjoying a delicious holiday pot-luck banquet and lively conversation with friends, the group gathered in a circle around the living room. There, the tradition of members exchanging holiday card haigas took place. One by one members handed out their cards and read their haikus aloud.

Judith's artistic touch and skillful hostessing, aided by husband Lou's good natured support, made for a memorable evening. Many thanks to the Schallbergers.

*Attendees: Patricia and Al Machmiller, Judith and Lou Schallberger, Alison Woolpert, Alan Leavitt, Patrick Gallagher, Carolyn Fitz, June and Scott Hymas, Bev and Kat Momoj, Ann and Kae Bendixen, Ed and JoAnn Grossmith, Jeff and Yukiko Tokutomi, Carol Steele, Roger Abe, Linda Papanicolaou, Joan Zimmerman, Cynthia and Rob Holbrook, Clysta Seney, Betty Arnold, Dyana Basist, Sandy Vrooman and Mimi Ahern.

Looking Back at a Historic Moment "December 2002 through mid-January 2003"

originally submitted by donnalynn chase, web
version edited by Patrick Gallagher

The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society met at Jean Hale's lovely home in Cupertino for their annual holiday party and haiku exchange on December 14. It was an unusually stormy and rainy night that prevented several members from attending. To our great delight, Yukiko Northon came from the Santa Cruz Mountains with her daughter, Nicholette, and her mother, Kiyoko Tokutomi, cofounder of our Society. The party became a very special event with Kiyoko's presence and the announcement of the release of her book, *Kiyoko's Sky*. Kiyoko read many of her poems to us in Japanese; Patricia Machmiller read the English translations that she and Fay Aoyagi had provided for the book. After that we exchanged our crafted haiku card-gifts. As each poet passed out their card, they read the haiku from the cards, for instance:

the evergreen left
in the Christmas tree lot
trimmed with rain drops
- Anne Homan

Kiyoko would have been 74 years old on December 28. She passed away quietly on Christmas day, making the memory of her reading at the party even more precious. Her daughter later told us that she thinks Nicholette will be old enough to remember her bachan (grandmother) reading haiku. She said, "I feared she would never get to see a reading by her bachan. She was so young when Kiyoko was still doing readings and such, and she had little understanding of poetry. At age 9, I think she is the perfect age for exposure to the literary arts. To have two accomplished poets side by side reading the poetry the way it should be expressed is something she will not forget, I think."

Yet in the sadness, Yuki Teikei had the rewarding opportunity to meet Haruka Goto, who came from Japan to the Bay Area to pay her respects. Haruka and her mother, Emi Goto, edit the haiku magazine, *Kurumaza*. (Circle). Haruka offered to lead a kukai for the Society; and thirteen members gathered at Patricia's beach home in Monterey Dunes just after New Years. We each submitted three haiku for the participant's appreciation and Haruka's review. Then we voted for our favorite poems, and Haruka selected poems for comment. Patricia's haiku was voted the best by the attendees.

I hear Shikibu
among the whispering redwoods— on
good days she weeps
- Patricia Machmiller

Roger Abe's poem was also highly regarded:

will you hide with me?
among sharp-tipped ovate leaves the
green of nightshade
- Roger Abe

Haruka stated that haiku should not be for "self-satisfaction." She stressed the importance and power of kigo to illuminate "the haiku possibility" and for people to universally value haiku. We did not have enough time to discuss these concepts as a group; we look forward to keeping in touch with Haruka. She then discussed the reasons for her choices of five haiku. It was an excellent opportunity to learn more about the art of haiku from her perspective.

YukiTeikei held their first 2003 monthly meeting on January 11 at the Markham House in the History Park of San Jose. This historical house now serves as the headquarters for Poetry Center San Jose. The Victorian bungalow was owned by the mother of the once-renowned poet Edwin Markham, and later by the poet himself. At the November meeting, Patrick Gallagher had delivered a very interesting and well-researched presentation on Markham. The society will be holding many of their meetings here in 2003. At this first meeting, we held a workshop in which we each provided a haiku that we judged needed help. The group offered suggestions and, of course, lots of discussion ensued around the "art" of haiku. A poem from the meeting:

his depression
seeing it as it really is—
leafless sycamore
- donnalynn chase

The Heron Leans Forward, the 2002 Yuki Teikei Members' Anthology, was published in late autumn. It contains haiku from 50 world-wide members along with special articles from the *GEPP*O, YT's bi-monthly newsletter, and season words.

Kiyoko's Sky; The Haiku of Kiyoko Tokutomi published by Brooks Books is also available for \$16 + \$2.50 for postage from Patricia Machmiller, 6116 Dunn Avenue, San Jose, CA 95123. It is translated by Patricia Machmiller and Fay Aoyagi with an insightful introduction by June Hopper Hymas.

At its bottom
all things are visible winter
river
- Kiyoko Tokutomi



photo by June Hopper Hymas