



## Haiku

### The History Of Haiku

In its traditional context, the Bushido code refers not only to an individuals' Military Training but also their attitude to everyday life. For this reason the study of non-military facets of day-to-day life played an important part in the training of a Samurai. Amongst the first element of Bushido studies was the reading and formulation of poetry, more specifically that of traditional Japanese "Haiku".

Haiku poems consist of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables. The written subject formula for haiku also has a traditional format. The first line should suggest a time or a place, the second line should be a vivid but fleeting observation with the third connecting the two through an account of a realization or a profound statement of fact. The poet does not comment on the connections between the sections but leaves a blend of the images for the reader to perceive in their own way.

The poet Matsuo Munefusa who wrote under the pseudonym "Basho" is considered to be among the best of Japans feudal era poets, and is accredited as having written the most perfect example of Haiku in the following poem.

*"Now The Swinging Bridge  
Is Quieted With Creepers  
Like Our Tendrilled Lives"*

*Matsuo Munefusa*

The Haiku style of poetry itself evolved from a much earlier 15<sup>th</sup> century style by the name of "Renga" although at this time it was exclusively practiced by Zen Buddhist Monks. However during the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century Renga gradually evolved into Haiku and this allowed it access to a far wider audience of wealthy male and female nobility as well as the powerful Samurai.

## Sample Haiku

The following Haiku were all composed by Junsei Ryu Hoshin Jutsu instructor; Taran McCarnun Sensei.

*"Then The Bloodied Blade  
Lies Silent, Painted Crimson  
How Quickly Life Fades"*

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*"My Enemies Swarm  
Like Mist Around A Mountain  
Onward Will I Fight"*

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*"Dark My Dying Thoughts  
A Thousand Poison Daggers  
Chancing My Honour"*

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*"Drumming In My Ears  
My Pulse Racing Faster  
The Thrill Of The Fight"*

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*"I Watch In Awe  
The Perfect Singing Sword Cuts  
Tears Fill My Eyes"*

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*"Fast The Strikes Rain Down  
With Killing Fist I Echo Back  
My Foe Has Failed"*

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*"Living By The Blade  
Holding Faith In The Swords Soul  
Together We Live"*

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*"A World Of Chaos  
Fear And Death Are Abundant  
Is My Life A Dream?"*

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*"Fear Eats At My Heart  
The Shadows Surrounding Me  
A Staff For My Blade"*

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*"The Sound Of Rain Upon Cloth  
Movements In The Shadow  
I Am Not Alone"*