



# SAKURA

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はっほうびじん びじん  
八方美人は美人でない A friend to all is a friend to none

## HAIKU + GISEIGO/GITAIGO Lectures



(1) On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015, we listened to a lecture on **HAIKU** by Nirmal Sensei. This interesting lecture was about the history and rules of writing haiku. Haiku is a Japanese poetic form consisting of 17 syllables arranged in three lines of 5-7-5 syllables respectively.

The 'Waka', one of the oldest known popular poetry forms in Japan, has 31 syllables arranged in five lines of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables respectively. Later on it was named 'Haikai'. The first 17 syllables (5-7-5) of Haikai was known as 'Hokku'. This is the reason why the Haikus of Basho were originally called Hokku. After many years, the Japanese writer, Masaoka Shiki, reformed the poetry form and named it Haiku instead of 'Hokku' and from then onwards Haiku emerged as an individual poem and was no longer a part of Haikai. It was Poet Shiki's endless endeavour that Haiku was ranked as a first class literature in the Japanese Literary World.

Basic rules of early Haiku are:

- 1) 17 syllables in 5-7-5 format.
- 2) A seasonal word (Kigo).
- 3) A cutting word (Kireji) like 'ya' and 'Kana'.

In the beginning, poets used to write only seasonal haiku but afterwards they started writing on various aspects of life. **Matsuo Bashō, Yosa Buson, Fukuda Chiyo-ni, Kobayashi Issa, Masaoka Shiki,** are some of the famous haiku masters.

The Most famous Haiku of Matsuo Bashō is:

古池や  
かわず飛び込む  
水の音

The old pond--  
A frog jumps in,  
Sound of water.

The session with a gift of Nirmal Sensei's own book on Haiku named "*Shiki no Haiku*" meaning "Haiku of Four Seasons" translated by him from Japanese to Bengali. While learning some interesting facts, we also enjoyed snacks and tea.

*Sumana Bhattacharjee*

(2) An hour long engrossing and very unique session on Japanese language was conducted by our dear Ruma Sensei at Sarat Samity on May 20, 2015. Her focus this time was on **ONOMATOPOEIA**; words with meanings indicated by the sound they mimic, like 'meow', 'buzz', 'gulp' and 'splash'.

This session was eagerly awaited by many students of Japanese language ranging from beginners to the pros. Such words are often used in English, Hindi and Bengali. Hence, there was great curiosity for exploring the same in Japanese. Sensei explained with examples, many such words which she had categorized according to the verbs with which those are usually used. Some of them were drinking, eating, walking, talking, etc. Few of the phrases we learnt that day were '*Chibi Chibi Nomu*' meaning sipping, '*Mogu Mogu Taberu*' meaning stuffed mouth eating, '*Gami Gami Okoru*' meaning energetic talking, and a host of others. The young bloods were all ears when Sensei explained that '*Mero Mero ni naru*' is when someone is unable to think of anything other than love. Sure thing!

The students thoroughly enjoyed the session and were thankful to Ruma Sensei for sharing her immense knowledge of Japanese language, eager for an opportunity to use these newly learnt words. Knowledge of such words by non-native speakers of Japanese gives a boost to one's level of fluency and ability to fit into a Japanese environment. It was also proved that Japanese is more similar to Hindi and Bengali than English as almost all the Onomatopoeic Japanese words learnt that day had a Hindi and/or Bengali counterpart used in the repetitive way. For instance, '*Shiku Shiku Naku*' is expressed in Bengali as '*Phinch Phinch Kanna*'. We truly hope to have more such enriching sessions in future.

*Supratik Sil Roy*



## UNIQUE JAPAN

An irresistible desire to go to Japan cropped up in my mind on July 11, 2006, the day of my first Japanese learning class at The Ramakrishna Mission of Institute of Culture, Golpark, Kolkata. My teacher was respected Nigam sensei. It was with a great feeling that I started to learn a foreign language from one whose mother tongue is Japanese. At last the dream came true because of my husband's interest. For the last one year he did a thorough study on Japan in respect of the nature of places/objects, staying and food pattern/budgetary expenses, formalities etc.

After this long exercise and preparation we set out for Japan on April 2<sup>nd</sup> by Silk Air Airlines and reached Singapore Changi airport next morning 6 o'clock (Singapore time). During three long hours halt at Changi we met two Japanese gentlemen. I started talking to them in Nihongo and enquired about the conveyance from Narita to Tokyo. We were under an impression that we shall take a cab and reach Tokyo. Practically it is immensely expensive and most of the people avoid availing taxi for such a long distance. One of them said that it would cost more the fifty thousand Yen to reach Tokyo from Narita. However, we had JR (Japan Railway) pass, which is said to be the best mode of transport for visiting Japan and we realised the same every moment.

At 9.30 a.m. we boarded on SQ12 (Singapore Airlines) and reached Japan, Narita Airport at 5.30 p.m. (Japan time). *Yume ga genjitsu ni natta*. Went through immigration formalities, collected luggage, reached JR counter, activated JR pass from that day itself. The jovial girls at the Counter received us with warmth and advised us to take Narita express, which takes only one hour to reach the Capital of Japan. As we showed them the address of our hotel at Tokyo, they told us to avail a local train from Tokyo to reach Hamamatsucho, which is the third station from Tokyo. It was the first experience on Japan Rail and we spontaneously felt how convenient and comfortable it is. In spite of being tired and anxious, we were relieved by the announcements, both in Japanese and English, inside the train. After getting down at Tokyo station, it seemed we were just in a vast concourse of people. Office goes running from one track to the other for returning home and we were trying our best to catch a local train for Hamamatsu cho and of course with two big pieces of luggage. In Japan, there was staircase in one side and escalator on the other side in every station. Being unaware of the fact, we carried the heavy luggage almost twenty five staircases. As advised by the cordial local people we took a train in Yamanote line and reached Hamamatsucho around 9.30 p.m. When we asked a gentleman about the location of our hotel he said it

would be ten minutes walking distance from Hamamatsucho. Accordingly, when we reached at the crossing just before our hotel, we got to be astonished that the gentleman came beforehand and awaiting us. As soon as we reached over there he escorted us up to the hotel and moved ahead. Having checked in 'Tokyo Grand Hotel', we asked for food but unfortunately their restaurant was closed by then. They gave us a list of nearby restaurants, wherein we found one Indian restaurant viz. 'Garonda' which is said to be within three minutes walking distance from this hotel. After a long walk we thought we were walking in wrong route and asked a gentleman, who might be returning from his workplace, about the restaurant. He gently heard our concern and started to search the hotel in GPS in his mobile phone. With the help of GPS we managed to locate it after a long walk of ten minutes in the opposite direction. Alas! 'Garonda' was closed. It was almost ten o'clock, we were famished. At last one small Japanese restaurant was visible. As we were about to order, we were told that the "shop is closed". We were utterly puzzled as we had no more energy. I told them "*Onaka ga sukimashita*". It seemed, I got the first prize of my learning Japanese language. Immediately they served us cold soba and shrimp tempura. We gulped the food and left giving them our heartiest thanks. Thinking of the term "*Atithidebo Bhaba*" is applicable for Japanese too.

.....to be contd.  
Debi Das

### MONTHLY PROGRAMME

- ◆ **Freshers' Welcome:** 25<sup>th</sup> July 2015  
At Sarat Samity 6:30pm
- ◆ **26<sup>th</sup> Cinema Nippon:** 31<sup>st</sup> July,  
1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug 2015  
At Nandan II
- ◆ **NKKS Founders Day:** 15<sup>th</sup> Aug 2015  
At Nigam Sensei's Residence 5:30 pm
- ◆ **19<sup>th</sup> IJSC:** Aug 2015  
(Details to be informed)
- ◆ **Nihongo Quiz:** 26<sup>th</sup> Sep 2015  
At RKM 2pm



### END OF AN ERA

**HITENDRA NATH CHOUDHURY**, the very first President of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai, is no more! We pray for his eternal peace!  
Thank you Hiten san, for your kind support to NKKS.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH SEIYA OZAWA



This young Japanese guy has charmed us by acting as Doraemon in In-Nichi-Bunka-Sai. He is working now as an Administrative Officer in the office of Consulate- General of Japan, Kolkata. I asked him about his interest in Doraemon. He smiled with a childlike simplicity. Then he told me, “You know, my elder brother calls himself Doraemon—*Ore Doraemon*... Actually he looks like Doraemon.” He arrived in Kolkata only last year. The conversation at Sarat Samity:

Q: Ozawa-san you speak Bengali so well! Are you learning somewhere?

A: Yes, I have been learning Bengali from Ruma Sensei.

Ozawa Seiya has come to India after completing his graduation. His specialty was Education and Social Science.

Q: Why had you chosen Education as a subject?

A: I wanted to be a teacher then. My father is a teacher of English. My mother was also a teacher, though now she works in a different field.”

Ozawa san was born in Aichi Ken. In his childhood he also played baseball.

Q: You wanted to be a teacher--- but you came here as an employee of the Japanese government in the Consulate office in Kolkata.

A: Yes. I wanted to visit foreign countries especially South East Asia; so when I got the chance I accepted the offer. I have read about India—heard about it—it is a huge country.

Q: Have you gone to other foreign countries?

A: Yes, I went to America. I studied Practical English, Education and Geography in a Community College for 9 months

Q: You also told about your special liking for reading History books.

A: I got this from my father. In my childhood he used to tell me many stories from history. Though he is a teacher of English but has special interest in History.

We talked about his American experience as a

student, a tourist visiting China and then in India as an Administrative Officer in the Consulate.

Kolkata instils in him a passion for the local language, to identify with the ambience, to communicate with local people. He finds Bengali to some extent difficult but similarities in grammar of both languages helps him to learn. Staying for almost one year in Jadavpur, he has experienced the attitude, the behaviour, culture etc. of people.

A: Calling a cab, going to a restaurant or talking to people in the street in Bengali helps to grow a congeniality which makes them happy and encourages them to communicate with me. Compared to the Japanese people they are more lively and ready to help others.

While we were talking one young girl, must be a student of Japanese language class, seeing Ozawa began to whisper---“Doraemon---Doraemon”. She must have seen him perform in In-Nichi-Bunka-Sai.

Q: You have performed so well. Have you acted before?”

Hearing this Ozawa’s eyes became bright with old memories! With a childlike smile he reminisced—“

A: Though actually it was my debut performance on stage, I had acted in my elementary school. I should say I had to act before teachers, students and others as it was compulsory for every student.

Q: Your hobby?

A: Mainly cycling. Once I went on cycling for almost 500 km. from Kyoto to Tokyo, (“Tokaido” route of Edo period on the Tokyo-Kyoto highway) for which I used a housewives’ model bicycle. It took almost 5/6 days. Besides cycling he also likes singing. But he prefers old melodious songs to modern pop. He also likes to read science fiction and the World Atlas.

He has a special liking for Darjeeling and wishes to work there.

Q: Your experience of Hindi movies.

A: I have seen three or four Hindi movies. Singham Returns, Three Idiots, etc. I liked Three Idiots for its theme. It highlights the educational problems and people’s attitude towards it. But why do you have so many songs in the movie?

I explained that Indian movie sans songs is almost a suicide in the box office. We, Indians often go to movies for watching those songs set in exotic locales with a make-believe world catering to our yearning for eternal romance and a sense of Utopia! But there are also many films made without songs. He told me to teach him some Bengali songs but I promised to teach him later! Smiling, Ozawa san began to hum the Doraemon song in Bengali!



