

Maiden Musings in Haiku

April 6, 2024, 18:05—After an almost 10-hour flight from Penang, Malaysia, I landed at Narita Airport. My much-anticipated journey as a foreigner working in Japan had finally begun.

April 8, 2024, 7:45—On my first day at work, I walked from the train station to Minatomirai Campus and was pleasantly greeted by rows of cherry trees in full bloom. The cherry blossoms harmonized beautifully with the surrounding modern high-rise buildings.

The sights of the cherry blossoms, much like the weeks that followed, felt surreal. I experienced a variety of interesting, unexpected, and baffling moments, each filled with “my first encounter with”: fresh, top-notch ingredients in food (no matter where you dine) , vending machines on every corner, on-time public transportation, nearly monochrome business attire, orderliness in every aspect, extensive paperwork, quiet neighbourhoods, a brutal and exhausting summer, and iced-cold apartment buildings during winter. I could go on and on, but suffice it to say that Japan possesses many charms—rich culture, picturesque nature, beautiful landscapes, and vibrant modern cityscapes.

The sights and sounds of Japan, along with the beauty of its changing seasons, inspired me to document my feelings and thoughts. And they came tumbling out, caught in the web of haikus. While I do not consider myself a (haiku) poet, as my pieces may not be particularly profound or delicate, I thoroughly enjoyed the creative process. I hope that some of these haikus convey how Japan's aesthetics are perceived through the eyes of a foreigner.

Grace

Your blessings pour forth
For one so undeserving
Grace personified.

JINDAI

A beacon of light
Spirit glows and dreams to show
Act, Lead, Advocate.

Cicadas

Your loud, raspy calls
Resonate across the park
Heralding Summer.

The Ginkgo Tree

Green, green foliage
Brilliant golden hues now
Blazing with autumn.

Before the Snowfall

Bare trees standing still
Green feast for the eyes no more
Fall, fluffy snow fall.

Life's a Hakone Ekiden Race

Life is not a sprint
Winners are not the swiftest
But those who press on.

To Moe, My Canine Angel

You came, bringing joy
You left, and all the sweetness
disappears, alas!

Bird Song

A little sparrow
Perched on a lone maple tree
Singing her beauty.

Hanabi

The dark dreary sky
Morphed into colour and life
Then all dark again.

Aomori's Gift

Crunch, slurp, munch and munch
Sweetness overflows--rare treat!
Apples in my dreams.

Violas (Sumire)

Delicate petals
Now covered with crisp white snow
Beauty is fleeting.

Oxford Word of the Year 2024

Social media lures
The unsuspecting entrapped
Break free, lest "brain rot!"