



Horizontal and Vertical Axis in Haiku



Japanese History

- Muromachi Period
 - 1336-1573
 - Contact with the Ming Dynasty in China
 - Influence of Zen Buddhism
 - Renewed interest in Shinto
 - First “Western” influence (Portuguese sailors)



Japanese History

- Tokugawa/Edo Period
 - 1603-1867
 - National Education
 - Han schools (samurai and elites)
 - Terakoya schools (commoners)
 - Ukiyo

A decorative illustration of bamboo stalks and leaves in a dark blue color, positioned on the left side of the slide against a yellow background.

Kabuki Theatre

- Dance-drama
 - Stylized movement
 - Stylized makeup
- Started in 1603 by Izumo no Okuni
- Two simultaneous plots
 - Sekai (“world,” “sphere”)--vertical
 - Shuko (“intention”)--horizontal

Horizontal vs Vertical



Unchanging, idealized history
(Chinese, Japanese cultural past,
aristocratic and religious, etc.)

Based on the present. Contemporary ideas and themes. Commoners

Basho





Two Axes of Haiku

- Basho's Travels
 - Contemporary
 - meet new poets
 - exchange ideas
 - compose linked verse together.
 - Historical
 - enter the past
 - meet the spirits of the dead
 - experience poetic and spiritual predecessors



Two Axes of Haiku

- Haikai must work along both axes
 - To work only in the present would result in poetry that was fleeting.
 - To work just in the past, on the other hand, would be to fall out of touch with the fundamental nature of haikai, which was rooted in the everyday world.
 - anti-traditional, anti-classical, anti-establishment
 - does not reject the past
 - depends upon the past and on earlier texts and associations for its richness

The Vertical Axis in the West

- Allusion
 - National/Cultural Literature
 - Art
- Cultural Memory
 - Historical Events
 - Historical Myth
- Cultural Associations
 - Popular Culture
- Cultural Conflicts (wars, social conflicts, etc.)



Writing Prompts

- Allusion
 - Write haiku based upon nationally or internationally recognized works of literature
 - Write haiku based upon nationally or internationally recognized works of art
- Cultural Memory
 - Pick iconic images related to your culture
 - Consider symbolism
- Cultural Associations
 - Write haiku alluding to popular culture
- Cultural Conflicts
 - Consider historical conflicts or conflicts with historical foundation
 - Write haiku from those images and memories

Thank you!

